

T.C.
ISTANBUL KÜLTÜR UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**THE CHALLENGES OF THE FRENCH SECULARISM ON THE LIVES OF MUSLIM
WOMEN**

MA Thesis by
HAMDA ABDOU

2100003284

Department: International Relations

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Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Nazlı Çağın Bilgili

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ÖZET

Bu tez, Fransız toplumunun temel ilkelerinden biri olan laiklik nedeniyle Fransa'daki Müslüman kadınların karşılaştığı zorlukları incelemektedir. Laiklik, dini kimlik ve toplumsal cinsiyet arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimlere odaklanan bu araştırma, Müslüman kadınların gündelik hayatlarında yaşadıkları gerilim ve çatışmaları incelemektedir. Çalışma, tam yüz örtünme yasağı da dahil olmak üzere Fransız laik politikalarını ve yasalarını ve bunların Müslüman kadınların hak ve özgürlükleri üzerindeki etkilerini analiz etmektedir. Ayrıca, bu tedbirlerin kadınların aidiyet duyguları ile dini ve kültürel kimliklerini ifade etme becerileri üzerindeki psikolojik, sosyal ve kültürel yansımalarını da incelemektedir.

Ayrıca bu araştırma, Müslüman kadınların eğitim, istihdam ve kamu hizmetlerine erişim gibi alanlarda laiklik ve dinleriyle ilgili klişeler ve önyargılar nedeniyle karşılaştıkları özel zorlukları incelemektedir. Bu araştırmanın temel amacı laiklik, toplumsal cinsiyet ve dini kimlik arasındaki etkileşimlerin derinlemesine bir analizini sunmak olup, bu tez Fransa'daki Müslüman kadınların karşılaştıkları zorlukların daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmayı ve Fransız toplumunda laiklik konusunda yapıcı ve kapsayıcı bir diyalogu teşvik etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Laiklik, Müslüman Kadınlar, Fransa

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the challenges encountered by Muslim women in France due to secularism, a key principle of French society. By focusing on the complex interactions between secularism, religious identity, and gender, this research examines the tensions and conflicts experienced by Muslim women in their daily lives. The study analyzes French secular policies and laws, including the ban on full-face veiling, and their impact on the rights and freedoms of Muslim women. It also examines the psychological, social, and cultural repercussions of these measures on their sense of belonging and ability to express their religious and cultural identity.

Furthermore, this research examines the specific challenges faced by Muslim women in areas such as education, employment, and access to public services due to secularism and the stereotypes and prejudices associated with their religion. The primary objective of this research is to provide an in-depth analysis of the interactions between secularism, gender, and religious identity, this thesis contributes to a better understanding of the challenges faced by Muslim women in France and aims to promote constructive and inclusive dialogue on the issue of secularism in French society.

Key words: Secularism, Muslim Women, France

Table of Content

Acknowledgments.....	i
Özet.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
List of Abbreviations.....	vii
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Research Methodology.....	4
2. Literature Review.....	5
2.1 French Laicite in Comparison to Anglo-Saxon Secularism.....	5
2.2 But what is the Origin of the concept.....	8
2.3 How does French secularism differ from Anglo-Saxon secularism.....	11
2.4 Multiculturalism.....	17
3. Islamophobia.....	24
3.1 The definition of Islamophobia and the reasons for its emergence.....	27
3.2 Charlie Hebdo: The terrorist attack and the Debate on Islamophobia.....	32
3.3 The Origin and Consequences of Islamophobia and its Impact on the Western World.....	33
3.4 The impact of this Islamophobia on Muslims and its different forms.....	35
3.5 France against Radicalization and Terrorism.....	43.
3.6 Unravelling the Complexity: Gender Equality and Muslim Women.....	48
3.6.1 The Place of Women in Islam.....	48
3.6.2 Women in Muslim-Majorities Countries.....	49
3.6.3 Muslim Women's Representation in European Countries.....	51
3.6.4 Fundamentalism.....	52
4 The Impact of French Secularism on the Lives of Muslim Women.....	47
4.1 The law on the prohibition of the wearing of Headscarves in public spaces (2010)	51
4.2 Discrimination in Employment.....	53
4.3 Discrimination in Education and Schooling.....	57
4.4. Discrimination in the Public Space.....	59

4.5 Discrimination in Justice System.....	60
4.6 Discrimination in Housing.....	60
5. Navigating the Challenges: Empowering Muslim Women in the Face of Adversity.....	64
5.1 Speaking Out.....	66
5.2 Social Network.....	66
5.3 Educating Others.....	70
5.4 Legal Actions.....	72
5.5 Engaging in Politics.....	73
5.6 Engaging in Activism.....	74
5.7 Embracing their Identity.....	75
5.8 Activism.....	76
6.Conclusion.....	78
References.....	82

List of Abbreviation

Femyso: The Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organization

ANCIC : Association Nationale des centres d'IVG et de contraception

HP: Huffington Post

AA: Anadolu Agency

PRI: Penal Reform International

LLC: Law Library of Congress

CFCM : Le Conseil Français du Culte Musulman

HCEFH : Le Haut conseil à l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes

ALCDM : L'association de lutte contre la discrimination envers les musulmans

DP : Deutsche Welle

HAP : Hyper-article en ligne

DDD : Défenseur des droits

1. Introduction :

The study's purpose is to understand the challenges of French secularism in the lives of Muslim Women. To fulfill this objective, the study addresses the following questions, which are central to the foundational academic discourse surrounding French secularism: How do Muslim women in France navigate and negotiate their religious beliefs and practices in the face of the challenges posed by the principles of secularism? How does the implementation of French secularism impact the cultural and religious identity of Muslim women in France?

Laïcité, or secularism, is a fundamental principle that holds a central place in the history of France. Since its establishment, it has shaped French society and sparked numerous debates and controversies. Secularism in France has its roots in historical events and the ideals that emerged over the centuries. Secularism in France took shape in the aftermath of the French Revolution in the late 18th century when French society sought to free itself from religious influences and establish a secular state. There were multiple reasons that motivated the emergence of secularism. In the first place, secularism aimed to break away from the privileges and political influence of the Catholic Church that characterized the Old Régime. During that time, the Church played a predominant role in the social, political, and cultural life of France. The establishment of secularism was, therefore, a reaction to this ecclesiastical dominance, asserting the principle of a clear separation between religious institutions and the state. Furthermore, secularism in France developed in the context of Enlightenment ideals, which advocated for reason, freedom of conscience, and equality. Enlightenment thinkers challenged the absolute authority of the Church and advocated for a society based on rationality and tolerance. Secularism became a concrete expression of these values by ensuring the state's neutrality towards religious beliefs and protecting the freedom of individuals to practice their religion or choose not to practice any. Secularism in France was also motivated by the need to ensure national unity in a country characterized by growing religious diversity. During the 19th and 20th centuries, France underwent demographic transformations with the arrival of populations from different religious backgrounds, including Protestants, Jews, Muslims, and other religious groups. Laïcité was perceived as a means to preserve social harmony by guaranteeing equal treatment of all citizens, regardless of their religious convictions.

Laïcité in France was established for various reasons, including the desire to separate the Church and the state, promote Enlightenment values, and ensure equality and national unity. Over time, this principle has become a fundamental pillar of French society, while continuing to provoke debates and evolve to face contemporary challenges (PRC,2005).

Secularism, which is one of the fundamental values of the French Republic, can be considered a challenge for Muslim women in France. Secularism is a principle of separation between the state and religions and guarantees freedom of conscience and worship for all citizens. However, the implementation of laïcité in France can sometimes conflict with the religious and cultural practices of Muslim women, particularly with regard to the wearing of the veil. Wearing the veil is often seen as a symbol of women's oppression and submission to men in some cultures, including the Muslim culture. However, for many Muslim women, the veil is a personal choice and an expression of their faith. In France, secularism implies that the state is neutral in religious matters, which means that religious symbols should not be visible in public places. This policy is often applied to Muslim women wearing the veil, which can limit their access to education, employment, and other public services. From this perspective, this issue has been the subject of debate in France for several years. On the one hand, there are those who consider that secularism must be defended at all costs, even if it means restricting the religious freedom of Muslim women. On the other hand, there are those who believe that Muslim women should be free to practice their religion as they wish, without being discriminated against or marginalized. This issue is complex and controversial, and many studies have been conducted to understand the implications of secularism on Muslim women in France. With this in mind, this essay will examine the challenges faced by Muslim women in France as a result of laïcité, using concrete examples and statistical data. In addition, this essay will also evaluate the arguments on both sides of this debate, citing academic sources and expert opinions to provide a balanced perspective. Contextualization France has a long history of separation between state and church. This relationship began with the French Revolution, which established freedom of conscience and ended the old regime of the Church. In 1905, France passed a law on secularism, which established the separation of church and state. This law also guaranteed freedom of conscience and worship for all citizens, but it also established that the state was neutral in religious matters. Since then, laïcité has become a central principle of the French Republic and is considered a fundamental value that guarantees freedom of conscience and worship for all citizens. However, the application of laïcité in France can sometimes pose

challenges for Muslim women who wish to practice their religion freely. (The Oxford Student, Lucie Guano Dent, November 27, 2021)

One of the main challenges for Muslim women in France is the issue of wearing the veil. In France, secularism implies that the state is neutral in religious matters, which means that religious symbols should not be visible in public places. This policy is often applied to Muslim women wearing the veil, which can limit their access to education, employment, and other public services. In many cases, Muslim women who wear the veil face discrimination and stigmatization in French society. Some women have been excluded from school or university because of their headscarf, while others have been denied jobs because of their religious appearance. In addition, secularism in France can also limit Muslim women's access to public spaces, such as beaches, swimming pools, and parks. In 2016, several French cities banned the burkini, a full-body swimsuit worn by some Muslim women, citing safety and secular reasons. The decision was widely criticized by human rights advocates and Muslim groups, who said it violated individual and religious freedoms. (The Hedgehog, Talal Assad, 2006)

Arguments for and against the debate over secularism and Muslim women in France are complex and contentious, with arguments on both sides. On the one hand, there are those who believe that secularism must be defended at all costs, even if it means restricting the religious freedom of Muslim women. These people argue that the veil is a symbol of women's oppression and should be banned in public places to ensure gender equality. On the other hand, there are those who believe that Muslim women should be free to practice their religion as they wish. (The Guardian, August 24, 2016)

Responding to the concerns regarding Islamic radicalization, France has implemented various policies, including the 2004 ban on wearing the headscarf in educational settings. These policies aim to curtail religious expression while emphasizing secularism and Western values. This legislation has had the unintended consequence of diminishing the educational aspirations of young Muslim girls and exerting lasting effects on their career trajectories and family structures. Indeed, Muslim women who choose to express their religious beliefs by wearing the headscarf encounter a spectrum of discrimination, ranging from verbal hostility to physical prejudice. This marginalization and verbal abuse are evident both in professional contexts and in public and educational spheres.

