

**Instituto de Ciências Sociais**  
**Universidade de Lisboa**  
[www.ics.ul.pt](http://www.ics.ul.pt)

**Working Papers**

**LITTLE DIFFERENCE? YOUNG MUSLIMS IN THE  
CONTEXT OF PORTUGUESE YOUTH**

**Nina Clara Tiesler & David Cairns**

WP8-06

2006

---

Please address correspondance to  
INSTITUTO DE CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS- UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA  
Avenida Professor Aníbal de Bettencourt, 9 1600-189 LISBOA  
Tel: (351) 217 804 700 - Fax: (351) 217 940 274  
URL: [www.ics.ul.pt](http://www.ics.ul.pt)

---

# **Little Difference? Young Muslims in the Context of Portuguese Youth<sup>1</sup>**

**Nina Clara Tiesler & David Cairns**

**ICS-UL Working Paper**

This working paper presents the results of recent research conducted with young people in Portugal. This quantitative survey conducted in Lisbon with a total of 241 young people focused upon examining key issues in their lives, including work, study and leisure. Two groups of young people were surveyed, 200 young people taken from a variety of tertiary education institutions and a further 41 young Muslims with similar age profiles and from socio-economic backgrounds. Following a contextualisation of the state of the art on Portuguese youth, including the experiences of young Muslims, analysis had been made of the data gathered. What is revealed is, generally, that across the board, despite what are perceived to be difficult structural circumstances in Portugal, particularly in relation to the labour market, these young people are content with their lives. In relation to the future, the overwhelming majority also plan to spend the rest of their lives in Portugal, rather than pursue trans-national future life trajectories. While the overall picture is one of little difference between the initial sample of young people and the young Muslims, it has been possible to observe some interesting differences, for instance, that young Muslims are somewhat more globally-orientated in imagining their futures.

## **Introduction: Youth in Portugal**

Within the tradition of studying youth transitions in Europe, considerable depth has been added in recent years to our understanding of how young people enter the adult world, particularly in relation to the significance of work and study and the living out of

---

<sup>1</sup> The original research upon which this paper is based was funded by post-doctoral research fellowships provided by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT) in Lisbon, to whom the authors would like to express their gratitude. We would also like to thank everyone at our host institution, Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa (ICS-UL), for their help and support, in particular José Machado Pais for commenting upon an early draft of this paper.

youth identities within the sphere of leisure.<sup>2</sup> While at policy level of discussing European youth, much has been made of the impact of economic, social or political upheaval, e.g. rising age at time of marriage, the decline in numbers of young women having children, changing family patterns, protracted stays in the parental home and continually high rates of youth unemployment (Bendit et al 1999; IARD 2001; Biggart et al 2004; Eurostat 2005), and indeed the erosion of the meaning of “youth” as a distinct life-phase in itself (see Mørch 1998) or adulthood itself (see Côté 2000), this article is focused upon examining the lives of individual young people rather than charting demographic trends or exploring epistemological conception of youth. Specifically, our intention is to investigate key issues in the lives of young people as they make the transition to adulthood, with particular emphasis upon experiences of study, work and leisure, culminating in a discussion of feelings of well-being and future life orientations.

The geographical context of this article is Portugal, concentrating upon young people in Lisbon. Furthermore, this discussion is to be made not only with a sample of “mainstream” young people in Lisbon, but also with an equivalent group of young Muslims. From this investigation, we can gain insight into the everyday experiences of young people and the impact of broader structural factors upon their lives. We already know that their lives may be complicated. The fact that young people in Portugal face a life course of labyrinthine choices and dilemmas, with a delineated future of unpredictable outcomes, has been well established and young people themselves cannot be viewed as an homogenous group (see Pais 1995, 1998, 2003); however in respect to where the futures of Portuguese youth is to be lived-out, the answer would seem to be somewhat more predictable: at home. Recent investigation has noted the absence of mobility as a

---

<sup>2</sup> For some examples of this tradition, see Jones and Wallace (1992), Roberts (1995), Furlong and Cartmel (1997) Brannen et al (2002) and Walther and Stauber

“resource” in respect to young people’s future life planning,<sup>3</sup> with Portugal having a particularly high proportion of young people still living at home, coupled with extremely low numbers of young people registering intentions to live outside Portugal in the future (Biggart et al 2003).<sup>4</sup>

In attempting to account for this apparent disinterest in the rest of the world, at least when imagining future life trajectories, there is a suggestion that despite difficult labour market conditions Portuguese young people feel relatively optimistic regarding the future at home. Biggart et al (2003) found that 65% of the Portuguese young people surveyed felt that they would be in a job they like within 12 months of exiting full-time education, although a similar proportion also anticipated this being difficult to achieve. This finding is in line with previous research on Portuguese youth transitions, which concluded that despite job insecurity being ubiquitous, there is a high level of satisfaction with life (Pais 1995; 1998).

