Muslim Women and the Identity Debate in France: 2001-2010

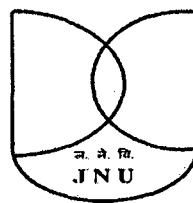*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University*

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for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation entitled **"Muslim Women and the Identity Debate in France, 2001-2010"** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other universities.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof. UMMU SALMA BAVA
(Chairperson, CES)

Dr. BHASWATI SARKAR
(Supervisor, CES)

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Acronyms

EU- European Union

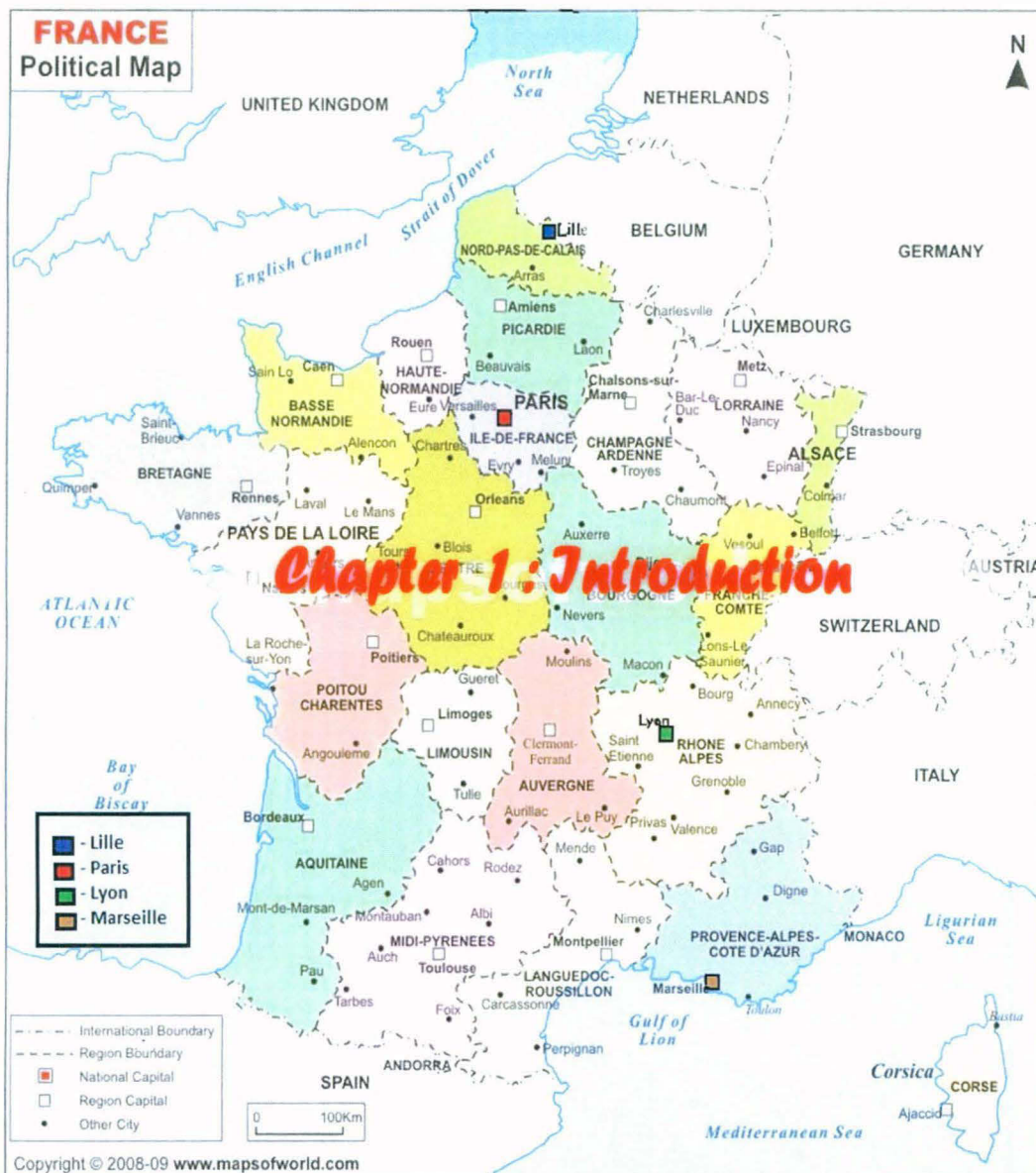MLA- Mutual Legal Assistance

NLF: National Liberation Front

SGI- Société Général d' immigration

CFCM- Counseil Français du Culte Musulman

UOIF- Union of Islamic Organization of France

FIS- Algerian Islamic Salvation Front

FRANCE
Political Map

Chapter 1 : Introduction

Introduction

Migration and settlement of people in new environments and societies has been a source of diversity in most European states. Social diversity is likely to increase as rapid communication and connectivity further eases mobility. The increase in diversity has been accompanied by increased focus on questions of identity. France is one state where such questions are being intensely debated.

The head scarf debate has rocked the French social and political arena in a big way. It erupted over the wearing of headscarves by Muslim girls and women in the public realm – institutions of education, workplace for instance. It has led to a re-look at what is 'French' and what constitutes their identity. The Muslim population in France grew rapidly after the Second World War when the process of decolonization began and immigrants began to arrive from France's colonies and ex-colonies of Africa and Asia, particularly from the countries of Maghreb: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. In 1974 following the official suspension of labor migration families of these Maghrebi workers arrived and the population became more feminized and settled in France. Their settlement was not what had been expected by the French authorities, which, like many others in European host countries had assumed that the workers who came in would return to their countries of origin. However, successive French governments did not feel that their presence in France pose major difficulties. France's commitment to secularism and the very ideals of French Revolution 'Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood' could they believed allow all immigrants to be absorbed and integrated into French national identity.

Over the years as the second, third and even fourth generation Muslim immigrants became an integral part of the French society this understanding stood challenged. Their demands as citizens came in conflict with what France was prepared to offer. The headscarf debate brought this conflict in sharp relief.

The most important feature of current French politics is its neo-republican discourse on French identity, in which membership in the national community involves an absolute commitment to the Republic and to its core values of égalité (equality) and laïcité (the separation of state and religion). This republican model was forged in the context of the

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1789 French Revolution, as a direct reaction to the historical French struggle against its own Monarchy, ruling aristocracy and religious establishment. This discourse is fed by two legal documents – first, Article 1 of the Constitution of October 4, 1958, which holds that "France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs"; and second, by the Separation of Churches and State Act 1905, which states that there is no recognition and no direct public funding of any religion in France. Consequently, France does not allow the State to officially support any exemption for or special representation of immigrant or national minorities.

The question of the Islamic Headscarf affair first hit the headlines in France in October 1989 when Earnest Cheniere, a headmaster in Creil, refused to allow three Maghrebi girls to come to school wearing their headscarf on the grounds that this would contravene the republic's principle of secularism. Subsequently in 2004 the French government passed a legislation prohibiting the wearing of the headscarf in French public schools.

Currently with an estimated five million Muslims living in France and Islam the second largest religion after Christianity the ensuing debate had many facets. Arguments favoring the headscarf ban revolved around the need to uphold the spirit of the French Revolution and principle of secularism and gender justice. French President Nicolas Sarkozy explained the rationale behind the ban on headscarf stating that "we (The French), cannot accept in our country, women imprisoned behind a mesh, cut off from society, deprived of all identity. This is not, a French republic's idea of women dignity." Recently on 14 September 2010 the French senate approved a law banning any veil that covers the face - including the burqa. The law passed by a vote of 246 to 1 with about 100 abstentions coming essentially from left leaning politicians. Further the French government also decided to impose a $185 fine on women who wear a full-face Islamic veil in public.

So far as the Muslim women themselves are concerned a 2004 survey reported by the Economist indicates that more French Muslim women support the headscarf ban than oppose it. This new generation of Muslim women argues that in French state to realize that traditional Islamic exegesis with its conservatively educated ulamas is not relevant to

the situation of immigration of the multiculturalism characteristics of the new millennium in Europe. These Muslim women living in France have been vocal in calling for the need to develop the new Islamic theology, a socially and politically sensitive jurisprudence. On the other hand the ban on the headscarf and subsequently on the veil and burqa has been criticized by some for creating an environment that discriminates against Muslim women who choose to practice a belief system that requires them to wear such garments. Muslim women who adhere to what they see as religious obligations are prevented from education and from work in government institutions. Whether they wear it or not, they argue that the ban contradicts the right to freedom of religion. They argue that the headscarf can carry number of different meanings in different contexts. The headscarf for some could be a simple expression of religious belief or a sign of respect towards one's family norms. One particular internet posting made the point that "in front of each educational institution there is written, liberty, equality, fraternity, so where is the liberty to exercise our religion?" Wearing the headscarf can be viewed as a manifestation of a young women's right to freedom of religion and expression, which does not have to be incompatible with democratic secularism.

This work attempts to study the status of Muslim women in France in the context of the ban and the ensuing debate. It will focus on the different positions taken by Muslim women themselves on the ban and analyze whether the argument of the government that it will enhance gender equality holds. This first introductory chapter gives an outline of the research undertaken, it delineates the rationale and scope of the study, the hypothesis it sets to test and research questions it attempts to address.The chapter also gives a broad overview of the literature on the subject referred to in course of the study and the methodology used.

The research questions of this study include 1) what has been the impact of 9/11 on the identity debate in France? 2) How has the 2004 headscarf ban and subsequent law banning the burqa affected Muslim women in France? 3) What has been the reaction of the Muslim community and women on these bans?

This study based on a hypothesis: The resurgence of identity issues in post 9/11 period has had a significant impact on the Muslim women.

The proposed work, by focusing on the Muslim women, will study the practical impact of diversity in France. It will focus on what has been the condition of Muslim women in France, the problems they face and the policies that the government has initiated to address them. It will examine the grounds that led to the headscarf ban in the context of majority-minority relation. The three components of the debate – French notion of secularism, national identity and gender justice and their dynamics will be examined to understand role of the state vis-à-vis Muslim women.

The scope of this research covers the period from 2001– 2010. The 9/11 incident has impacted the Islamic identity all over the world, mainly in the West. Since then the various cultural identities of Muslims, like beard and burqa, has suffered various challenges from the security state. From the 2004 ban on the headscarf in France, the focus of the state on the Muslim community has continued. It has manifested itself in the national identity debate where the government called upon its citizens to reflect on what it meant to be French. The initiation of the debate indicates the struggle of the state to come to terms with diversity and accommodation of demands that such diversity throws up. The proposed study is desirable on account of the fact that most studies are concerned with the role of French state in the field of how to make the laws and what kind of laws should be made to uplift the conditions of Muslim women in the French state. Most of the works have focused on very selective aspects. Thus, there exists the need to undertake the present study and address the issue of Muslim women in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

The second chapter focuses on the 9/11 terror attacks by Muslim jehadi groups and the post 9/11 scenario. It discusses how in the US and across Europe states tightened their security apparatus, the various laws that were passed and analyses their impact on the Muslim community at large and in France. The third chapter traces the background and status of Muslim women in France focusing on education, political participation, health and unemployment and their social status.. Chapter four deals with the headscarf debate in France. It is divided into four broad sections, the first section of this chapter deals with the significance of headscarf in Muslim society. The second section deals about the debate on headscarf which was started in 1989. and the third section throws light upon

the different views on the headscarf ban. The last section focuses on the national identity debate initiated by President Sarkozy. The last chapter is the conclusion which summarizes the findings of the study.

In course of the study a wide range of literature was used as reference. In theoretical literature there is an increasing focus on how liberal states should deal with increasing diversity. Joseph Raz for instance placed the autonomous individual who had the liberty to choose as the centre of the liberal state. But he was soon faced with the need to address the question of how liberal states should deal with communities that do not place the individual with rights as the centre, that valued the community more than the individual, how to deal with the 'illiberal'? Raz holds that even repressive cultures mean much to their members and unless such cultural communities physically harm the individual and if the community does not prohibit members to exit the liberal state should not interfere in the cultural practices of communities. Multiculturalists like Kymlicka, Parekh argue for the need of the liberal state to accept that diversity has transformed the understanding of 'national' from a homogeneous whole to a heterogeneous hybrid where both majority and minority cultures have the equal right to exist in the public domain. France is a classic example where the complexion of the 'national' has changed overtime.

Liberal State and Diversity

There exists today a rich body of work on state response to identity recognition claims. There are a number of works by Parekh in which he shows the inadequacy of liberalism with its focus on the individual to deal with identity claims. **Parekh (2006)** argues for a pluralist perspective on cultural diversity. Writing from both within the liberal tradition and outside of it as a critic, he challenges what he calls the "moral monism" of much of traditional moral philosophy, including contemporary liberalism-its tendency to assert that only one way of life or set of values is worthwhile and to dismiss the rest as misguided or false. He defends his pluralist perspective both at the level of theory and in subtle nuanced analyses of recent controversies. Thus, he offers careful and clear accounts of why cultural differences should be respected and publicly affirmed, why the separation of church and state cannot be used to justify the separation of religion and

politics. Rejecting naturalism, which posits that humans have a relatively fixed nature and that culture is an incidental, and "culturalism," which posits that they are socially and culturally constructed with only a minimal set of features in common, he argues for a dialogic interplay between human commonalities and cultural differences. This will allow, Parekh argues, genuinely balanced and thoughtful compromises on even the most controversial cultural issues in the new multicultural world in which we live.

Multicultural theory keeps the 'diversity within unity' at its core. **Will Kymlicka (1995)** talks about the accommodation of cultures and group differences in such a way that a person's group membership and membership in cultural community is not of any disadvantage to her. He identifies three kinds of minority rights that a state must recognize: the self government rights, polyethnic rights and representation rights. He believes that by 'protecting the common rights of all citizens' (civil and political; freedom of religion, speech, mobility, association and political organization) and 'accommodating cultural diversity through special legal and constitutional measures' the demand of national minorities and ethnic groups can be accommodated within a democratic setup.

Historical background of Muslims and Muslim women in France

The literature is also available on first the background of Muslim immigrants and Muslim women in France. **Jane Freedman (2005)** analyzes the way in which immigration policies for the integration of populations of immigrant origin have developed in France in recent years. He also examines the conceptions of immigration and citizenship in France, pointing to the development of the idea of immigration as a threat to national identity.

Tariq Modood and Panina Werbner (2000) raised the question of 'non-recognition' of Islam despite its being a second religion of France. Although the practice of religion is permitted- and there exists no constraints as far as this is concerned- it is nevertheless a fact that 'the Islamic presence has never been accepted by the majority of French people.

Cateilin Killen (2003) author of North African Women in France: Gender, Culture and Identity, examines the destructuring and restructuring effects of immigration on North African (Maghreb) women in France. Her focus on acculturation experienced by these women analytically intersects with socio- psychological and identity theories, feminists readings of race, immigration literature, and debates over assimilation. Killen has interviewed 45 Muslim women who, at different time have immigrated from diverts parts of North Africa and who vary in age, ethnicity and level of education By situating the women in the context of history of immigration in France, that is, in the relationship that France has had to the different countries in Meghreb. Her analysis yields and understanding not only of the variety of Islamic culture, practices, traditions and customs as constituted according to the ethnicity, class and geographical region in North Africa, but also how the migratory movement transpose these traditions within a colonially encased history that is refracted back on to France, even trasgenerationally.

Status of Muslim Women in France and the States' Role

A number of books highlight the role of the state in uplifting the status of Muslim women in France. One such work by **Ghazi Walid Falah and Caroline Rose Nagel (2005)** highlight the Muslim women's position and the gendered cultural politics taking place within the state and between the West and the Muslim countries their complex and often ambiguous roles within these cultural politics, and the diversity of their voices and viewpoints and the French Headscarf controversy is putting in this context.

Danielle Haase (2003) has stated that in order to understand the overlapping of social class/ race or ethnic origin and the condition of women in France, one must examine the principle of the indivisible, secular, democratic and social republic, as specified in Article 1 of the French constitution, founded on equality before the law of all citizens without any distinction of origin, race or religion. Within the secular framework certain specifically French struggles are located, which demonstrate not only that constitutional principles are not observed, but also that the very same principles may block access to equality.

Catherine Wihtol de Wenden (1998), explains the psychological, political and cultural adjustment of young Muslim women in France. Even though France has experienced increasing an inevitable feminization in its immigrant population since 1974, research has tended to ignore the role of, immigrant women especially Muslim women, in the migration process. Public attention has been diverted by concern over such relatively marginal issues as the headscarf affair, and insufficient attention has been paid to the important role Muslim women play in France. These women function as cultural mediators between the traditional culture of the sending country and the modern one of the host country. They see themselves as both tradition- bearers and integration proponents

Jonathan Laurance and Justin Vaisse (2006) argue that in France, as elsewhere, there are dozens of ways to be Muslim. They also portray a dynamic Muslim civil society, innovative of sometimes insufficient government policies, and encouraging signs of integration. They focused on the religion and culture as the dimension of the new and massive Muslim presence in France and discuss the last several decades of policy responses to the challenge of integrating Muslims and Islam into the social and institutional context of French politics. They methodically examine integration policies explore their origins and study whether they explicitly target Muslims or not. Many of the challenges of integration or most of them they argue have nothing to do with religion or Muslim culture rather they have 'everything to do with the poor social conditions and lack of educational capital of recent immigrants and their children and grandchildren.' By referring to "French Muslims" in non-religious context they admittedly succumbs to the convenience of shorthand and so emulates the recent trend among policy makers and community activists, though in the interest of providing clear reference points for the discussion of Islam in France.

Leslie J. Limage (2000) has traced the official discourse which proclaims that the state and its school promote a secular and equal opportunity for all and at the same time makes no allowance for cultural, linguistic, and religious or socio- economic diversity. He also examines the most recent attempts made by French government to address the longer terms needs and aspirations (especially religious) of immigrant population of Muslim

origin as it becomes clear that these populations are massively becoming French and have no further plans to return to countries of origin. He also reflects on the specificity of French approach to religious.

Jill Marshal (2008) investigates women's choices and personal freedom by reference to the European Court of Human Rights' jurisprudence on national laws banning the wearing of the Islamic headscarf by adult women. The article focuses on how ECHR law is used and misused to shape women's autonomy rights to develop and repress their own individual identities are impacted.

