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# France

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Publié le Wednesday 28 November 2007

Modifié le Friday 11 July 2008

Fichier PDF créé le Friday 11 July 2008

Demographics

There are approximately 3.5-5 million Muslims in France, representing 6.0-8.5 percent of the total population (58.5 million). At least 2 million Muslims have French citizenship.

French law forbids distinguishing citizens or residents according to their faith. As a consequence, there is no official statistical data on number of Muslims in France. There are several private studies conducted by academics (see Couvreur, 1998; Boyer, 1998; Tribalat, 1996). These studies from the mid- to late-1990s provide the following numbers for the ethnic breakdown of the Muslim population in France:

| Muslim Population Group | Couvreur (1998) | Boyer (1998) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Total / French Citizens | Total | |
| Algerian origin | 1,500,000 / 900,000 | 1,500,000 | |
| Moroccan origin | 1,000,000 / 400,000 | 1,000,000 | |
| Tunisian origin | 350,000 / 150,000 | 350,000 | |
| Middle East and Turkey | 350,000 / 150,000 | — | |
| Arab from Middle East (ME) | — / — | 100,000 | |
| Non-Arab from ME (incl. Turkey) | — / — | 315,000 | |
| Sub-Saharan African | 250,000 / — | 250,000 | |
| Harkis [1] and their Children | — / — | 450,000 | |
| Converts to Islam | —/ — | 40,000 | |
| TOTAL | 3,500,000 | 3,590,000 | |

Muslims are settled throughout the country, but there are concentrated communities in the Ile-de-France (35 percent), Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (20 percent), Rhône-Alpes (15 percent), and the Nord-Pas-de-Calais (ten percent).

Labor Market

Not only are French Muslims more likely to be unemployed than the rest of the population, they also encounter more problems finding long-term and full-time jobs (VIprey, 2002; Borgogno et al., 2004; qtd. in OSI 39). According to the 2005 data from the National Insitute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), unemployment among people of French origin is 9.2% while for those of foreign backgrounds, the rate is 14%. These statistics have been adjusted for educational qualifications. Additionally, in comparison to a 5% overall employment rate for people of French origin, 26.5% of university graduates with North African backgrounds are unemployed. [2] According to a survey conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project in 2006, [3] unemployment is the biggest concern of European Muslims. A majority of Muslims in France, in the mid-50% range, say they are very concerned about joblessness. Between a quarter and third of the remaining sample (those who did not express being "very concerned" about unemployment) expressed at least some concern on this issue.

Muslims are also underrepresented in executive positions, but twice as likely (40%) to work in a factory than the rest of the French workforce (21%) (Lopez and Thomas, 2006; qtd. in OSI 39).


This report "Les Immigres en France" provides helpful employment statistics by national origin and gender.

The profile of the Muslim worker has evolved considerably over the past couple decades. The proportion of female immigrant workers has increased, although they are concentrated in precarious and part-time positions (Bodeldieu and Borrel, 2001). The employment rate among Muslim women is impacted by their ethnic group. The employment rate among Turkish immigrant women is lower than among Algerian and Moroccan women. [4]

Lower education attainment levels of immigrants (described in more detail in "Education" section below) plays a role in immigrants experience in the labor market, but research suggests that inequities in the labor market are caused by other factors beyond lower education attainment levels of the first- and second-generation work force. Lopez and Thomas (2006) report that immigrant youth are often unsatisfied with their professional situation and feel they are in positions that to not recognize and/or take advantage of the skills the have to offer (293-305). Irène Fournier and Roxane Silberman show that the greater risk of unemployment among second-generation youth with backgrounds from outside the EU cannot be accounted for by their education levels. [5]

Education

There is no official census data on educational attainment and religion, but there has been substantial research conducted on education and ethnicity. INSEE collects information on attainment levels for immigrants according to country of origin:

Population Census 1999

| Country of Origin | No elementary school ed | HS or professional deg (CAP, BEP) | GCE | University | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Algeria | 45 | 32 | 8 | 15 | |
| Morocco | 53 | 22 | 9 | 16 | |
| Tunisia | 48 | 28 | 9 | 15 | |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 34 | 24 | 15 | 27 | |
| Totals | | | | | |
| Immigrant Population | 41 | 27 | 11 | 21 | |
| Non-Immigrant Population | 21 | 42 | 14 | 23 | |
| National Population | 22 | 41 | 14 | 23 | |
| | (Source: INSEE [6]) | | | | |

A 1995 study by DEP found that among children born to an immigrant family, 65.2% were not help back in elementary school, while the corresponding figure for children of foreign origin is 81.5%. In French and Mathmatics examinations, children from French families obtain better grades than those from immigrant families. In immigrant families, girls tend to test slightly higher than boys in these examinations.

The OECD collects data on education from various statistical agencies within the country, the majority of which comes from census data from the year 2000. The OECD classifies educational achievement using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): ISCED 0/1/2: Less than upper secondary; ISCED 3/4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary; ISCED 5A: "Academic" tertiary; ISCED 5B: "Vocational" tertiary; ISCED 6: Advanced research programs. 0-2 are considered low, 3-4 as medium, and 5 and above are considered high. This data is not reported by religion, but does have country of origin as reported by the respondent. It is thus possible to construct an approximate picture of the educational achievement of the population in the country with ancestry from predominately Muslim countries. One significant problem is that some countries, such as India and Nigeria, have large Muslim populations but the immigrant population cannot be readily classified as predominately Muslim or non-Muslim. As such, the educational data is split by predominately Muslim origin, predominately non-Muslim origin, and a separate category for those whom classification would not seem justified. Proportions are for all reported data, individuals with no reported ancestry or

education are excluded.

| | High | Medium | Low |
|---|---|---|---|
| Muslim | 16% | 28% | 56% |
| Non-Muslim | 17% | 37% | 46% |
| Indeterminate | 28% | 33% | 39% |

State and Church

France secularism is articulated in the form of laïcité. Laïcité was established under the Constitution in 1946 and reasserted in the 1958 Constitution. As is the case with most other secular systems, French laïcité posits a separation between church and state. Laïcité as it has come to be known was sculpted by a December 9, 1905 law. The first article of the 1905 law "guarantees the free exercise of religious worship" while Article 2 describes a French republic that "does not recognize, pay, or subsidize any [form of] worship." The tension between these two measures makes the French model distinct. When interpreted rigidly, laïcité also poses a barrier to a full embrace of multiculturalism as cultural, religious, and ethnic particularities are subordinate to the concept of equality for all individuals.

Exemptions to the strongly worded differentiation between religion and the state have been institutionalized over the past century. Most notably, the French state now subsidizes private religious schools, provides salaries for religious personnel in secular institutions such as prisons and the army, finances chaplains in public schools, recognizes religious holidays, and provides tax exemptions to faith organizations. In some French the separation is not enforced at all.

Islam has always been an exceptional case under French laïcité. Algeria was exempt from the 1905 law. The clause which declared this exemption created precedent for what would become a state-endorsed "Muslim exception to laïcité" (Frégosi 2001) that has endured decolonialization and reinforces the exceptionalism of Islam in French. This exceptionalism in turn complicates the project of integration.

The church and state dynamic in France was shaped significantly by a dominant Catholic church. Denominations could negotiate with the state by providing a single "privileged interlocutor"; this system of negotiation reflects a "denominational definition of religion" (Hervieu-Léger 1999: 213). Moreover, the concept of a single interlocutor to negotiate on behalf of each denomination is appropriate for hierarchical denominations such as Catholicism. Confronted with "de-regularized practices," French authorities have been ill-equipped to manage problems of public order triggered by religion. (Caerio, 2006)

Negotiations between the state and Islam have encouraged the formation of a representative body for Islam. The push for the creation of representative bodies for Islam is part of a general trend across Europe (Fetzer & Soper, 2004). Religious institutions must adapt to be effective counterparts to the state. In particular, this requires that religious communities create ecclesiastical structures to nominate leadership who have popular legitimacy and the savvy political skill necessary for effective advocacy.