It is also clear from the existing research on youth transitions that there may be a cultural explanation for the current state of future life orientations in Portugal, with the role of the “welfare family” prominent (see Pais 1995 and Pais & Pappámikail 2004), likewise, the sphere of leisure (see Cairns 2006). This former situation opens up the possibility of extended dependency for young people upon their parents, with a consequence of curtailed independence, particularly in planning future life paths, along with giving rise to numerous paradoxes between aspirations and attainments centred upon conflicts between inherited, acquired and projected identities (Pais 1998: 10), while the leisure arena provides an opportunity in which

---

(2002).

<sup>3</sup> In respect to a recent study of mobility “as a resource,” see Thomson and Taylor (2005).

<sup>4</sup> The Families and Transitions in Europe (FATE) project was conducted with young people making education to work transitions across nine European regions: the UK (Northern Ireland), Germany (East and West), Portugal, Spain, Italy, the

the venture abroad and explore what lies beyond Portuguese frontiers within a framework of existing family and/or peer relationships as opposed to forging new meaningful relationships. The impact of close family relationships and other influences, most notably peers, upon feelings of personal well-being and future life orientation have been explored in the present research context.

### **Young Muslims as Portuguese Youth**

For around 30 years, Muslims have represented the largest non-Christian religious minority in Portugal, the majority coming from Lusophone areas to live in and around Lisbon; hence Muslims and their ways of life are highly visible in Lisbon, just as they are in other European metropolises.<sup>5</sup> In respect to Portuguese Muslims as a social formation, the New Islamic Presence in Portugal (Tiesler 2000; 2001; 2005) is largely the result of the postcolonial movement of Muslims of Indian/Mozambican and Guinean background to Portugal. The vast majority of the 30-40,000 Muslims in Portugal are also linked to and take part in the life of the central Islamic Community of Lisbon (Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa, CIL), although while the CIL certainly acts as an umbrella organisation in formal and informal ways for Sunni Muslims, this by no means implies that Islamic community life is a somehow singular experience.<sup>6</sup>

As with other national and regional contexts, studying (Muslim) youth in Portugal presents particular challenges in respect to what to study and indeed whom to study; as Linda Herrera (2005) has argued Youth (in general) has long been treated as a social problem:

---

Netherlands, Denmark and Bulgaria during 2002-2005. Out of almost 200, young people surveyed in Portugal, 92% were still living in the parental home.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, the Muslim presence in Berlin, Paris and Marseilles, London and Bradford, for example, far exceeds that in Lisbon.

<sup>6</sup> For different Islamic groups and organisations see Vakil 2004. About Muslims from Bangladesh, see Mapril 2005.

“Much of the scholarly and media attention to youth, particularly from the ‘global North,’ has focussed on issues such as juvenile delinquency, unemployment, drug abuse, and high-risk sexual behaviour. The situation, however, has been changing. Notwithstanding the persistence of – and continued attention to – the older problems, newer areas also underline the youth as agents of change, creators and consumers of new technologies, trend-setters in the arts, music fashion, and innovators of new forms of political organisations and social movements towards greater social and economic justice” (Herrera 2005: 4).

In other words, when studying young people, we need to focus on the everyday life experiences of the mainstream rather than the exceptional experiences at the fringes if we are to advance our understanding of contemporary youth in Europe and avoid misrepresenting or even demonising our subject of discussion. Furthermore Herrera comments that in relation to representations of Muslim youth, the emphasis tends to be upon issues of security, religious extremism and violence, thus “reinforcing a single-minded approach to youth.” This research aims to counterpoint such reinforcements by applying the same perspectives to Young Muslims as those made in scholarly works in the area of Youth Studies to “mainstream” youth, to which Muslims in Portugal (and elsewhere) surely belong. Therefore, the young Muslims surveyed have not been addressed as “young Muslims,” but rather as young people irrespective of their social background; this approach also enables these young people to be assessed from a comparative perspective with a broader contemporaneous Portuguese young people, since the same questions have been asked to both groups of young people: about issues of relevance to their everyday life experience and future life orientations.<sup>7</sup>

This approach is innovative, since at the European level in particular, Muslims as an object of study and their cultural attitudes,

---

<sup>7</sup> A few prior works have presented either comparison between Muslims who represent different ethnic groups/national backgrounds see (Abranches 2007, forthcoming, about Muslim women) and e.g. between different groups of Indian origin (Sunni Muslims, Ismaeli Muslims, Hindus) see Bastos and Bastos 2006). Both works focus on young Muslims in Portugal.