The psychological, political and cultural adjustment of young Muslim women in France is characterized by a great diversity of many persistence compromises. In all cultures women habitually have to do more adjusting, more coping and more compromising-but probably seldom as much as these Muslim women, who are both tradition-bearersa and integration proponents, cultural and genera-tional mediators. It is possible that the developments of recent postwar history (the growth of multiculturalism, the move toward a European Union, etc.) will bring further improve. **Catherine Wihtol de Wendon (1998),** examines the Muslim women status in France and their identification with Islam and examine the conflicts confronting the young women, especially the one that arises from the desire to be tradition-bearers while simultaneously promoting their careers.

The Headscarf Debate

Over the past decade Muslim women's veiling practices have come under the gaze of government's all over Europe. It has been vehemently contested by some governments and passionately defended by veil wearing women and their supporters. Intriguingly European governments have viewed the veil from very different political vantage points thus resulting in different institutional approaches, constraints, and regulations. European countries have attached different meanings to the veil, and while some countries might have similar views of its meaning, this has not necessarily translated into homogenous policy measures. Countries such as France and Turkey have issued a ban on the wearing of the veil in public institutions, Austria has no prohibitive regulations and only little public debate, and in the United Kingdom the decision rests with heads of schools to

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decide whether the veil can be worn. So, what is the meaning behind veiling in Europe? And why does it tantalize and cause such controversy over issues about: gender oppression, citizenship, neutrality of the state, and multiculturalism? And why has it come under the disciplinary practices of some European countries but not of others?

The available literature provides an insight into the headscarf controversy. **Adrein Katherine Wing (2005)** examined the background of the Muslim Headscarf and its reception in France and provides some suggestions for considering the Headscarf issue in France and emphasized the diverse views of Muslim girls and women with some modest suggestions. Considering the legal choices of other jurisdictions, contemplating remedies for spirit injury and empowering Muslim females are options that France and other societies might consider in the future.

Sean Mcloughlin and Jocelyne Cesari (2005) argues that today Islam has come to embody a representation of women that some find distasteful or loathsome. As a consequence a debate has emerged in Europe and especially in France regarding the Muslim headscarf, or *hijab*. He states that current interactions between Muslims and the more or less secularized public spaces of several European states, assessing the challenges such interactions imply for both Muslims and the societies in which they now live.

Harry Judge (2004) states the particular circumstances of French history explains why that nation has adopted an unusually severe policy in attempting to suppress the wearing in schools of the Muslim headscarf. The long struggle to create French identity and then to resolve the bitter conflicts between traditional supporters of the Catholic Church and those of the secular republic resulted in a distinctive connotation being acquired by number of commonly used words, of which most English translations are misleadingly inadequate. The events leading from the exclusion of three Muslim girls from a school in 1998 to the passing of the new law of 2004 are analyzed.

Caitlin Killian (2003) examines the headscarf affair to explore Muslim immigrant women's use of their place in French society and reveals that even those who disagree with French public opinion often invoke arguments that are more French then North

African. Caitlin claims that younger, well- educated women defend the headscarf as a matter of personal liberty and cultural expression. Older, poorly educated women either defend or reject the veil but never discuss the issue of secularism. A third group opposes the veil, arguing that the goal of school is integration.

Afsaneh Najmabadi (2006) throws a light upon the current struggle and debate in France over Muslim women's headscarf. He questioned that how can one Muslim woman be French? How can French women be Muslim? How can one be a secular and Muslim woman? He tries to answer these questions briefly. He framed the debate around three main issues: first is the issue of individual choice and women oppressions second is the domain of state sovereignty and third are transnational political implications.

Pascale Fournier and Gokce Yurdakul (2005) critically investigate the case of Muslim women with headscarf facing a French legislator. In reflecting upon the nature of power in producing subjectivity, and questioning its relation to sexed/asexualized female subject, they focus on the ways in which legal rules in French state have attempted to discipline, regulate and punish the body of the Muslim women, thereby producing her as a subject of anxious sexuality. They also examined that what identity politics can and cannot do for Muslim women, particularly with regard to distributional preoccupations. After having discussed the legal contexts, they examined whether identity politics by so perfectly capturing the multiple meanings of the headscarf ("the headscarf as a political threat," "the headscarf as symbol of gender oppressions," "the headscarf as a religious sign," "the headscarf as a form of terrorism,"), has, in fact, rendered invisible the distributional stakes of such display of identity ("the headscarf as related to socio-economic conditions").

Tarik Kulenovic (2006) explains the social role of Muslim women in a postmodern society through a public symbol of her identity- the veil. Muslim women manifestation of their Islamic denomination through veiling and wearing appropriate clothes signifies an expression of a new, Islamic shaped identity. This is a postmodern identity based on modernity rather than a fundamental reaction of modernity. The veil a public symbol of Muslim identity is often given a different meaning by its observers than the person actually wearing it. Therefore the intension of Kulenovic is to analyze the elements of a

particular postmodern, identity that a Muslim women's veil, as a public symbol represents.

John Richard Brown (2007) argues that the focus on headscarves came from a century old sensitivity to the public presence of religion in schools, feared links between public expressions of Islamic identity and radical Islam and a media driven frenzy that built support for a headscarf ban during 2003- 2004. Although the defense of secularity was cited as the law's major justification politicians, intellectuals, and the media linked the scarves to more concrete social anxieties—"communalism", political Islam, violence towards women.

Marina Lezreg (2009), makes an argument against veil. She argues veiling is not obligatory to satisfy Qu'ranic exhortations for modesty nor does it guarantee freedom from sexual harassment or assault. It a symbol of gender inequality as men are not encouraged to wear one to preserve their modesty. Her most detailed argument on veiling is that women's justification for doing so really are more mundane than religious upon closer examination and no one possibly can chose the veil of her own free will because of all the symbolism and meaning (both positive and negative) piled on the veil.

John Wallach Scott (2007), questioned, why the veil? What is about the headscarf that makes it the focus of controversy, the sign of something intolerable? The case of the French headscarf law is not just a local story. It allows to think more broadly about the terms on which democratic politics are organized and to analyze critically the ways in which the idea of a "clash of civilization" undermines the very democracy it is meant to promote.

Domonique Costus (2004), argues that through secularism France exhibits a uniqueness which distinguishes it not only from countries that religious pluralism and a state religion, but also from those which embrace separation of church and state with an asserted sense of accommodation. The March 15, 2004 statute offers the latest illustration of this unique conceptualization of in the context of the massive state- sponsored educational system. By prohibiting public school students from wearing conspicuous religious garb it revives the era of confrontational secularism that has been largely derailed by the enactment of

the law of 1905. Costus also explains that, as religious pluralism is intensifying in France, the implications of this unique approach to secularism are compounded by a particularly universalistic construction of equality.

Maria Lezreg (2009), states on the one hand, Muslim women have been represented as oppressed by their religion, typically understood as being fundamentally inimical to women's social progress. From this perspective, the veil has traditionally been discussed as the most tangible sign of women's "oppression." On the other hand, Muslim women have been described as the weakest link in Muslim societies, which should be targeted for political propaganda aimed at killing two birds with one stone: showing that Islam is a backward and misogynous religion, and underscoring the callousness or cruelty of the men who use Islam for political aims. In the view of Maria Lazreg, the veil, not from its overwrought and contrived exegetic religious angle, but as an essential part of trend that is largely organized and thus detrimental to women advancement.

Christian Joppke (2009), sees the Islamic headscarf as a challenge to liberalism. As liberalism has two phases, two opposite responses of the headscarf are equally possible within its ambit: toleration of headscarf, as in Britain; or its prohibition, as in France. Comparing France and Britain, Joppke throws into sharp relief the two liberalisms difficulties with the headscarf: in its ethical variant (France), liberalism risks to turn into its repressive opposites, whereas in the procedural variant (Britain) liberalism encourages illiberal extremism.

The methodology that the study employs is deductive in nature. Reference to all relevant material pertaining to the issue of Muslim women in French state shall be made. Thereafter the matter is organized under various themes. The proposed study shall be descriptive and analytical in nature.

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary sources include documents and reports released by various institutions, like, *Pew Forum of Religion and Public Life and Open Society Institute* and different bodies of European

Union like (EUMC). Secondary sources include published work in the form of books, academic journals, articles, newspapers and internet sources.

Chapter 2:

9/11 and the Resurgence of Identity Debate in France
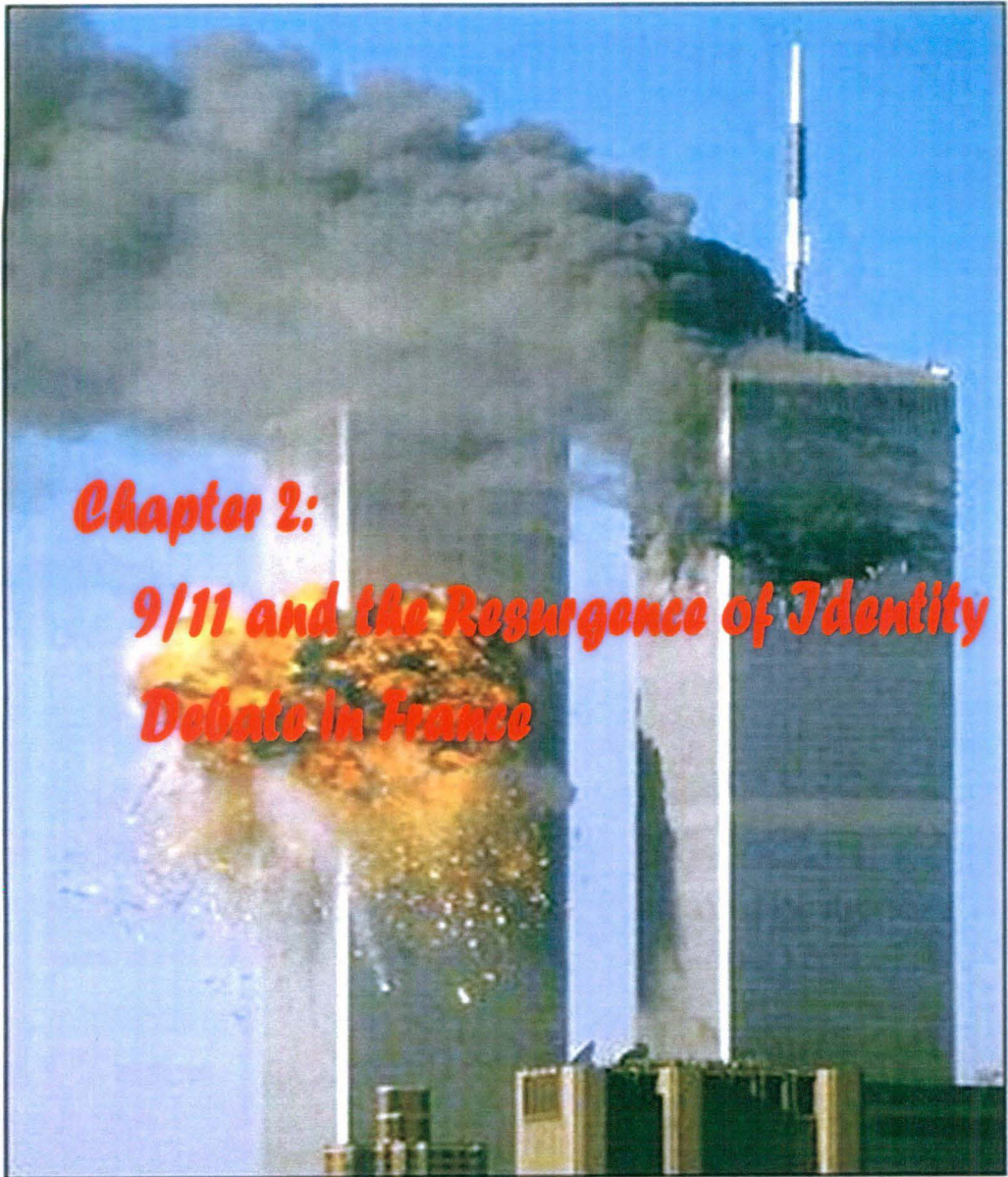
9/11 and the Resurgence of Muslim identity in France

Introduction

In contemporary international politics 2001 September 9 attack of terrorists on symbols of American economic and military might is a defining moment. The heightened threat perception and security concerns impacted states and how they conducted their affairs substantially. Approach to social diversity and its management were also significantly impacted. Since the attackers were Muslims the aftermath witnessed specific repercussions on the community. This chapter will begin with a broad overview of what happened across states before focusing on the specific case of France. So to begin with the 9/11 incident and policies and measures undertaken by the United States government to combat terrorism will be discussed. The next section will focus on the European reaction towards the September 11 attack and its effect on the Muslim community in Europe. In the 70s some European states toyed with the idea of multiculturalism as a response to increasing diversity that their societies had come to reflect. In the aftermath of the attack 'multiculturalism' as a policy stood questioned and states increasingly spoke in the language of integration. Multiculturalism in theory and practice is discussed next to comprehend the changes following 9/11. The last section begins by looking at the historical background of Muslims in France and goes on to thereafter analyzing the developments vis-à-vis this community in France.

I. 9/11 attack and the United States Policy

In the US, and indeed in much of the western world, the attacks of 9/11 have been declared as the most catastrophic event ever to occur in recent history. After September 11 the whole scene of the world has changed. The September 11 attacks resulted in a new extraordinary emphasis by the Bush administration on combating terrorism (The National Security Archive 2001). Immediately after the attacks Bush delivered a televised address

from the Oval office, declaring, "Terrorists attack can shake the foundation of our biggest building, but they cannot touch the foundation of America, these acts shatter steel but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve" (CNN News 2001). After the attack the 9/11 Commission was set on November 27, 2002. The Commission issued its final report on, July 19, 2004. The task of the Commission was to study the impact of the event and develop responses. A major recommendation of the report was that the US government should identify and prioritize actual or potential terrorist sanctuaries and, for each, to employ a realistic strategy to keep possible terrorist insecure and on the run, using all elements of national power. The 9/11 Commission identified six primary regions that serve or could serve as terrorists sanctuaries. These included Western Pakistan and the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border region; Southern or Western Afghanistan; the Arabian Peninsula; specially Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and the nearby horn of Africa including Somalia and extending southwest into Kenya; Southeast Asia, from Thailand to the Southern Philippines to Indonesia; West Africa including Nigeria and Mali; and European cities with expatriate Muslim communities, especially in central and eastern Europe (CRS Report 2005).

As the attackers were Muslim so in the immediate aftermath the community faced harassment in their everyday life. Mosques have been targeted and unruly mobs, egged on by rightwing politicians like Sarah Palin, Newt Gingrich as well as the rightwing media (Fox News and Zionist-owned publications) have declared that mosques do not belong to America. Some United States churches even wanted to burn copies of Qur'an on the anniversary of 9/11 in 2010. The United States courts stepped in and declared such acts illegal although it has not deterred American right wingers from holding rituals near the site of 9/11 that whip up mass hysteria. For this year commemoration ceremony, the racist Dutch politician Geert Wilders has been invited to spew venom against Muslims. Munafias among Muslims (of both genders) and non-Muslims promoters have also jumped on the bandwagon. In the name of security, the United States and its Western allies have declared war on Islam and Muslims.

II. Reaction in Europe to the Attack

Muslims constitute 7 to 8 per cent of the population in France and upwards of 6 per cent in the Netherlands, and in its cities like Rotterdam they come close to being a majority (Fukuyama 2006).

Table2.1

Muslim Population in Europe:

Country	Number (millions)	Percent of Population
France	4.5	7.5
Germany	3.0	3.6
Britain	2.5	2.5
Italy	1.0	1.7
Netherlands	1.0	6.2
Spain	0.5	1.2
EU Total	13.0	3.2

Source: Economist, 6 March 2004.

European countries and the European Union (EU) have been reliable partners for the United States in the fight against terrorism; they have significantly strengthened their legal and administrative abilities to counter terrorist's years since September 11, and made improving law enforcement cooperation with the United States a top priority. The 2001 attack and the subsequent discovery of Al-Qaeda cells in Europe shocked European leaders and public. Immediate and unprecedented European efforts following September 11 to track down suspects and freeze financial assets, often in close cooperation with US authorities, produced numerous arrests in Western Europe, specially, Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, Spain and United Kingdom. Germany and Spain were identified as key logistical and planning bases for the United States. As a result, it quickly became evident that Europe's different legal systems, the largely open borders of the fifteen member EU states, liberal asylum laws, and strong privacy protections allowed terrorists and other criminals to move around easily (CRS Report 2005).

Following the incident Muslims have been significantly affected. Although, US and other western officials have periodically said that they are not targeting all Muslims, but their policies have belied this so clearly that it leaves little doubt all Muslims have been declared the enemy (Bangash 2010). Europe has a sizeable number of Muslim immigrants; more than nine million Muslims currently live in Western Europe, which makes them the largest religious minority in the region. For some time now there has been considerable debate in various European states as to how best to recognize Muslims religious rights and these questions have become even more significant and contentious in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

It was being increasingly pointed out that the large Muslim populations in many Western European countries often provided cover for terrorists cells as well as fertile recruiting grounds, drawing specially for young, disenfranchised Muslim population that have not been well-integrated into mainstream European society. The lack of sizable Muslim communities in Most Central and Eastern European countries had made this region less of a known sanctuary, although laxer border controls and weaker governments, especially in Balkans, still pose concerns. The March 11, 2004 terrorist bombing in Madrid, Spain further confirmed that Europe remains both "a target and base" for Al-Qaeda and Al-

Qaeda inspired terrorists. To respond to these threats, European government have sought to tighten their domestic laws against terrorism and terrorist financing, and many have taken steps to reform immigration and asylum laws to prevent terrorists from gaining footholds in their countries. Especially notable are EU initiatives since September 11 to boost police and judicial cooperation, bring down traditional barriers among law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and harmonize national laws against terrorism. Among other steps, the EU has established a common definition of terrorism and a list of terrorist groups, an EU arrest warrant, enhanced tools to investigate terrorist financing, and new measures to strengthen external EU border controls. The EU has been working to strengthen Europol, its fledgling joint police body, and Eurojust, a new unit charged with improving prosecutorial coordination in cross-border crimes. In the wake of the Madrid attacks, the EU created what the CRS report of 2005 terms as a new "counterterrorism czar" to help further improve internal EU law enforcement cooperation and intelligence sharing. In addition, the EU has sought to build ties with U.S. police, judicial, and intelligence authorities to complement and enhance ongoing bilateral cooperation. Washington has welcomed these efforts, hoping they will ultimately help root out terrorist cells in Europe that could be planning other attacks against the United States or its interests. Europol has stationed two liaison officers in Washington, DC. The United States and the EU have worked to bring their respective terrorist lists closer together. Other steps taken to improve U.S. - EU cooperation include two U.S. - Europol information-sharing agreements, and two new treaties on extradition and mutual legal assistance (MLA). Once ratified, U.S. officials say the extradition accord will harmonize and modernize bilateral U.S.-European extradition treaties; the MLA treaty will give U.S. authorities access to European bank account information, speed the processing time for MLA requests, and permit joint investigations (CRS Report 2005).

