Migration, Diaspora, Muslim Transnational communities and Education

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Abstract
The Western World (especially Europe) is struggling to cope with one of the largest waves of human migration ever. Majority of the migrants are Muslims with traumatic experiences as a result of enduring wars, violence, and various forms of suffrage. The unique feature of this migration is the number of unaccompanied minor Muslim migrants with an unprecedented rate in human history. All these pose new challenges to European societies not least to accommodate the needs and meet the demands of Muslims for moral and religious education. While European education systems fundamentally rest on a rather monolithic worldview, inspired by Christianity and based on secularism, they need to adapt to the realities of the postmigration era. The Muslim transnational communities in West complicate the matter even further as they pose new challenges in the notions of identity and belonging of the younger generation of Muslims in diaspora. The new mode of policy-making in the face of the migration and multiple transnational communities is to create and foster an education system to respond to the needs of Muslims in the West while enhancing the process of integration and teaching the western-style notion of citizenship. Sex education, religious extremism, terrorism, and pluralistic values are among the challenges that education systems in the West need to alter both in policy and practice.

Keywords
Migration • Migrant education • Transnational Muslims • Islamic education
Introduction

The 2016 crisis as a result of war in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan which resulted in the mass migration of millions of people mostly from Muslim countries to the West has once again sparked the enduring debate on the clashes of the moral and religious values. Muslim immigrants are targeted as a source of discontent, fear, and instability across many countries in Europe, America, and Australia. Whereas many Muslims hold the West accountable for the events which lead to the exodus of Muslims from their homes, the perception of Western public on the Muslim migrants is shaped in the light of a series of events. One may recall a series of incidents which left the impression on shaping the mentality of the Western general public to perceive Muslims as a group of people reluctant to abide western values and sources of terror and fear. Iranian Revolution (1979), and subsequent Iranian Hostage Crisis (1979–1981), Rushdie Affair (1989), Gulf Wars I and II (1990 and 2003), Bosnian War (1992), emergence of Taliban (2001), 9/11 and emergence of al-Qaida (2001), murder of Theo Van Gogh (2004), Danish Cartoon Crisis (2006), Syrian War (2011), rise of Boko Haram and The Islamic State ISIS (2014–2016), Paris events and Charlie Hebdo (2015), and Nice and Brussels (2016), not but to mention a few. Many of these events resulted in waves of violence and mistreatment of rival religious groups and sexual and ethnic minorities across the Muslim countries, followed by waves of migration to West. This was in parallel with the period of demographic changes in Western Europe, as result of the collapse of Eastern Bloc and rise of such discourses as the “clash of civilizations,” “culture wars,” “religious wars,” and “Islamophobia,” as well as with the reinforcement of restrictive migration policies and territorial border security vis-à-vis the nationals of countries outside the European space (Kaya 2009).

Migration (hijrah) is not an alien concept among Muslims. In many ways, the Hijrah, emigration of the Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions from Mecca to Medina in 622, is “Islam’s most enduring symbol” (Mandaville 2001:113), which marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. In such strictly hierarchical clan-based society as early Islamic Arabia, muḥājirūn (migrants) appeared collectively as position comparable to that of one of the distinguished Arab clans of Medina. The status of muḥājir came to be greatly prized, perhaps sometimes placing people in a higher category in the dīwān or stipend-list, and the status was granted to others than those who had actually journeyed from Mecca to Medina. (Dīwān, is a
register,” or logbook, and later a “finance department,” “government bureau,” or “administration in Islamic societies”. The first dīwān appeared under the caliph ʿUmar (634–644) as a pensions list, recording free Arab warriors entitled to a share of the spoils of war. Out of rents and property taxes exacted from conquered farmers and landowners, hereditary pensions were assigned to warriors entered in the dīwān. Later the term came to signify a financial institution, and, by the time of the caliphate of Muʿāwiyah (661–680), it meant a government. The hijrah, hence, was introduced as a solution to deny suppression and exercise the daʿwah. The migration was established as an individual and sometimes collective strategy which made the rapid expansion of Islam possible.