Islam has been at a unique disadvantage because the Muslim community lacks cohesion and institutional mechanisms for developing consensus and organizing advocacy against the state. Since the 1980s, this has brought considerable critique to the French model of integration and has led to a widespread impression of a "Muslim problem." In 2003, the Conseil français du culte musulman (CFCM) was formed under the encouragement of the state with the hopes that a centralized representational body for the Muslim community would help remedy its long-term underrepresentation (Caeiro 2006).

In October 2005, Nicolas Sarkozy's advocacy of state funding for mosques caused controversy. As Minister of the Interior, he convened a committee to examine whether the shortage of mosques in France was allowing extremists to gain a foothold among France's Muslims. Sarkozy advocated for a reviewing of the 1905 secularity law that outlaws state funding of places of worship. Sarkozy's position placed him at odds with both President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, who defended the 1905 secularity law as a pillar of the French republican system. [7]

In spite of overwhelming resistance to Sarkozy's position, in June of that same year, the "Foundation for Islam" was established to supervise the financing of Islam in France. The foundation was government-backed and its funds will be held in a state-owned bank to ensure maximum transparency. [8] The financing will support the building of mosques and the training of imams. It has been championed by current Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin.

Muslims in Legislatures and Other Political Involvement

There are no Muslim members of the national legislature, but there are now several French representatives to the European Parliament from Muslim backgrounds.

The first Muslim cabinet member in French history was Equal Opportunities Minister Azouz Begag. He was appointed by Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin to this newly created-post in June 2005. [9] President Sarkozy (elected May 6, 2007) has brought three individuals of Muslim background into his cabinet. On June 10, 2007 he appointed Algerian-Moroccan Rachida Dati to the position of Justice Minister. Dati was Sarkozy's former advisor served as his spokeswoman when he was a presidential candidate. She is the daughter of an Algerian mother and Moroccan father. President Sarkozy, one week later (June 19, 2007), announced that Senegalese Muslim Rama Yade would be in charge of Human Rights under Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner. He also appointed Fadela Amar, who comes from an Algerian background, to Secretary of State for Urban Policies. Amara is a Muslim activist for women [10] and served as President of an organization "Ni Putes, Ni Soumises" ("Neither Slut nor Submissive"). On August 1, 2007, she launched "Pour ma ville", ("For my town"), a French-language blog that documents her professional activism.

Though no Muslim candidates were elected to national Parliament in the June 10 and June 17, 2007 elections, this election cycle saw a dramatic increase in the number of candidates from Muslim backgrounds compared to the last national Parliamentary election of June 9 and 16, 2002. Of approximately 7,500 candidates in each election, [11] under twelve candidates in 2002 came from minority backgrounds, [12] compared to just under 250 in the 2007 election. In 2002, no minority candidates made it to the second round of voting, whereas eight minority candidates made the second round in 2007. Several Muslim candidates in 2007 received national media coverage, including former Equal Opportunities Minister Azouz Begag and Negat Belgassem, former spokeswoman for defeated Socialist presidential candidate Segolene Royal. Independent Malika Ahmed and Hassan Abdel-Salam of the Democratic Movement were also Muslim candidates. French elections consist of two rounds; all four Muslim candidates were disqualified following the first round for not securing enough votes. [13]

Muslim Organizations

There are approximately 1,500 Muslim organizations in France, most of which are mosques. These bodies tend to be local groups affiliated to national federations or religious institutions (EP 11). Public organizations have been one of the most controversial and complex features of French Islam because

there is a lack of consensus in the Muslim community, and also because in the past, the French government has tended to pursue negotiations with multiple representatives of the Muslim community. [14] The Conseil français du culte musulman (CFCM) was formed in 2003 and is now the main interlocutor to the state (see below for more detail on the CFCM).

Muslim organizations first became active during strikes organized by Muslim laborers in the 1970s. [15] A 1981 law that gave foreign nationals the right to organized created a legal framework, inadvertently, for religious organizations. The 1980s saw the creation of many such organizations, two of which are still major actors today: the Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (Union of the Islamic Organisations of France, UOIF) and the Fédération Nationale des Musulmans de France (the National Union of the Muslims of France, FNMF).

Established in 1983, the UOIF is the French branch of the Union of the Islamic Organisations in Europe. They are related to the Muslim Brotherhood and receive funding from the Gulf States. They represent more than 200 local organizations [16] and have had great success in recruiting the younger generation of French Muslims. [17] The UOIF is an affiliate of the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe and helps run several satellite and affiliated locations across France including an Institute in Saint Denis in the Bourget district, where the annual UIOF conference is held. The UOIF is also affiliated with an FIOE school for Imams called the European Institute of Human Sciences at Château-Chinon in Saint-Léger-de-Fougeret (Nièvre region). [18]

The other large Muslim organization in France, the FNMF (est. 1985) has had considerably less success overcoming the generational divide between French Muslims. [19] It was established in 1985 by a group that broke off from the Paris Mosque and other representatives from the Muslim community. It is currently composed of a predominantly Moroccan constituency. Until 1993, the FNMF received funding from Saudi Arabia; it now is funded primarily by member contributions. [20]

The oldest Islamic organization is the Muslim Institute of the Mosque of Paris, dating back to 1926. Most members of the mosque are from surrounding Algerian community. [21]

The French Turkish community also has some representation in the form of the Tendance nationale-Union Islamique. It was founded in 1981 and is connected to the Milli Görus group, an Islamic organization founded by Turkish immigrants. [22]

Most of these older organizations are divided along ethnic lines and have been active in campaigning against racism and for equality, which distinguishes them from the newer associations of young Muslim groups that have been more successful at transcending national and ethnic divides and concern themselves with facilitating religious practice. Many of these newer youth organizations tend to be guided by the principle of dual allegiance to Islam and the French nation. These organizations include the Union of Muslim Youth (UJM), founded in Lyon in December 1987 and the Young Muslims of France (JMF). JMF was founded in July 1993 with the support of the UOIF. Their slogan is: "French people, yes; Muslim also." [23]

The Tabligh - created in India in 1927 - is also a major actor within the Muslim community. The association "Faith and Practice," which belongs to this movement, is especially active in providing assistance and services to the residents of the so-called disadvantaged districts. There are a number of smaller student organizations such as the Association des Etudiants Islamiques en France (AEIF), Etudiant Musulmans de France (EMF).

The most prominent Islamic organization in France now is also the newest. This is the Conseil français

de culte musulman, officially created on May 28, 2003 [24] at the prompting of the Ministry of the Interior in order to establish a single body representing all groups. It was first conceptualized by Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement in 2000. Its formation was concluded by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2003 and it is composed of a national council and regional structures (OSI 66). The creation of this body was encouraged by the state in order to bring Islamic practices into the open, thereby affording more input from the French government (Cesari, 2004). The CFCM has drawn criticisms about state interference and complaints that the organization does not adequate represent the diverse makeup of French Muslims. The favored candidate of the French government, Dalil Boubakeur (Leader of the Mosque of Paris), was elected CFCM president in 2003. Though Boubakeur has received substantial criticism for not representing the broader community of France and for being too agreeable to the state, he was reelected on June 19, 2005 without difficulty.

Seats on the council are apportioned according to the physical square footage of each mosque, a system that benefits groups with substantial financial resources, especially those that receive funding from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. When first formed in 2003, the FNMF won 16 seats, the UOIF won 14 seats, and the Paris Mosque won 6 seats out of 41 total. Two seats were given to the Coordinating Committee of Turkish French Muslims and the remaining three to independent groups. In the 2005 elections (June 19), the UOIF lost four seats to the FNMF. [25]

The CFCM has showcased its leadership in prominent controversies concerning Muslims in France since its conception in 2003, including the headscarf ban, the November 2005 Paris riots, and the cartoon controversy of early 2006. First, the CFCM's decision not to contest the 2004 headscarf ban is cited as one reason for its relatively seamless-execution. [26] In response to comments by Bernard Stasi, the man who headed the commission into the application of French laicity, that "Those who are against the law are against the integration of Muslims," CFCM chairman had a more subtle interpretation. Arguing that Stasi could have made his point more subtly, CFCM chairman Dalil Boubakeur was willing to concede that the ban might be in the best interests of the common good. "We believe Muslims must embrace a modern form of Islam in the name of the republic," Boubakeur said. "However, we want more talks with the government, not statements."