In order to address these research questions, the solution is to confront these challenges that have been marked by the adoption of multifaceted strategies aimed at asserting their religious rights, reshaping perceptions, and raising awareness about the authentic significance of their faith while advocating for their rights as French citizens. They have established advocacy organizations to defend their rights and even initiated feminist movements within their community. Additionally, they have chosen to actively voice their concerns on social media platforms, television shows, and various discussion forums like podcasts. These actions aim to sensitize the general public and policymakers to the discrimination they face and promote a more inclusive understanding of religious diversity within French society. These efforts are also geared towards shifting perceptions by emphasizing that wearing the headscarf should not be incompatible with active participation in social and professional life. Through these actions, Muslim women aspire to contribute to a lasting cultural change that upholds their fundamental rights while fostering harmonious coexistence in a secular society.

In the first part of the first chapter, secularism in France is compared to that of Anglo-Saxon countries, highlighting the differences and complementarities between them. This analysis will allow a better understanding of the specificities of French secularism. In the second part of the first chapter, multiculturalism will be addressed, in order to explore the different approaches adopted by Western countries to deal with the cultural and religious diversity of their societies. This analysis will help highlight the advantages and limitations of the French model of secularism in managing cultural and religious diversity.

The second chapter focuses on Islamophobia. It will examine the different definitions and manifestations of Islamophobia, as well as its historical and socio-political roots. The goal of this chapter is to better understand the phenomenon of Islamophobia in France and around the world, in order to discuss its implications for Muslim women and French secularism.

The third chapter is devoted to the impact of French secularism on Muslim women. It will examine the various measures taken in the name of secularism in France, such as the ban on the full veil in public spaces, and their impact on Muslim women. This chapter will also discuss the debates surrounding these measures, examining the various arguments for and against these measures and highlighting the implications for women's rights and religious freedom in France.

Finally, concrete examples will be presented to illustrate how French secularism can be a challenge for Muslim women in their daily lives.

The fourth chapter looks at the different strategies and resistances put in place by Muslim women to deal with the challenges posed by French secularism. It will examine the different actions taken by Muslim women to defend their rights and religious freedom, such as Muslim feminist movements and associations that fight against Islamophobia. In addition, this chapter will explore the strategies Muslim women have put in place to reconcile their faith with the demands of secularism, such as adapting their dress. Finally, this chapter will explore possible avenues for constructive dialogue and peaceful coexistence between Muslim women and French secularism.

1.1. Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study involved utilizing a wide range of sources, including books, journal articles, web pages, and blogs. This diverse approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the topic, incorporating both scholarly insights and contemporary viewpoints. By incorporating academic sources and digital platforms, the research process was enriched, resulting in a thorough and up-to-date analysis.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Chapter 1: French Laicite in Comparison to Anglo-Saxon Secularism

This chapter focuses on the concept of secularism and its variations, with a particular emphasis on the differences between the French and Anglo-Saxon models. Firstly, we will explore the definition and origins of secularism, providing a comprehensive understanding of its core principles and historical context. This will lay the foundation for a deeper exploration of the nuances and variations that exist within secularism. By comparing the French and Anglo-Saxon models of secularism, this chapter seeks to highlight the similarities and differences in their approaches to state neutrality, the relationship between religion and politics, and the preservation of individual religious freedom. Through this comparative analysis, we aim to deepen our understanding of the complexities of secularism and its impact on society, particularly in relation to the challenges faced by Muslim women within these contexts.

Secularism in France is a constitutional principle that guarantees the separation of Church and State. This means that the State must remain neutral and must not promote a particular religion nor favor one religion over another. Secularism also guarantees freedom of worship and freedom of conscience for all citizens, whether they are believers or non-believers. Secularism is considered a foundation of the French Republic. It is enshrined in Article 1 of the Constitution of 1958, which states that "France is an indivisible, secular, democratic indivisible, secular, democratic and social". This secularism is also marked by the law of 1905 on the separation of the Churches and the State which put an end to the public financing of religions and established the principle of the neutrality of the State with respect to all religions. However, secularism is sometimes the subject of controversy in France, particularly with regard to the application of the principle of neutrality in public spaces such as schools, hospitals, and businesses. France has recently experienced intense debate about the wearing of the full veil in the public space and on religious symbols in schools. In sum, it is a central principle of the French Republic that guarantees freedom of conscience and worship for all citizens, while ensuring the neutrality of the State in religious matters. Secularism in France is a complex concept that has a central place in the political and social life of the country. Indeed, the very idea of secularism emerged in the 18th century based on the ideas of the philosophers of the Enlightenment who

called for freedom of conscience and tolerance in religious matters. It was formalized in France by the 1905 law on the separation of Church and State which established the legal framework of secularism in France. The fundamental principle of French secularism is the neutrality of the State towards all religions. Thus, the State is forbidden to favor or support a particular religion and must not promote one religion over another. It must also guarantee freedom of conscience and worship for all citizens, which implies the recognition of all religions. In France, secularism applies to all areas of public life, including schools, hospitals, public companies, and administrations. This means that public officials and public services must be neutral on religious issues and must not express their religious or political opinions while on duty. However, the practical application is sometimes a source of controversy and debate. For example, the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in public schools has been prohibited since 2004. Similarly, the wearing of full-face veils was banned in public spaces in 2011. These measures have been criticized by some members of the Muslim community who see them as an infringement of their freedom of conscience. In conclusion, secularism in France is a complex and central concept that guarantees the neutrality of the state and freedom of conscience and worship for all citizens. Although the application of *laïcité* is sometimes controversial, it remains an important foundation of the French republican identity (HAL,2017).

In fact, several researchers and authors have made studies these last years on the real theme, what wants to say really the crisis of the nation-state in France" and what it really means to be French and what it requires. It is between the 18th century and the middle of the 20th century that the French adopted this smugness, this arrogance to believe that the French are superior to other nations. France, which was for more than two decades an ally two decades allied country with its policy, with established limits more or less respected, is now facing an identity crisis. But these identity problem does not date from today, indeed the France of before held real baggage because of its culture, its excellent literature an unequaled ideology, and a very good education which succeeded at one time "to transform" and even today has allowed minorities and immigrants to and immigrants to evolve to have access to the same education as the natives which, according to the author, makes them more "French" and less foreign (Patrick Claffey, 2016).

According to the British historian Sudhir Hazareesingh (2011), General de Gaulle would be the very idea of the incarnation of the 5th republic and the term republican differed from other

countries, in particular here from the Americans. Gaulle had a vision of France that was majestic, and exceptional and that the French norm can be seen to be accustomed to other civilizations although this sees itself criticized by the Anglo-Saxon model, he had a very precise idea of a France that is firmly convinced that the taste of its cultures is excellent and that not only is it beautiful but it can also be adapted universally to other countries, France is a country that is sucked in by the idea of transmitting these republican ideals to the rest of the world to show the greatness of its "republican values". According to Sudhir, France has reached a level of transcendental theology that is closest to truth and reason, and the world has so much to learn from them. This makes these republican values not really suitable in a modern world like this one which is in constant movement. France is a country that constantly stages these republican values and therefore here secularism and what the historian Hazareesingh calls "the pervasive neo-religious omnipresent" which is the real definition of French secularism according to him. In 1903 in the high school on Castres in Toulouse, the socialist and leader Jean Jaurès declared in his speech that the republic had arrived at its definitive form in the sense that the values they had adopted of democracy would not change anymore and that these values had long been outdated in other countries (2011;639).

According to Peter L. Berger (2005), an American sociologist, and theologian, secularism is "a process in which every sector of society and culture is deprived of religious domination and no institution is under its domination. In other words, religion should not be allowed to move beyond the private sphere. Berger's definition highlights the idea that secularism advocates for a clear separation between religion and public institutions. It suggests that religious beliefs and practices should not have a dominant role in shaping laws, policies, or societal norms. Instead, secularism encourages a more neutral and inclusive public sphere where diverse religious and non-religious perspectives can coexist. It is worth noting that perspectives on secularism may vary among scholars and experts. While some emphasize the exclusion of religion from public life, others may focus on the idea of ensuring religious freedom and equal treatment for all individuals, regardless of their beliefs. Understanding different perspectives contributes to a broader discussion of the complexities of secularism in various cultural and societal contexts. (2005;114).

According to Bryan R. Wilson (1976), a reader in sociology at Oxford University, there has been a fairly radical on the structure of society, one differentiated, expanded, and become autonomous, where religion gave up the last vestiges of the presidency it once exercised over the

whole of social affairs the definition of secularism is a point in French history, religion dominated all spheres of society without it, but faced with multiple difficulties and general awareness, it was necessary to adopt a neutral state under no other authority than itself and which would regulate itself, that is to say, with the help of the different branches. Indeed, although the various authors describe *laïcité* in distinct ways nevertheless they all join on the fact that religion should not be mixed with social affairs, the phenomenon of *laïcité* is a rather vast and complicated concept insofar as it tries to seek the best option allow a positive civic value but which cuts in the France of today thus modern France in its leanings for the oppositions of binary orders which allow only a small space for the differences. This supposes that the differences are not welcomed with a good eye and that this secularism digs the refusal of multicultural by the French (1976;260).