Islam possesses its own rich vocabulary of travel and migration. Apart from the hijrah, there is also ḥajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), riḥlah (travel in quest of education), isrāʾ (the Prophet’s nocturnal journey to miʿrāj), zīyarah (the visitation of saintly shrines and graves), and mujāvirat (migration to stay close to a sacred shrine) (Eickelman and Piscatori 1990, p. xii). As Mandaville (2001: 112–113) notes, the hijrah, moving from paganism, tribalism, and unbelief, into a community of monotheistic faith is a symbol whose resonance can still be heard in the name of Islamist groups today. The call for Muslims to quit “un-Islamic” lands still finds adherents and often figures heavily in the rhetoric of those religious leaders who seek to discourage Muslims from living in the West. The argument was used, among other groups, by ISIS which proclaimed an Islamic caliphate, that “Muslims can no longer justify living in the West and must join the caliphate (ISIS 2016: 4)”. The connotations of the hijrah, however, have been subject to diasporic arbitration. For instance, Ismail al-Faruqi (1987: 56) sought to reverse the rhetoric by calling on Muslims in the West – of which he was one – to regard themselves as having made a hijrah to the West. Faruqi, a scholar-activist trained at the famed al-Azhar in Cairo as well as at a number of secular institutions, encouraged his fellow Muslims in diaspora to live their lives as companions of the prophet Muhammad, as if they had just arrived in the city of the Prophet: “Now that you are in Madina, what is your task? . . . Your task. . . is the saving, the salvation of life, the realization of the values of dignity, of purity, of chastity, all the nobility of which humans are capable” (Mandaville 2001). A similar trend is observable in the treatise produced by a religious scholar (ʿālim) in Mecca in response to Algerian students enquiring what Islam had to say about Muslims staying in West, which argued that in some senses travel to these countries is actually obligatory for Muslims. He cites the importance of education and the acquisition of advanced science and technology, without which the Muslim world would be dependent on the West. Also noted is the fact that circumstances in the West are such that the proper practice of Islam is in some senses easier there (Masud 1990: 43).

Arguments of this nature provide partial explanations for the establishment of the transnational community of Muslims in the West. Decisions on where to invest, materially and symbolically, might constitute a field of negotiation or contestation since transnational practices eventually lead to deeper anxieties on where “home” is and where, thus, one is supposed to build a future for children and their education, to
acquire something more than material objects, that is a long-term symbolic capital. Analyzed from this perspective, transnationalism and ongoing movements do not seem simply to reconcile fractures, but may exacerbate anxieties about the future and amplify insecurities. While keeping a simultaneous relationship with their country of origin, Muslims paradoxically also increase their need for territorialization and secure identities (Salih 2002: 65). Education and socio-economic backgrounds are among the most important factors in facilitating the engagement in transnational practices (See Chap. 9, “Changes in Muslim Orientations and Views on Education”). There is also a substantial difference between the migrants from former colonies who manage the lingua-franca and those who lack such connection and have to learn a foreign language. Those who are educated and master the language by and large, much better prepared for finding their feet in a totally new environment and to create a life across borders. In the same vein, “those originating from urban areas tend to be more flexible, mobile and prone to transcend boundaries of cultures, political entities and economic systems than those who lived in rural areas (Al-Ali 2002: 114).”

Allievi (2003) argues that transnational Islam is in effect the two things: it is an internal social actor, but it is also externalized, for two different reasons. The first one is that it is effectively in a relationship with the countries of origin and the different kind of “centers” (centers of production of knowledge and education, symbolic centers of the prayer and the hajj, and organizational centers of movements and turuq) which are situated outside the West. The second one is, even when Islam is situated in West, culturally in terms of externality and extraneousness it is something which should “naturally” be outside. Hence, the Islamic transnationalism is “comprised of numerous ‘traveling Islams’ that recognise and are constituted through hybridity, internal difference and translocalised diaspora identities, and whose generally informal organising capabilities both influence and are transformed via the processes of cultural and economic globalisation (Levine 2003)”.