eventual socio-political engagement and social mobility, are hardly ever discussed in a normative context, i.e. compared in relation to similarities rather than contrasts with non-Muslim minority and majority groups of same age, gender, class, migratory and/or educational backgrounds.<sup>8</sup> In terms of analysis, this deficiency often leads to a disproportionate “Islamization” of the “object of study” (Muslims), and strengthening of the Islamization of public (and academic) discourses (Tiesler 2006): in short, nearly everything and anything these Muslims do, think, affirm or negate appears as deriving from their Muslim-ness, i.e. as an Islamic particularity, which may in fact not be the case at all. Economic and social aspects, class, gender and educational background, the impact of particular experiences in a specific historic context (e.g. social mobility or social exclusion in a European society) as well as similarities and continuities with non-Muslims or people of similar migratory experience are therefore often overlooked.

While it is valid to ask how young Muslims use their “Muslim-ness” as a “social capital” type resource in making the transition to adulthood, to see such capital as an essentialist property is problematic, since, at least in the case of Portugal, there are these other influences to consider, most notably, what could conceivably be termed their “Portuguese-ness.” This should not come as any surprise to anyone familiar with our research field, since, for instance, young Muslims are socialising with young non-Muslims in everyday life contexts unrelated to Islamic community life: in school, university, professional life, leisure time or socio-political engagement; and as we shall see, neither do their self-perceptions and senses of belonging refer exclusively to ethnic or religious bonds.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Vertovec and Alistair (1998) can be considered an exception to this rule; see also Roy 2000, who compared cultural attitudes of Muslim peer groups in the French Urban peripheries with other local young urban subcultures.

<sup>9</sup> It is also hoped that this article can help address a significant deficit in respect to studying Youth. Despite it is often said that the integration of young Muslims into European society and the prevention of both marginalisation and extremism being a

## Methodology

The original research upon which this article is consisted of an initial quantitative survey on mobility with young people in Lisbon, conducted during November 2005 at 7 different tertiary institutions in the city, alongside a further survey of young Muslims, also conducted in Lisbon, during March 2006. Regarding the initial sample of young people, 45% were male, 55% female and 95% were aged under 25; at the seven Universities covered, a wide range of academic disciplines were sampled, including social sciences, physical sciences, information technology and design. The young Muslim sample was 55% male and 45% female, with 73% aged under 25, from a wider range of educational backgrounds compared to the initial sample. The same questionnaire was administered to both groups. The questions themselves, while diverse in scope, all related to the everyday experiences of young people in Portugal, for instance, family and community attachments, in addition to gathering information on young people's own biographies and future life plans. In total, 241 young people were included in the survey: 200 in the original sample alongside a total of 41 young Muslims.<sup>10</sup>

---

challenge facing all EU countries, little serious research has been conducted to date concerning the contemporary Muslim presence in Portugal (Abranches 2004, Fonseca/Esteves 2002, Keshavee 2000, Malheiros 1996, Vakil 2003a, b, c; von Kemnitz 2002); most existing studies work focus either only on the Portuguese or broader Lusophone colonial and post-colonial contexts, while others take a comparative perspective at the European level into account (Tiesler 2000; 2001; 2002; 2005). Comparisons of young Portuguese Muslims with other young Portuguese people are absent.

<sup>10</sup> These young Muslims participate regularly in activities organised by the Youth Commission of the Central Mosque (Comissão de Jovens da Mesquita Central), hosted in the Islamic Community of Lisbon (CIL, Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa), like dinners, "passios" (dislocations in other cities or regions of Portugal), Bowling, or the annual Rally through Lisbon on the occasion of the beginning of Ramadan. Circa 4-6 events of this nature are organised per year, frequented by around 60-150 young people. Some of them meet more frequently in a discussion forum in the mosque.

For the researchers and the young people surveyed alike, this research experience was extremely positive. For the young Muslims in particular, it was helpful that questions did not actually refer, in the first instance, to the issue of religion; they were in fact pleasantly surprised with the fact that they were not treated as an exoticism but rather as 'merely' young Portuguese people: instead of answering questions explicitly about religion or politics, i.e. about Islam since the Rushdie Affair and other international incidents linked to Islam in public discourse (e.g. 9/11 or the occupation of Iraq), they were able to inform us about their subjective experiences and individual attitudes on everyday life issues.