There have been signs of trouble across Europe. Madrid bombings of 11 March, 2004 have had a major political impact, propelling the opposition Socialist Party to an upset victory over the conservative government of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, a staunch U.S. ally, in the general elections held three days later. As a result of the bombings, Aznar's government, which initially sought to lay the blame on Basque separatists who have conducted a terrorist campaign against the Spanish government for more than 20
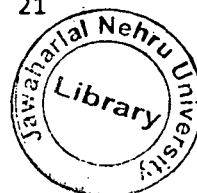
years, was swept out of office by a voter backlash (Phillips 2004) In Amesterdam on November 2, 2004 the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered by Mohammad Bouyeri in Amesterdam and on 7 July, 2005 the London bombings left 52 dead and hundreds injured. These events and attacks result in spreading suspicion and, time and again, in mindless counter-violence against other innocent people. In the Netherlands, for example, several mosques were torched as a 'revenge' for the assassination of Theo van Gogh, and the Arab newspaper al Jazeera reports that British Muslims have received hate mail, threatening them with acts of revenge for the London blasts. The President of the Muslim Association of Britain, Ahmed Sheikh, feared that women wearing Islamic headscarves (hijab) could be in particular danger. Such reactions followed though on a number of occasion's leaders across Europe emphasized that the West's fight was not against Islam and Muslims in general, and that the extremists are actually only a small group. They appeared well aware that failing to do this, would mean identifying every Muslim citizen as a potential terrorist, this in the end would strengthen the very forces they were up against. More and more citizens who happen to be Muslims would be further alienated. This would mean turning a substantial part of these societies into a recruitment base for Osama bin Laden and his followers. Another result of such attacks is the immediate call for tougher laws and more power for law enforcement agencies. Prime Minister Blair hinted early that new laws would be rushed through Parliament which would include provisions for new offences such as condoning or glorifying acts of terrorism. These accelerating plans for tougher anti-terrorist laws under the fresh impression of a terrorist attack had the danger of sacrificing certain democratic rights for the elusive aim of total security. Indeterminate detention for terrorist suspects is probably the most doubtful of such measures for such a law facilitates dealing with persons suspected to be either terrorists themselves or at least supporters of terrorists but against whom there is not enough evidence to bring them to justice. Here, one should take a look at Spain as a role model on how to deal with terrorism without sacrificing democratic values (Lehr 2005) and the riots that consumed the French banlieues in November 2005.

III. Multiculturalism as a response to diversity in Europe

The notion of multiculturalism is quite recent. Nearly unknown in the 1970s, it grew in significance and has become omnipresent in every discussion of cultural diversity since the 1990s. For quite a while, multiculturalism predominantly has a positive connotation until it came under heavy attack after the events of 9/11 (Semprini 1997). Cultural diversity in modern society takes many forms of which three are most common. First, although it members share a broadly common culture, some of them either entertain different beliefs and practices concerning particular areas of life or evolve relatively distinct way of life of their own. Second, some members of society are highly critical of some of the central principles or values of the prevailing culture and seek to reconstitute it along appropriate line. Third most modern societies also include several self-conscious and more or less well organized communities entertaining and living by their own different systems of beliefs and practices. They include the newly arrived immigrants, such long established communities as Jews, Gypsies and Amish, various religious communities and such territorially concentrated cultural groups as indigenous peoples, the Basques, Catalans, the Scots, the Welsh and the Quebecois. The term multicultural society or multiculturalism is generally used to refer to a society that exhibits all three and other kind of diversity. A multicultural society is one that includes two or more cultural communities. It might respond to its cultural diversity in or two ways, each in turn capable of taking several forms. It might welcome and cherish it, make it central to its self understanding, and respect the cultural demands of its constituent communities; or it might seek to assimilate these communities into its mainstream culture either wholly or substantially (Parekh 2000). Multiculturalism is not about difference and identity *per se* but about those that are embedded in the sustained by culture; that is a body of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of people understand themselves and the world and organize their individual and collective lives. Multiculturalism is then about cultural diversity or culturally embedded differences.

In Multicultural societies dress has becomes a sight of a most heated debate and struggles. As a condensed and visible symbol of cultural identity it matters much to the individuals involved, but for that very reason it arouses all manner of conscious and

unconscious fears and resentments within wider society. One could actually argue that acceptance of the diversity of dress in multicultural society is a good indicator of whether or not the latter is at ease with itself. In 1972, British Parliament passed a law empowering the Minister of Transport to require motorcyclist to wear crash-helmets. When the minister did so, Sikhs campaigned against it and similar to the protest over the headscarf issue in France in 1989. Multiculturalists would argue that in states with established minorities the state might sometimes need to go further and grant not only different but also additional rights to some groups or individuals. This may be necessary either to equalize them with the rest or to achieve such worthwhile collective goals as political integration, social harmony and encouragement of cultural diversity. If some groups are for long marginalized or suppressed or lack the confidence and opportunity to participate as equals in mainstream society and are subjected to vigorous assimilation, there is need to give them rights not available to others. Such additional rights help draw the groups involved into the mainstream of the society and give substance to the principle of equal citizenship (Parekh 2000).

At its core multicultural theory argues for the diversity within unity. Will Kymlicka talks about the accommodation of cultures and group differences in such a way that a person's group membership and membership in cultural community is not of any disadvantage to her. He identifies three kinds of minority rights that a state must recognize: the self government rights for national minorities, polyethnic rights for immigrant groups and representation rights for both.. He believes that by 'protecting the common rights of all citizens' (civil and political; freedom of religion, speech, mobility, association and political organization) and 'accommodating cultural diversity through special legal and constitutional measures' the demand of national minorities and ethnic groups can be accommodated within a democratic setup.

In European context, the notion of multiculturalism was explicitly adopted by the Swedish government at the end of 1970s in order to deal with the inflow and settlement of immigrant workers (Runblom, 1994). The Dutch were also influenced by this approach but defined their creed as that of the 'minority policy' (Entzinger, 1993). In the UK multiculturalism formed a pillar of Labor's response to diversity, 'a community of

communities' as the Parekh Report of 2000 characterized.(Parekh 2000, rethinking Multiculturalism). Germany with a steady flow of immigrants refused until very recently to acknowledge its immigrant nature though in 1970s it did establish a   France, with its strong republican tradition opposed the principles of multiculturalism, differences were to be tolerated in the private realm but not to be recognized in the public realm. However, some scholars argue that it is on many accounts is open to multicultural policies locally (Bousetta, 1997).

According to Roy, identity becomes problematic precisely when Muslims leave traditional Muslim societies and immigrate to Western Europe. One's identity as a Muslim is no longer supported by the outside society. On the contrary there is a strong pressure to conform to the Western society's prevailing cultural norms. The question of authenticity arises in a way that it never did in the traditional society, since there is now a gap between one's inner identity as a member of a Muslim cultural community and one's behavior vis-a-vis the surrounding society. Muslim identity thus becomes a matter of inner belief rather than outward conformity to social practice. Roy points out that this constitutes the "Protestantization" of Muslim belief, where salvation lies in a subjective state that is at odds with one's outward behavior.

Liberal societies in Europe like the Netherlands, France and Germany, the United Kingdom are known for having weak identities. Their celebration of pluralism and multiculturalism could go far enough to, argue that their identity is to have no identity. European some scholars agree therefore argue with some justice that they face a difficult problem in integrating their immigrants - the majority of whom are Muslims. In the new societies Muslims on their part are caught between the identity of their parents and the identity of the country in which they live.   Europe's failure to integrate Muslim immigrants is many scholars argue a ticking time bomb. It has already resulted in terrorism and violence. Resolution of this problem will they argue require a two-pronged approach. It involves mutual give and take, immigrant minorities and their descendants need to change their behavior and so do members of the dominant national communities.

Fukuyama argues that the first prong of the solution is to recognize that the old multicultural model was a failure in such countries as the Netherlands and Britain. It needs to be replaced by more energetic efforts to integrate non-Western populations into a common liberal culture. The old multicultural model was based on group recognition and group rights. Out of a misplaced sense of respect for cultural differences, it ceded entirely too much authority to cultural communities to define rules of behavior for their own members. Liberalism cannot ultimately be based on group rights, because not all groups he argues uphold liberal values. The civilization of the European Enlightenment, of which contemporary liberal democracy is the heir, cannot be culturally neutral, since liberal societies have their own values regarding the equal worth and dignity of individuals. Cultures that do not accept these basic premises do not deserve equal protection in a modern liberal democracy. Members of immigrant communities and their offspring deserve to be treated equally *as individuals,* not as members of cultural communities. Thus, there is no reason for a Muslim girl to be treated differently under the law from a Christian or Jewish one, whatever the feelings of her relatives.

The other prong of the solution to the problem of Muslim integration concerns the expectations and behavior of the majority communities in each European country. National identity has not disappeared, and it often continues to be understood in ways that make it inaccessible to newcomers who do not share the ethnicity and religious background of the native-born. As a first step, rules for naturalization and legal citizenship need to be put on a non-ethnic basis and the conditions made less onerous. Beyond this, however, each European nation-state needs to create a more inclusive sense of national identity that can better promote a common sense of citizenship. National identity has always been socially constructed - it revolves around history, symbols, heroes, and the stories that a community tells about itself. The history of twentieth century nationalism has put discussions of national identity off-limits for many Europeans, but this is a dialogue that needs to be reopened in light of the de facto diversity of contemporary European societies (Fukuyama 2006).

Following the various terror attacks already discussed, in all European states whether robust or reluctant followers of multicultural policies, multicultural practices were increasingly questioned. It had it was pointed out allowed groups to live ghettoized lives in their own communities with very little understanding of the new environments and values in which they had now come to lead their lives. Fukuyama's argument found increasing takers. Others like Bassam Tibbi evolved the concept of 'Euro-Islam'. Muslim scholars like Tibbi have pointed out the conflict between *laicite* and *sharia* are value related conflicts (Tibbi:2008). For Tibbi the conflict can only be resolved through 'Euro-Islam.' Tibbi cautions Europe to understand the meaning and aim of 'jihad.' He argues that in Islam migration is a religious duty. It is not simply geographical relocation but relocation with a specific purpose of proselytization and creating *amsar* as *hijra* settlements. He further cautions that the goal of the Islamists is to replace the existing order based on secular foundations. Political Islam tries peacefully to do what jihadi terror aims at establish an Islamic state, a new world order. It is not only against the West but more fundamentally against the idea of the West, Western values and the rational worldview underlying them. Given the Islamists agenda of peaceful systemic transplantation Tibbi vociferously argues against multiculturalism which he believes is used by the Islamists as a transitory step on the road to Islamization. The majority of Muslim immigrants living in Europe are ordinary Muslims, not Islamists, but they are not culturally integrated and do not belong to the European polity. The multiculturalists' view of two different worlds expected to live peacefully side by side Tibbi observes, is a deception. Europe he argues needs a 'double track strategy', dialogue with pro democracy Muslims who do not subscribe to jihadism and shariatization and security approach for dealing with Islamism and its jihadist branch.

Since 9/11 Islam's public status has become markedly less tolerant. In Europe, discussions around the issue are accompanied by the often aggressive re-evaluation of multiculturalism as a social policy and practice. The crisis of multiculturalism comes at a time of heightened security awareness as a result of the events of New York, Mdrid and London as mentioned above. European citizenship is disorientated increasingly linking a religion (Islam) with violence and anti- Western values (Madood 2006).

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All cultures are patriarchal, some more so than others, and that cultural minorities claiming group rights or multicultural accommodation are often more patriarchal in their practices than the surrounding cultures (Phillips 2007). In such a scenario giving the groups rights would mean to leave the women at the mercy of extremely oppressive policies. The place of women and their rights to exercise choice in Islam has of late been a centre of vociferous debates. Many politicians' especially right wingers are especially critical of gender relations in Islam and as practices in the Muslim communities. The headscarf issue, female circumcision and honor killings have been central to these debates. The debates (discussed in subsequent chapters) are especially important in the context of France.

IV. Response to 9/11 in France

The impact of 9/11 on France was in many ways similar to that of other states in Europe. After 9/11 security became the primary political concern of the government. Within months, in November 2001, the law on day-to-day security was passed to fight against terrorism. In the course of deliberations on this law, the French National Assembly introduced a whole series of categories to serve in the fight against terrorism. 9/11 also lead to the establishment of, and elections for, the French Council on Islam, whose primary mission was to be a barricade against the 'bad' 'fundamentalist' Muslims who posed a threat to national and international security. The March 2004 a law prohibiting the wearing of religious symbols in the public schools was another example of such kind of law which was made for the security purpose of the state.

Some women stopped wearing hijab temporarily after 9/11. Many were pressed by their husbands to do so, at least until the situation settled down. Some religious figures, whose authority was accepted by some women and contested by others, issued statement after 9/11 those women who felt in harm's way, could refrain from wearing hijab. Many other women carried on with life in hijab, but, aware that they were the potential targets of the attacks shifted their patterns of movement in public space and exercised greater caution in their everyday lives. (Cainkar, 2009: 254).

V. Background of Muslims in France: Arrival and Settlement

France has an area of 547,026 square kilometers and, in 1971, a population of 54,350,000 people. Today It is administratively divided into twenty-two regions. The majority of its Muslim population is of colonial origin. By 1900 the French Empire included a multitude of Muslim countries, the important of them being Algeria. But until then, Muslim immigration to France had remained negligible. Indeed in 1900, there were only 1,000 Muslims in France. They number increased to 6,000 in 1912. After World War 1, a severe man power shortage was felt in France and to make up for this Algerian immigration was encouraged. Thus in 1924, the Muslim population reached 120,000 but by 1936 it fell to 70, 000 due to the economic recession. Muslim immigration into France took a new upward trend after World War II, with the Muslim population reaching 240,000 in 1950. The greatest immigration to France of Muslim populations started, however, after the independence of the colonies, especially Algeria. By 1971, the Muslim population surpassed two million people making it the second religion of the country after Roman Catholicism. By 1982 this figure reached about 2.5 million people making it in number, the second largest Muslim population of Europe after Yugoslavia. Of the 2.5 million Muslims in France in 1982, about 1,960,000 were of North-African origin. The others came from Black Africa, Yugoslavia, The Arab East, Turkey and Iran. There were also about 70,000 Muslims of French ethnic origin. Indeed, the trend of conversion to Islam for two or three generations. Most Muslims of France were from the Maliki School. Among the Muslims immigrants, about 600,000 were French citizens. Their majority, about 450,000, consists of Harkis of Algeria and their descendants (Harkis were Muslim soldiers in the French army who fought against the Algerian revolution). given these historical linkages, French is understood by most Muslims in France. Muslims are found in all parts of the France. (Kettani 1986: 35-36).

At present, there are three to five million Muslims in France, and cities like Paris Marseille, Lille, Lyon and Roubaix have highest number of Muslims (as shown in table 2.2)

Table 2.2

Cities in France with the Highest Muslim Population:

Populations	%
Paris	10- 15
Marseille	25
Lille	5
Lyon	8- 12
Roubaix	50

Source: Jonathan Lawrence and Justin Vassie, "Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France", (2006).

The French High Council of Integration estimates France is home to 4 million to 5 million Muslims defined by culture rather than religious observance of whom up to half have French citizenship. Of the Muslim total, almost 3 million are of North African origin or ancestry, with 1.5 million from Algeria, 1 million from Morocco, and the rest from Tunisia. Of the other Muslims, Turks probably number about 350,000, sub- Saharan Africans about 250,000, and assorted Middle Easterners (Iranians and Kurds, as well as Arabs) the remainder. France's Muslims make up at most one in twelve of the population and its Arabs one in twenty (Maillard 2005).

According to Millard France's immigration policy is at crossroads as a result of three factors considerations- first, is the logic of values, of political principles that distinguishes among political asylum, labor migration, and population immigration, and guarantees residence to the immigrant. Second is the logic of demographic politics, based on the principle that France needs population to remain or become again a world power. Young people likely to start families or with young families are therefore welcome. Their

children, born in France or coming at an early age, will be raised and educated in France. Furthermore, some demographers differentiate among the ethnic groups that are more likely to be integrated or assimilated into French society. Third is an economic logic, which is looking for male, single, flexible, usually low-paid workers preferably in good health who can adapt to the contradictory needs of the various economic sectors (Millard 2005).

Like other European counterparts France in the post World War II period set itself to the huge task of reconstruction. The decree of 2 November 1945 formalized the major principles of immigration policy Like in other European states (instance the UK) the implicit preference of the decree of 2 November 1945 and of all subsequent pragmatic decisions that were made by the French administration in charge of immigration was to encourage and facilitate the migration of Europeans to France. However, they were not enough in number to meet the labor needs of France. The need could be filled in by the Algerian Muslims who had French citizenship and were allowed to circulate freely between France and Algeria as part of an. exceptional arrangement for the Algerian Muslim French justified by the "blood debt" of France toward the Algerians in two world wars. But soon the French authorities were divided over how to organize the flow of migrants from Algeria. The Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Labor competed to get the upper hand on the management of the migrants, although in principle, being French citizens, the workers from Algeria were not considered as needing a special institution to take up their concerns. The affairs pertaining to the migrants from Algeria were spread through various ministries, but the Interior Ministry was to play a key role as the rebellion gained momentum in Algeria and the National Liberation Front (NLF) waging an Algerian war in France through its militants. The French authorities became aware of the fact that the poor living conditions of the Algerian workers in France had to be improved dramatically and constructed "bachelors' residences." Despite these improvements, the number of sympathizers for the cause of the Algerian independence increased. At the same time, the social function aimed at the *assimilation* of the Algerian workers was replaced by a policy of *control*, including a policy of monitoring Algerian immigration in 1957 and 1958 (Millard 2005).