2.2 But what is the origin of this secularism?

Ahmet T. Kuru (2008) in his book examines the concept of secularism in Europe, with a particular focus on France and its exceptional approach to *laïcité* (secularism). The book explores how state policies in France have shaped the relationship between the state and its Muslim population. Kuru analyzes the historical, political, and legal factors that have contributed to the unique form of secularism in France, he also examines the impact of French state policies on the integration of Muslims and the practice of Islam in the country. The book also delves into the debates and controversies surrounding issues such as headscarf bans, public displays of religious symbols, and the role of religion in public institutions. Through his analysis, Kuru aims to provide insights into the complexities of secularism and its effects on religious minorities, particularly Muslims, in France. The book offers a comprehensive examination of French exceptionalism in relation to secularism and provides a nuanced understanding of the challenges and dynamics at play in the French context. The first one is Anthony Gill's rational choice approach to state policies toward religion in general. He argues that state policies are designed by the rulers' calculations of opportunity costs based on their preferences for sustaining political survival, minimizing the cost of the ruling, and succeeding in economic development. The strength of this argument is its ability to explain the strategic flexibility of rulers. The second approach highlights the significant influence of anti-immigrant sentiment and Islamophobia on the formulation of French state policies toward Muslims. This approach, however, has two problems. Opposition to immigration

and the rise of Islamophobia are prevalent trends that have been observed in several Western European countries, indicating a growing concern in these societies, such as Britain, Germany, and France. The recent terrorist bombings in Britain and Spain have unfortunately contributed to the reinforcement of these trends. While it is true that France is often considered more restrictive towards its Muslim population compared to other Western countries, it should also be noted that France applies a stricter approach towards religion in general, including Christianity and these restrictions can not be explained by opposition to Immigration and Islamophobia. The ban on students' religious symbols, which includes the prohibition of large Christian crosses, Jewish kippas, and Sikh turbans, exemplifies a broader policy that extends beyond targeting specific religious groups.

Indeed, France is the only country in Western Europe where there are no religious instructions in public schools (2008;3).

Patrick Claffey (2016), secularism did not take place suddenly but several events led slowly but surely to its appearance such as the venal agreement of Descartes which became later the Cartesian philosophy, the French Revolution as well as the particularities of the history of France. The term says for the first time initiated in 1871 in a dispute which took place at the end of removing the religion of the elementary school indeed disputes of secularization take place where one wishes to fire the teachers who teach the religion. But this took a definitive turn in the middle of the 19th century which will remain of topicality thus until this modern France, the laws which implanted this secularization are "the laws of Ferry" whose three laws of Ferry" of which the three principal laws are the free public school, the free public school, the compulsory instruction, and secular teaching. According to the author, this is an effective way to develop the ethical "Weltanschauung", which is a philosophical way of seeing the world, it is a vision of the global conception of life free of all religious considerations, it is seen as protecting the freedom of conscience, promotes spiritual independence, encourages tolerance towards different ways of thinking which differs from the Anglo-Saxon secularism insofar as the latter remains neutral as a process or social evolution (2016;174).

Jean Bauberot (2012), indivisibility, secularity, democracy, and sociability are the foundations of the political bond, each of them intimately linked to the other and to the republican principles themselves. In other words, the struggles and the conflicts in society are purely

subjective to the society as the debates of the veil in France which does not take place in Belgium. It appeared according to the author in the second half of the 19th century under the 3rd Republic, this term was initiated for the first time and understood as an organization created by the society that seeks reciprocal neutrality between spirituality, religious authorities, and political, civic and administrative authorities". The two reasons for the origin of this law according to the author are the first one is to fight the problems that against clericalism, a system under which the clergy is going to leave the religious out of the religious field to take part in the public affairs and tends to install its influence and the second one was to assert the liberties of conscience under which the individuals can exercise, or not the religion of their choice, to develop not only as personal units or groups of units. This secularism is both an international ethic and a set of rules to which the public service must conform (2012;18).

Heiner Bielefeld (2013), argues that today, French secularism is threatened from within for two reasons: the first one is that neutrality is being overemphasized in a very dominant way, sometimes interpreted in a way that is contrary to the 1905 law, but at the same time atrophies the various other principles such as separation, freedom of conscience and non-discrimination. It is believed that one of the primary concerns in the public sphere is the display of religious expression, which is often attributed to the fear of "the other" or the perceived threat of religious influence. The second reason is the imposition of intellectual simplism which impregnates even the elites with contempt of historical science, a revival of secularism would be welcome and essential for France today, secularism is imposed on religions, not by discrimination or constraint but by freedom (2013;40).

Nicolas Cadene in his article argues against the misconception that French secularism, known as *laïcité*, is inherently illiberal. The author argues that placing excessive emphasis on culture wars and divisive discussions surrounding *laïcité* (secularism) tends to overshadow the similarities between France and the United States. The article highlights that both France and the United States share a commitment to secularism as a means of protecting individual freedoms and ensuring the separation of religion and state. It argues that *laïcité*, like the American model of secularism, aims to establish a level playing field for all citizens, irrespective of their religious beliefs or non-beliefs. He argues that labeling *laïcité* as illiberal overlooks its intended purpose of preserving religious freedom and preventing the dominance of any particular religion. They assert

that French secularism is not an attack on religion but a defense of the principles of neutrality and equality before the law. Moreover, the article emphasizes that both France and the United States have faced challenges and controversies in implementing their respective models of secularism. It points out that misconceptions and misapplications of *laïcité* should not overshadow its underlying goals of safeguarding individual liberties and maintaining a diverse and inclusive society. The article concludes that rather than focusing on the perceived differences or casting French secularism as illiberal, it is important to recognize the shared values and goals of secularism in France and the United States. By doing so, a more nuanced understanding of *laïcité* can be fostered, leading to a more productive dialogue about the relationship between religion, culture, and the state in both countries. In summary, the article challenges the notion that French secularism is illiberal and argues for a broader perspective that acknowledges the similarities between French *laïcité* and the American model of secularism. It encourages a more nuanced and informed discussion on the topic, emphasizing the shared commitment to religious freedom and the protection of individual liberties in both France and the United States (Foreign Policy, 2021).

Martin Evans (2016) stated that French secularism, known as *laïcité*, is a concept that originated in the early 20th century as a principle of separation between religion and the state in France. It was established as a response to the historical influence and power of the Catholic Church in French society and politics. At its core, *laïcité* aims to ensure religious neutrality and equality in the public sphere. It emphasizes the principle of the separation of church and state, advocating for the state to be independent of religious influence and for religion to be a private matter of individual choice and belief. French secularism encompasses several key principles: Separation of Church and State: *Laïcité* calls for a clear distinction between religious institutions and the state, with no formal ties or preferential treatment given to any particular religion. Religious Freedom: It upholds the right of individuals to practice their religion or to choose not to follow any religious beliefs. However, religious practices should be limited to the private sphere and should not infringe upon public institutions or spaces. Equality and Non-Discrimination: *Laïcité* promotes equality before the law, regardless of religious beliefs or non-belief. It seeks to prevent any religious group from exerting undue influence or privilege in the public sphere. Public Neutrality: Public institutions, such as schools, government offices, and courts, are expected to be neutral and refrain from promoting or favoring any religious beliefs. Religious symbols and expressions are generally restricted in these spaces (History Today, 2016).

2.3 How does French secularism differ from Anglo-Saxon secularism?

France's interpretation of secularism differs from that of the Anglo-Saxon world, as Nicholas Sarkozy considers the wearing of the hijab to be a provocation to the republic, and it so happens that his point of view is not an isolated one, as Renaud Girar, a leading reporter, shares the same view. The wearing of the veil, the Burkini or the full veil is contrary to the republic and its mores, and represents an offense against the law, he says. France wishes to keep religious beliefs in the private sphere, to allow *laïcité* to play its role. Indeed, these different religious communities are not recognized by the French Republic, but differences do exist in the treatment of each community, such as the fact that a woman wearing the Christian veil will receive less hatred than a woman wearing the hijab (François Gemenne). France bans a number of associations and communities, particularly Muslim ones, which intensifies tensions between France and Muslims. As for secularism in the UK, the country's official religion is Christianity, more specifically Anglicanism, and the Queen was head of the Anglican Church, which would have been impossible in the French model. French secularism is seen as an exception in Europe, since it is one of the European countries that has maintained a strict separation between church and state, making it difficult for Muslims to practice their religion since the country has banned the labeling of halal products and is conducting investigations against companies that subcontract halal products (Murat Sofuoglu, 2020).

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have faced challenges and controversies in implementing their respective models of secularism. It points out that misconceptions and misapplications of *laïcité* should not overshadow its underlying goals of safeguarding individual liberties and maintaining a diverse and inclusive society. The article concludes that rather than focusing on the perceived differences or casting French secularism as illiberal, it is important to recognize the shared values and goals of secularism in France and the United States. By doing so, a more nuanced understanding of *laïcité* can be fostered, leading to a more productive dialogue about the relationship between religion, culture, and the state in both countries. In summary, the article challenges the notion that French secularism is illiberal and argues for a broader perspective that acknowledges the similarities between French *laïcité* and the American model of secularism. It encourages a more nuanced and informed discussion on the topic, emphasizing the shared commitment to religious freedom and the protection of individual liberties in both France and the United States (Foreign Policy, 2021).