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**Education of Muslim Migrants**

Education of the children of Muslim immigrants across the Western countries has never been more challenging than today. The voluntary nature of previous waves of migration made immigrants prone to integrate into the mainstream and take advantage of school system, training their religion and language on the side. Many perceived the migration temporary and endeavored to maintain their culture and language by educating their children in home country; others preferred homeschooling. Postwar immigration into Germany, for instance, did not challenge education for a long time due to the fact that work migration was regarded as temporary until 1970s. So was the situation more or less in other European countries. When workers began to settle – mainly as a result of the enforced stop of recruitment
in 1973 – education had to deal with the situation of migrant children attending schools in large numbers. The first answer to this new challenge was the concept of migrant education (Ausländerpädagogik). Multicultural education (intercultural education in the German diction) was developed in Germany rather reluctantly in the 1980s as a second answer to this challenge when the concept of migrant education was no longer regarded as an adequate one by many educationalists in practice and research. Multicultural education finally got some recognition in the 1990s, when it was partly connected with international education like European aspects or global learning. Europe, but also further developments in migration, led to a new type of short-term migration and further newer forms of migration, which have not fully been taken into consideration in education (Luchtenberg 2004: 40).

The cultural and educational – both formal and nonformal – reproduction within the Muslim transnational neo-communities in west is much facilitated than ever. In practice, this means that rather than the creation of Western (European and American) Islam, the original form of Islam in practice in the original centers of its production – Middle East and North Africa – is emulated and practiced. The transnational nature of the Muslim communities in West also makes inter-connection and transition from one sort of Islam to another much easier and acceptable. The outcome of such an interconnection is seen, for instance, in the cases where European converts or non-Arab Muslims advance their Qur’ānic and Islamic studies in such institution as al-Azhar or Zaytouna, anywhere from Morocco to Saudi Arabia and Iran. Another example may be the members of some movements who go for their training to the centers of these movements, unrelated to their ethnic origin (so, an Arab can go to India for a Tablighī course, etc.). New waves of Muslim extremism in the West could be attributed to such development between various groups and networks of Muslims. The same can be said of the members of several brotherhoods, who travel to the country where they have their center for a certain period, and again what is new is that in Europe it is not unusual for an Asian (or a European) to become a member of a brotherhood that did not even exist in his country of origin. Also, there are Muslims who come to Europe for a period of training in Islamic studies, not only with Muslims but also in academic and even Christian or secular institutions (Allievi 2003: 22–23). Through this interaction, Islam has become increasingly “scriptualized” since the nineteenth century. The growing tendency of “scriptualism” is manifested in an increasing emphasis on Qur’ānic teaching, Islamic education, mosque-building (Gellner 1992), and now on digitalized ummah. In diaspora, the scriptualist tendency comes at the expense of the folk Islam of saint worship, healing, Sufism, and local brotherhoods. The tendency of clericalization becomes more evident in the migration process. When Islam leaves its original setting, what travels with it are not the shrines, local rituals, folk practices, and guilds, but the Qur’ān and Qur’ānic teachings. As Pieterse (1997) argues, the Qur’ān becomes portable Islam. The return of scriptures, on the one hand, underlines the return to the fundamentals and, on the other, is itself a mode of modernization, because it makes cultural reproduction independent of local
circumstances (Kaya 2009: 193). This results in various forms of educational arrangements to teach Qur’an, often in a form of after school Islamic activities, weekend schools, or adding religious subjects as electives in mainstream private Muslim schools.

While ICT is used as an active platform to promulgate Islam (both as an Islamist ideology and a religion of peace and co-existence, and otherwise), the world of information and communication produces one of the important realities involving Islam, in the West, namely “mediated reality”, the world in which and through which Islam is perceived. Such mediated reality of Islam and Arabs is discussed thoroughly by Edward Said (1994), Jack Shaheen (1997), Hamdi Dabashi (2009), and others. The core concern of the discussions by those scholars is that the mediatization of Islam has contributed significantly to the process of “othersization” of Muslims in the West. Saunders (2015: 120) notes how an essentialized constructed image of the “Muslim other” is shaped through a process “invention of the Muslim,” as

When they got off the airplane, they weren’t “Muslims.” They were Indians, Turks, Arabs, North Africans, Baghdadis, Persians, Nigerians, Asians. . . . Islam may have been the religion of these twentieth-century arrivals, but in general their faith was just part of the background of their lives. It wasn’t the way they thought of themselves, it wasn’t something they sought out in others. . . . By the time their Western-born children came of age, however, they had become Muslims. At the beginning of the new century, that was how the world had come to describe these immigrant communities, often fearfully. For some, it had become the way they chose to describe themselves, because their religion had become their default affinity in a polarized age, the one non-shameful source of self-identification.