All of the young people surveyed were asked to provide information about their personal backgrounds, particularly in respect to self-perceived ethnic status and/or nationality. While the young people in the initial sample described themselves predominantly as "Portuguese" (84%), 9% were of African origin, mostly from Cape Verde, with 6% from other European countries; in relation to the national backgrounds of the young Muslims, almost all were born in Portugal, to parents from Mozambique who were also Sunni Muslims of Indian origin. Regarding marital status, both groups of young people were overwhelmingly single: 94% of the original sample and 80% of the young Muslims. In respect to the remaining cases, the original sample included 7 married young people, 2 fiancées, 2 divorcees and 1 cohabiter; for the young Muslims, out of a total of 41, 4 were married, 3 were engaged and 1 was divorced. Very few of these young people had children: 5 in the original sample and 3 amongst the young Muslims.

### **Family and Peer Relationships**

From surveying existing literature on Portuguese youth, and indeed European youth, it is evident that the family is of paramount

importance to everyday life, with peer relationships also being of major significance (see Guerreiro and Abrantes 2004; Pappámikail 2004; Pais et al 2005). The strength or weakness of relationships with family members, most significantly with parents, and friends is of obvious interest when studying future life orientations of young people, considering the fact that these are people with whom Portuguese youth spend much of their time.

According to Iacovou and Berthoud (2001), at the age of 17, the majority of young people in Europe are still living with their parents, while the proportion of home-leavers steadily increases with age. More recent studies on Portuguese and European youth indicate that the overwhelming majority of the young people, including those well beyond the age of 17, are still living in the parental home (see Biggart and Cairns 2004; Pais and Pappámikail 2004); this finding was equally true for the young people surveyed in the present research context, with a majority still living in the parental home: 68% (with a further 4% living in other family arrangements, such as with grandparents) in the initial sample and 80% of the young Muslims. Furthermore, when questioned on this issue, both sets of young people agreed that it was “good to live with their parents,” the young Muslims somewhat more so: 86% (including 26% who strongly agreed with this statement) compared to 68% from the initial sample (wherein 12% agreed strongly).

Regarding peer relationships, the majority of these young people indicated that they would feel “uncomfortable” without their friends: 80% of the initial sample and 74% of the young Muslims. These friendships are also extremely durable. It is also remarkable that the majority of these young people not only have the same friends they had during childhood, slightly less so in the initial sample, 64%, compared to 86% of young Muslims, but they also anticipate having the same friends in the future: 84% in the initial sample and 87% amongst the young Muslims. However, more young people from the

initial sample thought having friends was more important than their job: 67% compared to only 42% of young Muslims. In the initial sample, this trend was more prevalent amongst males, 74% compared to 61% of females, but vice versa in the young Muslim group, with only 38% of males agreeing compared to 47% of females.

## **Study and Work**

A number of indices regarding study and work were included in the questionnaire to explore the significance of both of these areas in the lives of the young people surveyed. Large numbers of young people who "liked to study" (74% for the initial sample and 80% of young Muslims) were present, and overall, more males disliked studying, 34% compared to 17% of all females; largely negative appraisals of the Portuguese education system were also made: only 14% in the initial sample of young people and 28% of young Muslims thought "Portugal has a good education system."

Regarding their future working lives, equally high numbers of young people from both groups thought that it was good to work abroad (88%). There was however a major discrepancy concerning working outside Lisbon: while majorities in both groups would like to work elsewhere in Europe (80% in the original sample and 76% of the young Muslims), only 29% of the young Muslims, in contrast to 57% of the initially sampled young people, wanted to work elsewhere in Portugal; young Muslim males were however more strongly predisposed towards working elsewhere in Europe (95%, including 53% with very strong inclinations to do so) than their female Muslim counterparts (59%, with only 12% strongly inclined), while young Muslim females were more likely to preference working elsewhere in Portugal (38% compared to 23% of males).

Both groups of young people were however in agreement with the statement declaring salaries in Portugal were too low: 81% and 84% respectively; it is interesting to note that amongst the young Muslims, significantly more females than males agreed that salaries were too low, with 100% of young Muslim women in agreement with this position, compared to "only" 83% of the young Muslim men, while for the initial group of young people, the gender difference is less pronounced on this question, with 82% of females agreeing, compared to 80% of males. Both sets of young people also feared unemployment, 74% in both groups, with women in both samples more apprehensive: 84% beside 60% of men in the initial sample and 82% of women compared to 68% of men in the young Muslim group.

### **Leisure and Mobility**

A number of questions were posed regarding these young people's leisure habits, concentrating upon one area of particular relevance to Portuguese youth: holidays; while surveying young people on such an issue may seem somewhat trivial, holidays are central to the cultural lives of Portuguese youth and as we have previously noted, with so many of these young people living with their parents, they are important in terms of providing an arena in which to express personal freedom (see Cairns 2006); the responses to these questions also provide us with vital indices of geographical mobility in the lives of these young people.

