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Abstract  Is multiculturalism still a suitable policy framework for managing diversity in the 21st Century? Critics in Europe and Australia have challenged multiculturalism for its perceived failure to foster social cohesion, especially in relation to the Muslim population. Alternatives to multiculturalism tend towards the assimilationist end of social policy spectrum. The underlying assumption for the shift towards assimilation is that Islam as a social entity does not belong to the secular societies of the West and as a result needs to be kept out of the social domain. This paper presents a critical assessment on the forces that push for assimilation, in a comparative framework, and explores the potential for this policy in managing Islam, promoting civic citizenship and upholding social cohesion.