Classic theories of migration often explain what determines people move, where to and what consequences the mobility of people might have both on the individual and on the society from an economic prism. Individuals are defined as self-interested actors who apply principles of rational calculation (cost-benefit analysis) of the gains of moving with regard to, e.g., employment, income, education, political rights before making decisions to migrate. Along with the concept of “economic man,” there are socio-political factors in different contexts (“push and pull” factors) both at the individual and collective levels. In (neo-) classic theories of migration, the migration is perceived as a market with a supply side including differential incentives of individuals for migration based on their ability, skills, and motive for migration and with a demand side of need of labor force, mechanisms for allocation of visas, and the enforcement of immigration law, and the likes. Whereas economic objectives are certainly part of the explanation of the migration of Muslims, it is often the outcome of policies and political crises. Some scholars have maintained that internal and international migration, defined as the movement of people between geographic (and, thus, automatically social) spaces, would – if it did not stop entirely – cease to be a force behind change and challenge in modern, “established” societies and in a global order based on nation states (Luchtenberg 2004: 30). In any case, it was assumed that the nomadic way of life, in which movement between places itself represented a form of social being, and not only
The educational needs of the children of Muslims in the West exposed a fundamental tension at the core of the western educational mission. On the one hand, educational systems are expected to provide students with an education appropriate to their adult lives. Operating within the context of highly differentiated labor markets and inequalities in earnings, school systems inevitably play a major role in determining how young people will be sorted across the socioeconomic spectrum. Since studies show that educational outcomes for all students reflect social origins to a greater or lesser extent, it is not surprising that schools also tend to reproduce inequalities, at least in the aggregate, between native and immigrant origin students (Alba and Holdaway 2013). On the other hand, educational systems are charged with ensuring fair opportunities and the potential for social mobility for children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many children growing up in immigrant Muslim families fit in this category, for example, those whose parents are low-wage workers with low levels of education when judged by the standards of the receiving society. In the most rudimentary sense, all the school systems of receiving societies do provide such opportunities: it is common for the second generation to make a large step beyond its parents in educational terms, if only because its members are growing up in societies where the legally mandated period of school attendance is far longer than in the societies from which immigrant parents came (ibid.).

In examining educational opportunities for Muslims in the West, Schweder (2008) argues that in liberal societies, four key values are both strongly held and potentially in conflict: autonomy and freedom of expression, “the merit-based allocation of benefits and fair assignments to statuses and positions in society,” equal opportunity to “become qualified for valued positions in society,” and “equal safekeeping from arbitrary or unfortunate harms.” New waves of Muslim migration to West starting from 1980s onward was mostly due to humanitarian causes as a result of wars, ethnic conflicts, and cleansings and appearance of various forms of religious extremism in the Middle East and North Africa. This group was often marked by their lower socio-economic background, lower level of education, and unskilled labor and arrived at the post-industrial Europe, where there was a surplus of unskilled labor force. In the absence of any integration policies, many ended up in Muslim-dominated urban neighborhoods or public-housing blocks that were rife with poverty, unemployment, petty crime, and welfare dependency. This is true of most poor immigrants; however, Muslims tend to attract extra attention (Saunders 2015). Such segregation was perceived by many as an act of self-ghettoizing and was conceived as the creation of “parallel societies.” Muslim immigrants were perceived as a group who lacks interest in integrating with the wider society and economy around them. The consequences were visible among other areas in education of the second generation of the immigrants.

The mandatory school attendance in western countries on the one hand and exposure of Muslim students, especially girls on the other hand, left policy makers no option but to introduce new forms of schools, while maintaining the national
curricula and rights to monitor the schools. Some countries proposed policies with the ambition to create equal conditions for all pupils and give more resources to schools with a comparatively large proportion of disadvantaged children (children with learning disabilities, immigrant children, etc.). For instance, in England, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden, supplementary resources are allocated to areas or schools that have a certain proportion of immigrant children (Daun and Arjmand 2005: 409).