The second event of CFCM prominence came during the November 2004 riots in Paris. The CFCM and the UOIF had dramatically different approaches to handling the crisis. The UOIF issued a fatwa condemning the violence and criticized the CFCM for not intervening, while the CFCM argued the UOIF had no authority to issue a fatwa and defended its reserve as an attempt to prevent the Islamization of the conflict. [27]

The CFCM was also active during the February 2006 French response to the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoon controversy (For more information, see the "Media Coverage and the Jyllands-Posten Cartoon Controversy" in the Denmark Country Profile). Leadership of the CFCM was extremely critical of *Le Soir*'s publication of the twelve caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad first made notorious by the Danish daily Jyllands-Posten. The CFCM threatened to sue *Le Soir*, but decided against litigation after *Le Soir* owner Raymond Lakah fired Jacques Lefranc, the daily's president and editor. In its condemnation of the publication, CFCM chairman Dalil Boubakeur rejected the idea that Muslim objection to the publication was a sign of radicalism. "We attach enormous importance to this image," he said, "and we will not allow it to be distorted. I myself oppose the extremist forms of Islam; we reject this parallel." [28]

On June 18, 2006, the Rally of Muslims in France (RMF) was formed with the goal of providing a complementary approach to the CFCM. Citing the CFCM's debilitating infighting and more conservative nature, the RMF said it hoped more fully represent France's five million Muslims and to

"contribute to the emergence of moderate Islam." Taoufiq Sebti, president of Paris-based Muslim group, serves as the group's leader. [29]

Islamic Education

Equal access to free public education is guaranteed for all, and all children (including foreigners) of school age are under an obligation to attend school.

The sphere of education is framed and regulated by the principle of laïcité and by the 1989 Law on Orientation in Education, which affirm the individual right to freedom of conscience. In practice, these two principles have come into conflict, particularly with regard to students belonging to religious minorities, including Muslims. It is a central objective and responsibility of French public schools to train students in Republican values including laïcité, and to ensure both equal treatment of individual pupils and respect for pluralism. As such, local officials have the competence to regulate the public expression of religious belonging in schools. The conflict over the banning of the hijab illustrates the tension between public space and private choices; the difficulties inherent in balancing the requirements of laïcité against the needs of Muslim students.

In primary schools, no religion course can be organised, whereas in secondary schools religion can be taught by chaplains (but not during the school timetable). However, as of 2004, no Islamic chaplaincy operated in any public secondary schools. [30]

Officially, private schools cannot benefit from public financial support of more than one tenth of their annual expenses. For many years, private schools were sponsored exclusively by private sponsors, though several forms of indirect assistance were available, such as allocation of rooms and social grants for pupils (children attending private schools are eligible for these grants since 1951). The Debré Law of 1959 introduced two possibilities for a private school to receive State funding: the simple contract (contrat simple) and the contract of association (contrat d'association). Under a simple contract, staff expenses are covered by the state for teachers and state-accredited professors. Though private schools with a simple contract have autonomy in determining the content of their curricula, they retain the obligation to prepare students for official degrees, and must use authorized books and organize in line with the curriculum and schedule of public schools. The contract of association allows for more significant financial support: the State pays for staff expenses and also for material expenses on the basis of costs in the public sector. It also allows more freedom in defining the content of the curriculum.

The religious education of young Muslims has generally been provided either by the family at home or by associations and mosques in the framework of Koranic courses, independently and outside of regular school hours. However, the debate over the hijab has provided impetus for the establishment of state-approved general Islamic schools. One has been established in Lille, joining the other school established in La Reunion several decades ago. There exists one Islamic private school under a contract of association (which means that the school can receive State subsidies) in the Réunion department. Two more opened in 2001 in Aubervilliers and in 2003 in Lille (lycée Averroes): neither is under contract with the State. Another one (without contract, based in Lyon) opened in March 2007 (lycée college Al Kindi). [31]

On March 10th, 2008, the Muslim private school Éducation et Savoir opened its doors in the Parisian suburb of Vitry-sur-Seine (Val-de-Marne). The school will teaching one primary education class for the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year, and has plans to accommodate 40 high school students for the 2008-2009. For the 2008-2009 school year. In addition to state-mandated curriculum, the school

will offer classes on Arabic and Islam. The school's director, Mahmoud Awwad, claims that their biggest challenge has not been obtaining an operation license, but has been funding. The school has been funded by private donors and associations in France (Islam Online 2008).

The lack of qualified teaching staff and the need to provide training to imams have become increasingly important issues since the beginning of the 1990's. Several attempts have been made by Muslim associations to develop appropriate training institutions for imams

The question of the training of imams has been the first task delegated to the French Council of the Muslim Religion. Such an issue has concerned both French governments and Muslim communities for several years. Many attempts have been made, so far without success. For example, a European Institute of Human Sciences (supported by the Union of Islamic Organisations in France) was founded in Nièvre, but it has hardly operated, whereas the Paris Mosque Theology Institute only has a few students. In September 2006, the Machelon Commission (a commission charged by the Prime Minister with the examination of some legal issues concerning the relations between the State and religious denominations) suggested the creation of a State-funded institute of Islamic theology in Strasbourg. [32]

The poor training and low salaries of imams are seen as contributing to a possibly extremist subculture among Muslims in France. According to the King Baudoin Foundation survey in 2003, of approximately 1000 imams, just over half are permanent residents and less than half receive regular salaries, while a third speak little or no French. Conversations between the Muslim Council and the government have promised to remedy this situation with new guidelines and further programs at universities for the training of imams. [33]

Security, Immigration and Anti Terrorism Issues

In France, the legal code bans incitement to racial discrimination, race hatred and violence against members of other races (Law of 29 July 1881, Art.24, Section V & Penal Code, Art.625-7).

The legislative response to September 11th came first in the Law on Everyday Security passed November 15th of 2001. It has been particularly controversial, as it clearly extends far beyond the boundaries of what normally could be considered counter-terrorism. Along with relatively minor juvenile delinquency measures, police powers were substantially expanded. Stop and search of vehicles in the context of terrorism investigations became legal without prior court approval. This policy clearly has the potential for abuse. It became legal to search unoccupied premises at night with a warrant but without notification of the owner and previously private police records were made available to terrorism investigators. Probably most controversial, however, has been the push to have much more extensive monitoring and recording of electronic transactions. E-mail can now be monitored much more easily, and the new law required records to be kept tracking communications.

Since 2001, the Muslim population in France has come under particular police scrutiny. Young Muslims are victims of harassment in identity checks, and the dense concentration of young Muslims in city districts ridden with crime worsens the relationship between these youth and security forces. Police admit to using ethnicity and age as criteria for evaluation during security interventions on the ground. [34] Muslim leaders and representatives have also been subject to police surveillance in the name of security.

Muslims working are also often under suspicion. For example, an employee at Roissy airport in 2002 was accused of being member of a terrorist network. [35] After September 11, security and cleaning

companies working in airports and public buildings received requests from their employers to conduct background checks on their Muslim employees to ensure that non were members of terrorist networks. Some were even asked to dismiss groups of workers. [36]

French immigration policy is based on two broad main principles: equality for all backgrounds and the expectation that immigrants will fully integrate into French society. [37] As with many other European countries, from the post-war years until the 1970's the policy tended towards open acceptance of immigrants to support the national economy. During the widespread economic malaise of the 1970's, immigrants became much less welcome, as they were seen as contributing to employment problems. France struck agreements with the main countries of origin to provide for social and political services for migrants and developed policies to encourage return to native countries. These policies were not very successful. [38]

Over the course of the 1980's and 1990's, more restrictive laws were passed to reduce and reverse immigrant flows. However, in response to new policies from the European Union, many of these were softened to prevent discrimination during the last few years. After September 11th, the French government trended back towards more restrictive immigration laws.