Maurice Bougès-Maunory proclaimed in 1958 as "the indefectible belonging of the population of Algerian origin to the national community." This was a change in perspective, since the phrase implied a certain distance from a population that was supposed to have been assimilated into the French people. The Muslim community, therefore, was no longer part of the national community. It was linked with it, as a colony could be with the mother country. Thus, the Muslim community became heterogeneous in the double meaning of the word. It was a foreign body in the nation and it was composed of elements of a different nature. It followed that the Ministry of the Interior would have to separate the "straight" from the "crooked" migrants. Social considerations came back with de Gaulle's speech in Constantine on 3 October 1958. The general referred to the notion that the people of Algeria were "full-fledged Frenchmen." Algerian workers who could not find access to bachelors' residences or families without housing had settled in makeshift shantytowns stigmatized by the propaganda of the NLF. About 14,000 single workers and 1,800 families from Algeria lived in the shantytowns of Lyons, Marseilles, or the Paris area; more than 130,000 people were considered as not having adequate housing and lived in overcrowded, furnished rental units. Housing had become a crucial issue of the Algerian migration to France. However, the authorities then had only the housing of the bachelor workers in mind. Family housing did not look like a priority, but the tensions in Algeria in the 1950s had triggered a migration of families, rising from three thousand to twenty thousand between 1953 and 1960.6 These families did not have access to housing because of a lack of available apartments and their lack of assimilation. Thus special public funds were raised to build halfway houses. The French authorities in their negotiations with the NLF had a mind to trade improved status of the Algerian immigrants for the future status of the Europeans living in Algeria. Besides, the post–World War II economic boom was now in full swing and the French economy was ever more in need of labor at a time when Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland were also hunting for cheap labor. The Algerian workers had become indispensable to the French economy in sectors like public contracting, foundries, and textiles. The Évian Agreements guaranteed the *pieds-noirs* — the million or so European settlers named after the color of their leather boots at the beginning of colonization in Algeria — their civil rights, religion, language, and property. The Algerian workers living in France wanted

the same rights as the French citizens except for political rights. The negotiators had discussed a situation that was never to exist, that of a million *pieds-noirs* living in an independent Algeria. But nobody had foreseen that thirty years later there would be about the same number of Algerians living in France. Free circulation between the two countries was the core of the matter. It was meant to safeguard French political interests in Africa and keep an influence on that continent. Thus the principle of free circulation, which was seen as a tool of France's African policy, was extended to all Africa countries through a series of special agreements. The extension of the exceptional regime of the Algerian Muslim French to all the nationals of the former French Union was in line with the liberal economic logic of the postwar boom. But as a consequence, social services were extended to all immigrants. In a way it was a legacy of the Algerian war. With the downturn of the economy linked to the oil shortage in the early 1970s, France shifted from growth to recession. This had dramatic effects on the social welfare of immigrants and raised political concerns over immigration policy. Two questions were tackled: the return laws and illegal immigration. Labor migration came to stop, and the level of immigration started decreasing. Return laws failed to achieve their purpose. As to illegal immigration, it has become a larger European problem with the end of border controls within the Shenghen area. The largest source of immigration to France in the early 2000s is family reunification or *regroupement familial*. It is a legally different concept from the American idea of family reunification, since the purpose of the *regroupement* is to allow the family of the immigrant worker to join him — not the legal right of a French citizen to have his parents and certain relatives join him. Thus the *regroupement* means mainly women coming for marriage or a wife and children joining their husband (Millard 2005).

For centuries immigrants have made up an important of the French working class, and in particular the unskilled, industrial workforce. And from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, immigration became a massive phenomenon as the beginning of real industrialization proved how much France needed foreign workers to supplement its own workforce, with government as well as industrial leaders actively encouraging immigration. As Georges Mauco, a demographer commented in 1932: 'only the

introduction of new element, coming from the outside, would be sufficient to nourish the demographic and economic structure of the country. It was clear that immigration, and essentially working-class immigration, was a necessity'. In fact, although governments took responsibility for organizing the diplomatic relations surrounding immigration, and for signing conventions with neighboring European countries to govern migration into France, the actual recruitment of foreign workers was handled by a specialized private organization, the SGI *(Société générale d'immigration)*. This delegation for the organization of practicalities of immigration away from political institutions and towards private labor- market institutions demonstrates the way that immigration was perceived primarily as a labor market issue, and one to be resolved by employers, with government controlling only the very high- level diplomatic issues involves. However although employers' needs for labor seem paramount in propelling the demand for immigrant labor, immigration was not perceived solely as the importation of labor for French industry, but also as closely link to the necessity of repopulation of the country- necessary for the productivity but also for defense and security. France and continual worries about under- population, and as pro- nationalist policies achieved little tangible result, immigration was seen as one solution to the problem of repopulating the country. The migratory phenomena was so great during the first decades of the twentieth century that during the 1920s (Freedman 2004).

As Alain Juppé notes, the French mainstream was paradoxically unprepared for the settlement of 4 million Muslim immigrants in France. The paradox lies in the fact that France had been a major "Muslim" power for more than a century, with moreover a long tradition of Arab and Islamic studies. Indeed, without going as far back as the Crusades or Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt, France and the Muslim world have always had significant cultural, political, and commercial contacts, especially through the Ottoman Empire. These links deepened with the colonization of Algeria and other parts of Africa from 1830 onward. The French colonial authorities had put in place a structured organization of Muslim worship in Algeria, with the French colonial prefects being endowed with important powers of nomination in the mosques. Furthermore, as the Islamic graves of French military cemeteries testify today, about one hundred thousand Muslim soldiers died for France during World War I. The thankful French colonial power

erected the Mosque of Paris in the heart of the capital in 1926. However, the scarce Muslim population living in metropolitan France illuminates the fact that practically no places of Muslim worship had been built prior to the 1905 Separation Law between State and Church in France. This scarcity also explains why there had not been any state-organized Muslim consistory in France or why the bulk of the native French population has been so little familiar with the characteristics and traditions of Islam (Millard 2005)

Most of the Muslims of France occupy the less attractive occupations and make up the 'proletariat' of the French cities. In principle and in appearance, the rights of Muslims as a individuals are respected by French law. However as a community Muslims are suffering in France from an anti-Islamic attitude which may be traced back to the time of Crusades, and by a racism reminiscent of the colonial period. The influence of the Muslim community in France was negligible in practically all the fields, especially if one were to compare it to much smaller Jewish and Protestant communities. Until 1968, there was practically no religious organization of Muslim community, and Muslims practiced their religion privately. There has been a large mosque in Paris since 1030, but it was never controlled by the Muslim community in France. The efforts at organization started on a local scale as an increasing number of Muslims settled in the country and became concerned about the religious future of their children. Spontaneously religious associations were formed, establishing mosques and Quranic schools for children. The buildings of mosques and schools were often very modest, but the effort was sincere and the results were encouraging. The number of such mosques reached 410 in 1982 (Kettani 1986: 36-37). At present there are 16,00 mosques and Muslim prayer halls in France (BBC News 2003).There was no national organization for Muslims in France, no schools for imams or for the Muslim children, and no Council of Imams. But today, UOIF (Union of Islamic Organization of France and CFCM *(Conseil Français du Culte Musulman)* are the organizations made for the Muslims in France.

France has had assimilation's approach toward immigration. Immigrants were expected to learn French and to conform to French values in public. Muslims have begun to challenge this assimilation approach. France on the contrary just as other developed

industrial countries of Europe is debating the best way to integrate minority populations. Thus in the fall of 1994, the French government officially banned girls who wear "ostentatious" headscarves from attending public schools. Some Islamic associations immediately attacked the headscarf ban as a symbol of French intolerance for minorities; 22 percent of the Muslims polled in October 1994 thought that Muslim girls should be allowed to wear headscarves to school. One-third of the Muslims polled agreed that integration into French society means that an individual becomes less Muslim.

Muslim girls in France face special challenges. At home, boys are favored, but in school, Muslim girls reportedly do better than Muslim boys because they are treated more equally than at home. Many Muslim families reportedly arrange marriages for their daughters at age 18 and, if the girl objects, she sometimes must make a break from her family. Other girls go to the other extreme, becoming fundamentalist to gain power within their families. On March 21, 1994 the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights issued its annual report on human rights in France. The report expressed alarm over the continued spread of intolerance toward foreigners, especially toward those of North African origin. The Commission reiterated its criticisms of a series of laws passed in 1993 tightening controls on immigration and restricting access to the French nationality. One of the laws passed in 1993 tightened the regulations on marriages between immigrants and French citizens. Immigrants married for more than one year to a French citizen, or who are parents of a child born in France, generally cannot be deported. Previously, the government granted long-term residence cards to such immigrants. Under the 1993 law, the government rarely grants work, study or residence permits. The two-year-old law, according to a government spokesperson, was designed to stop marriages of convenience. Mayors have the power to review marriage applications and refuse those they think are for convenience. An organization called Lune de Miel says that the law has left many partners in honest marriages between an immigrant and French citizen without access to social services and employment (Migration News 2000).

The Muslim population in France constitutes approximately five to ten percent of the people and is very diverse, coming from regions of the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia), the Middle East, Turkey, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. In addition to the sheer number of Muslim immigrants who have entered the country and are putting down roots, more and more individuals of European descent are converting to Islam as well. Of the many Muslims in France, the number of those who have immigrated and gained French citizenship is not great. Only fifteen percent of Algerian and Moroccan immigrants and one –third of Tunisian immigrants have become French citizen after only five years of permanent residence. Acceptance by white French society is not any easier for those who gain French citizenship. Unfortunately, discrimination and hostility within France towards French citizens continue based on appearance, dress, names, and religion. According to one immigrant from Mexico, "[i]mmigrant can be French on paper, but citizenship [is] on paper only." The same individual also said there is significant discrimination in housing and employment, where more requirements are placed on people with darker skin in an attempt to weed out those who are not "truly" French. While there has always been some political and cultural opposition to Muslim infusion into France from the former colonies, the most recent vocal objections have come about as Muslims have attempted to "create an Islamic identity with local institutional, societal, and cultural structures." For some French, the erection of mosques and loud Islamic call to prayer represent "clashes of civilizations." Because of France's Islamophobic tendencies, the Muslim community in France has been "thwarted in its attempt to be both visible and naturalized" (Kathering Wing: 752- 753).

The problematization of the immigration issue and the continuing politicization of the discourse and debate around immigration and French nationality highlight some seemingly contradictory tendencies within the discourses of nationhood and citizenship in France, and point to discontinuities in the incorporation of non-national residents which would seem to challenge the thesis of a developing post national citizenship. French attitudes to and the policies towards immigration can be seen as paradoxical in that whilst in perception and in reality. France has been one of the foremost countries of immigration in Europe; it has resisted movements towards any formal acknowledgement of the

multiethnic nature of the society. (Freedman 2004: 9). As Walzer argues in his study of "regimes of toleration", France is a complicated case because: "Far more than any other country France has been a society of immigrants. And yet it isn't a pluralist society - or at least it doesn't think of itself, and it isn't thought of, as a pluralist society (Walzer 1997:38). And although it might be argued that in recent years France has become more and more of a pluralist society, this paradoxical tension between high levels of immigration and an attachment to an assimilationist Republican continue, complicating many of the debates surrounding migration and migration policy in contemporary France. Indeed, the debate over immigration can be seen as part of a greater debate about the nature of the French nation-state itself, a nation-state which some have argued is in crisis (Silverman, 1992).

The newly adopted immigration law France (26 November 2003) share the following provisions: increased penalties for illegal immigration, more temporary detention centre and limits on family reunification. France's law further introduces digital fingerprint files for those seeking French visas and close surveillance of mixed nationality marriages. Since the Madrid attacks of 11 march 2004, Spain policies on immigration and foreigners have also been made to do 'double- duty' in the war against terrorism. Thus several individuals who have been suspected of terrorist activity have been deported from Spain under laws governing the movement of foreigners (L.Pias, 2004: 30-31). The same logic applies in laws governing political asylum and refugee status. In France, a December 2003 amendment of asylum law included a list of 'safe countries' in terms of their respect for international human rights (10 December, 2003, Law No. 20031176).

In this chapter we focused on the circumstances in which Muslims became a part of France and the rationale behind policies regulating their entry and settlement. This gives us an understanding of the subsequent identity claims of the minority and the ensuing debates in this case of Muslim women. The overview of the effect of the terror attacks of 9/11 on the community across Europe indicates the shrinking space for multiculturalism to make a case for itself. It is evident that France was no unique, exceptional case in

terms of increasing insistence on merits of commonality and integration. The next chapter details the headscarf debate in France.
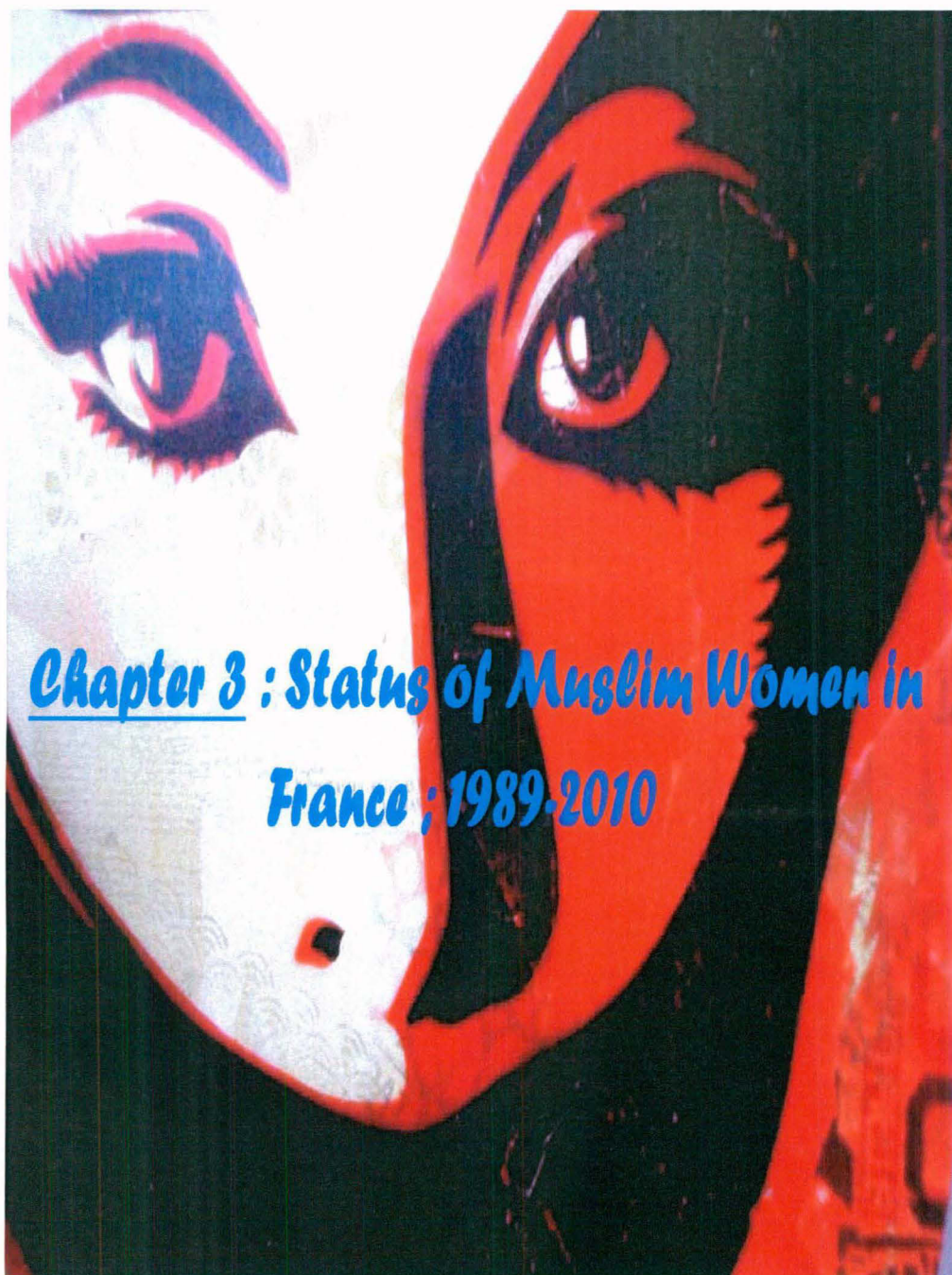
Chapter 3 : Status of Muslim Women in France ; 1989-2010

Status of Muslim Women in France: 1989-2010

Introduction

The previous chapter detailed the heightened security concerns after 9/11 attacks and their effect on the Muslim community in different parts of the world. France, since 1989 much before 2001 incidents witnessed heated debate over permissibility of different identity markers in their public space. The veiled Muslim women were central to this debate. However, before moving on to the debate, it is important to see how Muslim women fared in French society per say. How they were placed in French society would largely determine the contour of this debate and its outcome. This chapter thus focuses on the status of Muslim women in France overtime.

I. Muslim Women's Identity after 9/11

As it is explained in chapter one 9/11 has had a great impact on the Muslims of the world and because of the incident they suffered much. Among these Muslims communities Muslim women are highly affected by the incident.

From the outset of the twenty-first century, Muslim women have attracted international media attention. Some high visibility cases include the Afghan women who appeared in world headlines after 9/11 not only as victims but also as RAWA, the long-term women's resistance movement to the extremist rule of the Taliban. In 2003, the International Scientific Muslim Women's Council was established to provide a forum where Muslim women might address issues that cut across the academic-activist divide. In Iran, Shirin Ebadi became the first Muslim woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2004, in Morocco, women and men were successful in their call for gender-sensitive revision of the Mudawana, or family law. In the Wahhabi Gulf State of Qatar the state university has appointed not only a woman president, a woman vice-president and a woman dean of arts and sciences, but also 'A'isha al-Mann'ai the first woman dean of a Sharia College. In the past year and a half in Kuwait women were finally enfranchised. In Kyrgyzstan, after

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years of religious suppression under the Soviets Muslim women have been studying and teaching Islam and even opening NGOs for Muslim women. Since 9/11, Muslim women artists, actors, playwrights, film producers and directors and journalists have risen to prominence. Glossy magazines for Muslim women are a brand new trend. Noor in Indonesia and Azizah in the U.S. (launched in 2002) target a middle class Muslim woman readership with high-fashion ads, cooking sections and health and beauty tips. A recent addition is Hejab Fashion in Egypt that markets itself as the "first veiled women's" in order to distinguish it from a "Muslim women's magazine." First published in early 2005, it provides new design ideas for wealthy pious Arab women looking for fashionable modest clothing. While Hejab Fashion is devoted to exquisite dresses and elaborate veils (and how to wrap them in intriguing ways), Noor and Azizah are more political in their overall goal. Although they refuse the label "Islamic feminist," they do emphasize women's rights to education, to work, to full participation in the life of the community and to control over their bodies that are usually shown covered (Cooke 2007: 143-145).