Both groups of young people are clearly interested in foreign travel. In the last 12 months, 46% of the young people in the initial sample and 74% of the young Muslims had travelled outside Portugal at least once, while previously, 74% of the initial sample and 70% of the young Muslims had enjoyed foreign travel; gender differences were also observed within both samples, in the initial sample, more males than females had taken trips abroad in the past year, 39%

compared to 28% (there was no significant gender difference regarding the number of foreign sojourns made in previous years), while amongst the young Muslims, this trend was reversed: in the past year, 76% of women had taken trips abroad in the past year compared to only 68% of men, while in previous years, 78% of the Muslim women had been abroad, beside 64% of their male counterparts.

It was also noticeable that between the two groups of young people, destinations did vary somewhat, with the young people of the initial sample preferring nearby European destinations, most notably Spain, while the young Muslims tended to venture further, particularly to the Middle East (United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia), Asia (India and Pakistan) and Africa (Mozambique, principally to visit family); additionally, the young Muslims were the only group to undertake pilgrimages to Mecca (12% having done so at some point in the past, with a further 5% wishing to do so in the future).<sup>11</sup> It should also be noted that a small number of young Muslims, specifically females, had recently married and made visits abroad in regard to making preparations for weddings, principally to England, and subsequently took honeymoons; Tunisia was a particularly popular destination in this latter respect; the former trend also helps account for the higher number of Muslim women taking trips abroad.

Regarding opinions on holidays, all excepting a small minority of these young people felt that it was "good to have holidays" (14% dissented in the initial sample; 8% amongst the young Muslims). The young Muslims also expressed a stronger preference for holidays abroad (78% compared to 54% in the initial sample); 78% of the initially sampled young people also preferred holidays in Portugal, compared to 45% of young Muslims. Both groups however, preferred beach holidays (78% in both samples) and thought themselves to be

---

<sup>11</sup> Although it should be noted that there were no explicit questions on this subject of religious pilgrimages; the subject was raised by the young people themselves.

adventurous in their choice of holiday destinations, 60% of the original young people and 72% of young Muslims, an interesting finding considering the broader travel horizons of the latter young people; on this subject, in both groups, males thought themselves to be more adventurous than females: 76% compared to 64% respectively in the original sample and, likewise, 82% in contrast to 59% in the young Muslim sample.

### **Other Cultural Indices**

A number of other results are worth briefly highlighting, mostly concerning “cultural” indices. A much higher level of religiosity is to be found amongst the young Muslims<sup>12</sup>: a total of 44% attend religious services on a weekly basis, with a significantly higher number of males doing so (65% compared to only 19% of females), compared to only 9% out of the initial sample. The young Muslims also like to socialise more within their own (geographical) communities: 61% doing so, compared to only 42% in the original sample, again, more so for young Muslim males (75%) than females (44%). Higher numbers within the original sample also always vote in elections: 61% compared to 40% of young Muslims.

Other more abstract measures demonstrate these young people’s deep attachment to living Portugal and being Portuguese. Relatively small numbers out of both groups of young people “feel more European than Portuguese:” 23% in the initial sample and 18% of

---

<sup>12</sup> Although this finding clearly suggests that the importance of religion and respective community affiliation is stronger among the young Portuguese Muslims, it appears a rather limited and positivistic trial to qualify attending religious services as representing the ‘religiosity’ and/or religious dedication of an individual. Religiosity can also be lived and expressed beyond institutional spaces and in a very individual and intimate way. The much lower frequency among young Muslim females in this sample does not reveal at all that their ‘level of religiosity’ or the importance of Islam in their lives and religious dedication is lower than in the case of the young Muslims males. Furthermore, we cannot conclude from this finding that all those 91% of young non-Muslims who do not attend religious services on a weekly basis live a completely non-spiritual life or lack any religious convictions.

young Muslims, more males than females for both the initial sample of young people (31% of males compared to 17% of females) and the young Muslims (24% of males and 12% of females). Similarly, few would engage in a relationship if it meant leaving Portugal: 25% out of the original group and 24% amongst the young Muslims. Higher numbers of young people did however feel more individual than part of any collective: 73% in the initial sample (78% male and 69% female) and 67% of the young Muslims (81% of males but only 47% of females). The vast majority in both groups also felt "at home" in Portugal: 88% in the initial sample and 89% of the young Muslims; out of this last total for the young Muslim context, 54% agreed strongly with this position.

### **Derived Scales**

Moving beyond straightforward quantitative indicators, a number of questions were included in the questionnaire from which derived Likert-type attitudinal scales could be constructed on key indicators of firstly, work and study, and, secondly, personal well-being, namely: "belief in the value of work," "work commitment," "fatalism," "self-esteem," "motivation" and "internal locus of control." The questions themselves from which these scales were created covered a wide range of orientations, ranging from consideration of personal factors ("If I can't do a task or a job the first time, I keep trying until I can" or "I avoid trying to learn new things when they look too difficult for me"), societal influences ("Poor people have the system to blame for their poverty") and evaluations of the value of work ("A person can get satisfaction out of life without having a job").