While the school attendance of children, at least at the compulsory level, is not an issue among Muslim immigrants, early school leavers are overrepresented among immigrant children in general compared to natives (see Table 1), a problem for Muslim immigrant children alike. Also, it is evident that disproportionately many children have a significantly lower level of achievement on knowledge and skills tests in OECD countries due, among other things, to the fact that education in the “host” country is conducted in that country’s own predominant language(s) and few (if any) efforts are made to base teaching in and on cultural and/or socioeconomic conditions (OECD 2015). While there is an over-representation of migrant children in general in lower-level vocational education streams and under-representation in higher-level academic courses which provide opportunities for pursuing tertiary education at university, it is certainly true about Muslim pupils. Migrant children are often also more likely than the general population to leave school with no qualifications (Heckmann 2008).

Table 1  Islamic religious education (IRE) in public schools in selected European countries and the United States

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<tr>
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<th>IRE in public schools</th>
<th>Publicly funded Muslim schools</th>
<th>Publicly funded teacher education for IRE- teachers</th>
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<td>Austria</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>United States</td>
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Source: Berglund 2015.

In all European countries, in comparison of children of Muslim immigrants with average children in the respective country, the children of Muslim immigrants typically appear to be performing poorly in school. However, in a comparison between children from families with the same level of incomes, the gap often disappears (The Open Society 2009: 93).
The diversity within the actors and their objectives are reflected in the performance of the Muslim schools. There are as much discrepancies between Muslim schools as between Muslim schools and mainstream schools. In the United Kingdom, where a longer and more elaborated tradition of private Muslim (independent) schools has developed to the extent that the across to Muslim schools for all groups with the wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds are possible, some Muslim immigrants’ children perform poorly, while others are among the top performers. For instance, Mazahirul Uloom, a secondary boys’ school that professes to teach the National Curriculum and Islamic Sciences, along with some other schools of similar profile, face “the criticism that too much of the curriculum ‘focuses solely on Islamic theme’” and judged inadequate by the Department of Education. Pupils believed it was wrong to learn about other religions, were not taught art, music, or drama, and had a “narrow view” of women in society. Some students told inspectors of the Department of Education, “women stay at home and clean and look after the children. They cook and pray and wait for us to come back from school with homework (Richardson 2014)”. On the other hand, there are Muslim schools which perform highly. For instance, for the second consecutive year over half of Muslim schools featured in the British Department of Education league have surpassed the national average of students achieving 5 or more GCSEs (The General Certificate of Secondary Education). Eight independent Muslim schools were featured in the top 50 of the examination in 2014 (Buaras 2015). Even “in comparisons of the academic performance of students eligible for free school meals (an indicator of poverty), Pakistani and Bangladeshi students perform significantly better than their white British counterparts (Saunders 2015)”. Statistics show that while new immigrants from Muslim countries on average receive considerably less education than other people in their host countries, their children narrow the gap. French-born Muslim children receive about the same number of years of education as ethnic French kids, German-born Muslims receive on average only 1.9 years less education, and British-born Muslims receive an average of 1 year more education than white British kids (Algan et al. 2010).

In the Netherlands, second-generation children appear to be splitting into two groups. Those who drop out of secondary school, at a rate more than twice the national average are very likely to fall into unemployment and benefit dependency. Of the smaller group who stay in school, more than 40% end up in higher education (though more often in technical colleges than universities). A large-scale Dutch study (Crul and Heering 2008) of second-generation success found that there is “a considerable group that stays behind and an equally large group that performs remarkably well.” This is the same pattern seen in Britain: Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people are overrepresented among those entering higher education and at the same time overrepresented among those leaving school without qualifications. In other words, there is a polarization within ethnic groups – something which is not unique to Muslim immigrants and seen equally in other groups of immigrants. This is, in a way, reassuring. It means that Muslim immigrants are on the path once followed by other religious-minority immigrants, encountering the same mix of
opportunities and obstacles. But it also means that many school systems are failing them (Saunders 2015).