The war on terror and the information revolution have created a new cultural climate with serious implications for Muslim women around the globe. They are now able to communicate experiences that before they might not even have been able to publish let alone share with a global audience. Women are talking back to those who seek to silence and marginalize their voices. The desire to talk back is not new, but the possibility of being heard is new. The virtual space of the Internet is allowing for an unprecedented anonymity that challenges and overcomes the former namelessness and voicelessness of many Muslim women. This virtual anonymity functions like a veil; it covers the face and disguises the voice (ibid: 149).

Thus as it is explained above that after 9/11 Muslim women are came in the front of the world and there are many positive actions in which they participated but if we look at the other side of the mirror the scene is different because after 9/11 the Muslim women has also suffered much because they are Muslim. Although they came in front of the world and media but the reality behind this is different. The very salient example of this is the headscarf ban in France, which is dealt in the next chapter.

II. Muslim Women in France

Even though France has experienced increasing and inevitable feminization in its immigrant population since 1974, the trend becomes particularly evident after the tightening of immigration controls in 1974, which had stopped the immigration of salaried mail workers and accelerated the pace of family reunification. In addition the growth of informal work economy encouraged new waves of migration by single women. Other factors that facilitate that development had to do with the sending countries internal developments such as, urbanization and the rises in the level of female education, as well as the young women's desire for emancipation and for an escape from the traditional social controls (Wenden 1998).

The number of migrant women in France, as in other European countries, has increased rapidly as a proportion of the total immigrant communities. Figures for 1990 show that women made up 41 per cent of Maghrebin and Sub-Saharan African and 45 per cent of Asian population in France (INSEE 2000). While in 1999 women accounted for 49. 9 per cent of the total immigrant population (INSEE 2000). This increasing feminization of migration noted as one of the tendencies in contemporary migratory flows, and also specifically as the feature of the new migration in Europe has many different causes. One of the reasons that has been cited for the increasing proportion of women in migratory flows into Europe, has been the growing importance of family reunification as one of the only legal means of entry into many European countries. The history and the structure of migrations into France mean that women make up of large proportion of those entering the country for family reunification purposes. Immigration in the post war period was mainly of men coming to work in France, but after the official suspension of immigration in 1974, family reunification became one of the main ways of entering France legally and many women came to join men who had previously immigrated. Immigration for family reunification remains a largely female phenomenon. Although the principle of family reunification benefits women in that it provides a legal method of entry into France, those who enter by this means are often denied independent legal and economic status because the ways that immigration laws and policies treat them as dependents of men already

residents in France. This leads to increasing problem of dependence and insecurity for many women immigrants, who find themselves trapped in violent relationships which they cannot leave because of fear of losing their residence status, or who may have been denied the right to work legally as it is assumed that they will be financially dependent on their husband. However family reunification is not the only cause of entry of immigrant women into France, and even those women who do enter under the official label of family reunification may have the variety of other motives of immigration, like they have the variety of independent migratory projects including migration to seek asylum. A survey of Algerian women immigrant in France revealed, for example, that for many of them the choice to migrate was made in hope of achieving greater personal freedom (Freedman 2004:105-106).

Largest population of Muslim women immigrants arrived in France in the 1970s when the laws of *'regroupment familial'* (1974) permitted them to join a husband, father, or brother already working in French factories and helping to bolster the flagging French workforce(Muslim Women at the Turn of the Millennium 2001). Today Muslim women of about 1,500,00 in France (The Independent World 2010) These women were for the most part wives of unskilled workers, often uneducated. They remained at the margins of French society if only because of their utter lack of French language skills. In addition, the majority of these women participated only in the private sphere, staying at home and taking care of their children; they covered themselves with a hijab (Islamic headdress) whenever they went out in public and unwittingly helped maintain the persistent image of the subordinate subservient Muslim Maghrebian wife and mother. Even twenty years ago, Muslim women were visible in French society primarily through their victimization, their absence, and their double subordination (to their husband, father, or brother in their culturally patriarchal household, and to French society at large which remained uneasy about the equal acceptance of Muslim immigrants). In the 1980s, for instance, the main hurdle facing Muslim women in France (and in Europe) was centered around the Veil Debate and the adoption of the traditional hijab in high schools. Muslim women soon found themselves at the center of the hotly debated issue of Islam's incompatibility with the ideals of the French Republic and of its much-championed idea of laïcité.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Beur literature and film unwittingly contributed to perpetuating similar versions of Muslim women's subordination in traditional francophone culture by foregrounding issues of arranged marriage, violence, and forced sexuality at the expense of other themes. (Muslim Women in France At the Turn of the Millenium, 2000).

The immigrant families are under the collective and hostile pressure of a host society that does not accept the differences in customs, justifying its stance by quoting the inferior status of Muslim women, gang activities, drug trafficking, or the dreadful gang-rapes of "easy" Muslim girls that some Muslim boys regard as a rite of passage. Second, there are the individual and positive solicitations of French society. Young Muslims can quickly be accepted as matrimonial partners since they are not imprisoned for life in their parents' culture. The vast majority of the French Muslims are consumerists rather than Islamists. Furthermore, intermarriages are not so uncommon among the French-born, provided that their interpretation of Islam does not foreclose marrying with a non-Muslim partner—an act of defiance that has already resulted in the assassination of young women in France by their disgusted parents. Besides, there may be as many as seventy thousand forced marriages involving Muslim girls living in France. However, not all Muslim-French women are subjugated, and some are fighting back through their associations. Besides, the anthropological universalism of French working-class children does not produce a rejection of their immigrant peers: equality of brothers, equality of children in the street, or social equality. Thus the modes of behavior of the individualistic and egalitarian host society are usually transmitted to the immigrant children who start questioning the traditional values of their family—as long as a rigorous Islamic counter influence does not stall the process (Millard 2005).

At the turn of the millennium however, the image of the subordinate, subservient wife and mother has been superseded by that of the active, educated Muslim French citizen of Arab background who is as equally invested in French society, at school, in the neighborhood (quartier), at work, or at the city hall as she is in her home. Muslim women of Maghrebian descent living in France today are facing an entirely new set of

challenges than those faced by their mothers and grandmothers. The questions are different because of the changing composition of Muslim women living in France. This is indeed the first or second generation of Muslim Maghrebian women born and educated in France. They speak French fluently and have French citizenship (or will acquire it at age 18). These are the daughters of the Beur generation, culturally and geographically distant from their Arab country of origin, where some have never set foot; they may not speak its language, and are not torn by the same longing and nostalgia for their motherland as their mothers and grandmothers were (The case of Sebbar's novel). They are also the first generation of Maghrebian Muslims to attain a high level of education, often times higher than that of their male counterparts, and other non-Muslim women of French origin (de souche) of the same socio-economic class, a phenomenon which has led some sociologists to refer to them as the elites of immigration (Address of European Deputy Alima, 2001). Their birth rate is equal to that of the French population, and they increasingly are involved in mixed marriages. The Islam they practice is different from that of their partly integrated beur parents. Some of them freely choose to wear the veil; others choose not to, as Dounia Bouzar and Saïda Kada note in their book *L'Une voilée, l'autre pas: La Place des femmes dans l'Islam de France* (Bauzer and Kada, 2003: 16-17). French Muslim women all agree however that being Muslim is not a question of wearing a particular set of clothing, but rather the adoption of a particular kind of socially, politically, and ethically active behavior.

This new generation of Muslim women refuses to have its destiny dictated in terms of its integration, as was the case for earlier generations of women. For the younger women, integration has negative implications, endlessly underscoring the idea that they are different, other, "un-integratable" into French society. Muslim women living in France also affirm their culture of origin and emphasize their double identity. They are revisiting categorizations and stereotypical labels. While in the 1980s, beurs fought against labels such as *"Français d'origine étrangère,"* or *"jeune issu de l'immigration"* in their efforts to be just "French", most Muslims of the 2000s are reclaiming what their mothers considered as stigmas, using them as challenging signs of pride; they now

demand to be recognized as *"Arabe Français, "* or "French Maghrebian." (Le Monde, 2002).

The new generation of Muslim women (and men) is determined to become culturally visible and claim their own place in French society. Being recognized in their new identities means, first of all, addressing the pervasive cultural amnesia over the Algerian War of Independence, the effects of colonialism, and the history of the Maghrebian immigration to France. Second- and third-generation Muslim women living in France are determined not to become, like their parents, *"les clandestins de la mémoire"* (La Médina, Jan. 2003). They are henceforth actively engaged in rediscovering their own cultural past, in recovering oral histories, in retrieving their mothers's and grandmothers's memories that had been carefully repressed for years, and in thus reclaiming several generations of *"mémoires d'immigrés, "* to use Yamina Benguigui's now famous film and book title Doumia (1997). Inspired by her work and in a desire to validate the history and life experiences of Muslim women from different generations, ministries of culture across France have established various artist-in-residence programs to help the most socially and economically depressed neighborhoods (Le Monde, June 6, 2002). The Rhône-Alpes region was already a pioneer in this endeavor in the early 1980s. In such programs, various literacy classes are offered and are specifically geared towards women; these sessions include showings of Arabic films followed by a discussion in French facilitated by Maghrebian film directors. In addition, art classes are offered and students are invited to direct their own documentaries on immigration in consultation with resident directors. Cinéma le France, a centre d'art et d'essai that is part of the national TV network Cinéville, has recently produced one such film, Saint Etienne, *escale ou terminus*. This film, entirely written and directed by young Muslim high school women, documents the history of immigration at Saint Etienne through interviews of a dozen older immigrants (from Italy, Poland, Spain, and the Maghreb), and contrasting their memories to images, photos, and films from the city archives. At the completion of their film, the Maghrebian women amateur directors showed their documentary and led roundtable discussions in various regional towns. In summer 2003, the documentary will be aired nationally on TV through the Cinéville network, thus bringing into the global

light the local histories and memories of Muslim women in France. A new project is already in the making: in the context of the year of France-Algeria (2003), the same group of young women plan to travel and conduct research at the *Cinémathèque* (Film Library) in Algiers for their second documentary (Women in France at the turn of the Millennium 2000).

It is necessary to focus on the status of Muslim women in France in various areas like their status in education, health, political position, unemployment and employment, social status and their religious position in Islamic thought.

a. Education

Islam enjoins upon its followers both men and women to dedicate themselves fully to learning knowledge. There is an ingrained value in every Muslim, man and woman alike to pursue knowledge and to learn about God's Truth. Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H) advised his followers to seek knowledge from every nook and corner of the world. In keeping with this value, Muslim women are continuing to make headway in the field of science and their participation in terms of graduation ratios often surpasses that of western women in pursuing scientific degrees according to UNESCO. The quest for knowledge has always applied to women in Islam. God has made no difference between genders in this area. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) once said: "Seeking knowledge is a mandatory for every Muslim (male and female)." (Qudri 2010).

The younger generation of Muslim women living in France is committed to being equally Muslim and French citizens. They firmly believe that such a double identity must first assert and prove itself at local levels of society. They are convinced that official demands for political asylum, civil rights, and protection are important but remain insufficient without what they term *« le travail de terrain, »* that is, the fieldwork at the local level. Instead of merely being consumers of various kinds of aids (allocations), of being defined exclusively by their lack, or of occupying exclusively the position of the demanding migrant person (who calls for equal rights, jobs, economic opportunities, education,

health benefits, etc.), Muslim women living in France are slowly reversing these images as they prove themselves to be well educated, actively contributing citizens to their European society (Muslim Women at the Turn of the Millennium 2000)

Muslim women living in France has revealed the following threefold definition of fieldwork: (1) active participation in their children's education; (2) regular involvement in the school systems; and (3) the sponsoring of small educational programs to teach other Muslim women how to be responsible Muslim-French citizens. As a Muslim woman and French citizen, one of the women interviewed indicated that she considered as her priority to be present with her children at school. She explained that this presence did not mean simply ensuring that her children completed their homework or arrived at school on time; rather, being present at school for her means helping teachers in their school activities (especially during outings), participating actively in school board meetings *(conseil de classes)*, and being counted upon to cast her vote whenever needed. For her, such participation at the school and local level is important because it reverses past (yet persistent) images of the absent Maghrebian Muslim woman from French public spaces and paints henceforth that same population in a new, more positive light. She states:

En tant que femme musulmane, je considère comme ma responsabilité d'être présente avec mes enfants à l'école. Je les accompagne, je fais partie des sorties, j'essaie toujours d'aider à l'école, d'être là au conseil de l'école, et ça, c'est une manière de positiver notre présence. Parce que nous, les parents d'origine maghrébine, nous brillons par notre absence à l'école (Ibid 2000).

(Being a Muslim woman, I consider it a responsibility to be present at the school with my children. I accompany them, I take part in the outings, I try to help them at school, to be there at the school meetings, and this is a way to think positive of our presence. Because we, the parents of Maghrebian origin, we shine by our absence in the school).

The increasing participation of Muslim women in schools is considered to be a considerable investment in the changing perception of Muslims in France and in Europe today. The participation of young Muslim women in French civil society is evident also in the efforts made to ensure their children's educational success. Muslim women are particularly anxious over their children's educational success. For them, it is of utmost importance to see their children succeed in school precisely in order to demonstrate to them and to others that being an Arab and Muslim is not always a negative identity, and that it certainly does not mean unconditionally condoning the violent behaviors of other Arabs. In addition, Muslim women want to display their own similarity to their fellow non-Muslim and non-Arab citizens, and to distance themselves from the image of "evil Arabs and Muslims" which they too fear and condemn and which escalates the level of psychological violence they end up facing in France. Furthermore, Muslim women are determined to prove to themselves and to the people around them that they too eagerly participate in and anticipate the accomplishments of their newly elected country of 11residence. Last, but not least, these women are fully aware of the fact that only through their educational successes and the positive images they provide of their cultural and religious background can their children have the self-esteem and self-confidence necessary to build on their achievements and help form a truly intercultural, interreligious society.

Muslim women endeavor to educate other Muslim women of any generation who are currently living in France. This education is especially pressing today given the results of the last presidential elections. Even though the Muslim community was expecting the results of the elections to turn as they did, Muslim women are determined from here on out to take their future in their own hands, and to combat extremism and segregation in all their forms so that French democracy can be preserved and does not veer, as it almost did, to the extreme right. They have thus identified two main areas for their future work. First, and as discussed above, to empower Muslim immigrant families so that they realize their parental role and responsibility as educators of their children, and that they thus become actively present in the school system. Second, to organize the Muslim community in France so that it can produce a unified vote that can potentially make great

difference in future presidential and legislative elections. Muslim women believe that the current lack of a fully organized vote by the Muslim population in France is partly due to a lack of confidence in the entire electoral system. Many of French Muslims come indeed from countries in which voting is essentially pro forma and in which many people spend their entire lives without casting a single vote. Living in France, they must however be educated in the possibilities afforded by the electoral system so that they can become responsible citizens who are able to create their own future rather than just submit to it. In order to teach Muslim women to vote, various Muslim associations emphasize electoral training starting at the local level, as they believe that if Muslim women can be motivated to participate in smaller scale elections, such as those held for school boards or apartment building associations, they are likely to vote in larger elections (presidential, legislative, European, or otherwise). It is important to teach Muslim women (and men) to vote, to choose, to voice an opinion, since for many of these daughters of immigrants, democracy is learned and not an innate political condition. This is the approach adopted by the newly formed *Forum Citoyen des Cultures Musulmanes* (FCCM), for instance, which has been working with the younger (male and female) generations from the banlieues to help them register and take part in elections.

Muslim women must speak up because they are fighiting two battles at once: one against persistent Western cultural stereotypes of Maghrebian women and the other against their own Maghrebian and supposedly Islamic traditions on women's proper place and role in society. By breaking the silence, Muslim women become instrumental in correcting prevailing passive view on them, hence slowly "banalizing" (the verb banalize is borrowed from Tokia Saifi's political goal for the future of Meghrebian population in France), the image of the active, militant Muslim women. Even if aan op-ed piece ends up not being published by a newspaper, Muslim women must not give up writing, for they thus gain experience and training in reacting, in expressing themselves clearly on a particular issue, and in articulating a well- demonstrated perspective. Ultimately, such regular training is bound to end the recycle of silence, social marginalization, and consequent paralysis previous generations of Muslim women have often left.

Moreover, the education statistics of the second-generation Turkish and Moroccan youth show high levels of school dropout: 46.4 percent of all Turkish second-generation youth, and 24.3 of all Moroccan and mixed-marriage second-generation youth drop out of school. The education level of Moroccan women is better than the Turkish women, however. On the one hand, while 22.6 percent of all Moroccan women drop out of school, 28. 3 percent make it to university. On the other hand, 51.6 percent of all Turkish women drop out of school, and only 7.7 percent go to university. Simon compares these numbers to the French working class, and discovers that 26.5 percent of French working-class women drop out of school, a figure which is slightly higher than the number of Moroccan women who drop out (22.6 percent). However, almost twice as many Turkish women (51.6 percent) drop out of school (Yardakul 2005).

b. Political Participation

Despite the famous 1983 Marche des Beurs, the Maghrebian Muslim immigrants remained totally absent from the French political scene throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Zidane's success at the World Cup (1998), the definitive incorporation of rai into the French music scene, and the "promotion" of couscous as a French national dish however, heralded a new era of political participation for the Maghrebian population in France. The growing number of Muslims living in France at the turn of the millennium represents indeed a sizeable electoral faction that both rightist and leftist political parties are vying equally to attract. In the hopes of garnering its votes, politicians, beginning in 1990s under the late President Mitterrand, have been courting the growing Muslim population in France, offering to extend to it equal recognition and official representation at the Elysées. Every Minister of Interior since that time (Jospin, Chevènement, and now Nicolas Sarkozy among others) has renewed his efforts in the hopes of associating his name and his tenure with the Official Muslim Representation. In both 2000 and 2001, Jacques Chirac became the first French President of the Fifth Republic to publicly welcome four Muslim leaders at the Elysées for the annual end-of-year meeting he holds with heads of religious communities (Catholics, Protestants, Jews). On July 3rd, 2001, an agreement was signed for the future official representation of Islam in France; the group

was to be called the CFMC (*Conseil Français du Culte Musulman*). This future organization, like others of the same kind, will be governed and protected by law 1901 as soon as elections are held (they have continually been postponed and are now rescheduled for April 2003) to determine which of the various Muslim Associations will represent all Muslims living in France (Muslim Women at the Turn of the Millennium 2000).