The general picture which emerged can best be described as one of there being extremely high scores in both samples on all measures except "work commitment," with only relatively small fluctuations between the two groups, e.g. greater numbers of young people with

very high levels of “self-esteem” in the young Muslim sample (28% compared to 13% in the initial sample) and amongst females within this group (87% high or extremely high compared to 65% of males) and slightly higher levels of strong “work commitment” in the initial sample (47% compared to 40%); in the young Muslim sample, this latter trait was most evident amongst women, 53% with high or very high levels in contrast to 20% amongst males, although surprisingly, in the light of this finding, none of the young Muslim women demonstrated very high levels of “work commitment,” while 10% of the males did so.

The inclusion of such standardised indices enables comparisons – and contextualisation - to be made in relation to prior studies which have asked the same questions of young people. For example, the Families and Transitions in Europe (FATE) study included the same indicators, administered to similarly-sourced groups of young people across nine different European contexts, including Portugal. Despite differences in sample construction, with the young people and young Muslims from the present study being predominantly middle class while the FATE sample was inclusive of a broader range of young people, in comparing mean scores, differences were relatively slight on all measures (see Biggart et al 2003).

In further interpreting these results, we need to bear in mind what we have already established about these young people: that most of them live at home with their parents, they appear to enjoy largely constructive relationships with family and peers and, indeed, that they like to travel a lot. Such a lifestyle seems conducive to feelings of well-being, but we should however add two major caveats to this assessment: firstly, the majority of these young people were from comfortable, relatively affluent backgrounds and live in one of the most metropolitan parts of Portugal; other, less socio-economic fortunate or geographically marginal young people may not enjoy such conditions; secondly, the present living condition of these young

people, i.e. with parents, is not sustainable indefinitely, and many of them have also yet to be exposed to the vagaries of the labour market; perhaps when they do move-out into independent homes or attempt to find jobs, their optimism will be tempered.

### **Future Life Orientations**

An area of special interest to the present study concerns future life orientations, particularly regarding geographical mobility. From the responses of the young people surveyed in this research, we have gained some idea in respect to geographical mobility in residential status. The question was asked whether or not these young people had spent all their lives in Lisbon: in different areas or within the same district. In respect to residence within the same district ("bairro"), out of the initial sample, only 40% had never moved, 45% of the young Muslims likewise, while 63% of the initial sample had always lived in Lisbon, compared to 86% of the young Muslims; in the latter sample, female young Muslims had been slightly more mobile in terms of their past place of residence: 62% compared to 50% of males regarding residence in the same district, with 75% always living within Lisbon compared to 95% of males also doing so. Regarding future place of residence, the young Muslims displayed a greater predisposition towards remaining in their present country of residence, with an overwhelming majority always wanting to live in Portugal (81%) compared to 68% in the initial sample.

In respect to planning for the future, both groups of young people demonstrated that both family and friends play an important role: in respect to the former, 64% of the initial sample and 76% of the young Muslims stated their families help them plan their future; in both samples, women more frequently than men involved their families in their future life planning: 71% in the original sample compared to 55% of males and 88% of young Muslim females in

contrast to 67% of young Muslim males. Additionally 65% and 49% of friends also played such a role in the two respective groups, again with gender differences, albeit less pronounced in the initial sample (67% of females being helped by friends but only 61% of males) but with the trend inverted towards males in the group of young Muslims: 62% of males compared to 31% of young females. While similarly high numbers of males and females in both samples expressed a desire to have their own family, 91% and 95%, an interesting divergence was observed in respect to having a home of one's own in which to do so: only 23% for the original sample, compared to 67% of the young Muslims. More young Muslims also noted that their personal life plans were different to those of their friends: 84% compared to 68% in the initial sample.

As was the case in evaluating these young people's feelings regarding work and study and of personal well-being, we need to remind ourselves that still living at home may have an overwhelming influence, this time on future life orientations, and that again it is possible that the influence of family may recede when these young people eventually become residentially independent. Likewise, when these young people begin or move further within their careers, they may learn that being sedentary in their choice of place to live is not practical in the future.