However, according to an OECD report (2015: 230–232), progress in performance among immigrants at school is noticeable, both over time and with greater experience of the host country. In non-EU OECD countries, native-born children with two immigrant parents perform on average as well in reading at the age of 15 as children with two native-born parents. In contrast, foreign-born students lag behind. In the European Union, both foreign-born pupils and natives with two immigrant parents show average outcomes that are well below those of children with two native-born parents. Between those of mixed and native parentage, there is generally no difference. School performance improves the longer pupils reside in the host country, with the native offspring of foreign-born parentage outperforming immigrants who arrived in childhood.

That said, despite progress over the decade, a significant share of students with a migrant background lack basic skills. In 2012, an average of 30% of foreign-born pupils across the European Union lacked basic reading skills at 15, compared with around 25% of native students born to immigrant parents and 14% of native children of mixed parentage and of children of native-born parents. By contrast, comparable average shares of around 17% of native-born pupils of native- and foreign-born parents struggled with reading literacy at 15 years old across the OECD (ibid.) (See Table 2 in the Appendix for further details).

On the other hand, while the first generation (the new immigrants) earn far less than natives do, their children, the second-generation Muslims, who have the same language fluency and have achieved levels of education that are the same or better than those of the native population, do not manage to narrow the wage gap. British-born Bangladeshis do twice as well as their parents in the labor market – but that is still far worse than British-born Britons. German-born Turks actually earn less than their Turkish-born parents, despite having more years of education (Algan et al. 2010). Or, as The Open Society (2009) Institute study concludes, “human capital accounts for some of this disadvantage; other factors include social networks, knowledge and understanding of the labour market and language fluency.” But even after all that has been taken into account, it appears that children of Muslim immigrants face both an ethnic and a religion penalty in the labor market.

Across all OECD countries disproportionately many immigrant children have a significantly lower level of achievement on knowledge and skills tests, due, among other things, to the fact that education in the “host” country is performed in the country’s own predominating language(s) and few (if any) efforts are made to base teaching in and on cultural and/or socioeconomic conditions (Brandsma 2005; OECD 2015). It has been found that “education (in a broad sense) is neither the sole cause nor the sole solution for social exclusion (Brandsma 2005: 23). “One of the principle conclusions of the synthesized findings from educational research is that education policy initiatives have only limited success in removing barriers to inclusion if they are not continuously articulated with policies that address wider economic inequalities.
Educational outcomes for Muslim immigrants are in part discussed in the light of the long-term socioeconomic, political, and social consequences of education. That is, the consequences for the individuals some years after their departure from the educational institution/arrangement, which among others, affected by globalization, migration, inclusion/exclusion, and participation. Social exclusion may be seen as constellations of disadvantage which implies complex interrelationships between socio-economic, institutional, and individual factors (Walther and Pohl 2005: 38–39). The failure in inclusion is most often ascribed to factors resulting from cultural differences such as language problems, religious, or traditional family values. While these aspects clearly play a role, it should at the same time be taken into account that most Muslim immigrants have a lower socio-economic status that affects school performance and leads to a situation of segregation or exclusion. Social exclusion is associated with long-term unemployment. However, countries with both low and high early school leaving have high rates of long-term unemployment, which means that other factors need to be taken into consideration.

Education is generally a key driver of the labor market integration of immigrant offspring and of immigrants who arrive as children, although less so among women than men. According to OECD (2015), in the European Union, young immigrant offspring with two immigrant parents are four percentage points more likely to be neither in employment, education, or training (NEET) than those with no migrant background. In contrast, in the non-European OECD countries, such youth have similar NEET rates than their peers with native-born parents. Also, in the European Union, the youth unemployment rate among native-born offspring of immigrant parents is almost 50% higher than among the young with native-born parents. In non-EU OECD countries, rates are similar.

The analysis conducted by OECD (ibid.) also suggests that, since 2007–2008, youth employment rates among those of migrant background have deteriorated more than ever before, and the disadvantages of youth with a migrant background have extend beyond education and labor market outcomes. One-fifth of young people born in the host country to foreign-born parents report belonging to a group that is discriminated against on the grounds of religion, ethnicity, or nationality in the European Union (ESS 2016). In 2012, nearly one in two children (aged less than 16 years old) living in a migrant household in the OECD countries was living below the relative poverty threshold, compared with less than a quarter of those in a native-born household. Shares are the highest in the United States, Greece, and Spain (OECD 2015).