In France, the results obtained by Front National candidate Jean Marie Le Pen at the Presidential Elections of April/May 2002 sent a shockwave through the country, and signaled the beginning of a radicalization of discourses on immigration. The right-wing government elected the following year embarked on a strict anti-immigration policy -under Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, police repression is one of the key themes. The law related to the control of immigration, the stay of foreigners in France, and nationality was adopted on 26 November, 2003. The following year asylum-seeking was rendered more difficult and it became easier for the French government to expel individuals from the country. [39]

In 2003, a new law entered into force which made it substantially easier to deport individuals who "have committed acts justifying a criminal trial' or whose behavior ‘threatens public order'. Earlier versions of this law gave police the power to deport foreigners for participating in political demonstrations. Also adopted were increased penalties for illegal immigration, more temporary detention centers, and new limits on family reunification. Following the example of other European governments, France also instituted a list of "safe countries" from which asylum seekers will be denied (10 December 2003, Law No. 20031176).

In late October 2005, youth riots in a number of French banlieues (banlieues is a term that generally refers to low-income densely-populated outskirts of a city) create a security crisis for French authorities. [40] Looking back on this episode now, scholars and politicians are more inclined to recognize that socio-economic factors played a role in the course of events, but at the time, right-wing politicians and members of the government connected violence with the problem of Islam and immigration. These riots put immigration and integration concerns high on the political agenda and have benefited extreme-right anti-immigration parties.

The riots have been directly linked by Nicolas Sarkozy to his second anti-immigration law, entitled "law on immigration and integration," presented to the National Assembly in May 2006. Sarkozy called for a "selective immigration" ("immigration choisie," as opposed to what Sarkozy describes as the current situation of "immigration subie" or "uncontrolled/unwanted immigration" [41]). But perhaps more stigmatizing is the emphasis on the integration contract to which all immigrants will be submitted - a contract hinted at in the report by the Stasi Commission (Commission preside par Bernard Stasi 2004: 147). [42]

Questioned on prime-time news, Sarkozy made it clear Islam is at the centre of the debate: immigrants will have to learn French and "learn to respect the country." For Sarkozy, this means "accepting French laws, even if they don't understand them," because "it is up for them to adapt, not for France." In barely- concealed references to the Muslim problem, Sarkozy argued forcefully that immigrants must accept the publication of religious cartoons in newspapers; women must provide uncovered photographs for identity cards, and they must accept to be treated by male doctors. [43] Thus defined, the French integration contract is quite stigmatizing of Muslims. [44]

Running parallel to this evolution of immigration and anti-terrorism discourse has been a movement to institutionalize these control through more severe immigration policies. [45] After three weeks of riots in Paris in November 2005, immigration laws were first tightened by Interior Minister Sarkozy. Two years later, on September 18, 2007, a bill was presented to Parliament with President Sarkozy's backing that would authorize DNA testing for immigrants, and require applicants to pass language examinations and prove they can support themselves.

Moreover, any applicant over the age of 16 must demonstrate familiarity with French values, culture, and society. The bill coincides with Sarkozy's renewed promise to begin deportation of the estimated 400,000 illegal immigrants. He has vowed to deport 27,000 individuals in 2007 alone. The bill, especially its prescription for DNA testing, was criticized by French MPs and Human rights activists, including Aurelie Filippetti of the Radical Citizen's Socialist Party, and the French Human Rights League, which characterized DNA testing of immigrants as "offensive, inhumane and morally abhorrent."

The immigration bill was passed by Parliament on October 23, 2007. In addition to DNA testing, the bill was controversial because it also paved the way for the government to collect statistics on ethnic origins to ensure diversity. On November 15, 2007, the French Constitutional Court delivered its judgment on the bill. The Court threw out the article in the immigration bill that sanctioned census tracking of ethnic origins. The Court did not challenge the amendment allowing for DNA testing of immigrant's family, however. While warning against systematic use of DNA tests, the court did not find voluntary testing limited to cases of establishing a direct link with the mother to be unconstitutional. This new immigration law also requires that applicant immigrants pass a language test, an exam on fundamental French values, and meet a minimum income level (established by the legislation) to ensure that they can adequately support themselves.

Bias and Discrimination

Although there is little official data on religiously motivated violence, intolerance against Muslims seems to be on the rise in France. [46] (IHF, 2005). Over the last few years in France, incidents against Muslims have increased dramatically.

One of the most complete sources on Islamophobic acts in France is the information provided by the Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France (CCIF). Founded in October 2003 "in reaction to the essentialist presentation of a monolithic Islam in the French public sphere", the 15 volunteers working for the CCIF produced its first report in October 2004. Noting the "ambivalence" (CCIF Report 4) [47] of the historical / conventional anti-racist organizations regarding the phenomenon of Islamophobia, the CCIF sets itself the twin aims of "improving the information concerning the social expression of Islamophobia in France" and helping its victims with legal advice. [48] It acts as a centralizing body for the collection of data, and tries to raise public awareness in order to organize a coherent and efficient counter-strategy. [49] The CCIF distinguishes carefully between ethnic/racist discrimination and

Islamophobic acts. [50]

It reports 182 Islamophobic acts targeting individuals [51] and institutions (CCIF 64)`during the period running from October 2003 to August 2004, including 27 physical aggressions (four of which are serious), 29 degraded mosques and 11 vandalized cemeteries with more than 200 profaned tombs. [52] Acts targeting Muslim institutions include expulsions (of religious personnel?), last-minute cancellation of conferences (often by Tariq Ramadan), the closure of mosques or freezing of mosque projects, (attacks against other) Muslim structures, cemeteries and vandalized mosques. The Islamophobic acts reported are mostly concentrated in Ile-de-France, Alsace and Rhone-Alpes: roughly 2/3 of all acts. [53]

Based on the statistics accumulated for anti-Islamic manifestations against individuals, the CCIF distinguishes between three types of Islamophobic actors: public services (mainly administration, education and public enterprises); private companies (mostly in the medical, commercial and leisure sectors); and individuals. The CCIF identifies the typical Islamophobic act as an act of discrimination at a public institution (59% of the cases), or against a veiled woman (81% of the cases). This is not surprising, as it corroborates the EUMC's assertion that the headscarf is "the primary visual identifier" of Islamophobia in Europe. [54]

Although this Islamophobia is not seen as institutionally organized, it is facilitated by the climate of impunity of the concerned agents and by the wider social banalization of Islamophobia. The most serious institutional cases include a highly publicized interdiction of marriage for veiled women at Nogent-sur-Marne (Le Monde 20 Dec, 2003): Jacques Martin, UMP Mayor of Nogent-sur-Marne [55] has stipulated in November 2003, in a document sent to all prospective brides and grooms, that "no conspicuous sign of religious, philosophical, trade-unionist or political affiliation will be tolerated." Regarding individual acts, one will note an incident in Montpellier where a driver tries to run his car into a man he mistook for bin Laden - but instead of the reward of five million dollars, he gets a sentence of three-month imprisonment (avec sursis) and a 500 euro-fine. [56]

The report also notes "a strong correlation" between the output of media coverage of Islam and the rise of Islamophobic acts. [57]

The "STIC" is another database, established in 2005, of racist violence and crime that is maintained by the DCRG (Direction Centrale des Renseignements Generaux). The police have the option of specifying the victim's "origin" and religion when entering incidents into the database, but this is not obligatory. Therefore, this database serves as only a partial account of racial or anti-Muslim attacks. In 2004, 131 incidents were reported and 65 incidents in 2005. [58]

The CNCDH (Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme) is another governmental group. Its 2005 Annual Report on Combating Racism, Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia, documented a total of 352 violent acts and threats against North African or Muslim individuals (including 266 threats and 64 violent acts) (CNCDH, 2005; qtd in EUMC 73).