## **Conclusions**

Upon juxtaposing the two samples, the general picture is predominantly one of continuity between both groups aside from differences which might be expected, such as the higher rates of religiosity (here: higher rates in the attendance of religious services) amongst the young Muslims, to such an extent that it was often difficult to distinguish between samples. In respect to their home-lives, across the board, these young people still typically live with

their families, and appear to enjoy doing so. Both groups of young people also enjoy strong peer relationships, with an extremely high proportion having the same friends now as they did in childhood and expecting to have the same friends in the future. Again, across samples, practically all these young people are strongly predisposed towards studying. They are also in agreement in terms of their negative appraisals of structural conditions in Portugal, particularly in relation to the labour market; this last assessment is particularly strong amongst young Muslim females, 100% of whom feel that salaries are too low in Portugal. There was however some difference in respect to where these young people wished to work in the future, with the young Muslims more attached to Lisbon than their counterparts in the initial sample. Yet the young Muslims were also more predisposed towards working elsewhere in Europe in the future than their counterparts in the initial sample.

Further difference was observed in the area of travel. While both groups of young people clearly enjoyed foreign travel, the destinations to which they ventured differed somewhat, with the young Muslims preferring to travel to further, particularly to the Middle East. This finding was in line with the fact that a significantly higher level of religiosity and affiliation to their religious community was demonstrated by the group of young Muslims chosen here, males in particular<sup>13</sup>; the young Muslim's also preferred to socialise within the bounds of their own geographical community. In respect to more abstract indices, few young people in either group felt more "European" than Portuguese and also more individual than part of any collective identity. Large numbers of young people in both groups

---

<sup>13</sup> This might not be a surprise as we have chosen a group of young Muslims which is organised inside an Islamic community, aiming to compare young people who explicitly highlight their Muslim-ness as an important part of their lives with other young Portuguese people. To qualify a particular religious dedication of these young Muslims, one should also compare them with other young people who belong to a religious (youth) association/community.

however felt at home in Portugal, with little difference between groups.

## References

- Abranches, M. (2004) 'Pertencas Fechadas em Espaços Abertos. Estratégias de (re)Construção Identitária de Mulheres Muçulmanas em Portugal, Dissertação de Mestrado,' ISCTE, Lisboa.
- Abranches, M. (2007) 'Muslim Women in Portugal: Strategies of identity re(construction)' *LUSOTOPIE*, Vol. XIV (1), "Islam en lusophonie", édité par Nina Clara Tiesler (avec l'aide précieuse de Lorenzo Macagno et Eric Morier-Genoud), forthcoming May 2007.
- Bastos, S. P. & Bastos, J. G. P. (eds.) (2006) *Filhos Diferentes de Deuses Diferentes. Manejos da Religião em Processos de Inserção Social Diferenciada: Uma abordagem estrutural dinâmica*, Lisboa: Observatório da Imigração, 17 (Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Minorias Étnicas (ACIME)).
- Bendit, R., Gaiser, W. & Marbach, J. (1999) *Youth and Housing in Germany and the European Union. Data Trends on Housing: Biographical, Social and Political Aspects*, Leske and Budrich, Opladen.
- Biggart, A., Bendit, R., Cairns, D., Hein, K. & Mørch, S. (2004) *Families and Transitions in Europe: State of the Art Report*, European Commission, Brussels.
- Biggart, A., Cairns, D., Hein, K., Bendit, R., Pais, J. M. and Pappámikail, L. (2003) *Families and Transitions in Europe: Workpackage 2 Report*, University of Ulster, Coleraine.
- Biggart, A. & Cairns, D. (2004) *Families and Transitions in Europe: Comparative Report*, University of Ulster, Coleraine.
- Brannen, J., Lewis, S., Nilsen, A. & Smithson, J. (eds) (2002) *Young Europeans, Work and Family. Futures in Transition*, Routledge, London.
- Cairns, D. (2006) *Famílias, Futuros e Férias: uma investigação provisória sobre juventude e mobilidade em Lisboa*, Conference Paper, Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Lisboa.
- Côté, J. (2000) *Arrested Adulthood. The Changing Nature of Maturity and Identity*, New York University Press, New York.
- Eurostat (2005) *Europe in Figures. Eurostat Yearbook 2005*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
- Fonseca, M. L. & Esteves, A. (2002) 'Migration and new religion townscapes in Lisbon,' in *Immigration and Place in Mediterranean Metropolis*, eds M. L. Fonseca et al Luso-American Foundation, Lisboa, pp. 255-289.
- Furlong, A. & Cartmel, F. (1997) *Young People and Social Change*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