Hence, Muslim immigrants who do complete a good education and seek a place in Western society can encounter devastating barriers. One study of four European countries (Zimmermann 2009) suggests that among the Muslims with higher-than-average educational achievement, the optimism is reversed as soon as they try to enter the workforce. A recent review of the labor-market integration of ethnic minorities in Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Britain found that they “typically have significantly higher unemployment rates, lower labor income, and
they are less likely to find and keep their jobs than the majority population.” The proportion of the population of Belgium living below the poverty line is 10% for native Belgians, 59% for Turkish immigrants, and 56% for Moroccan immigrants and in Amsterdam, 32% of Turkish households and 37% of Moroccan households (Saunders 2015; The Open Society 2009).

Education of Muslim Immigrants: Problems and Solutions?

Educational systems nowadays tend to be caught between two principal demands. On one hand, processes of globalization drive countries to make people technically and economically competitive generally and to enhance students’ cognitive and technical skills more specifically. On the other hand, Islam is itself a globalizing force (Daun and Arjmand 2005); the number of Muslims who have migrated from the “core” areas is increasing. At the same time, the international discourse legitimizing religious and multicultural demands on education is being globalized (Karic 2002). Most Muslims prefer their children to have an education that includes at least some religious instruction concerning morals and values. For the educational systems in Europe and other areas that are not historically Muslim, it is a challenge to find an optimal balance between these two principal demands.

Religious education of Muslims in Europe and the North America has become a subject of contention and disagreement. Many argue that “their states are doing too little or too much to shape the spiritual beliefs of private citizens. State response to this concern ranges from sponsoring religious education in public schools to forgoing it entirely policies vary according to national political culture (Berglund 2015).”

In Germany and Austria, public schools may teach Islam to Muslims as a subject within a broader religious curriculum and parents are legally entitled to choose religious education on Islam for their children. Germany and Austria have also started to provide teacher training for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in public universities. The policy reflects Germany and Austria’s legal and religious contexts, in which officially recognized religions may enter into cooperation with the state (ibid.).

In the United Kingdom and Sweden, public schools teach all religions including Islam to all pupils as an academic subject. Teachers are trained in comparative religion in the respective universities. In both countries, Muslims have been awarded the same rights as Christians to receive public funding for religious schools. Both the United Kingdom and Sweden have an established national church; however, non-Christian religions are now accorded equal opportunities and rights.

French and American public schools do not teach religion, although there is an opportunity to teach about Islam in school subjects such as art, history, or literature. The policy comports with the national political culture in both countries, which maintain a rigid separation between church and state (ibid.) (See Table 3).

Study of Islam as a religion is not the only concern of the Muslim parents. For many Muslim immigrants, other than coping with the school culture, sex education proves a challenge. Sex education (with variations in arrangement and syllabi) is a
mandatory subject across public schools in OCED countries and is placed within the national curricula across. It is one of the major areas of contentions and source of disagreement among Muslim immigrants and the hosting Western countries. For many Muslims, the decline in spirituality and the tendency of the West to embrace materialism is partially an outcome of the rationalization and adherence of such perpetual attitudinal changes lies in the Western notion of sexuality and sexual pleasure. For many Muslims, such attitudes and behaviors are normalized through sex education which solely promulgates sex as purely physical, which lacks moral and spiritual dimensions. Hence, many Muslim immigrants in the West argue that their children would be better off without the sex education offered in schools. Upon the request of parents, Muslim Parliament of Great Britain issued a fatwā which argued, “what today passes off as ‘sex education’ is laden with a ‘hidden agenda’ by which libertine values are being imposed upon impressionable children (Halstead 1997). “For many Muslim parents, what lies behind these anxieties is the conviction that current practice in sex education is in serious conflict with Islamic teaching. The Muslim Parliament, then, strongly recommended that all Muslim parents seriously consider withdrawing their children from sex education classes.