Muslims account for an estimated 50 percent of France's prison population, with some jails in the banlieues hitting 80 percent, while they only constitute six to ten percent of the total population. [59]

Public discourse throughout the hijab controversy reflected and perpetuated bias against Muslim gender relations and the nature of Islam. Opponents of the hijab also insisted that the law would save girls from the domination and the authority of males in their families. Muslim women's voices were marginalized in this discourse. Contrary to the arguments of the hijab opponents, many women were

not coerced or "manipulated" into wearing the hijab: some of them chose to wear it as a sign of faith, while others were able to free themselves of the domination of their fathers and brothers since by wearing the "hijab" they can lead more independent and public lives without being "considered an object of male seduction." [60] Another insight from this discourse surrounding the hijab law is documented by Nacira Guénif-Souilamas and Eric Macé in a book entitled *Les féministes et le garçon arabe* showed that this discourse stigmatised Arab men, by "accusing them of oppressing girls and women in general." [61]

Islamic Practice

The conditions of Islamic practice in France can be understood by examining state policies toward the wearing of the hijab in public, the presence of mosques and Muslim cemeteries, halal slaughter, and marriage legislation:

*The Hijab*

The wearing of the headscarf (hijab) by young women in school first sparked controversy in 1989 in Creil. This situation and another in 1994 caught the nation's attention, but in each case, solutions were reached through mediations at the local level organized by Hanifa Chérifi, who is now the inspector-general at the Ministry of Education. [62] The 1994 affair involved 300 students and individual mediations were necessary in each case. Most of the girls agreed to remove their hijab in the classroom rather than being in conflict with school policy. [63] (OSI 37-x) In cases in which the pupils refused to remove the headscarf, they chose to join a private school or to be home schooled.

In 2003, President Chirac had also launched a commission to reflect on the position of *laïcité* in French society. Although there is no direct translation in English, the French word "Laïcité" is a concept of separation of church and state akin to "secularism." More so than secularism, laïcité emphasizes the division between private life, which is where religion is supposed to belong, and the public sphere. According to the principle of laïcité, individuals in the public sphere should present themselves as unencumbered by particularities of religion or ethnicity, which is thought to secure individuals' equality as citizens under the state.

This commission was named the Stasi commission after chairman Bernard Stasi, Ombudsman of the Republic since 1998. It was formed on July 3, 2003 and released its findings on December 11 of the same year after its 20 members consulted with school administrators, political leaders, equal-rights activists, and religious leaders. The most significant recommendation of the report involved the banning of religious symbols in schools: "Out of respect for the freedom of conscience, dress and symbols showing religious or political membership are forbidden in elementary schools, secondary schools and high schools. Any penalty is proportional and imposed after the pupil has been invited to conform to his/her obligations. According to the report of the Commission, the dress and religious symbols forbidden are such symbols as a large cross, headscarf or kippa. Discreet symbols such as small medals or crosses, or small symbols (the Star of David for Jews or the Hand of Fatima for the Muslims) are allowed. [64]

The commission has been subject to scrutiny from within and without. Claims by Stasi commission members and supporters that Islam was not the singular target of the policy recommendations were found disingenuous. Social scientist Farhad Khosrokhavar claimed in November 2003, "It is common knowledge that what is aimed at is Islam, especially the headscarf. The rest is trivia." Also, Jean Bauberot, a sociologist who sat on the committee, wrote that "large crosses, let's face it, have nothing to do with this kind of report". [65]

Jean Bauberot, the one member of the commission who chose to abstain from voting in favor of the law, warns against the fundamentalist application of an ideal laicite against real religions. Bauberot's argued that the government's claims that Islam was not the primary target of containment were superficial and dangerous. As a historian of laicite, Bauberot draws a comparison between French Muslims now and Jews during the eighteenth century. [66] In an article posted on the French Embassy (United States) website, Bauberot's position is one which favors religious freedom and advocates an ad hoc approach to situations where non-veiled Muslim girls feel intimidated by their peers to wear the veil [67] (which Weil cites as the dominant concern of the commission).

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life article on "100th Anniversary of Secularism in France" is a comprehensive resource for links to transcripts, official statements on secularism, and accredited news on commentary related to the life of laicite in France.

Following the release of the Committee's findings, a bill banning religious symbols in schools passed through the legislature and was signed into law on March 15, 2004 by President Chirac. The law prohibited the hijab in public schools; in response to the Stasi Commission's recommendations, the law emphasizes the need for mediation and suggests that penalties should only be applied as a last resort. [68] The law drew criticism from the Commission and international audiences. It is important to note here that a distinction should be made between criticisms leveraged at the Commission's recommendations and those leveraged against the French law. While the Commission received its fair share of criticism, it was the Stasi Commission itself that articulated substantive critiques of the law and took issue with the laws half-hearted application of the commission's recommendations.

The Commission's main critique was that the government did not adequately balance its restrictions on religious expression with gestures that would help equalize the status of Islam and other minority religions in France. For example, the commission recommended the recognition of select minority religious celebrations as public holidays. In the words of Patrick Weil, who sat on the committee, this type of state reform is necessary to "move beyond the simple right to practice one's own faith, to mark the respect of the whole French community toward their compatriots." [69] In spite of approval by Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim religious authorities, and by support of 40% of French citizens, this proposal was rejected by the government. [70]

Critics also accused the French law on secularity and conspicuous religious symbols in schools (the legislation that followed the report) of violating the European Convention on Human Rights. This was the content of criticism by Human Rights Watch, which criticized the law as "an unwarranted infringement on the right to religious practice" [71] and by the United States Government, whose condemnation of the French law was particularly vocal. [72] The French government has remained steadfast in spite of such criticism. On October 8, 2004, the Conseil d'État rejected a case against the Minister of Education's that alleged the law to be in conflict with the French Constitution and with the European Convention on Human Rights. [73]

The following school year, Hanifa Chérifi drafted a report in 2004-2005 for Education Minister Gilles de Robien regarding the March 15, 2004 Law on Secularity and Conspicuoys religious symbols in Schools. Chérifi's position was that the law did not threaten to provoke identity or religious tensions within French society. According to her report, a total of 639 religious symbols (626 headscarves, 11 Sikh turbans and 2 Christian crosses) were reported during the 2004-2005 school year, which was less than half the number of religious symbols reported the year before. The hijab cases were concentrated in six school districts with high immigrant populations: Strasbourg, Lille, Créteil, Montpelier, Versailles and Lyon. Forty-seven students left public school in resistance to the

prohibition.(OSI 37-x)

The Stasi law banning "ostentatious religious signs", including headscarves, in French schools, came into effect on September 2, 2004 with the new school year. Despite the controversy when the law was passed, the actual enforcement of the law was rather uneventful.

According to statistics from the French government, 240 girls attempted to come to school with a headscarf; 170 later accepted to take it off, and 70 "conciliation procedures" were started. Two junior high school female students, Dounia and Khouloudewere, aged 12 and 13 respectively, were the first to be expelled under this law for refusing to take off their headscarves on the 20 October 2004, from a school in Mulhouse, Alsace. At the end of the first semester, according to François Fillon, Minister for Education, 48 students were expelled under the new law, including three Sikh students who went to Catholic schools. [74]

On July 19 2005, the Paris administrative court of appeals rejected the respective requests from the parents of two students who were expelled from a high school in Bobigny on November 5 2004 for wearing turbans (keshkis), albeit small ones, demonstrating their belonging to the Sikh religion.

In September 2005, the Ministry of Education reported that only 12 students showed up with distinctive religious signs in the first week of classes, compared to 639 in the preceding year. A number of students have elected to take distance-learning classes from CNED. There is a case of a Sikh student in the académie of Créteil, who refused to remove his turban.

*Places of Worship*

There are at least 1,500 Islamic places of worship in France, although only a few of these are mosques and the substantial majority are small and poorly equipped. Building new mosques has been difficult, and there have been protests from local communities and arbitrary blocking of the efforts by local authorities. However, there have been some signs that things have improved over the last few years.

*Cemeteries*

While cemeteries are secular, provisions have been made by local authorities to allow for Islamic burial practices. However, a lack of space leads to the granting of burial rights only for some specified period of time. As this is contrary to Islamic practice, the policies have generated protests from the community.

*Halal Slaughter*

Halal slaughter is allowed within designated slaughterhouses and at most times is not a difficulty in France. However, during certain times of high demand, the capacity of these slaughter facilities can be stretched, leading to the practice of halal slaughter in irregular venues. There have been persistent problems with labeling and distribution of halal foods. The Muslim Executive Council has promised to address the problem, but many fear that it will not have the broad authority to implement its ideas. In 2005, a new fast-food restaurant opened in Paris that planned to serve only halal foods. In a play on the French word for Arab, it is named "Beurger King Muslim".

*Marriage*

In a response to the practice of arranged marriages by Muslims, in 2006, the French government raised the age of marriage for females to 18 from the 15 it had been for two centuries. The measure was endorsed by numerous civil rights organizations.

Public Perception of Islam

French public perceptions of Muslims has changed significantly over the past decade and this change has been largely a product of social and political events related to the Muslim community and its relationship to the rest of French society.

The decline of the economic and social situation in the 1980s led to the scapegoating of many young North African immigrants for these problems and an intensification of xenophobic attitudes in France. Local elections in 1983 saw the election of the anti-immigration NF party and during the summer of that same year, approximately 20 immigrant youth were injured or killed by French security forces. [75] After the election success of NF, immigrant populations also found that their traditional allies (such as the LP) were aloof.

This political and social environment, in which immigrants were confronted with anti-Arab racism, and isolated from mainstream society, prompted second-generation North African immigrants to organize the "First March for Equality and against Racism" ("la Première Marche pour l'Egalité et contre le Racisme"). This March and subsequent demonstrations were a way for immigrant youth to defend their right to live in France. This climate also caused many second-generation youth, plagued by unemployment and racism, to look again at Islam as remedy to their exclusion. [76]

The discourse of suspicion toward Muslim immigrants in France shifted between the 1980s and 1990s. Debate over the right of Muslim families to live and stay in France gave way to concerns over the loyalty of Muslims to the French state and especially the republican and secularist principles so fundamental to traditional French identity.

The 1989 "headscarf affair" contributed to suspicions of the Muslim population in France. The affair put local immediacy to anxieties triggered by the Islamic revolution in Iran of that same year. According to Alain Gresh, media coverage of the Creil case contributed toward an atmosphere of suspicion towards the Muslim population: "Magazines dedicated different articles to this headscarf crisis [Creil, in 1989], and television channels did the same; opinion was divided. Reading the same documents ten years later, we are impressed by the gap between these three girls and the apocalypse that was announced." [77]

After the 1989 "headscarf affair," anti-Muslim sentiment took root. An August 1990 Poll by *Nouvel Observateur* found 78% of the French population disapproved of the Islamic headscarf and supported the ban. [78] In addition to the Islamic Revolution in Iran, political instability in other countries such as Algeria also fueled French anxieties. When the Algerian Civil War began in 1991, the Muslim community in France chose to remain outside the crisis and to support the French position so long as it was "fair and respectful toward Islam." [79]

In 1995, Islamic movements developed in France and the country also endured several attacks at the hands of Algerian terrorists. The term "Islamisation" emerged in the 1990s in response to the intensification of religious sentiments among second-generation Muslims. The "Islamisation phenomenon" of the mid-1990s is one explored by many scholars, including Farhad Khosrokhavar (1997) [80] and Jacques Barou (1995). [81] Khosrokhavar found that as Muslims felt increasingly alienated from French society, they gravitated toward Islam as a source of dignity. French scholar

Alain Boyer also wrote about this phenomenon, but insists that religious profiles in the French Muslim community were more diverse and complex than Khosrokhavar's and Barou's studies indicate and what the native French population feared of their Muslim neighbors: "Contrary to what people feared, the great majority of Muslims in France had no sympathy for the religious extremists, and only a badly integrated minority were able to enter sporadic alliances, as was the case with Khaled Kelkal and the Roubaix networks [...]." [82]

Polling conducted by the IFOP Polling Institute after the September 11, 2001 attacks also showed that the image of Islam in French society was not necessarily improving:

Public perceptions of Islam (1994 and 2001) *Respondents were asked if they associated the below-mentioned values with Islam*

| Share of poll respondents (%) | In 2001 | In 1994 |
|---|---|---|
| Justice | 6 | 2 |
| Freedom | 8 | 6 |
| Democracy | 5 | 3 |
| Protection of women | 6 | 5 |
| Submission | 18 | 24 |
| Fanaticism | 22 | 37 |
| Violence | 8 | 5 |
| Rejection of Western values | 17 | 12 |
| No answer | 10 | 6 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |
| | | |
| Source: Sondage IFOP [83] | | |

Though this polling reveals that Islam is still in 2001 linked with negative images such as fanaticism, submission, and the rejection of Western values, there is also a notable decline since 1994 in the linking of Islam with fanaticism (from 37% to 22%) and submission (from 24% to 18%).

Polling conducted in July 2005 by the Pew Research Center, the year after legislation banning the headscarf was passed, found four out of five French citizens agreed with the ban, indicating that the ban had gone more smoothly than expected. [84] The same polling, "The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other" also showed 34 % of the French population proclaim a negative view of Muslims, while 64% proclaim a positive view.

Media Coverage

The media coverage of Islam is undoubtedly the most researched aspect of Islamophobia in France (and probably elsewhere). Drawing on Edward Saïd's Covering Islam: How the Experts Determine how We see the Rest of the World, social scientists have critically plunged into the world of representation of Islam in the media. [85]

One of the earliest works was written by Sadek Rabbah (L'islam dans le discourse médiatique - comment les medias représentent l'islam de France, 1998). One of the most persuasive chapters in Vincent Geisser's book deals with Islamophobia in the media (Geisser: 23-56). More recently, Thomas Delcombe has made a valuable contribution to the debate through the publication of L'islam imaginaire: La construction médiatique de l'islamophobie en France, 1975-2005, which focuses on the medium of television. Concerning the recent "debate" on the Muslim headscarf, Pierre Tévanian has highlighted, in Le voile médiatique - un faux débat: l'affaire du foulard islamique (2005), the political and media construction of a problem which has been one of the most impassioned issues in France in the past years. [86]

Geisser delivers a nuanced analysis of the media treatment of the Muslim question. Refusing the thesis of the pensée unique affecting the media, Geisser argues that the media discourse on Islam is not homogenous and constitutes just one element in a wider discursive field. Media do not create Islamophobia as much as they operate a "mise en ordre du sens commun" about Islam and Islamism. This is achieved through a number of procedures, including the selection of contents, themes and images the cooptation of "legitimate" figures and "experts" (en)able(d) to interpret and give meaning to the event; finally, the production of Muslim heroes and anti-heroes. The "media common sense" ("le sens commun médiatique") contributes, according to Geisser, to the banalisation of Islamophobia. Some of the media failings in the treatment of Islam are structural and endemic: absence of thematic specialization; irregularity of the follow-up of the subjects; self-censorship. Geisser nevertheless reproaches the journalists' "total absence of critical distance towards popular emotions and passions". Islam is seen not as an "ordinary social object" but always as a "potential danger" - and the media have responded to fear by fear, meeting an implicit social demand: instead of knowledge on Islam and the social practices of Muslims, French audiences desire expertise on the risks of infiltration by Islamic terrorism. In a striking illustration of this conception of Islam as a potential danger, Le Figaro ran a story at the height of the riots in the banlieues entitled on the front page "Survey on the role of Islam in the dissemination of the violence." It is reported there that following the explosion of a police gas bomb outside a mosque in Clichy-sous-bois, "families of Moroccan origin...called each other on the telephone"! The "survey" was not conclusive, however, and the journalist was forced to concede that "Islam does not play a determining role in the propagation of the riots." [87]