- Guerreiro, M. & Abrantes, P. (2004). 'Moving into adulthood in a southern European country: transitions in Portugal,' *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 3 No. 3, pp. 191-209.
- IARD (2001) *Study on the State of Young People and Youth Policy in Europe. Final Reports. Vol. 1: Executive Summary and Comparative Reports*. IARD: Milano.
- Iacovou, M. & Berthoud, R. (2001) *Young People's Lives: a Map of Europe*, University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research, Colchester.
- Jones, Gill & Wallace, Claire (1992) *Youth Family and Citizenship*, Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Keshavjee, Faranaz (2000) 'A Índia em Portugal: concepções culturais da mulher islâmica' in *Encontro Sobre Portugal e a Índia*, Fundação Oriente, Lisboa, pp.137-144
- Mapril, José (2005), "Bangladesh: Islão e bengalidade entre os bangladeshianos em Lisboa", in *Análise Social*, vol. XXXIX (173), pp. 851-873.
- Malheiros, J. M. (1996) *Imigrantes na Região de Lisboa*, Lisboa: Edições Colibri
- Mørch, S. (1998) "What is Youth?" in Council of Europe (ed.) *European Youth Trends 1998*. Report by the Youth Research Correspondents. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Pais, J. M. (1995) *Young People and New Social Conditions: Trajectories, Prospects and Crossroads*. Unpublished conference paper. Young Adults in Europe International Conference at Tutzing.
- Pais, J. M. (1998) *Economy and Education: Maladjustments and Paradoxes (the Portuguese Situation)*. Lisboa: Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa.
- Pais, J. M. (2003) "The Multiple Faces of the Future in the Labryinth of Life" in *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2.
- Pais, J, M. & Pappámikail, L. (2004) *Families and Transitions in Europe WP 3 and 4: Portugal*. Lisboa: Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa.
- Pais, J, M., Cairns, D. & Pappámikail, L. (2004) "Young Europeans: A Portrait of Diversity." In *Tempo Social*, Vol. 17, No. 2.
- Pais, J, M. & Pappámikail, L. (2004) *Families and Transitions in Europe Workpackages 3 and 4 Report: Portugal*. Lisboa: Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa.
- Pappámikail, L. (2004) "Intergenerational relationships, family support and the transition of young people to adult life in Portugal." In *Sociologia: Problemas e Práticas*, 47.
- Roberts, K. (1995) *Youth Unemployment in Modern Britain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Thomson, R. & Taylor, R. (2005) 'Between cosmopolitanism and the locals: Mobility as a resource in the transition to adulthood,?' *Young*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 327-342.

- Tiesler, N. C. (2000) "Muçulmanos na Margem: A Nova Presença Islâmica em Portugal", in: *Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas*, No. 34, (Decembro 2000), pp. 117-144.
- Tiesler, N. C. (2001) "No Bad News From the European Margin: The New Islamic Presence in Portugal", in: *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (January 2001), pp. 71-91
- Tiesler, N. C. (2002) "National Database on Portugal", in: Brigitte Maréchal (coord.): *L'Islam et les musulmans dans l'Europe élargie: radioscopie/ A Guidebook on Islam and Muslims in the Wide Contemporary Europe*, Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia Bruylant, pp. 123-129
- Tiesler, N. C. (2005) "Novidades do Terreno: Muçulmanos na Europa e o caso Português", in *Análise Social*, vol. XXXIX (173), Inverno de 2005, 827-849
- Tiesler, N. C. (2006) *Muslims in Europe. Religion und Identitätspolitik unter veränderten gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen*, Münster, Hamburg, Berlin, Wien, London: Lit-Verlag.
- Vakil, A. (2003) "Muslims in Portugal: History, Historiography, Citizenship", *Euroclio Bulletin 18: Looking Outwards, Looking Inwards*, pp.9-13.
- Vakil, A. (2003b) "From the Reconquista to Portugal Islâmico: Islamic Heritage in the shifting discourses of Portuguese historiography and national identity", *Arqueologia Medieval* 8 (2003), pp.5-16.
- Vakil, A. (2003c) "Questões inacabadas: Colonialismo, Islão e Portugalidade, in: Margarida Calafate Ribeiro e Ana Paula Ferreira (coords.): *Fantasmas e Fantasias Coloniais no Imaginário Português Contemporâneo*, Porto: Campo das Letras.
- Vakil, A. (2004) "Comunidade Islâmica em Portugal", *Verbete para o Dicionário Temático da Lusofonia* (Dir.) Fernando Cristovão, Lisboa: Associação de Cultura Lusófona-Instituto Camões.
- Von Kemnitz, E-M. (2002) "Muslims as Seen by the Portuguese Press 1974-1999: Changes in the Perception of Islam", in: W.A.R. Shadid & Van Koningsveld (eds.): *Religious Freedom and the Neutrality of the State: The Position of Islam in the European Union*, Leuven, pp. 7-26.
- Walther, A., Stauber, B., Bolay, E., du Bois-Reymond, Mørch, S. Pais, J. M. & Schröer, A. (1999) "Young Adults in Europe – New Trajectories between Youth and Adulthood" in *CYRCE* (ed.) *Intercultural Reconstruction. European Yearbook for Youth Policy and Research*, Volume 2. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter.