

MAPISLAM: A Spatial Dataset of Muslim Institutions in Urban France

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The purported spatial segregation of Muslim populations in Western Europe constitutes a long-standing policy and scholarly concern, yet little spatial data exists for purposes of empirical study. The MAPISLAM dataset is a research effort aimed at bridging this gap for the French empirical context. MAPISLAM relies on publicly available online repositories of addresses for places of interest destined to the Muslim communities of France's major cities. This report presents the dataset, how it was built, and how it is structured for interested users. The MAPISLAM dataset is stored in the [GESIS data archive](#) and can be freely accessed with a registered account.

Motivation: Bridging a data gap

The primary motivation for MAPISLAM is the creation of a dataset allowing interested researchers to study the spatial dynamics of Muslim communities in France. While there exists high levels of policy and scholarly interests in this question - not least because the purported segregation of Muslim populations is linked to important concerns around concentrated poverty, alienation, "parallel societies" and risks of homegrown terrorism - there exists to date no systematic spatial data. The 2008-2009 *Trajectoires et Origines* (hereafter TeO) survey provided a large, representative sample of immigrant minorities living in France (Beauchemin, Hamel and Simon 2016) and filled an important void, but did not contain variables on geographic location for obvious anonymity and ethical reasons. The same situation obtained for other surveys containing exploitable samples of self-identified Muslim respondents, such as the EURISLAM survey (Tillie et al. 2013) and the European Social Survey.

The MAPISLAM dataset aims at bridging the gap by compiling existing online sources containing physical coordinates for places of interest to the Muslim communities in France. The intuition behind MAPISLAM is that the location of institutions used by Muslim individuals and communities in the course of everyday life such as *halal* butchers¹, mosques and prayer rooms, religious bookstores and

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¹In Islam, what is *halal* is what is allowed by *shariah*, the Islamic law. By contrast, anything expressly forbidden is *haram*. In the case of meat, *halal* meat obtained only after a specific slaughtering ritual involving involving

religious schools can serve as reasonable proxy for the residential location of Muslim population themselves.

This approach is bound to be imprecise, of course: not all self-identify Muslims regularly go to the mosque or systematically eat *halal* food, for example. Yet, it is highly unlikely for mosque-going Muslims to be different in many other aspects determining residential location as to be living in consistently different neighborhoods compared to their non mosque-going coreligionists. More generally, there is evidence that religiosity does not quantitatively shifts over the life course of the first generation or among the second generation (Drouhot and Nee 2019, Drouhot 2017), so that these religious institutions likely serve Muslim immigrants as well as their children, to whom they transmit their religion at very high rates. Halal eating, in particular, is widely adhered to across generations: in the TeO data, 83% of first-generation Muslims and 87% of second-generation report they "always" follow the dietary constraints imposed by their religion, of which eating *halal* food is a key aspect. Less is known about bookstores and schools, but the number of Islamic schools is rapidly increasing due to high demand among Muslim parents (Chambraud 2015).

Data sources and data gathering process

In the TeO survey, the vast majority of Muslim respondents tend to live in large cities and 65% reside in just three regions (*Ile-de-France*, *Rhone-Alpes* and *Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur*). These three regions each contain a major French city: Paris, Lyon and Marseille respectively. It can thus be inferred that around two thirds of Muslims living in France live in these three cities. The MAPISLAM dataset thus covers these three cities and their respective metropolitan areas.

The MAPISLAM data comes from several online community portals maintained by, and catering to Muslims living in France: *pageshalal.fr*, *trouvetamosquee.fr*, *halal-avs.fr*, and *lemuslim.com*². Each contains a database of user-reported addresses for Muslim services or institutions of interest - namely mosques or prayer rooms, butchers, bookstores and schools³. All relevant addresses were gathered on each site, and duplicates were later deleted as there was considerable overlap across online platforms. Data collection and cleaning took place in 2015-2016.

The Parisian data was used as a test for data quality. Each address was verified with Google Street View or a telephone call to make sure it existed and matched the online data. This led to verification rates of 87% of *halal* butcher shops, 74% of religious bookstores, 41.2% of mosques and prayer rooms⁴, and 78.3% of religious schools. Overall, online repositories of Muslim institutions maintained and catered to the Muslim communities thus appear reliable. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the number of Muslim institutions by type and metropolitan area.

letting the animal bleed to death while being turned towards Mecca.

²The latter appears to be offline as of August 2019.

³Note that "schools" also include theological and language institute dispensing religious courses, as well as primary and secondary schools.

⁴The lower verification rate for mosques and prayer rooms stems from their precarious legal status, as many of them are unauthorized and located in inconspicuous buildings or unreachable by phone. In addition, many are frequently shut down by the authorities. It is possible that the MAPISLAM datasets overestimates the number of mosques and prayer rooms in urban France. However, it is also possible they are under-counted, as many of them may be unlisted in online sources and only known through word-of-mouth.

Table 1: Number of Muslim institutions by type and metropolitan area in the MAPISLAM dataset

	Paris	Lyon	Marseille	Total
<i>Halal</i> butchers	510	90	77	677
Mosques and prayer rooms	716	99	109	924
Muslim bookstores	68	5	4	77
Muslim schools and learning institutions	45	5	3	53
Total	1339	199	193	1731

Structure of the MAPISLAM dataset

The MAPISLAM dataset is organized as such:

1. CSV files of addresses, by metropolitan area and type of institution.
2. Shapefiles (.shp) with geocoded data points, by metropolitan area.
3. Basemaps for data projection.

In the case of Paris, addresses are divided between inner/outer Paris, except for the school file which contains all religious schools in the metropolitan area. In the Lyon and Marseille area, the number suffix for each file is an indication for the geographic unit at which the data was gathered (namely *département* 69 and 13).

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