According to Andrew Copson (2019), the separation between the state and the church became a constitutional characteristic for the first time in some Western countries in the 18th century. However, the separation between religious institutions and the state has also been an important feature adopted by other countries at different times. Indeed, this project of neutralizing the state emerged during the 20th century when several countries in Asia and Africa declared that religion would now be differentiated from the political affairs of the state. Today, this separation is seen as an ideal modern and democratic model. The primary motive for this separation was to guarantee equality for all citizens, regardless of their beliefs or affiliations, and to avoid alienating them by assigning them to a state religion that is not their own. Although France was the birthplace of many Enlightenment philosophers, it was still a nation under a monarchical regime in the 18th century, where the monarchy exercised authoritarian political power. This power was closely tied to dogmatic Catholic institutions that had influence in social and economic domains. When the French Revolution of 1789 broke out and the old monarchical regime was swept away, both the crown and the church became equal targets. New laws had to be drafted, and an elected assembly produced the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which stated, "No one may be disturbed on account of his opinions, even religious ones, as long as the manifestation of such opinions does not interfere with the established law and order." The declaration was accompanied by significant changes in the power structure, specifically related to the influence of the church. As part of these reforms,

the state power of the church was dismantled, and its assets were seized. This indicates a shift towards a more secular governance system, where the separation of church and state is prioritized.

On the other hand, the United Kingdom is based on an established church model as an alternative to secularism. From the late 17th century to the late 19th century, all non-Anglican Protestants, followed by Roman Catholics, Jews, and non-religious individuals, gradually acquired legal equality with Anglicans through a progressive process of tolerance. As the 20th century drew to a close and devolved national governments were established in Wales and Scotland, they adopted a secular approach. However, the Church of England remains the established church in England. The state then appoints its bishops, some of whom sit in the British Parliament and vote on laws. While the United Kingdom is still officially a Christian state, it does exhibit secular elements in its state and government systems. The historical process of reducing the privileges of the Church of England without complete disestablishment aimed to accommodate the diverse and predominantly non-religious society. The government upholds a secular ethic in the majority of its activities, and religious concerns do not dominate governance (2019;85).

Christopher Grasso (2016), should be pointed out that the notion of "Anglo-Saxon secularism" is a concept that is not clearly defined. That being said, here are some potential differences between French secularism and the notion of secularism in the Anglo-Saxon world, the first difference is the separation of church and state, indeed, French secularism is based on a strict separation between state and religion, while the notion of secularism in the Anglo-Saxon world focuses rather on the neutrality of the state in matters of religion. Prohibition of religious symbols: French secularism prohibits conspicuous religious symbols in public schools and public spaces, while the Anglo-Saxon notion of secularism may be more tolerant in this regard. History and culture: French secularism is intimately linked to French history and culture, while the Anglo-Saxon notion of secularism may be influenced by other cultural and religious traditions. The conception of religious freedom: French secularism can be interpreted as restricting religious freedom, while the Anglo-Saxon notion of secularism is often associated with a broader conception of religious freedom. The place of churches in society: In France, secularism has led to the marginalization of the Catholic Church, whereas in Anglo-Saxon countries, the churches have often retained a more important place in society. It should be emphasized that these

differences are not absolute and that conceptions of secularism and secularism can vary considerably in political, cultural, and religious contexts (2016;365).

Veit Bader (1999), in the United Kingdom, the Church of England is the established church, but there is also a tradition of religious tolerance and freedom. It is important to note that Anglo-Saxon secularism is often characterized by a certain tolerance of religious manifestations in the public space, in contrast to French *laïcité* which prohibits conspicuous religious symbols in public schools and public spaces. Thus, in Anglo-Saxon countries, it is often accepted that people can wear religious signs (such as crosses, turbans, yarmulkes, etc.) in public places, as long as these signs are not used to promote or impose a religion on others. In addition, Anglo-Saxon secularism is often seen as more respectful of religious and cultural diversity and seeks to foster inclusion rather than assimilation. This often translates into policies to recognize and accommodate the religious practices of religious minorities, such as the provision of halal or kosher meals in public institutions or the right to wear religious head coverings in schools. Finally, it should be noted that Anglo-Saxon secularism is often associated with a broader conception of religious freedom, which encompasses not only the right to freedom of religion but also the right to freedom of association. freedom of religion, which encompasses not only the right to believe or not to believe but also the right to practice one's religion in public or in private. The concept of *laïcité* originated in France and refers to the separation of church and state. In the Anglo-Saxon world, there is a similar concept called "secularism", which emphasizes the neutrality of the state in matters of religion and promotes freedom of religion and belief for all individuals. However, the implementation and interpretation of secularism can vary across countries and cultures. For example, in the United States, there is a strong emphasis on the separation of church and state, and the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. In the United Kingdom, the Church of England is the established church, but there is also a tradition of religious tolerance and freedom. Overall, the concept of secularism in the Anglo-Saxon world is similar to secularism in that it promotes the separation of religion and state, but there are also differences in how this is understood and applied (1999; 603).

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The author Ratna Gosh (2014) examines the educational challenges of religious diversity in secular democratic societies and examines the implications of secularism for education, focusing on educational policies and practices regarding religious diversity in several countries including France, and the United States, and explores in detail the educational policies in place in different countries to address the challenges of religious diversity. Gosh examines how governments and schools can adapt to meet the needs of students from different religious traditions while ensuring that religion is not used to justify discriminatory practices or impose beliefs on others. Tensions can arise between secularism and religious freedom, especially in countries where religion is considered an important part of national identity, and solutions must be found to manage these tensions, including encouraging interreligious dialogue and fostering mutual understanding and respect. Education can be used as a means to promote tolerance and social cohesion in diverse

societies through educational programs that aim to raise students' awareness of cultural and religious differences, as well as to encourage intercultural and interreligious dialogue. It proposes strategies to encourage students to engage in constructive and respectful discussions about issues related to religion and culture. Indeed, in France, secularism is considered a fundamental value that must be protected, while in the United States, religious freedom is guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution (2014;90).

Author Nicole Marafioti (July 2019) examines how these two systems of justice, that is, the concepts of secular and ecclesiastical justice in late Anglo-Saxon England interacted and evolved over time to create a complex and dynamic legal system and also the tensions that sometimes arose between the secular and ecclesiastical systems of justice. For example, the church had its own jurisdiction over criminal cases involving clergy, but there were situations where secular courts were also involved. Both systems of justice evolved over time, examining the social, political, and religious changes that influenced these systems, how the Norman conquest of England influenced the legal system, and the religious reforms that took place during the medieval period. There are challenges posed by the coexistence of secular and ecclesiastical systems of justice and explores the implications of these challenges for the theory and practice of justice. Nicole Marafioti also shows that the concepts of secular and ecclesiastical justice were not distinct and separate from each other, but were in fact closely related and interdependent. Ecclesiastical courts were often called upon to resolve cases that normally fell under the jurisdiction. However, the practical application is sometimes a source of controversy and debate. For example, the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in public schools has been prohibited since 2004. Similarly, the wearing of full-face veils was banned in public spaces in 2011. These measures have been criticized by some members of the Muslim community who see them as an infringement of their freedom of conscience. Secularism in France is a complex and central concept that guarantees the neutrality of the state and freedom of conscience and worship for all citizens. Although the application of *laïcité* is sometimes controversial, it remains an important foundation of the French republican identity (2019;794).

The author Rod Preece (1980) offers an in-depth study of the Anglo-Saxon tradition, which is an important cultural and political force in the history of France. Indeed, he argues that the Anglo-Saxon conservative tradition is an important cultural and political force that has shaped the

history of England and its former colonies, including the United States and Canada, as well as the key ideas of the Anglo-Saxon conservative tradition, including the importance of cultural continuity, defense of traditional institutions and customs, opposition to revolution and radical change, and a preference for social order and stability over egalitarianism and rapid change. It also highlights the different branches of the Anglo-Saxon conservative tradition, including traditionalist conservatism, and pragmatic conservatism. The text explores the different branches of the Anglo-Saxon conservative tradition, such as traditionalist conservatism, pragmatic conservatism, and ecological conservatism. It discusses how these branches have evolved over time and influenced politics and culture in Anglo-Saxon countries. The author acknowledges criticisms that label this tradition as elitist, reactionary, and resistant to change. However, the author argues that the conservative tradition has been a positive force, contributing to stability and prosperity in Anglo-Saxon societies. Key ideas of conservatism, such as the defense of cultural continuity, preference for traditional institutions, and opposition to radical change, are highlighted. The author counters critics by emphasizing the tradition's role in maintaining social order and stability while addressing evolving societal needs (1980;3).

Secularism is a political and legal principle that aims for freedom of conscience and the neutrality of the State in religious matters. It is often associated with the separation of church and state, although there is no consensus on how to put it into practice. In France, *laïcité* has been enshrined in the constitution since 1946 and is considered one of the foundations of the Republic. It implies the neutrality of the state in religious matters, freedom of conscience, and freedom to practice one's religion in the private sphere. Additionally, it is worth noting that the principle of secularism also includes provisions to prohibit discrimination based on religion. However, in Anglo-Saxon countries, secularism is often perceived differently. The United States, for example, has a tradition of separation of church and state based on the First Amendment to the Constitution. However, the practice of religion is often considered an individual right, and freedom of religion is guaranteed. In the United Kingdom, there is no written constitution and the religion is Anglicanism, although other religions are also recognized and recognized and protected. This has led to debates about how religion and politics interact, particularly in matters of education and morality (Politics,2019).

The main differences between French *laïcité* and Anglo-Saxon secularism are the following, in the first place is the role of the state, indeed, in France, the state is seen as the guarantor of secularism and regularly intervenes in religious matters to ensure the separation of church and state. In contrast, in Anglo-Saxon countries, the state is generally less interventionist and allows religions to operate in the public sphere. The second main difference is the place of religion in public life, in France, religion is considered a private matter, whereas, in Anglo-Saxon countries, religion is often visible in public life, particularly in official ceremonies. Anglo-Saxon countries generally grant more freedom to religions in their public practice, while France considers that religious freedom must be balanced with the principle of *laïcité* and the protection of the rights of others. Finally, the place of education, in France, education is an area where secularism is strongly present, with the prohibition of religious symbols in public schools. In Anglo-Saxon countries, education is often less subject to the principles of secularism. In sum, these differences reflect the different histories and cultures of the countries, as well as their different approaches to religion and the separation of church and state (CP,2021).

Muslim women in France often face restrictions on wearing full-face veils, while in Anglo-Saxon countries; they generally have more freedom in choosing their clothing in accordance with religious freedom laws.

2.4 Multiculturalism

Secularism and multiculturalism are two concepts that are often linked, but can also be in tension with each other. On the one hand, secularism aims to guarantee the neutrality of the State in religious matters and to ensure the equal treatment of citizens, regardless of their religious affiliation. From this perspective, secularism can be seen as a key element in the management of cultural diversity, allowing the interests of different religious communities to be reconciled within the same public space. On the other hand, multiculturalism is an approach that values the recognition and celebration of cultural and religious diversity within a society. This approach emphasizes the respect and appreciation of cultural differences, rather than their integration into a common national culture. In some contexts, these two approaches can be complementary. For example, in societies where religious diversity is strong, secularism can ensure the equality of citizens before the state, while allowing each religious community to practice its religion freely. In other contexts, however, these two approaches may be in tension. For example, in some societies

where cultural and religious diversity is very strong, multiculturalism may be perceived as a threat to social cohesion and national solidarity. In such cases, secularism can be seen as a way to strengthen social cohesion by avoiding the fragmentation of society into different cultural or religious communities. It should also be noted that secularism can be put in tension with multiculturalism in cases where cultural or religious practices are perceived to be in contradiction with the secular values of the state, such as gender equality or freedom of conscience. For example, in France, there have been debates about banning the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in public schools, such as the Islamic veil. Some saw this as an infringement of religious freedom, while others argued that the ban was necessary to maintain the secular nature of public education. Similarly, the issue of wearing the niqab or burqa in public has led to debates about the compatibility of these practices with the secular values of French society. In sum, the relationship between secularism and multiculturalism is complex and may vary according to social, cultural, and political contexts. However, it is important to find a balance between the two ideals to ensure equality, tolerance, and respect for religious and cultural differences in a diverse society (Ann Uldall and Zoe Hallington, 2012).

According to Abdeljalil Akkari and Myriam Radhouane (2022), however, multiculturalism in France is not officially recognized as a public policy, although some initiatives, such as the promotion of the teaching of languages and cultures of origin for the children of immigrants, can be seen as efforts to recognize and value cultural diversity. Indeed, France has historically adopted a policy of assimilation rather than recognition of cultural differences. This policy of assimilation, also known as "republican universalism," holds that all French citizens should be equal before the law, regardless of their origin or religion. According to this perspective, French national identity is based on common values, such as liberty, equality, and fraternity, rather than on cultural differences. However, France today is a multicultural society, with an increasingly diverse population in terms of religion, language, and origin. This cultural diversity has led to tensions and challenges, including the issue of the integration of immigrants and their descendants. Some argue that the policy of assimilation does not take sufficient account of cultural differences and that it can actually lead to a denial of the cultural identity of ethnic and religious minorities by forcing them to give up their cultural identity in order to become French (2022;4).

Author Jonathan Seglow (2003) explores the concept of multiculturalism and examines the arguments for and against this approach to cultural diversity in contemporary societies by defining what multiculturalism is and examining the reasons why this approach became popular in the 1980s and 1990s providing insightful analysis on the concept of multiculturalism. In his work, he examines the challenges and implications of multiculturalism in contemporary societies. Seglow critically assesses the tensions between cultural diversity and social cohesion, highlighting the potential conflicts that can arise from the recognition and accommodation of diverse cultural identities. Seglow argues that while multiculturalism aims to promote inclusivity and respect for different cultures, it can also inadvertently foster social fragmentation and hinder the development of a shared national identity. He emphasizes the importance of balancing the preservation of cultural diversity with the promotion of common values and a sense of community. Furthermore, Seglow delves into the philosophical underpinnings of multiculturalism, addressing questions of cultural relativism and universal human rights. He explores the challenges of reconciling the rights of individuals within cultural communities with the broader principles of equality and justice. His work offers a nuanced examination of multiculturalism, shedding light on its complexities and potential shortcomings. It underscores the need for careful consideration in implementing multicultural policies, striving for a balance between cultural diversity and social cohesion. Seglow's analysis serves as a valuable resource for students of international relations seeking to understand the multifaceted nature of multiculturalism and its implications in contemporary societies (2003;157).

Philosopher Will Kymlicka (1996) wishes to defend cultural protections according to liberal principles and thus questions whether groups can have rights over the need for tolerance and the problem of maintaining a common civic identity. In his view, increasing cultural homogeneity represents a particular general concern with a particular culture. Two other movements contributed to the conscription of cultures into the liberal camp. According to Kymlicka, the initial step is to acknowledge that cultures possess inherent value and uniqueness, but that they are not solely defined by a set of shared values. In other words, cultures encompass various aspects such as language, traditions, customs, and practices that contribute to their distinctiveness. Since cultures are valuable at least to their members, the basic reasoning is that there will be a loss if they begin to erode. This gives rise to the theory of cultural justice. Since each culture is different from its neighbors, this loss is not just a general problem of increasing

cultural homogeneity, but a particular concern about a particular culture. As Appiah noted about the situation of blacks in the United States, "Culture is not the problem and it is not the solution. The problem is racism. According to this philosopher, it is not the ethnicity or the origin that is the problem but rather how some people apprehend this cultural heterogeneity if it is valued or discriminated against. Racism against religious and racial communities is a common phenomenon in today's world and is growing. Cultures do not consist of shared values; they are made up of people. If members of the same group share certain values, they do not have to share them all. Therefore, not all values are valued by every person in the group. Kymlicka's second approach involves recognizing the significance of cultural contexts, such as the media, in providing individuals with meaning, orientation, identity, and a sense of purpose in life. Cultures are a necessary framework for human action; therefore, there is a loss if one's cultural context begins to erode. This is an argument from justice, which asserts that every person has the right to a safe cultural context, not just any context, but their own. The argument for freedom asserts that people are autonomous choosers and that what they choose are different cultural options (1996;8).

Chandran Kukathas (1998) explores the tension between liberal ideals and demands for cultural recognition in contemporary societies. He examines the challenges that cultural diversity poses to liberal values such as individualism, equality, and tolerance, and highlights the limitations of multiculturalist policies in responding to these challenges. Kukathas argues that multiculturalism emerged as a response to the injustices suffered by cultural and ethnic minorities and questions these approaches, claiming that they fail to address the problem of peaceful coexistence of different cultural groups in a single society. Kukathas argues that liberalism should be based on cultural neutrality rather than cultural recognition. In his view, societies must treat all citizens equally, regardless of their culture, race, or religion. He criticizes multi-culturalist policies that promote the recognition and protection of specific cultural groups, arguing that they create divisions and tensions within society. Instead, Kukathas proposes a "politics of indifference," which involves the state refraining from taking a position on cultural differences. He suggests that the state should not be involved in promoting or protecting particular cultures, but should instead focus on protecting the individual rights and freedoms of all citizens. In the first part, he examines the philosophical underpinnings of liberalism and multiculturalism, particularly the ideas of Rawls and Taylor. He argues that their approaches fail to address the concerns of all citizens and are not adapted to the reality of multicultural societies. He argues that the politics of indifference would

allow people to live together peacefully by promoting tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect. The politics of indifference would also allow individuals to define their own identity and express themselves freely, unconstrained by their culture. Kukathas examines areas such as the protection of minority rights, education, and immigration, and explains how the politics of indifference could be applied in these contexts and challenges multiculturalist policies that promote cultural recognition, and instead proposes a politics of cultural neutrality that would allow individuals to live together in peace and tolerance (1998;687).

Jeremy Jennings (2000) explores the tensions between citizenship, republicanism, and multiculturalism in contemporary France by examining the philosophical underpinnings of French republicanism, which is based on a vision of a united and homogeneous political community. Jennings also examines the critiques of republicanism that have emerged as a result of the growth of cultural diversity in France and argues that traditional French republicanism has had difficulty integrating cultural minorities because it requires cultural conformity to be considered a citizen. He then notes that attempts to reform citizenship in France to better include cultural minorities are being implemented, such as the recognition of dual citizenship. He researches the policy of cultural diversity in France, which was adopted in response to criticisms of traditional French republicanism, and examines policies of affirmative action and recognition of cultural identities and their impact on French society. The politics of cultural diversity can be seen as a response to the failure of republicanism to integrate cultural minorities, but it can also threaten the unity of the French political community. According to him, it would be necessary to find a balance between the policy of cultural diversity and the French republican tradition in order to guarantee a stable and inclusive democratic society (2000;576).

Conclusion

This chapter examined the different definitions and origins of secularism in France through various authors such as Berger, Wilson, and Sudhir. They emphasize that secularism in France is the result of a historical struggle against the influence of the Catholic Church and autocratic rule to free state institutions from religious control. However, some authors note that contemporary secularism in France, particularly in its strict version, tends to marginalize and exclude certain communities in order to preserve state neutrality.

In summary, laicity in Belgium aims to promote peaceful coexistence of different religious beliefs while maintaining state neutrality in matters of religion. Despite the multitude of forms of secularism, this chapter will focus specifically on the comparison between secularism in France and the Anglo-Saxon countries.

France has a stricter approach to state neutrality, while Anglo-Saxon countries adopt a more flexible and tolerant stance. The concept of separating Church and State is fundamental in France, whereas Anglo-Saxon countries have a less formal relationship between the State and religion. Anglo-Saxon countries place a stronger emphasis on individual religious freedom. These differences can be attributed to their unique historical and cultural backgrounds. These examples highlight the diversity of approaches to secularism, reflecting the values, norms, and sociocultural contexts of each nation. It is essential to find a balance between state neutrality and the protection of rights and religious diversity to overcome the challenges faced by Muslim women within the framework of secularism in France. By comparing Anglo-Saxon secularism to French secularism, this chapter examines the specific challenges that secularism poses to Muslim women. It explores the differences in approaches and secular policies, as well as their impact on the religious freedoms and practices of Muslim women. This comparison highlights the regulations and social dynamics that influence the identity and religious expression of Muslim women in these two contexts. Multiculturalism plays an essential role in contemporary society by promoting the recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity. It contributes to peaceful coexistence among different ethnic and religious groups through the promotion of equal rights and intercultural dialogue. In France, multiculturalism faces challenges due to the republican integration model based on assimilation. On one hand, it can enrich society by recognizing and valuing cultural diversity within the French territory, allowing communities to preserve their cultural identity while actively engaging in French society. However, the republican assimilationist model can create tensions between the expression of cultural diversity and the preservation of national unity. Additionally, issues such as minority integration, discrimination, and value conflicts can make the implementation of multiculturalism complex.

3. Islamophobia

3.1 The definition of Islamophobia and the reasons for its Emergence

The second chapter of this study will delve into an important and sensitive topic: Islamophobia in both France and European countries. Islamophobia is a complex phenomenon that has been the subject of increasing debates and concerns within French society. This chapter examines the different dimensions of Islamophobia, its manifestations in various aspects of daily life, and its consequences for Muslim individuals and communities. The aim is to gain a better understanding of the factors that contribute to Islamophobia in France while exploring possible measures to combat this phenomenon and promote a more inclusive society that respects religious diversity

According to Erik Bleich (2012), Islamophobia has developed in the late 19 century by political activists in order to draw attention to the Muslim communities that are located in Western countries. Recently Islamophobia evolved from primarily political concepts towards one increasingly analytical purpose which means the reason behind some sorts of Law. Islamophobia unlike xenophobia and homophobia is oriented toward individuals, or groups because of their membership in a defined category. According to some of this research, he tried to determine the degree to which a statement or person can be taken as Islamophobic, Katzenstein, and Keohane identify the intensity of an individual's adherence given the particular position he or she occupies (2007:19-24). For Sniderman the more frequently and consistently an individual offers negative evaluations of a group or its members, the more he or she is considered as an extreme Islamophobic (Sniderman, & al, 2000:23-5). Conforming to these researches, the statutes that having a one-off negative opinion about Islam are the lowest level of Islamophobia but rather what turns out to be considered as an Islamophobia of extreme order are expressions of unshakable hostility towards these individuals. It means that the consistency of Islamophobic expressions with high intensity can be definitely seen as Islamophobic (2012;182).

Mohammad H. Tamdgidi (2012) stated that the Runnymede Trust which is a think tank on racial equality in the UK founded by Jim Rose and Anthony Lester in 1968 published 1997 a report

on Islamophobia: “A Challenge for Us All” which is considered have introduced the term Islamophobia in the UK. According to the Runnymede Trust's report, Islamophobia is defined as follows: Islamophobia refers to an unfounded hostility towards Islam. It also refers to the practical consequences of this hostility which result in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities and the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs. Islamophobia can be motivated by factors such as fear of the unknown, misinformation, media and politics as well as international geopolitical conflicts. People who are victims of victims may be subjected to verbal or physical attacks, discrimination in employment discrimination in employment, housing, education, and access to public services, as well as social stigmatization. The Council of Europe defines Islamophobia as an unjustified fear or aversion towards Islam and Muslims, which leads to discrimination, marginalization and exclusion of marginalization and exclusion of Muslim individuals and communities (2012:57).

According to Himanne Mohamed (2021), there has been a significant increase in verbal and physical attacks against Muslims, as well as increased stigmatization of the Muslim communities not only in France but also among all Muslims in Western countries. As a result of their marginalized position, these minorities also faced serious economic, social, and cultural issues within these Western countries, the unfavorable conditions of the Banlieues, and the scarcity of jobs represent many of the barriers that the Muslim community may face (2021:18).

The Centre for Research on Social and Religious Sciences (CéSor, 2012.) defines Islamophobia as "a political, social, and cultural construct that aims to marginalize and stigmatize Muslims and exclude Islam from the public sphere. According to a study conducted by the Collective Against Islamophobia in France (CCIF, 2021), Islamophobia acts can take the form of discrimination, insults, verbal or physical violence, or even media stigmatization. These acts can have serious consequences on the lives of the people concerned, in terms of mental health, social mental health, social well-being, and civic participation. In France, Islamophobia is often associated with the issue of the veil.

In short, according to these authors, Islamophobia is a complex phenomenon that takes different forms in France and manifests itself through various discriminatory acts, ranging from moral judgments to physical acts. This stigmatization has serious consequences on the lives of those concerned, in terms of mental health, social well-being, and civic participation. The multiple

definitions highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of Islamophobia and highlight the various social, political, cultural, and economic factors that may underlie it. These definitions were developed by international organizations, think tanks, and researchers who have been working on issues of Islamophobia for years and are widely recognized and used in public debate.

According to Chon and Arzt (2005), religion exists in both dimensions in the cultural and ritual sense which means that it's about a community of like-minded people that share the same beliefs and identify with each other in ways different from what they are doing when they accomplish the exercise of their faith. No matter what are they different backgrounds, members of the Muslim community believe in the same God depending on their understanding, God decides the rules, and those rules are respected. In the USA, the law of religious freedom has been included in the First Amendment, which states that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, shall not prohibit individuals from freely practicing their religion, nor shall it limit or suppress freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to peaceful assembly, or the right to petition the government to address concerns or seek resolution for grievances. Being a part of a religion is way more significant than being part of any part of the World, the Islamic religious difference has been racialized into the context of the War on Terror just because of differences that emerge from religious matters. Muslim citizens in the US are estimated between one and seven million, and collecting data about religion is forbidden in the United States of America. The government tries through this law to confine neatly religion as a private affair within a division between the private-public dimension as requested by the US constitutional law. But instead, religion spills over into all aspects of the civic life of individuals, and it is considered a component of the War on Terror (2005;218).

Lutfi Sunar (2017), the term “phobia” in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is an exaggerated, usually inexplicable fear of a particular object, class of object, or even a situation. Its means if we refer to that definition that having a panic or an extreme fear in a way to called a phobia is meaningless. Over the last decades, Western societies have been affected by this fear called Islamophobia. The Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) defined Islamophobia as a closed-mind hatred fear or prejudice towards Islam and Muslim communities that results in discrimination. Islamophobia in that regard can be seen as negative attitudes held primarily by mostly non-Muslims. Islam and Muslim communities are portrayed as enemies sometimes as the

American example, as the enemy of the republic, it's become complicated for non-Muslim people to discover this new religion because of all stereotypes (2017;35).

According to Imran Awan, and Irene Zempi (2020), Islamophobia is a relatively new concept that was introduced into the public debate in the 1990s. Since then, there has been a significant increase in research on the subject in English, but not as much in French. This may be due to a lack of funding for research on Islamophobia in France, or perhaps the reluctance to address the topic due to the controversy surrounding it. However, it is important to understand the consequences of Islamophobia in France; Muslims in France are often victims of discrimination and prejudice, which can have serious consequences on their daily life for example, they may have difficulty finding a job or obtaining housing because of their religion. In addition, Islamophobia can also lead to violence from some individuals to hurt, or murder, as we have seen in the terrorist attacks in France in recent years. It is therefore important to understand the causes of Islamophobia in France (2020;4).

Some researchers have suggested that this can be done by educating people about Islam and encouraging interfaith dialogue. Others have suggested that it can be done by strengthening anti-discrimination laws and encouraging Muslims to organize and mobilize against Islamophobia. It is important that researchers continue to study this phenomenon and seek ways to combat it (Elius, & Mansor, 2020).

According to Emmanuel Brenner and Marwan Mohammed (2020), they will examine the discrimination and stigmatization of minorities in France, especially Muslims, in the French educational system. This systemic discrimination and marginalization lead to a second-class education for minorities and contributes to the increase of Islamophobia in France. Second-class education will further diminish the chances of these minorities finding decent jobs that would allow them to get by. Islamophobia is linked to racism and how negative stereotypes have an impact on Muslims in France. This book examines how young Muslims in France navigate a complex social environment, trying to define themselves and find their place in a society that marginalizes them. How ultimately the rise of Islamophobia in France affects intercultural and interfaith relations and how young Muslims construct an identity in this context.

In conclusion, these works on the subject offer an in-depth analysis of Islamophobia in Western countries, exploring the different forms that anti-Muslim discrimination takes place, the

historical and political roots of this phenomenon, and the causes and consequences of this hatred. The authors also propose solutions to combat Islamophobia, including promoting inclusion and diversity, working to reduce socioeconomic inequalities, and challenging security policies that reinforce the stigmatization of Muslims. Islamophobia in France is a complex and worrying phenomenon that affects the lives of many Muslims in the country. This discrimination can manifest itself in different ways, ranging from insults and prejudice to physical violence. This is often fueled by negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims which are conveyed in the media, politics, and society in general. This creates a climate of fear and intimidation for Muslims, who are often perceived as outsiders or enemies of society.

3.2 Charlie Hebdo: The terrorist attack and the Debate on Islamophobia

According to Brian Trench (2016), on October 16, 2020, a French professor by the name of Samuel Paty was murdered during a lecture he was holding on freedom of expression using one of the cartoons from Charlie Hebdo, the satirical newspaper that had published a picture of the prophet Mohamed. As a result, the president cracked down on Muslim organizations, and places of worship were placed under surveillance for fear of reprimand situation the minister of the interior put in rigor a ban on the collective that fights against Islamophobia in France that is an association that tracks anti-Muslim crimes, at least those that have been reported, was created in 2003 and was dissolved in 2020 (2016:183). In fact, an alliance took place between the parties of left and right to be able to prohibit the wearing of the veil in school establishments in 2004 although these two political parties do not get along hardly on several points, they were able they could nevertheless find common ground in that of discrimination and cultural appropriation. Several students, observers, activists, and politicians have highlighted that Islamophobia has many complications; indeed, some authors will speak of deep historical roots (Matar, 2009) or highlight social and economic discrimination suffered by the Muslim minority (Tausch. 2007). He highlights the role of Islamophobia in the media coverage of the controversy, argues that the mainstream media has not adequately addressed the underlying issues, and explores the broader context of press freedom in France and the challenges journalists face when reporting on sensitive issues such as religion and terrorism. The debate surrounding the Charlie Hebdo controversy has highlighted the need for a more nuanced understanding of the limits of freedom of expression and the

importance of promoting responsible and ethical journalism. In addition, the broader political and social context in which the controversy occurred, including the rise of far-right political movements and the impact of ongoing conflicts, was also considered in the Middle East (Brian Trench; 2016:186).

Although there were tensions between the Muslims of France and the French state, it came more intensified when Macron said that a plan of attack had been put into effect to fight separatist Islamists, he pledged to continue to keep the Charlie Hebdo cartoons alive and continued to print some of them, especially the one about the Prophet Mohamed, and stated that Islam was not only a problem in France but a problem in several countries of the world (Al-Jazeera, 2020).

The first terrorist attacks that had been perpetrated in France was on January 7, 2015 and it was the beginning of the hatred situation for the Muslims, a deadly assault was committed on the offices of the satiric French journal Charlie Hebdo a pair of Islamists with assault rifles have made a massacre in this Paris office and murdered 11 people but this massacre didn't stop there on the 48 hours 6 more peoples were murdered in and around Paris, these murders were perpetrated by two French-Algerians brothers Said and Cherif Kouachi (Michael Ray; 2015). Exactly 10 months later another attack November 13 began with a suicide bomber, the terrorist tried to enter the stadium of France when the France team was competing against the German Team but the security officers at the stadium's main entrance detected his bomb belt and he detonated it killing one person passing by but didn't stop there the gunmen targeted the first location as "Le Carillon" a popular bar on Paris's 10th on the rue Alibert minutes after a Cambodian Restaurant called "Le Petit Cambodge" across rue Bichat even though it only takes few minutes, the injuries were still significant 15 peoples were murdered and dozen were wounded. The deadliest attack on this night had been perpetrated in "The Bataclan ", a historic theatre and concert hall, more than 15.000 had they had come to attend the concert of the American rock band called Eagles of Dead Metal when three attackers burst in and opened fire killing more than 90 peoples were killed and thousands were wounded (BBC,2015).

Since those attacks, there has been a significant increase in verbal and physical attacks against Muslims, as well as increased stigmatization of this community. As Islamophobic acts, it's important to highlight some facts that have occurred in recent years animated by hatred examples;

in 2016 a Muslim woman wearing the hijab was verbally and physically assaulted by two men on a train in the Paris region (Daily Sabah, 2012). In 2017, a gunman opened fire on a mosque in Avignon (Anadolu Agency, 2017). These acts show that there is the existence of a real problem of Islamophobia in France.

According to the National Observatory of Islamophobia, anti-Muslim acts have increased by 53% in 2020 compared to the previous year. There are many examples of Islamophobia in France, hate speech on social networks, acts of vandalism against Muslim mosques and places of worship, and laws that specifically target Muslim women, such as the ban on the full-face veil in public full-face veils in public spaces have become quite common. According to the head of the National Observatory of Islamophobia, Abdallah Zekri, there has been a census of more than 235 aggressions perpetrated against Muslims in France during the year 2020 against exactly 154 the year before. Most of these acts took place in the regions of Ile de France and Rhone-Alpes as well as attacks against mosques, which also increased during the same year (Daily Sabah, 2021).

Faced with this growing Islamophobia recently two women of Algerian origin were stabbed near the Eiffel Tower and were insulted. The police by controlling the beaches during the summer realized that the dress of Muslim women was considered inappropriate for public beaches and that they public beaches and that they had the choice between undressing and therefore or have to leave the premises because this kind of "attire" was of "accouterment" were prohibited being contrary to the values of the republic, a pretext to be able to justify their contempt (France24, 2020).

3.3 The origin and consequences of Islamophobia and its impact on the Western world.

Abubakar Bukar (2020) explores the roots and consequences of Islamophobia in the Western world which is not only a cultural or ideological phenomenon but has deep roots in the economic and political structures of Western societies. According to Bukar, Islamophobia is fueled by a "hate industry" that includes right-wing politicians, media and think tanks that perpetuate negative stereotypes about Muslims and Islam. This hate industry serves the interests of certain powerful groups by diverting attention away from real issues that as economic and political issues and by blaming Muslims for social problems. This discrimination has serious consequences for Muslims, including hate crimes and exclusion from political and economic life. He suggests that

in order to combat Islamophobia, it is necessary to address the underlying economic and political structures that cause it. Bukar also points out the role of the media in perpetuating Islamophobia; he states that the media often portrays Muslims in a negative light, which has an influence on public opinion. This is particularly important because negative representations of Muslims can help legitimize discrimination policies and practices. In addition to exploring the causes and consequences of Islamophobia, he also proposes strategies to combat it he emphasizes the importance of building alliances between Muslim and non-Muslim groups (2020:5).

Aristotle Kallis (2015) evokes Islamophobia in Europe and its impact on European society and politics. Indeed, according to him the causes of Islamophobia would be due to the role played by the extreme right in the promotion of anti-Islamic hatred, but also how traditional political parties have adopted similar positions to meet the expectations of their electorate. The consequences of Islamophobia range from discrimination to violence and exclusion, Islamophobia has become a tool of political mobilization for far-right groups and became a major problem in recent years, with a rise in xenophobia and populism in many European countries. This radical right has been accused of fueling this Islamophobia by scapegoating Muslims as scapegoats for the economic and social problems of the region. The discrimination against Muslims, as well as physical and verbal attacks, have multiplied, ranging from even to the countries that have no incidents related to Muslims and the enforcement of laws that criminalize this community is no longer so rare, which has prompted human rights groups for the struggle as well as research centers to try to wake up the public conscience about the dangers of this discrimination on this community compromising all the good principles of a good citizen. Indeed, some bad organizations use this religion to justify their acts towards this community and instrumentalize it to be able to use it for personal or political purposes. Indeed, these political parties use this racism and this islamophobia to paint a picture of the rise of immigration and that it should be stopped, and that if they are elected, they will stop in general way all migration from "third countries". Islamophobia has become a common topic on TV and in political debates and has become a hot topic of discussion in the news. However, Islamophobia in Europe is not just a problem of the radical right, it is deeply rooted in European society (2015;27).

Edward Said (1977) argued that the Orient is not merely geographically close to Europe but also symbolizes the site of Europe's most significant, prosperous, and longstanding colonies.

Islam always represented the most active enemy of the West, it was used as logistic support in the battle with the Church with the collapse of the monopoly of the church over knowledge and the beginning of the Age of Expedition, as Church opposed the emerging modern order, it has been efficient that Muslim societies started being regarded as alternative models by the first moderns. The reasons for Islamophobia by the West are none other than the fear of the unknown that they are unaware of the depth of their religion, even if they have not undertaken any research. Muslim communities are considered as a ghost because they should stay in the past but this religion keeps following today's world (1977;163).

According to Luis Manuel (2023), as in many other European countries, the existence of Islamophobia in Germany is a highly debated and contested topic. However, in these recent years, there has been a slow process of recognition that Muslims and those perceived as, such face several forms of discrimination, violence, and stereotype. Those hatreds and feelings can motivate some violent actions as the example of the Hanau shootings. On 19 February 2020, the news of a terrorist attack spread commuted by a 43 years old man known as a "lone wolf" far-right extremist in the city of Hanau near Frankfurt. These attacks killed 9 people and injured 5, the target places were shisha bars, very well known as a place frequented by immigrants, he will murder his mother before eventually taking his own life. The supposed motivations behind these attacks were the hate toward the immigrants to whom Germany had opened its door and also against the Muslim community. The Jewish community is also a victim of attacks in Germany, months before the Hanau attacks, on 9 October 2019, a far-right terrorist attempted to enter a synagogue in Halle during the celebration of Yom Kippur. He later killed a person but get caught by the police, the hatred was animated toward all the non-White Germans. As in many other European countries, the myth of a post-racial society has taken a strong hold on the narratives in the German Nation, this myth of a post/ racial society has made Germany a nation that learned from the past and overcame its racial and murderous past (2023:75). Indeed, there are numerous cases of racism that the myth does not entail, furthermore, this myth of post-racial Germany influenced the language through which different forms of discrimination based specifically on the racial matter are minimized and even denied. In Germany too, Islamophobia has been contested and minimized as a racial case in the public debates, it proved complicated to consider Islamophobia as a form of racism since it was not a question of biological race but of vision. In 2006 have been founded the Deutsche Islam Konferenz (DIK) with the initiatives of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), and the Federal

Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). The major aims of this institution were promoting the dialogue to foster and enhance the integration of Muslims even though national security concerns have been foundational since its beginning of this institution but also to fix some issues that concerned Muslims in Germany as the right to construct some mosques, training imams as well as debates in gender inequality and antisemitism. The conspiratorial terrorist violence in Hanau and Halle put racism in Germany into the spotlight while highlighting the rise of violence from the far-right, this violence had not been taken as a serious case form the German government, even though thousands of lives are in danger if this kind of case repeated itself. Communities from different religions expressed such concerns for the future in a Germany that does not seem to take into account these phenomena of violence based on the refusal to live in a country with diverse cultures and nationalities (2023;78).

A recent survey conducted by the University of Birmingham reveals that individuals belonging to the middle and upper middle classes in the United Kingdom exhibit a higher likelihood of harboring prejudices. The survey findings suggest that socio-economic status plays a significant role in shaping attitudes and biases within society about the Muslim community as opposed to the working class. (Stephen Jones, 2022, University of Birmingham).