Focusing on the debate concerning the Muslim headscarf, Pierre Tévanian traces the way in which the "problem of the hijab" was politically constructed. Tévanian underscores the concerted role of the media in shaping the terms of the debate and in forging the "Islamophobic consensus" for the ban of conspicuous religious signs in public schools - ultimately adopted by an overwhelming majority of MPs - through a process of inclusion and exclusion of specific voices from the public debate. By excluding from the debate sociologists, as well as feminists, teachers and civil actors not opposed to the Muslim headscarf, the media (particularly the audiovisual outlet) contributed to the construction of a simplistic world whereby only bearded foreign religious men could defend the Muslim headscarf against women (necessarily opposed to it), who are supported in their rejection of the religious clothing by native or emancipated (male) intellectuals. [88]

The study of audiovisual representations of Islam by Thomas Deltombe is set to become the reference in the field. Drawing on thirty years of 8 o'clock TV news coverage, Deltombe contextualizes the audiovisual construction of an "imaginary Islam" which reflects tensions and fears within the larger French society. Islam appears as an "evanescent phenomenon", disappearing as suddenly as it appeared in the news; the treatment of Islam is always partial, covered exclusively in its crises and through its problems; and television coverage progressively constructs a binary world where the gap between the West and Islam is steadily widening, making Muslims in France fall under the exclusive categories of moderate or Islamist. [89]

Among the national daily print media there seems to be a graduation in the level of Islamophobia. Le Monde, and in particular its social and religious affairs journalist Xavier Ternisien, have been at the forefront of the denunciation of the phenomenon, [90] By contrast, for the centre-right daily Le Figaro, Islamophobia seems to exist only as an "alibi." [91]

Political Discourse

With worries about the possible incompatibility of Islam with Republican values on the rise, the

pressure on politicians to address Islam, immigration, and integration has increased. This has led to a series of policies attempting to make Islam more ‘French'. This trend can be seen in the development of the Muslim Council, the establishment of imam training and the banning of the hijab in public schools.

Politicians in France are often ambivalent concerning the phenomenon of religion in general, and of Islam in particular. There are no specific studies that would systematically deal with the role of political leaders and parties in the production and/or dissemination of Islamophobia in France. The following remarks are based on a reading of the media declarations of prominent political figures in France, as well as the analysis of political writings published as books by some leading politicians. [92]

The anxiety and insecurity generated by the establishment of Muslim communities in France (as shown in a number of surveys) create a climate of impunity concerning Islamophobic remarks made by politicians. François Baroin, spokesperson of the Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP, right-wing, in government), thus declared categorically on prime-time television: "One has to say it clearly, there is no Islamophobia in France!" [93]

Since the 1980s local politicians at the municipal level have been willing to instrumentalise the fear of Islam as an electoral resource (Geisser 2003: 15). Refusal to allow the building of mosques has been one of the most common strategies. The Mayor of Nice, Jacques Peyrat (UMP) once argued that "mosques as such are inconceivable in a secular Republic." [94] In 2005 the same Mayor repeated he would use his veto powers to prevent the acquisition of land for the building of a mosque which he judged inappropriate. Meanwhile, one of his delegates opposed the construction on the grounds that a mosque in the inner city centre, where Muslims are concentrated, would lead to further "ghettoïsation." [95]

One of the effects of the rise of the extreme right-wing in France has been the adoption, by mainstream parties, of some of its rhetoric. The case of the aforementioned Mayor of Nice J. Peyrat - who moved from the Front national to the UMP - illustrates this shift most pointedly. [96]

Although several politicians have clearly made Islamophobic comments, the official line of the conventional political parties disseminates a binary and simplistic representation of Muslims by systematically opposing a good "islam modéré" to an evil "islam intégriste" (Geisser 2003: 15). This "selective stigmatization" of Islam, studied by Bonnefoy (see above), has come to permeate all levels of French public institutions (Bonnefoy 2003: 22). [97]

Nicolas Sarkozy has excelled in the discursive distinction between good (read French) and bad (foreign) Islam. The Minister of the Interior played an important personal role in the establishment of the Conseil français du culte musulman, a symbolic recognition of Islam in France, while multiplying the alarmist statements concerning Muslims, self-consciously linking the institutionalisation of the Muslim representative body to threats of international terrorism. Most recently, following the riots in the banlieues, Sarkozy blamed - in prime-time television - "immigration", "culture", "polygamy" and "social origins" for the troubles. [98]

The Socialist Manuel Valls has in a recent book, La laïcité en face (Paris, 2005), laid out his vision of a new Republican pact. As the Mayor of Evry, M. Valls played an important role in the political outcry which led to the closure of the Halal Franprix (a supermarket chain) in Evry because its Muslim managers did not sell alcohol and pork - a form of "ghettoïsation" (sic!) which politicians and the media unequivocally combated. In his book Valls considers the institutionalization of Islam in France as the consequence of an absence of control of migration fluxes in the last thirty years. [99]

The most extreme, but nevertheless revealing, case is that of Philippe de Villiers, leader of the Mouvement pour la France (MPF), who has made the struggle against "the Islamization of France" his political slogan. Philippe de Villiers published this year a book about an "Islamist conspiracy" to place the Paris-Charles de Gaulle airport "under the 211 of 323 shari'a". [100] He has repeatedly linked Islam, Islamism and terrorism, arguing categorically that Islam is "incompatible with the Republic." While P. de Villiers acknowledges that there may be moderate Muslims, he rejects the possibility of a "moderate Islam."

The reference to the "Islamic threat" allows P. de Villiers both to draw on a wide repository of popular anxiety and to distinguish himself from Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the far-right Front National. The latter, though not totally unambiguous on this issue, has recently tended to dismiss the "problem" of Islam as a natural outcome of immigration influxes. [101] After September 11, the Front National engaged in anti-Muslim rhetoric. In the words of party leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, "[T]here are six million Muslim citizens who are recent arrivals. They entered in civilian dress, in jeans. They would never let six million people with weapons enter our territory. But a person in jeans can become a soldier. If, despite their French citizenship, these Muslims feel an affiliation with another entity, they naturally become suspect in the eyes of those who one day will be compelled to confront them." Along with a number of other statements of this character, these words led to a conviction for inciting hatred. Although the Front National is generally seen as a fringe far-right party, in 2002 the party came in second in national elections, displacing the center-left. They did not go on to win the run-off, but their broader than expected popularity led to a great deal of concern in France, and led observers to pay closer attention to their rhetoric and intentions.

Following his presidential victory on May 7, 2007, Sarkozy's rhetoric has continued to emphasize the good Muslim and bad Muslim dichotomy. On October 1, 2007, Sarkozy attended an iftar (fast-breaking) dinner at the Grand Mosque of Paris. In his address to the community gathered there, Sarkozy extended thanks to the mosque's president, Dalil Boubakeur (who is also the head of the CFCM) and other CFCM leaders for their role in preventing the degeneration of Muslim and non-Muslim relations. [102] He described France as a country that respects those who practice Islam, and urged Muslim-majority countries to treat their non-Muslim minorities better.

This positive language was complemented by a forceful message that extremists who "want to kill or commit violence in the name of Islam, who detest others in the name of Islam have nothing to do on French soil." Sarkozy also stated that, "those who do not want to spread the message (of peace) will be expelled from French territory." This statement reflects the interconnectivity between Islam in France and issues of immigration and citizenship.

Other relevant positions taken by Sarkozy include his opposition to Turkey's admittance to the European Union on grounds that its Muslim majority is inconsistent with European identity. [103] Sarkozy's advocacy of the integration of ethnic and religious groups has two edges: he has supported affirmative action programs to promote social mobility for immigrant communities and had an active role in creating the CFCM. His advocacy of integration has also meant Sarkozy has taken a strong stand against extremism and he has encouraged integration by targeting and expelling Muslims whose more radical positions compete with his vision of Muslim integration. Sarkozy opposed the hijab ban as "secular fundamentalism"; during the period of the Jyllands-Posten Cartoon Controversy, Sarkozy inflamed Muslim sentiment by supporting the publication of the cartoons in the French magazine Charlie Hébdo. [104]

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[29] "French Muslims Regroup With New Organization" Expatica 18 June 2006.

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[31] Messner F., op. cit., p.97; "France's first Muslim secondary schools opens" http://hrfw.org]; cited in EP 112.

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[36] Nasser Negrouche. "Alibi terroriste pour racisme antimaghrébin" ("Terrorist Alibi for Anti-Maghrebi Racism") Le Monde diplomatique November 2001.

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[39] Alexandre Caeiro. "France." In Muslims in Western Europe after 9/11: Why the term Islamophobia is more a Predicament than a Solution. Ed. Jocelyne Cesari. Securitization and Religious Divides in Europe. GSRL-Paris and Harvard University. 1 June 2000: 204.

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[41] "Immigration: la gauche joue la surenchère verbale" Le Figaro 4 May 2006.

[42] Caeiro 205.

[43] TF1: Le journal télévisé de 20h (27 April 2006); cited in Caeiro, 205.

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[47] "Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France" (undated) Rapport d'étape 2003-2004.

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[49] Ibid., 6.

[50] Ibid., 5.

[51] Ibid., 118.

[52] Ibid., 8.

[53] Ibid., 14.

[54] Amiraux 2005: 73.

[55] Ibid., 94.

[56] Ibid., 64.

[57] Ibid., 25.

[58] STIC 2005; qtd in EUMC 73.

[59] "Muslims in Prison" http://www.insee.fr, MSNBC, J. Beckford et al, 2006: 276-9.

[60] Dounia Bouzar and Saida Kada. L'une voilée l'autre pas (One Wearing the Hijab, the Other Not) (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003).

[61] Nacira Guenif-Souilamas and Eric Mace. Les féministes et le garçon arabe (The Feminists and the Arab Boy) (Paris: Edition de l'Aube, 2004).

[62] OSI 37.

[63] Cited by Caroline Brizard, "Ecole: légiférer ou pas?" ("School: To Legislate or Not?") Le Nouvel Observateur 15 May 2003.

[64] Commission de réflexion sur l'application du principe de laïcité dans la République Commission of Reflection on the Application of the Principle of Laicism in the Republic Rapport au Président de la République remis le 11 décembre 2003 [Report to the President of the Republic, Handed over on 11 December 2003], available on the Commission's website at http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr (accessed 18 January 2007).

[65] "Faith v the state" The New York Times 27 December 2003.

[66] Jean Bauberot. "La laicite": 237; see also his Histoire de la laicite frangaise (Paris: PUF, 2000); also "La laïcité française et ses mutations" Social Compass (1998) 45(1): 175-187.

[67] Jean Bauberot. "The Secular Principle." Available online: http://www.ambafrance-us.org/atoz/secular.asp

[68] "Divided France Debates Hijab Ban" Al-Jazeera 5 February 2004.

[69] Patrick Weil. "Lifting the veil" French Politics, Culture and Society 22:3 (2004).

[70] Weil.

[71] "France: Headscarf Ban Violates Religious Freedom: By Disproportionately Affecting Muslim Girls, Proposed Law Is Discriminatory"Human Rights Watch 27 February 2004. Available online: http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/02/26/france7666.htm

[72] Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (May 2004). Available online: http://www.uscirf.gov/countries/publications/currentreport/2004annualRpt.pdf

[73] "French Legal News - Constitutional Law and Individual Right" Institute of Global Law, UCL Faculty of Laws. Available online: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/laws/global_law/legal-news/french/index.shtml?constitution

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[75] "After the revolt of young people in poor districts around the city of Lyon during Summer 1981, a climate of tensions between the children of immigrants living in these districts and the police forces was born. In Summer 1982, the young people considered to be responsible for the increase of violence in the suburbs were victims of xenophobia expressed both by some inhabitants of the districts and by some policemen." (Footnote 222 in OSI 222); see F. Gaspard and C. Servan-Schreiber, La fin

des immigrés [The End of Immigrants], Paris: Seuil, 1984.

[76] OSI 73.

[77] A. Gresh and T. Ramadan. L'islam en questions [Islam in Question] Arles: Actes Sud, 2000, p. 215; cited in OSI 72.

[78] "Survey conducted from 18-20 August 1990 on a representative sample of 1,000 persons (from the populationof people aged 18 and over). Quotae method (gender, age, professionalposition of the householder)"; Footnote 225 in OSI 73.

[79] Farhad Khosrokhavar. L'islam des jeunes [Young People's Islam] (Paris: Flammarion, 1997); cited in OSI 73.

[80] Khosrokhavar; cited in OSI 73.

[81] Jacques Barou, "Un danger islamiste existe-t-il en France?" ("Does an Islamist Danger Exist in France?") Hommes et Migrations (January 1995); cited in OSI 73.

[82] Alain Boyer, L'islam en France; cited in OSI 74.

[83] L'islam en France et les réactions aux attentats du 11 septembre 2001 (Islam in France and the Reactions to the Events of September 11 2001) (September 28, 2001); Henri Tincq, "La France et l'islam: une religion mal aimée, des fidèles mieux intégrés" ("France and Islam: a Religion Little Loved, with Believers Well Integrated") Le Monde (October 13, 1994); both cited in OSI 74.

[84] "France Hijab Ban Takes Effect" Al-Jazeera 2 September 2004.

[85] Caeiro, 208.

[86] Caeiro, 208.

[87] Le Figaro 5-6 November, 2005; cited in Caeiro, 208-9.

[88] Caeiro, 209.

[89] Caeiro, 209.

[90] See "Le danger de l'islamophobie" (12-13 May 2002); "Du racisme anti-arabe à l'islamophobie," (10 October 2003); "En France, le terme « islamophobie » suscite un débat" (15 February 2004); "Une enquête sur la religion en Europe confirme la montée de l'islamophobie et de l'antisémitisme" (15 December 2004); cited in Caeiro, 209.] but its reporting has not always followed consistently. Journalists at Le Monde have, perhaps unconsciously, participated in the confusion between Islam and Islamism, confusing legitimate religious needs with radicalisation.[[ See for example "Peu de musulmans radicaux employés dans les aéroports, selon les RG" (26 April 2006); cited in Caeiro, 209.

[91] See for example "Médias, pouvoir et responsabilité" (13 February, 2006); cited in Caeiro, 209-210.

[92] Caeiro, 210.

[93] "Mots croisés" France 2 (3 November 2003); cited in Caeiro, 210.

[94] AFP (12 September 2000); cited in Geisser 2003; cited in Caeiro, 210.

[95] Le Monde (12 November, 2005); cited in Caeiro, 211.

[96] Caeiro, 211.

[97] Caeiro, 211.

[98] Caeiro, 211.

[99] Valls 2005: 26.

[100] De Villiers 2006.

[101] Caeiro, 211-2.

[102] Sarkozy praises French Muslims Reuters.uk 1 October 2007. Available online: http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKL0166189720071001

[103] "Allure of Islam Signals a Shift Within Turkey" The New York Times 27 November 2007. Available online: http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/28/world/europe/28turkey.html

[104] "Muslim fury at Sarkozy's support for cartoons" The Telegraph 8 February 8, 2007. Available online: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/02/08/wfra08.xml