The nature of Muslim objections to the sex education lies in the following premises: (1) They argue that some of the materials used in Western sex education in schools offend against the Islamic principle of modesty and decency (ḥayā), an attribute which encourages believers to avoid anything objectionable by observing the inherent shyness and a sense of modesty. (2) Western-style sex education tends to present certain behavior as normal or acceptable which Muslims believe is sinful. (3) Shari‘ah provides clear guidance about what is acceptable and unacceptable for Muslims regarding their sexual behavior, and marriage is a religious duty and the only legitimate institution for sexual relationships, which should take place between a man and a woman; and homosexuality is regarded a capital sin. (4) Western-Style sex education undermines the Islamic concept of family life-style and encourages Muslim youth to follow Western sexual normative rather than Islamic.

Despite the fact that Muslim immigrants in general are adapting quickly to the social values, reflected often in the formal curricula, and many also adopt the fertility patterns of the West (Saunders 2015), and they generally become enthusiastic supporters of the state and democratic institutions, many Muslim migrant parents are faced with a dilemma: they can either withdraw their children from sex education in mainstream schools, or they can allow their children to attend such classes and supplement the teaching with a specifically Islamic viewpoint at home or in some other Islamic setting, as recommended by other Muslim leaders. A larger group of Muslims argue that in lieu of sex education, the children are better off if encouraged to observe the Islamic life style which contributes to protection against HIV/AIDS and other problems such as STIs without necessarily promulgating moral decadence.

Mosques and Islamic associations and centers play a significant role in the education and training of young people. They struggle against juvenile delinquency and deviant behavior, namely, alcoholism, prostitution, violence, and drugs. These efforts are appreciated by both the Muslim population and local authorities alike.
The motivation for this work of civic education is primarily the religious healing of individuals who may have gone astray (Ennaji 2016: 81).

A chapter of this length, obviously, cannot but to scratch the surface of such a topic as the migration of Muslim in the West. One should also be aware of the in-group variations in the Muslim communities in the West. Muslim diasporic communities are heterogeneous and extremely diverse. They are divided by class, gender, education, geography, working and living conditions, social status, sociocultural background, rural-urban differences, age, language, and color (Moghiissi and Ghorashi 2010).

The new wave of refugees from Muslim countries (except for Afghanistan) as distinguished from the previous groups is markedly distinct from the earlier generation for higher level of education and expertise. Unlike the first migration wave, which was economic, this one was political. This will introduce a new dynamic to the Muslim transnational communities in the West and, as Ramadan (2005) anticipates, would promote a pluralist Islam among Muslim communities in the West.

Conclusions

Despite the significance of migration among Muslims and the role of Muslim migration in the formation of archaic globalization, in quest for realization of Muslim ummah, the situation of Muslim migration today is far less glorious than past. Muslim migrants in West struggle with a wide array of problems from attaining the residence permits to living ḥalāl and educating their children in increasingly hostile diasporic milieu. Formation of Muslim transnational communities has introduced a new dynamic to the Muslim migrants in West. Muslim parents, however, on one hand are concerned about the extremist Islamism which is growing exponentially in the light of discriminations in the competitive labor market and on the other hand to protect and educate their children in some increasingly hostile host societies.

Majority of Muslim migrant children take part in the mainstream schools in the host countries whose arrangement for the study of Islam varies from one country to next. Religious education takes place in the form of after school classes or weekend Islamic schools and/or combination of both. In some countries, private Muslim schools are permitted which using the flexibilities of the national curricula to teach Islam as part of the curriculum. The informal and nonformal religious education take place in mosques and Islamic centers which despite divisions across sectarian or national lines more often than not promote and promulgate the culture of coexistence and pluralism.

Appendixes

See Tables 2 and 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Luxembourg</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>OECD total (16)</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>EU total (10)</th>
<th>Netherland</th>
<th>Spain</th>
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<th>Switzerland</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
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(continued)
Table 2  (continued)

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Source: (OECD 2015).
Table 3  Islam in public schools in selected EU countries

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<th>Country</th>
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<th>Confessional</th>
<th>Islam as an elective course</th>
<th>Private Islamic Schools</th>
<th>State subsidizes Islamic schools (fully or partially)</th>
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</table>

^aDecisions are taken in länders level
^bOnly in secondary schools
^cUpon request of parents
Source: (Musharraf 2015).

References


ISIS. (2016). Dabiq (Islamic State online English magazine), No. 15. Feb 2016 (Shawal 1437).