This undeniable change in the status of Muslims in France today is perhaps most evident in the results of the last European elections (1999) which witnessed twenty-three French citizens from Maghrebian background on the ballots, participating in nine electoral lists that ran the gamut from far right to extreme left. Four of these candidates 15 were elected deputies, and three of them were Franco-Marghrebian women: Alima Boumediene-Thierry (ecologist), Yasmine Boudjenah (communist), and Toïka Saïfi. The election of Maghrebians, and of women in particular, reveals a greatly shifting landscape in the status of immigrants of Arabic and Muslim background living in France and indicates the beginning of the "banalization" of the Maghrebian population's presence in France's internal politics (Arabies, Feb. 2000). This extraordinary success has motivated various immigrant associations to organize themselves, and develop what they call *"une politigue musulmane"* in order to weigh in on future elections. Even the university system is feeling the impact of this new mobilization (ibid).

Despite these clear signs of progress, the contribution of Muslim women to French interior politics continues to be limited overall. Not surprisingly, it remains intimately bound to the still equally stifled participation of women in general on the political scene in France. For as French women are bitterly observing, the June 6, 2000 laws of parité which had promised them an equal sharing in all parties's political seats has yet to fulfill Lionel Jospin's bold claim: *"Pour moi, la parité, c'est 50-50"* (Le Figaro, May 28, 2002). Two years after the law came into being, everyone had come to recognize that what had been heralded as a "true cultural revolution" (according to the Leftist parties), "an unforgettable date in the conquest of equal rights" (according to Nicole Péry, Secretary of State for the Rights of Women), "one of the most important moments in the

evolution of the history of democracy since the instauration of women's right to vote, 56 years ago" (according to Bernard Roman, spokesman for the PS) consisted only of rhetorical and lyrical promises that were not supported by facts (Le Figaro, May 28, 2002).

For the 2002 legislative elections, the UDF's slate included only 21% women, and the UMP a mere 20% (with only one Maghrebian candidate), the lowest of all parties. The Socialist Party's slate included 36.06% women (of whom two were Maghrebians), and the Communist Party fared little better with 44.8%. Only the Far Left has presented more women than men for the Legislative elections (50.5%), while the Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR), and the Green Party have each almost reached true parity, proposing 48.2% of women candidates. Evidently and as these numbers testify, women have yet to gain a sizeable voice and a truly equal participation in the French interior political scene. Muslim women continue to lag farther behind (based on documentary) and deplore, with the rest of the Maghrebian population, their political utilization as commodity, and as the "beurs de service." Of the twentyseven members that figure in the current right wing French government, there are six women; and only one is Maghrebian, namely Tokia Saïfi, Secretary of State *(Secrétaire d'Etat au Développement durable)*, and she currently also serves as a European Deputy. This is only the second time in history that a Maghrebian has played a role in the French government (Nationale Council for the French Muslim).

In their militant activities towards political recognition and equal representation, Muslim women are extending their solidarity to French women in general, affirming that both face equal discrimination as women, regardless of ethnic and religious background. In this way, just as the Ligue des Femmes Musulmanes has sent Chirac an official statement to voice its support of Palestinians, particularly after the last massacres at Jenin and Ramallah, the Ligue has also issued an official letter to the President and Prime Minister to express its solidarity with all French women and mothers who were affected by the attacks against French citizens in Karachi, Pakistan. Muslim women, in their role as women and French citizens, are determined to voice their solidarity with other women

and fellow citizens in their crises. If Muslim women struggle to gain their French citizenship and affirm their political participation, it is first and foremost because it is another crucial level at which they can unite and gain strength from a shared experience, a shared sense of belonging. Ultimately, such work will reflect more accurately than it does today the social and ethnic composition of the French population.

President Sarkozy has reshuffled his government, appointing a Muslim women, women of Senegelese heritage as junior minister. His cabinet already has Rachida Dati as a justice minister, she is of African origin. The new cabinet which is said to be the most diverse in French history comes after Sarkozy's conservative party did not get expected results in the parliamentary elections held last week. Fadela Amara, daughter of Algerian immigrants is known for her work in empowering Muslim women in France. She founded "Neither a Whore nor Submissive"(NWNS) a group that works to improve conditions for French Muslim women living in poverty and facing violence. Amara is staunch supporter of ban on wearing Muslim head scarves in public schools. She will be working a junior minister for city policy. Rama Yade, who is of Senegalese heritage is working as a junior minister for human rights Just 30 years old, Yade is the rising star of Sarkozy's conservative party (France gets a Diverse Cabinet 2005).

c. Health and Unemployment

Women from the community has less advantaged in terms of their health in comparison with their French peers: the prevalence of obesity was twice as high, and they were at a significantly higher risk of being diabetic than French women. Anemia is also more frequent in I migrant women then in metropolitan French women at term in pregnancy (Kindman 2005).

The unemployment level among second-generation immigrants is significantly gendered in France as well. More women than men are unemployed. Further, unemployment rates are higher among certain immigrant groups. The unemployment rate of second-generation Turkish women stands at 47 percent, compared to Moroccan women, whose rate is 29.7 percent. This is dramatically different from other immigrant women groups,

such as Portuguese immigrant women, who have a 20.4 percent unemployment level (Simon, 2003: 1112).

d. Social Status

In France, the 2003 report of *Le Haut conseil à l'intégration*, estimates that more than 70,000 ten to 18-year-olds of migrant origin experienced problems with a forced or arranged marriage, more often found among communities from Mali, Mauritania and Senegal, but also the Maghreb, Turkey and Pakistan. The data show that not all migrants are equally exposed to racism and discrimination in employment. Muslims appear to be particularly affected, while Muslim women face a 'double' discrimination on account of both their gender and their ethnicity/religion (Report of EUMC 2006).

One of the most dangerous traditional practices that is linked to Islam is honor killing. In 2002, an honor killing took place in France; Sohane Benziane, 17, was raped, tortured by her ex boyfriend and his friends for being too Western. After they were done, they burned her alive in an abandoned building. It is horrifying incidents like these that show the dangers of being a Muslim woman in France but it also shows how a small number of incidents have created a strong desire for immigrant assimilation in France (Chesler 2009).

Many Francho-Algerian women have reported a generally unwelcome atmosphere if they stand out from regular French culture. The young women in *They Call Me Muslim* reported running during lunch time to attend afternoon prayer at a mosque because such practices are not allowed in French schools.

e. Muslim Women and Islamic Thought

There is a growing number of associations of Muslim women in France, spanning all political, ethnic and cultural interests, from Nanas Beurs (one of the first), to Voix des Nanas, and Soup (Shorba) for everyone to the Ligue des Femmes Musulmanes. They are all intent on taking their destiny in their hands and ensuring their official and permanent

participation in French civic life. While some of these associations are well-known and support Maghrebian and Muslim women in multiple social, emotional, economic and legal ways, others are at grassroots levels and have thus far still not received media attention. In the remainder of this article, I would like to discuss one such organization (Groupe Orsay), its intellectual and religious activities at the local levels, as well as the work of some of its members that bridges out to the European and global levels. Groupe Orsay was established in Paris in the 1970s by a group of Protestant women with the goals of confronting religious studies with feminist theories, promoting interreligious dialogue (with Muslims in particular) and fostering cross-cultural understanding and cooperation across religious and ethnic lines. Many Muslim women joined the group from its inception, and it has gained even stronger momentum and became especially active since the events of 9/11 (Muslim Women at the turn of the Millenium 2000).

Groupe Orsay holds monthly meetings between local (Parisian) Muslim and Christian women (each meeting is comprised of about 20 members, half of them Christian and half of them Muslim) in order to discuss topics mutually agreed upon for the year. Topics are selected for their relevance at a particular moment in time, and have included the question of *laïcité* in France, the notion of free will, women of faith and the body, woman and sexuality, prostitution, homosexuality, woman, discourse and violence, etc. The goals of these discussions are not only to allow each participant to express herself honestly on the topic at hand, but also to educate one another about one's religious systems, as members firmly believe in their roles as bridges between two cultures, two communities of belief. Another objective is to explore the official religious pronouncements in each tradition and to reach an interpretation that makes sense given the particularly specific socio-political configuration these women live in. At the conclusion of each year and of the discussions on the topic selected, these women publish a brochure summarizing their discussions and intellectual exchanges (ibid).

Through the interreligious dialogues afforded them by the Groupe Orsay, Muslim women living in France are called upon to reflect, to explore in greater depth their cultural and religious traditions, and ultimately to learn to formulate their own ideas, their own

perspectives on Islam. In that sense, one may say that Muslim women living in France are at the forefront of Islamic exegesis, and are actively developing an intellectual Islam with new interpretations from feminist perspectives.

Muslim women living in France are currently actively involved in what they call "a re-appropriation of religious discourse": that is, in innovative reinterpretations of Islam from feminist perspectives. Such a re-appropriation is possible, in their words, precisely because these Muslim women live in France, in a country where they benefit from a freedom of thought and expression, from the opportunity for an intellectual development that their own Muslim sisters living in other parts of the world do not enjoy. It is by exploring their own religious heritage that Muslim women are becoming empowered and are slowly engaging in theological discussions on equal footing with Muslim (male) ulamas. Muslim women can no longer be silenced because they too have gained access to religious material that until recently has been exclusively explored by men. While some of the ulamas still view with suspicion this feminist reappropriation of Islam and its consequent female empowerment, and while they still attempt to control women's public pronouncements on Islam, they are no longer able to halt it or prevent it (Fatima Mernissi, 1992).

Among Muslim Maghrebian women's work at the local levels of French society is their solidarity with new Muslim converts who are not necessarily of Arab descent. Maghrebian women are acutely aware of the fact that these new converts can often feel isolated, especially since Muslims of Maghrebian descent remain culturally and emotionally attached to their culture of origin and the politics that take place there. Muslim women living in France are thus determined to ease the converts' Islamization and to welcome them at a religious level by making clear that these converts do not need to be Arabs in order to be Muslims. This once again demonstrates Muslim women's attempts at building lines of communication with other women, at uncovering, nurturing and emphasizing common traits at the expense of whatever may distinguish them from other women. This participation at the local level of religious debates has opened doors to Muslim women's participation at a more global, European level.

The future of Muslim women in France is likely that of other women from other religious backgrounds: it may well lie less within their own specific religious affiliation then in their local, national and international involvement with other women for differing faiths in the creation of a world alliance of women of faith.

In this chapter we focused on the different immigration circumstances of Muslim women in France and their status by looking at their position and achievements in various fields. The chapter also focused on how they are showing increasing activism and awareness on issues such as education, or on upholding the right to faith. This sets the stage to better comprehend the 'veil debate' which is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 4 : Muslim women and the Headscarf Debate in France Since 1989

Muslim Women and the Headscarf Debate in France Since 2001

Introduction

The previous chapter deals the Muslim women immigrants in France and their status in French society. Thus chapter examines the headscarf debate in France. It focuses on the different issues related to the debate and the various views that were in circulation. For any discussion on the headscarf issue it is necessary to begin with an understanding of the role of the headscarf in Islam. The chapter thereafter focuses on the Muslim way of life on France, the status of headscarf in France and finally the passage of headscarf ban.

I. Hijab and Islam

Before entering into the debate centering the wearing of hijab in France we need to understand the significance of hijab in Islam. What does it mean and where it comes from? The headscarf derives its religious significance in the Islamic tradition from the Koran, which is the word of Allah as told to the Prophet Mohammed. While the validity and the extent of covering one's self varies in different countries and among Muslim women in those countries, those who choose to wear the different types of head coverings point to the Koran as the source of God's command. There are some verses that speak of modesty and the need to cover one's self in general:

"O you Children of Adam! We have bestowed on you raiment to cover your shame as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness, that is the best. Such are among the Signs of Allah, that may receive admonition." (Wing 2005)

Other verses are more explicit about the need for women to cover their beauty:

61

Abraham's religions because it pays a lot of attention in its basic religious texts to women and man-woman affairs. How does Qur'an define the relationship between men and women?

Men are the maintainers of women because Allah

has made some of them to excel others and because

they spend out of their property; the good women are

therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has

guarded; and (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion,

admonish them, and leave them alone in the

sleeping-places and beat them; then if they obey you,

do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is

High, Great (Kulonovic, 2006:714).

Nevertheless all the Muslim women choose to interpret the above noted koranic verses as "elementary obligatory," and instead see them as "utilitarian recommendations." Others have gone far to argue that it is not Islam that has imposed the headscarf, but that the headscarf was imposed on Islam and on women (Wing 2005). In other words, it is the customs in specific countries that have mandated the covering and not Islam itself.

Europe's present encounter with hijab started, when European colonialism ended in the 1950s and 1960s, and immigration to Western Europe from the Middle East and African countries increased number of Muslims in these historically Christian areas began to rise. The prevalence of the headscarf, in its many forms, thus increased in the European public space.

After understanding the relation between hijab and Islam, it is also very important to understand the meaning of hijab. On the basis of these various cultural traditions in different countries that have emerged since the time of the Prophet in the seventh century, some Muslim women have chosen to don one of a variety of coverings. They range from a simple headscarf (which covers a woman's hair) to a fully enveloping Afghani burqa (BBC News 2004). There are thus two historic objectives of wearing the headscarf: to

shield the female body from the view of strange men, and to ensure that women who follow the Prophet will be easily recognizable and not degraded in offense to Mohammed (Wing 2005:751).

The different meaning of hijab is perhaps best studies in the European country which had the biggest problem with it. First if we look at France, the pioneering work done by Françoies and Khoshrokhavar thay traces the three meanings of headscarf. The first is the veil if immigrant, which signifies the permanence of the identity of origin. It marks the permanence of the immemorial principles of the country of origin in the in the face of traumatisms of change and of transplantation into a different society. Controversy arose only around a second veil, 'the veil of adolescent' which is imposed by parents as a sign of modesty and for the purpose of controlling their daughter's sexuality. The third and the most interesting type is 'the autonomous veil.' This veil is freely chosen, and expression of an Islamic identity on the part of assertive young second generation Muslims aged between 16 and 25. The autonomous veil is often donned by those who are most integrated into the French society through their studies or through their lower middle class standing. In fact the autonomous veil is the desire to be French and Muslim, modern and veiled, autonomous and dressed in the Islamic way (Joppke 2009:3-5).

Here are the most well known versions:
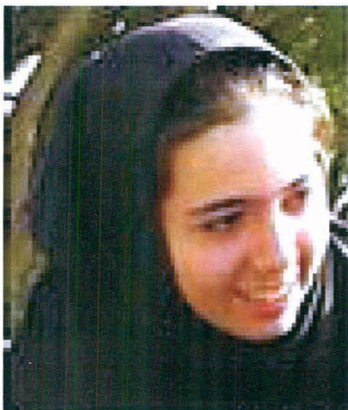
1. Chadar: Typically black. It is loose flowing piece of material draped over the head and held shut under math the chin with the free hand.

2. Burqa: Frequently blue, the tent like garment hangs from the head and falls to bellow the ankles. Though it has a slit for the eye, this is covered up with a lightly women mesh piece, leaving no skin exposed.

3. Hijab: Common throughout the Muslim world, it describes a range of hair coverings from loose scarves draped over the head and under the chin and then pinned to elastic support hijab for use when exercising.

4. Niqab: Almost always black, it leaves nothing but a slit for the eyes showing, and is usually worn with a shapeless black robe and black gloves. Usually its sign that the individual is a follower of the strict Sala School of Sunni Islam (Muslim women, the Veil and the Human Rights, Centre for International Studies, 2009).

II. Religious Identity Claims in Secular France

The headscarf's recent history in France is complicated. Put the number of females wearing head gear. The issue of females choosing to wear the headgear first arose in 1989 when three girls in Creil, a suburb of Paris, were suspended for wearing their headscarves in their public middle as a place to take the first step towards integration. In the Frenchification efforts in the colonies, there was an emphasis placed on the education of young girls as a way to pass on the French republican values to their future husbands and sons, as well as their fathers and brothers in the present. This same emphasis on female education is being used again in the twenty-first century. It seems that the government is confident that bareheaded Muslim girls will carry secularist French values to the men in their family and to others in their community (IslamOnline.net 2003).

III. The Headscarf Debate

In France, debate about whether girls could wear Islamic headscarves in public schools erupted at three separate moments: in 1989, 1994, and 2003.

i. 1989: The Debate Starts

The headscarf's recent history in France is complicated. In 1989 three girls were excluded from the local college (the lower secondary or junior high school in the French system) in Creil. The principal-who later became a member of parliament for the party to which Chirac belonged-alleged that they had persistently attempted to come to school, and to attend classes, wearing a Muslim headscarf (the foulard or hiab). This he regarded as a violation of the principle of secularism in France. The headscarf now in France became for the first time an issue related to identity, and (in the eyes of its critics) toleration of its wearing in schools represented an unacceptable subordination of women. The media fully alert to the confrontation in Creil and all that followed the developments. Lionel Jospin, Minister of Education during the presidency of Francois Mit-terrand, temporized by referring the matter to the *Conseil d'Etat*, the highest administrative court. In November 1989 it produced a closely argued opinion that carefully balanced two principles. The first guaranteed the freedom of conscience of the student, which public law must never invade. Students must be free to hold and to express their own opinions, preferences, and loyalties, and this guaranteed freedom must embrace the right to such expression not only of speech but also in dress or symbols. That freedom is not, of course, enjoyed by teachers and other public servants for, as agents of a laique Republic; they must be and be seen to be scrupulously neutral. A second principle required, however, that no such expression of belief may disturb the orderly conduct of a school or any other public institution, affect the duty of each student to be assiduous in attendance and participate fully in all the normal work of the school, or constitute an act of pressure or proselytization. Two of the founding principles of the Republic-liberte and egalit had always to be carefully balanced. (Judge 2004: 8-10).

The numerous styles of Islamic dress throughout the world today reflect local traditions and different interpretations of Islamic requirements. Muslim women in France, therefore, exhibit a wide range of dress and head coverings. Many wear nothing that distinguishes them as Muslims. A number of immigrant women practice modesty, not by donning traditional dress (i.e., the North African djellaba), but rather, by wearing long-sleeved shirts and skirts that reach the ankles. For those who do veil, some simply wear brightly colored scarves on their heads, sometimes even allowing hair to show; others pin unicolor veils tightly around the face; and still others adopt long, flowing Islamic dress and occasionally cover the entire face except for the eyes. The girls at the center of the controversy usually wear Western clothing with a veil pinned around the face to cover their hair. The struggle over Maghrebin women's dress began long before their immigration to France in the 1970s. French colonizers encouraged Muslim women to remove the veil and emulate European women (Killen 2003:570).

In 1989, the minister of education, Lionel Jospin, stated that although the "secularity of the school" must be respected, "school is made for receiving children and not for excluding them". Although the National Education Council vigorously opposed Jospin's statement, the *Conseil d' Etat*, the equivalent of the Supreme Court, decided that the veil was not an ostentatious symbol and that, there-fore, it would not be used to prohibit girls from attending school. Many French people also disagreed with Jospin and the *Conseil d' Etat*. In a 1989 poll in Le Monde (30 November 1989), 75 percent of the French were against the veil in school, 17 percent were indifferent, and 6 percent supported it. While three-fourths of French people opposed wearing the headscarf in school, only 32 percent opposed wearing it in the street. Thus, the French were protesting an ethnic marker in republican institutional space (Bloul 1996).

Although the state has quietly negotiated with Christian and Jewish groups, their needs were dealt with on a case-by-case basis without establishing an official policy or precedent. Serving fish in school cafeterias on Fridays to accommodate Catholics and not giving exams on Saturdays to respect the Jewish Sabbath are areas of compromise, whereas Islamic dress is not. This is because Islam is seen as more of a threat to French civic culture (and even French security) than Catholicism or Judaism. From the start, the

French press portrayed the headscarf as a symbol of Islamic fundamentalism. Fears that members of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) were organizing in France and images of women being forced to veil under threat of bodily harm in Iran and Algeria flamed more controversy over veiling in school in the early and mid- 1990s (Kiliç, Saharso and Sauer 2008).

For sometimes the things calm down and the media attention moved elsewhere. There was hardly any coverage of local negotiations, except for the conclusion of the story of the girls from Ceriel. Two of the three (sisters of Moroccan origin) were convinced by the King of Morocco, whose intervention had been sought by some French Muslim leaders, to take off their headscarves when they entered a classroom. It is interesting to note in this connection that the pressure that was brought to bear from their "community" forced the girls to abandon their choice of religious expression in favor of accommodation to secular authority (Scot 2007).

The debate didn't actually remove headscarves from the public schools. In a clear demonstration of their personal religious conviction, they continued to wear the headscarf in courtyards and hallways but in the classroom they were required to follow the secular principles of the Nation.

ii. 1994: The Debate Rages On

In 1994, Eugee Cheniere again raised the question of headscarves in schools. Cheniere immediately offered a bill that would ban all "ostentatious" signs of religious affiliation. After a year of what one news account referred to as "Cheniere's crusade," during which there were several conflicts in schools (among them a strike by teachers at one school in support of a gym instructor who claimed that headscarves were dangerous to wear during physical activity), the Minister of Education, Francois Bayrou, decreed on September 20, 1994, that "ostentatious" signs of religious affiliation would henceforth be prohibited in all schools. The behavior of the students need not be taken into account, he asserted, because certain signs were "in themselves" transparent acts of proselytizing. Bayrou drew

a distinction between "discreet signs," those that demonstrated personal religious conviction, and "ostentatious signs," whose effect was to introduce difference and discrimination into an educational community that, like the nation it served, ought to be united. Indeed, the nation was the only community which could command the allegiance of its citizens. "The nation is not simply a collection of citizens with individual rights. It is a community." Discreet signs were tolerable; ostentatious signs were not. The ministerial pronouncement was followed by the expulsion of sixty-nine girls wearing what were increasingly referred to as "veils." Bayrou's decree was challenged by some of the girls who had been expelled from school, and it was overturned by various courts and by the Council of State, which reaffirmed its 1989 ruling. The Council rejected Bayrou's claim that certain signs could be separated from the intentions of those who carried them and again left it to teachers and administrators to interpret the actions of their students. In the wake of this ruling, Simone Veil, the Minister of Social Affairs, appointed a woman of North African origin, Hanifa Cherifi, as official mediator for problems linked to the wearing of the veil. Cherifi's work seems to have borne fruit: the number of disputes dropped dramatically (from about 2,400 in 1994 to 1,000 in 1996), and only around a hundred students were reported to be wearing headscarves to class. In some schools, girls were permitted to wear bandanas to cover their hair (although there were often intricate negotiations about size and color); in others, headscarves could be worn in the school building as long as they were dropped to the shoulders upon entering a classroom. As in 1989, the compromises did not resolve the tension but embodied it (Scott 2007: 26-29)

Debate in public and in the press over the motivations behind students' veiling in school continues. In 1995, Gaspard and Khosrokhavar interviewed the girls about the headscarf ban. They had different views of the veil, only one girl had any ties to political Islamic fundamentalism. The majority of adolescents and preadolescents who veiled did so because of family pressure. Many indicated that if they did not veil, their parents would not allow them to attend school. Women, who were older, between 18 and 22, were more likely to adopt the veil out of personal religious conviction or as a symbol of difference and pride in their ethnic identity. For some, the veil is the symbol of a religious way of life that precludes a whole range of behaviors including participating in mixed-gender

extracurricular activities. For others, it is a way to reclaim an ethnic identity and says little about the rest of the wearer's behavior. In general, among the girls interviewed, the veil is a way to negotiate between the community of their parents and the French society in which they are immersed. Those young women who willingly adopt the veil are more French than most view them. These girls reject what they view as a devaluation of their parents' culture and an emphasis on assimilation. They accept integration through schooling and employment, however, and wish to be recognized as both Muslim and French. Within various Muslim groups, as among politicians and the press, there are differences of opinion. The 1998 poll in Le Monde found that among Muslims, older people (67 percent) were more opposed to the veil than younger people (44 percent), and women (49 percent) were more opposed to it than men (43 percent). Only 30 percent of Muslims supported veiling in school, and 22 percent were indifferent. Bloul (1996) noted that when younger Maghrebins and those of North African origin born in France defended the veil, they did so in the name of individual rights and tolerance for cultural difference. Older Maghrebins, on the other hand, often opposed the headscarf as a lack of discretion by immigrants living in a host country. While age and gender affect responses to this issue, neither they nor other factors that may shape North African immigrants' opinions have been investigated (Killen 2003: 572-573).

As mentioned above, after 1989 headscarf debate, it never much effected. Like 1989 the controversy of 1994 headscarf again died down, although it continues to receive government attention. But after 9/11 attack the debate again starts and it became in the front of the world. France because of its security concerns again made a law which bans the headscarf in the State and the debate again starts in 2003.

iii. 2003: The Debate in the post 9/11 milieu

In 2003, the question of headscarves was first brought to national attention when the minister of the interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, insisted that Muslim women pose bare-headed for official identity photographs. In the wake of the controversy generated by the policy, schools once again became an issue, and politicians from the major parties rushed to declare their fealty to the republic. Socialist deputy Jack Lang presented a bill to the
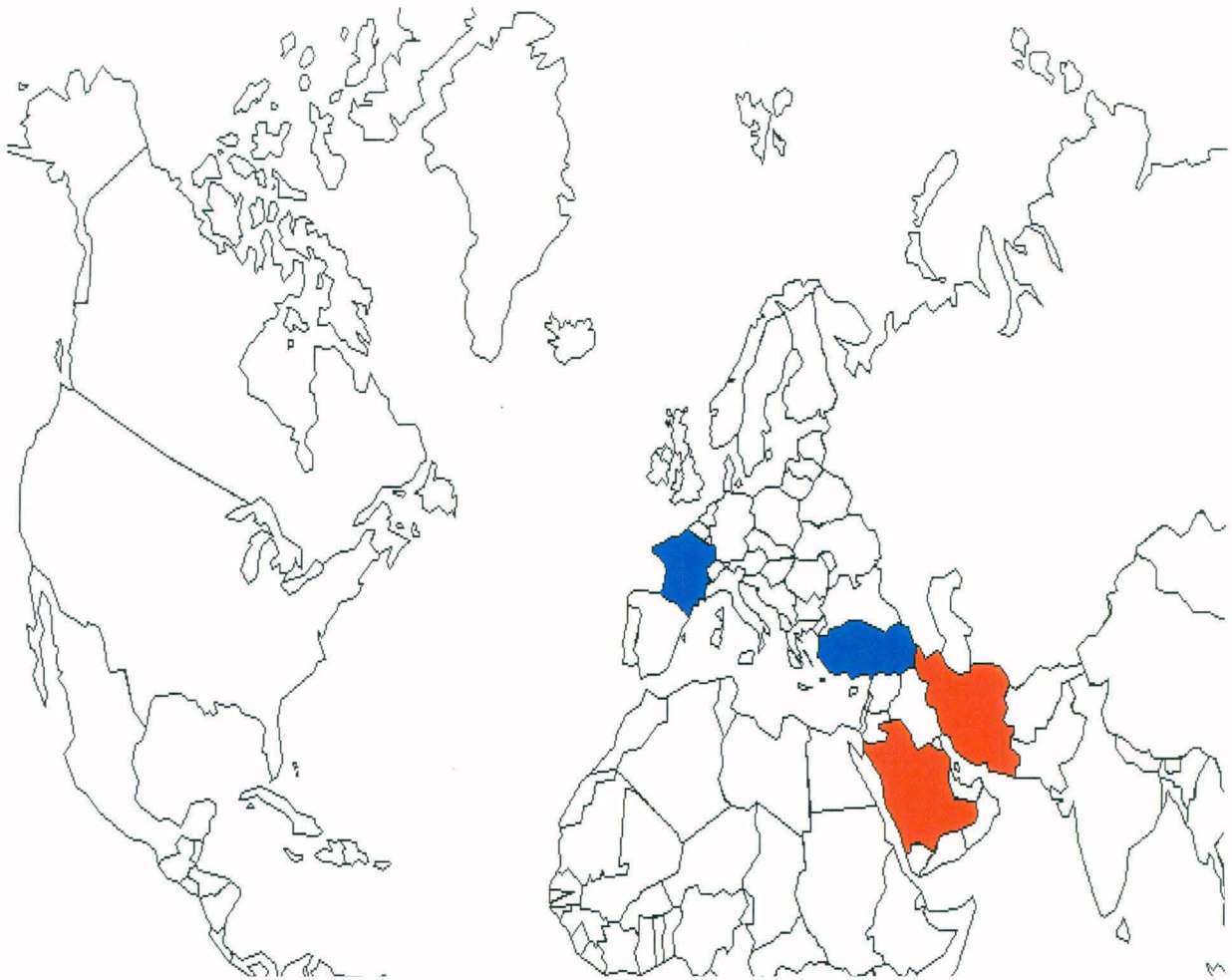
The following map illustrates countries where the veil is legally enforced, Saudi Arabia and Iran (shaded red) and where it is banned, Turkey and France (shaded blue).

Source: Centre for International Studies, Global lesson, 2009.

National Assembly that, in the name of laicite (and in the interests of not being perceived as discriminating against Muslims), would outlaw signs of any religious affiliation in public schools. In June the assembly created an investigative body to gather information, and in July President Jacques Chirac appointed a commission headed by a former government minister and deputy, Bernard Stasi, to explore the feasibility of enacting a law (Scott 2007: 29-30).

IV. Views on Headscarf Ban

Before going through the different views on headscarf lets have a look on the regions where headscarf is banned and the countries where headscarf is legally enforced, as shown in map.

i. Views in Support of Hijab

The veil should not be a problem. The one who supports the headscarf, according to them there are so many reasons, why a Muslim women wears it. Those who does not support the headscarf ban, do not understand why girls wearing it in French classrooms would be a problem.

According to Fouzia (42-year-old Moroccan),

> *"They are exaggerating, because if the girls want to wear the veil, where's the problem? ... Me, I don't know why they have so many problems with it."*

Bahia (38-year-old Algerian) shares this opinion, insisting,

> *"The headscarf and the shirt-it's the same thing."*

Many of the Muslim girls and women wanted to wear the headscarf because of religious matter. If the girls believe they need to veil for religious reasons, or simply do it out of habit, they should be allowed "to live." Some stated that the veil was not a bad thing, and the girls were not trying to cause trouble: "Because it's a question of, for us, it's a habit.

It's not different from anything else. It's not because someone wears a headscarf that she does something bad" (Hiba, 43-year-old Algerian). Bahia agreed,

"In school if they find that the girls are nice, that they work hard and are good, why is the veil [a problem]? It shouldn't matter." They thus argue that as long as the girls are good and work in school, there should be no restrictions on what they wear (Kittani 2003:575).

The other French Muslim Khadija received formal religious instruction and wore the "veil" outside of school. She considered herself a practicing Muslim, which she defined as one who prays, reads the Koran, fasts, eats *halel,* and attends the mosque:

"Personally, I want to wear the veil because I feel more Muslim, and according to the Koran, women are required to wear it."(Keaton 2006: 187).

For many "believing Muslims," the headscarf is a religious obligation It is a required act of "submission to God." Many women say that they wear it because the Koran requires it. As one female wearer stated:

"I am Muslim and I find that wearing the headscarf is one of the aspects of our religion at the same level as our ceremonies for example during the month of Ramadan."

Another added: I will soon turn 20 years old and recently I decided to wear the headscarf. That has changed a lot of things in my life and above all, the way I view religion. Personally, I feel more feminine and freer than before, despite what some people may think. I am happy like this and I want to say never be ashamed to want to live your beliefs (Wing 2005)

Tunisian women Nedjema argued that all people, including the children of immigrants, have the right to express their religions and cultures. She viewed it as a question of liberty. According to her:

"In my humble opinion, well, I am not for fanaticism, i.e., force a woman to put a scarf on her head, me the Muslim religion, it's my problem, but I respect the freedom of others to wear it"

One particular Internet posting made the point that "in front of each educational institution there is written Liberty Equality Fraternity, so where is the liberty to exercise our religion??" One girl put her view on the headscarf ban very simply: "Not touching my headscarf is good . . . but not touching my freedom . . . is better." Thus, wearing the headscarf can be viewed as a manifestation of a young woman's right to freedom of religion and expression, which does not have to be incompatible with democratic secularism (Wing 2005)

Keltoum and other respondents challenge France's inability to allow for cultural differences in public space, and many feel that the French are specifically targeting their culture Yusra (31-year-old Moroccan) makes this case explicitly:

I find that it's really an attitude on the part of teacher that is really racist, truly. That, for me is a racist act. We cannot exclude girls because they wear the headscarf.... It's really pointing a finger at them, and then vis-A-vis the culture of the child, they say to her" your culture, it's not good. "You don't have a right to judge like that.(ibid: 577)

Many Muslim women do not support the headscarf ban and chosen to wear the headscarf despite societal disfavor. One very astute comment was made by Monique Gadant in her work on women and Islam: "Before we come out against the *hijab*, reduced to a symbol of oppression . . . we should take some time to reflect on the motivations of these women [who wear it]." There are so many wide range of intersecting reasons why Muslim females may want to wear the headscarf in schools and elsewhere.

Some Muslim women thought that headscarf provide a form of protection from outside world for females who wear it because they can come and go without being an object of harassment by Muslim men. On the other hand, if they wear Western clothing, they may be insulted or experience acts of violence from men who view them as "cheap."

The *hijab* allows security and comfort within one's own sexuality. For example, a woman who has chosen to wear the scarf stated:

I feel at peace with myself. Before, people would look at me like every other girl. Now . . . [i]t is like I am in the image of Islam. People pay more attention to my behavior, to the attitudes I adopt. Therefore I have to think about my words and actions. Better control myself. . . . Now I truly am at peace.(Wing 2005).

Khosrokhavar is a "neo-communitarian" argues on the topic of compulsory veiling for women, "It's God who says it. It's because of man's weakness, which means that even if someone tries to be serious in their religion, God made us weak . . . If a man sees a woman pass by, he'll have bad thoughts about her." He concluded by saying that a woman must cover herself to avoid triggering those "bad thoughts." (Keaton 2006: 186).

In the schools that have largely Muslim student populations, girls who do not wear the headscarf are viewed as whores and are potential targets for violence, such as gang rape and even violence or murder. Within their families, they may also be seen as disgracing family honor if they do not choose to wear the headscarf. Many Muslim females in France express their desire to wear the headscarf as part of their right to individual choice in a democracy. They distinguish their choice from being forced to wear the scarf in an Islamic state. As one woman said:

"I think that the problem could be resolved by respecting the freedom of expression and the freedom to express oneself in all the domains, especially if this liberty does not harm others." As another stated: "Mr. Chirac, our headscarf is not an aggression to the Republic," and "France you are my country, hijab you are my life."(Wing 2005).

While the women mentioned above favor wearing headscarves, many Muslim women oppose them. No comprehensive national survey has been taken of Muslim women, but in a poll taken by *Elle* magazine, fifty-three percent of Muslim women of North African background living in France were hostile to headscarves in schools, and eighty-one percent claimed to never wear a veil.

The above views are in the support of hijab but there are some views which do not support the hijab arguing that if immigrants cannot adapt to France, then they should

return home. Several participants expressed views that people arguing for multiculturalism might be deemed racist. Many respondents simply stated that immigrants who do not conform should have stayed in their countries of origin or should return home.

ii. Welcoming the Ban

Muslim women were sharply divided on this place of veil in Islam. Some eleven women argued in an interview taken by Catellin killen in 1999, that there was no need for girls to veil in school because the veil is not really required in Islam. The other facets of the religion matter more, that a woman can dress modestly without covering her hair, or that one must not show off or try to stand out Fatima (54-year-old Moroccan) thought that girls should not veil inside the school although outside it was fine: "That way they don't bother others, because all of you don't have your head covered in class; it draws attention. ... You find right away the person who covers her head." While all but one of these women are very religious, and several veil at home while praying, they stated over and over again that Islam was not about the veil but about the heart. The majority of these women actually pronounced themselves against girls wearing the headscarf in school:

> I am Muslim, and I am against this, against people who dress like this, who wear veils; I can't stand it. Because when you want to follow the religion, as we say, religion is in the heart. It's not wearing the veil and then behind it doing things that are against the religion. I am Muslim, I practice, I do Ramadan, I do my prayers, and it stops there. It's not worth it that I wear a headscarf or that I have to go to work like that or to school. That I don't accept. (Souad, 49-year-oldTunisian) (Wing 2005).

Probably one of the most dominant justifications in favor of the headscarf ban is that wearing such a garment is oppressive. Prominent Egyptian feminist and physician, Dr. Nawal El Saadawi, is among those who perceive the veil as a symbol of subjugation. One of the most salient concerns for young girls who wear the headscarf is that it is a requirement being pushed upon them by their family, their community, and their religion.

One Algerian woman said about the veil, "I did not feel good at all wearing the veil. I felt camouflaged. But then I thought this is life, you know?" She also felt "jealous" of the few girls who, because they lived in French neighborhoods in which they were less conspicuous, could afford not to wear the veil (Lazreg 2009).

Some views to favor the headscarf is regarding to women's protection as it is mentioned above, some Muslim men say that the headscarf protects women from the "carnivorous gaze of men." According to secular feminists, this belief promotes the understanding that the veil covers a woman from all men except for one, her husband, and in that sense he maintains a possession over her. Thus, "the veiled woman is reduced to impotence in a society whose politics demands the donning of a certain garment and strictly regulates relations between the two sexes; while the woman in a liberal society who exposes her body can usually decide to remove it from the marketplace." The question is raised as to why Muslim men cannot just control themselves so that women can be free to dress as they wish: "It is not the girls who should be punished for putting on the headscarf but look first at the problem of the 'bestial' leer of men!!!!!!" The Koran requires both males and females to be modest and lower their gaze, but most of the time the requirement is applied solely to women. If women are required to cover themselves, why are men not also required to do the same? While men can walk freely, women wear the headscarves as a "sexist marker" to remind them of their place. The other justification in favor of the ban is that wearing the scarf creates dissension among Muslim women themselves. There are instances where females who wear the headscarf scold women who choose not to wear it, accusing them of "turning their back on God and 'going Western.'" (Wing 2005)

There was an survey taken in 2003 in which all of the participants are first-generation Muslim immigrants from the Maghreb, but they differ on other characteristics such as age, country of emigration, ethnicity (Arab or Berber), education, employment history, marital status, and number of children. Although 45 women were interviewed, 4 did not discuss the headscarf affair. The sample discussed here thus consists of 41 participants: 25 Algerians, 10 Moroccans, and 6 Tunisians between the ages of 25 and 58, who have resided in France between 1 and 37 years. The majority were between 17 and 35 years

old when they immigrated. About half of the women interviewed are better educated, more likely to be employed, and more likely to have become French citizens than the typical Maghrebin population in France. The other half of the sample is more representative. Having similar numbers of well-educated and poorly educated women facilitates comparisons between these groups. Religious observance is tied to age and educational level, with older, less well-educated women being more observant. Approximately one-third of the women interviewed do not practice, although they do self-define as Muslims. Another third are very observant, fasting during Ramadan, following food restrictions, and praying daily. The other third are also observant, respecting Ramadan and not consuming pork or alcohol but not praying daily. Although only 2 of the respondents always veil in public in France, another 9 wear the veil in their own homes and/or when in the Maghreb (Killen 2005: 573-575). (see Table 3).

Table4. 4.1

Respondense who wear the Veil:

Response to whether the Veil should be allowed in Schools

Where they were the veil (n=11)	Yes/No Problem (n=5)	No/Integrate (n=2)	Not Required in Islam (n=3)	Identity (n=1)
Always	2	0	0	0
Maghreb/At home	2	0	0	1
Maghreb	1	2	2	0
At Home	0	0	1	0

Source: Kettalin Killan, "The Other Side of the Veil." Vol 17, 2003.

iii. Stasi Commission

The Stasi Commission published its report on December 11, 2003, ruling that ostentatious displays of religion violated the secular rules of the French school system. The report recommended a law forbidding pupils from wearing "conspicuous" signs of belonging to a religion, meaning any visible symbol meant to be seen. Prohibited items would explicitly include headscarves for Muslim girls, yarmulkes for Jewish boys, turbans for Sikh boys, and large Christian crosses, whereas discreet symbols of faith, such as small crosses, the report also emphasized the duty of the French State to protect Muslim girls from several forms of violence, including genital mutilation and polygamy. The Commission clearly identified the role of publicly funded schools in France, which is to "transmit knowledge, teach students critical awareness, assure autonomy and openness to cultural diversity, and encourage personal development. Schooling aims both to train students for a professional career, and to train them to become good citizens of the French Republic." Such a mission, according to the report, presupposes fixed common rules, like gender equality and respect for secularity. Following entirely the Commission's recommendations, the French law on secularity and conspicuous religious symbols in schools was adopted on March 15, 2004 (Yardakul, 2005: 168).

iv. Reactions

French education authorities with a large Arab population were on high alert on Thursday. Teams of mediators were on hand to intervene in any dispute. Schools have been told not to automatically exclude pupils who arrive wearing headscarves, but to try and avert a showdown through dialogue. The law, which affects 12 million children, calls for a period of dialogue, although Education Minister Francois Fillon has stressed that there is no room for negotiations. "There is no question today of excluding. It is a question of convincing," he said. As classes opened, one Muslim girl in the working-class Paris suburb of Aubervilliers said she had left her headscarf at home. "I was always treated badly and I felt uncomfortable, so I decided to take it off," Nadia Arabi, 16, told the Associated Press before heading through the gates of Henri Wallon school (BBC

News 2004). Amnesty International has repeatedly urged France not to impose the ban, saying it violates European human rights law (CNN World 2010).

The law affects barely 2,000 women who cloak themselves in the niqab, which has just a slit for the eyes, and the burqa, which has a mesh screen over the eyes, and it enjoyed widespread public support when it was passed last year. But it has worried French allies, prompted protests abroad and has come to epitomize France's struggle to integrate Muslim immigrants in recent generations. This is a traditionally Catholic country where church and state were formally separated more than a century ago, when Muslims were barely a presence. Today, France sees itself as a proudly secular nation, few Catholics attend church regularly and small-town churches are crumbling — while growing demand for prayer rooms means Muslims pray on French city sidewalks and streets. Though only a very small minority of France's at least 5 million Muslims wear the veil, many Muslims see the ban as a stigma against the country's No. 2 religion. Many have also felt stigmatized by a 2004 law that banned Islamic headscarves in classrooms (msnbc 2011).

Today we have to worry about the fate of two hostages Muhammad Bechari, vice president of the French Council for the Muslim Religion said, "The political battle, a purely French one, for religious freedom will resume later on." France, he added, "is not at war with the Islamic faith." Much of the Muslim world remains convinced that the new law is an unfortunate affront to Islam. Arguments by French officials since the law was passed in March, to explain it as a desirable way to preserve France's republican values, have not been understood. "The Muslim world simply doesn't understand the law," said Abderrahim Lamchichi, a political science professor at the University of Picardie in Amiens. "It is deplorable that even liberal Muslims think that the law is against Islam. It's absurd." (The New York Times 2004)

v. 2009: Debate on National Identity

In France the law forbidding the Niqab was proclaimed on April 11, 2011. Voted in October 2010, it has generated vocal; debates within political parties and had been passed

by the Parliament without the presence of the majority of the left- wing MPs, who has deserted the premises in protest (The Hindu April 24, 2011).

The voting of the law somewhat paradoxically, seems to have provoked more heated debate and reactions than its actual application, Of course there was a small demonstration organized in front of the Notre- Dame church by a few 'militant' Islamists where a Niqab wearing women was arrested. She was actually released a few hours later, without having to pay the "mandatory" €150 fine. But apart from that, no official debate has been launched although there are still some heated exchanges on the French Web.

Nocolas Sarkozy's government's openly xenophobic electoral strategy is a complete failure, as all his attempts to mobilize the opinion around "sensitive subjects" such as a debate around the "French identity" in 2009, a national debate between Islam and secularism (The Hindu, April 24, 2011). Sarkozy launched a debate in October 2009, inviting citizens to help define what is meant to be French and what their view of national identity is. 60% people support the identity debate, but defining the national identity in a multiethnic country is not an easy task (BBC News 2009).

The debate goes to the national assembly where deputies will provide their input before the introspection draws to close on February 4, 2009 with a national conference allowing the government to take stock. Struggling with low approval ratings, Sarkozy has defended the discussion about national identity saying "this is a noble debate" and that those who opposed it are simply afraid of tackling complex issues. Sarkozy's appeal, in a statement "I address my Muslim countrymen to say I will do everything to make them feel they are citizens like any other, enjoying the same rights as all the others to live their faith and practice their religion with the same liberty and dignity," he said. "I will combat any form of discrimination."But I also want to tell them," he continued, "that in our country, where Christian civilization has left such a deep trace, where republican values are an integral part of our national identity, everything that could be taken as a challenge to this heritage and its values would condemn to failure the necessary inauguration of a French Islam." (Washington Post 2009)

"We must reaffirm the values of national identity and pride in being French," Eric Besson, the Minister for Immigration and National Identity, said as he announced the three-month series of discussions on November 2. Eric launched a website where citizens can write about what they think it means to be French. "This debate doesn't scare me. I even find it passionate." Besson says it's important for an increasingly diverse France to define its essential unifying values and reclaim a national pride and patriotism that the National Front co-opted long ago for its own xenophobic purposes. According to Eugene-Henri More, the deputy mayor of the ethnically mixed Paris suburb of La Courneuve, "the debate is being organized in a very unhealthy context." Critics also believe the idea is motivated by political opportunism. With regional elections looming next March, leftist politicians and pundits say the government is using the national-identity theme to appeal to the right-wing Le Pen voters who flocked to Sarkozy's 2007 presidential campaign once he began promising to get tough on crime and immigration. Le Pen's daughter Marine, the FN vice president, has voiced a similar accusation. "This country is suffering a major crisis of identity that is driving it into chaos," she told the Europe 1 radio station on Oct. 28. "We've been denied this debate for 25 years. We want a (real) national debate, not an electoral gadget. (Crumley 2009).

Some see the debate initiative as a reaction to a France whose citizens, and non-citizens, of immigrant origin are growing increasingly vocal, just as the singular French model of integration by which foreigners are expected to fully assimilate is weakening. "I'm amazed at this debate. It's a political event (and) doesn't represent any deep need in society," said Emmanuelle Saada, a sociologist and historian at Columbia University and *France's Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*. "National identity is not up to us to establish as a norm for us to conform to," she said in a telephone interview. "National identity just happens. ... In a big sense, it is outside our control." And, she adds, "It's not for any government to decide." The question, she said, is why the issue resonates with the public. Hicham Kochman, a rapper known as Axiom, says the national identity debate is a diversion. "I think this debate hijacks the real problems," like unemployment and buying power, he said. "The only values in France are liberty, equality, fraternity. ... Each time injustice gains ground, the values are weakened. For me, France isn't a country. It's an idea." (The Great Debate: What is Meant to be French 2009).

Thus we see that the headscarf debate in France has had a significant effect on Muslim women. Though moves to ban it way back in 89 the debate and subsequent policies gained momentum in the post 9/11 years. The terror attacks substantially reduced the place for maneuvering minority rights and identity claims. Women were on both sides of the debate and many who themselves did not wear the veil opposed the ban as curbing individual freedom and choice. The study also indicates that the distinction between individual choice and family/community compulsion in real life are often blurred.

Chapter 5 : Conclusion

Conclu/ion

The 'veil debate' of France has received attention across the world. The debate intensified farther in the post 9/11 scenario. This study attempt to analyze this debate from the perspective of 'difference accommodation.' The first chapter of the study outlined the objectives of the research, developed research questions and hypothesis.

The 9/11 attacks have been very significant in so far as it drew attention to the threat the established liberal democracies faced in so far as a different world system based on Islamic principles presented itself as a challenge. The subsequent Madrid and London bombings further highlighted how alienated individuals professing Islamic faith were ready to use violence against the state in order to undermine it. These attacks, their implication, policies and responses of the states is the focus of the second chapter.

Since the 70s multiculturalism emerged as an answer to deal with increasing heterogeneity that the states of Europe had come to reflect as a result of immigration requirements in the post Second World War period. Multiculturalism essentially called upon states to recognize the importance of culture in the individuals' life. Individuals are as they termed it 'culturally embedded.' Immigrant populations were not to be left to pursue their culture through private efforts rather the state should recognize them in the public sphere. Many European States like the UK, the Nitherlands followed this policy. Multiculturalism, however, was not a policy in France. Moreover following the terror attacks the strident criticism that multiculturalism faced from many quarters for effectively leaving communities to live in ghettos with very little communication and understanding became shriller. All this has been dealt in the second chapter.

In the first decade of twenty first century, Europe finds itself undergoing a civilization crisis while facing a great challenge related to Islam. There is an Islamist and Islamic challenge to Europe. One response to both is multiculturalism, the other is cultural pluralism. We must keep in mind that political integration does have to mean assimilation. Muslim migrants can become Europeans; accepting both individual citizenship rights and duties that would smooth the way for their membership of the club,

without ceasing to be Muslims. However it is appropriate to demand from them loyalty to the democratic polity to the idea of Europe, a formula which covers the core values of European civil society such as those related to secular constitutions separating religion from politics.

The politics of immigration in France has been marked by two overarching goals in the years since the closure of borders in 1974- that of the control of the number of immigrants reaching France, and that of integration of those immigrants that are residing permanently in the country. Further these two goals have been inextricably linked by the premise that any successful integration requires a limitation on the number of immigrants entering the country, otherwise a perceived threshold of tolerance with regard to immigrants will be exceeded. The development of those immigration and asylum policies have been played out within the context of attempts to create a unified and integrated European immigration and asylum policy attempts to partially successful. What the process European integration of immigration and asylum policy has done is not to remove control from nation states within Europe but rather to construct new forms of power which can increase the capacity of the states. This power has been increasingly been used to exclude non-EU nationals from its territory and this is true of France elsewhere. This assertion of the right of exclusion has been justified by the invocation of the threat to France security posed by immigration, both in terms of the threat of terrorism, the economic threat to French jobs and to the social security system and threat to French national culture and identity.

In these terms the restrictions on immigration may be seen as legitimate 'self-defense,' but the costs engendered by such restrictive policy are not taken into account. These costs can be measured in terms of insecurity, vulnerability and hardship inflicted upon immigrants due to the restrictive policies in action and negative impact. This has upon scope and nature of the principles underpinning the French policy.

Third chapter highlighted the status of Muslim women in French state. The chapter deals with the circumstances and gives us understanding about the actual position of Muslim women in France. Dealing with the status of Muslim women in France it is cleared that

they are today much more conscious about their education and the different rights. Muslim women in France as active as in politics also this shows their awareness in the French political system but the number of these Muslim women s are were few.

The crucial question is about the social recognition of the Muslim women in French society which seems to be struggling since 1989 and they are trying to fit themselves between two recognitions, one is to be Muslim and other is to be French. This becomes more pity after the 9/11 bombings and the actions taken by French government make them struggle much for their identity. The very relevant example of this is law which bans the headscarf in France.

It has been argued in chapter four that women immigrants' origin faces a double discrimination within French society and is often in a situation of double dependency of men. In these immigrants women Muslim women face the problem much. The continuing debate over the headscarf is a symbol of the difficulties that France is experiencing in coming to terms with the presence of large, settled Muslim community to French national identity. But as Silverman argues, 'those elements deemed to be alien to the French tradition only appeared in that light due to the mythologised reconstruction of the development of the French nation.' This construction of national identity constructed a dichotomy between the universalist/assimilationist tradition traditions France.

The dispute over the girls wearing headscarves at school was pointed a battle analogues to that between the secular Republic and the Catholic Church at the beginning of the century, and it was argued that as in the first battle; any concession on part of the secular Republic could lead to its downfall, a downfall into society of different communities living in separate ghettos.

Many of those who argued against the exclusion of Muslim girls wearing headscarves from school did so because they believed that entering the secular Republican school system would be best to emancipating the girls from their Muslim beliefs and traditions and thus better integrating them into French society. Many argued that this framework makes it very difficult for the left and for the anti-racist movements in French society and although these anti-racist movements did originally make a stand against the exclusion of

Girls from the schools, as the affair had progressed the number of those arguing for the girls right to adhere to their owm particular culture and religious values has decreased. The way in which the proposed new legislation to ban the headscarf is being supported by both Right and Left in terms of defending clearly the values of Republic, shows perhaps a final defeat for the advocates of the right to difference. In these circumstances the position of those wishing to continue to uphold their Muslim traditions within the public sphere of this secular French state becomes very difficult. The rejection of the headscarf can be seen as a profound refusal to accept the reality of Maghrebian and Muslims immigration, and as a readiness for exclusion of these populations. Paradoxically, whilst arguing for greater integration, the government sees to be creating the conditions for greater exclusion of some immigrant and ethnic minority populations in France. At last the identity debate initiated by Sarkozy in 2009 questioned the identity of these Muslim women again.

It becomes clear from our study that the manifestation of specific characteristics by community can at times question the fundamental tenets on which liberal state is based. As theoretical response to tackle the fundamental change that these societies had themselves undergone as a result of immigrants who had become citizens multiculturalism appeared to be more sensitive. Such an approach makes it possible for the state to adopt policies that cater to needs of the minority community on account of the fact that these rights of minorities are found to be consistent with liberal democratic principles and their rights does not going to be harm the secular nature of government. However, at the time the principle of the unity in diversity should be upheld at all costs and no cracks should be allowed to be made by divisive forces in the name of asserting one's minority identity in the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural state.

Thus study has proved to be extremely useful in understanding the identity debate of Muslim women in France. The study point to failure of the French Republicanism confronts in dealing with issues of immigration, asylum, racism and discrimination. It would seem, however, this points to a need to re-evaluate the values of the French Republicanism that lie at the heart of the French nation state. In France the law forbidding the hijab was proclaimed on 11 April, 2011, generated vocal debate within the

political parties and had been passed by the parliament without the presence of the majority of the left-wing MPs and this seems to have more heated debate and reactions than its actual application. Nikolas Sarkozy openly xenophobic electoral strategy is a complete failure as all his attempts to mobilize the opinion around sensitive subjects around the French identity in 2009, a national debate around Islam and secularism ended up as huge flops. But whether the failure of this xenophobic and populist politics is a sign that France has deeply changed and that the traditional discourses do not work anymore remains to be seen. Some would argue that by and large Urban population has now been living side by side with immigrants for almost half of a century and have learned to know them, and appreciate them. This failure on Sarkoxy's part is, therefore, quite interesting and challenging not only for the conservatives, but also for the socialists, who are getting ready for the 2012 elections, as it seems they will have to tackle a new generation of voters who want to hear less about 'threatening immigrants' and more about the nations real problems.

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