According to Saffron and James (2013), the emergence of Islam as a political organization in the UK was driven by various incidents that were not directly related to the events of September 11, 2001, such as the Rushdie Affair in 1989 the incident that arise after the publication of his novel named *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie the Britain author, many Muslims authorities called that a blasphemous book. He was stabbed multiple times on August 12, 2022. Indeed, discourse around Islamic terror began a long time before the 9/11 attack, there was a legitimate reason for the European countries to the exclusion of Muslims in Europe because of the many incidents that occurred in their countries One-third of the Moroccan Muslim community in Spain feel comfortable in their dual nationalities, and nine-tenths of Muslim Bangladeshis felt proud of their dual English nationalities. This inevitably shows that Muslims feel more comfortable in the UK than in Spain. Although it is important to note that Bangladeshis are less professionally qualified and therefore see themselves as less employed compared to the Muslim community living in Spain. Muslims in the UK are considered more open to the idea of making their religions a way of life than Muslims in Spain. This legitimizes why Muslims feel more like themselves in the UK.

In their article, they tried to show that the relationship of Muslims to Western society depended on the country in question but also on the stories that were hit by these countries since most of them had experienced terrorist attacks that changed the perception of Islam into a religion of terror (2013; 697).

The author Yasser Louati, a prominent French human rights activist, and Seema Syeda, a British journalist (2022), propose a definition of Islamophobia and its manifestations in France. They argue that Islamophobia is not only a form of racism, but a distinct form of discrimination based on religion, discussing the historical and political context of France, including the legacy of colonialism, and the French state's response to Islamophobia. The causes of Islamophobia in France include the role of the media, politicians, and civil society, the media plays a crucial role in perpetuating Islamophobia by promoting stereotypes and demonizing Muslims, but they also criticize politicians for using Islamophobia as a tool to gain electoral support and for passing laws that target Muslims. Responses to Islamophobia in France, including the role of civil society and the Muslim community, play a crucial role in combating Islamophobia by promoting interfaith dialogue and challenging stereotypes. They also discuss the role of the Muslim community in responding to Islamophobia including the importance of grassroots activism and alliance-building with other marginalized communities, they believe that Islamophobia is a pan-European phenomenon that requires a coordinated response, a coordinated response, so they call on governments to adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards Islamophobia and on civil society organizations to work together to combat stereotypes and promote inter-religious to fight against stereotypes and promote interreligious dialogue. Indeed, Islamophobia in France is a very real phenomenon that has serious consequences on the life of Muslims in France, despite this; there is a lack of academic studies in French on the subject, which is a cause for concern (2022;5).

3.4 The impact of this Islamophobia on Muslims and its different forms

Yasser Louati (2015) talks about the ways French society and its institutions have treated Muslims in France and discuss that Muslims in France are subject to a form of systemic discrimination that is unique to France, which he calls the "French Exception." He starts tracing the history of Muslims in France, from their arrival as colonial subjects to their current status as a marginalized minority which will pay the way to examine the ways in which French society has

constructed a narrative of fear around Muslims, portraying them as a threat to French values and culture. These conduct Muslims in France to be subject to discrimination in areas such as employment, education, housing, and policing. He argues that this discrimination has led to a form of social death sentence for Muslims in France, with many living in poverty, isolation, and despair. For centuries, France has been a colonial power in many lands in Africa and the lands in Africa and the Middle East, most Muslims emigrated to France after the end of the colonization of this one notably for the countries in North Africa that are to say, Arab Africa. The relations between the Muslims and the French state date thus from the empire and the exploitation of France for economic purposes, slavery, although France was one of the main exporters of slaves from Africa to Europe, Algeria was part of one of the only countries of North Africa to have been incorporated into France, but later will end up getting rid of it due to international aid, and several demonstrations and confrontations. The Algerians were considered French and could thus easily go to France; however, Muslims could not participate in political life insofar as religion had to be separated from political affairs. The French colonizers tried to "de-Islamize" Algeria by trying to prohibit the wearing of the veil as well as the study of the Arabic language only in private schools (2015;92).

According to Louati, France has one of the most important Muslim communities, and the Muslim religion is the second most practiced religion in France, in fact, Islamophobia goes back to the very history of France and is not new. The relationship between Islam and the Western world is indeed intricate and can sometimes be fraught with challenges. It is worth noting that certain perspectives within the Western world hold the belief that Muslims should be liberated or emancipated from what they perceive as restrictive or outdated practices, to be able to integrate into this new world which is Europe and to be able to enjoy the freedom which "deprives" Islam to its believers (2020;94).

The French institutions propose a point of view of Islam that would be more adequate with the republic, the debates about Muslims are commonplace, especially since the government neither prohibits nor sanctions but rather positions itself in front of this debate by allying itself with right-wing extremists and arming itself with laws to limit the rights that once the constitution had allowed. However, this Islamophobia has led to a rise in Islamophobic acts (have doubled between 2017-2018), on October 3, 2019, Michael Harpon, a civil servant at the Paris prefecture murdered

four of his colleagues and will be judged by the Paris public prosecutor's office on the assumption that he was a terrorist, he has converted to Islam and was close to the Salafist movement. Given that Islamophobia affects many countries in Europe it needs to be better explained (Vincent Gessier, 2010).

According to Ramon Grosfoguel (2012), different forms of Islamophobia exist in contemporary society and believes that Islamophobia is deeply rooted in society. Islamophobia is deeply connected to other forms of oppression, such as racism, colonialism, anti-Semitism, intolerance, and imperialism in fact, it's a form of prejudice and discrimination against individuals or groups who identify as or are perceived to be Muslim. Grosfoguel argues that Islamophobia takes many forms, including cultural, political, economic, and social. With respect to Islamophobia, for example, he notes that in the United States, Islamophobia is often linked to fears of terrorism and civil war while in Europe it is more closely linked to debates about immigration. In Europe, it is more closely linked to debates about immigration and cultural identity (2012;13):

Cultural Islamophobia involves the denigration and stigmatization of Islamic cultures, practices, and beliefs. It's discussed through several examples the first one was the Charlie Hebdo in 2015, the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo published cartoons portraying the Prophet Muhammad, an act that was deemed offensive and disrespectful by a significant number of Muslims. Cartoons.

The publication of these cartoons sparked protests and outrage in Muslim communities around the world and led to an increase in Islamophobic incidents in France (BBC News, January 2015). Indeed, this magazine is based on the ideology that freedom of expression and journalistic freedom should be preserved and therefore no limits are imposed on them in any field. The publication of the cartoon was seen as a violation of the respect due to the Prophet Muhammad and was considered offensive and hurtful by many Muslims. The terrorist attack amplified tensions and sparked a global debate about freedom of expression, satire, and the limits of religious criticism. Indeed, reactions within the Muslim community were unanimous in condemning the attack on Charlie Hebdo, stating that violence was not the appropriate response to an offense and choosing to express their displeasure through peaceful means. They stressed the importance of respecting religious symbols and called for constructive dialogue to better understand and respect each other's beliefs and sensitivities.

The second one was the Burkini Ban in 2016, several towns in France banned the wearing of the burkini, a full-body swimsuit worn by some Muslim women. The bans were widely criticized for targeting Muslim women and for infringing on their right to religious expression (BBC News, August 2016). Several French municipalities implemented bans on wearing the Burkini on beaches, citing reasons of security, public order, or secularism. This prohibition sparked intense and polarizing debates in France and elicited varied reactions within the Muslim community. For some members of the Muslim community, the Burkini Ban was seen as an infringement on their religious freedom and their right to practice their faith according to their beliefs, and viewed the ban as discriminatory and stigmatizing, equating it with a form of Islamophobia.

The last one is the discriminatory Language in Political Discourse, in fact, Far-right politicians in France have used Islamophobic language and rhetoric in their campaigns, stigmatizing Muslim communities and portraying them as a threat to French culture and values. This has contributed to a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment in France (National public radio, 2011). In recent years, France has witnessed intense debates and discussions surrounding Islam, religious identity, and national values, some political actors and public figures have employed discriminatory language, often targeting Muslims, which can contribute to the marginalization of Muslim communities. This discourse tends to focus on issues such as religious attire, cultural practices, and perceived conflicts between religious and secular values. The discriminatory political discourse can reinforce stereotypes and negative perceptions about Islam and Muslims, perpetuating Islamophobia. This can lead to heightened levels of prejudice, discrimination, and even hate crimes against Muslims, not only in France but also in other parts of the world. It can also negatively impact the overall social cohesion and harmony within diverse societies, such discourse can influence public policy decisions and contribute to the adoption of legislation that disproportionately affects Muslim communities. For instance, debates surrounding the ban on full-face veils, known as the "burqa ban," have sparked contentious discussions about individual freedom, religious expression, and gender equality.

Police Brutality against Muslims is also discussed as an important sign of Islamophobia, in fact, Muslim communities in France are often targeted by police for discriminatory treatment and excessive use of force. There have been several cases of police brutality against Muslim

individuals, including the death of Adama Traore in 2016 (France 24, 2021). Police brutality against Muslims, or any marginalized community, can have severe consequences on the affected individuals and the broader Muslim communities in France. Incidents of police brutality can erode trust and confidence in law enforcement among Muslim communities and it can lead to profound psychological and emotional effects on individuals and communities. This stigmatization can result in social exclusion, discrimination, and the marginalization of Muslim individuals and communities.

Political Islamophobia refers to the demonization and exclusion of Muslims from the political process and their marginalization from positions of power. In 2021, the French government enacted a contentious legislation commonly referred to as the "separatism law." This law was introduced with the objective of addressing what the government perceives as "Islamist separatism" within France.

The law has been criticized for stigmatizing Muslim communities and eroding their rights (Al Jazeera, 2021). The Separatism Law in France aims to strengthen secularism, regulate certain religious practices, control religious organizations, and monitor schools. While not explicitly targeting Muslim communities, concerns exist regarding its impact on them, some fear stigmatization and restrictions on Muslim religious practices, while others argue it promotes republican principles and prevents extremism. The debate continues regarding how the law will be implemented and its actual impact on Muslim communities in France. The Ban on Foreign Funding of Mosques, implemented by the French government in 2020, aimed to restrict and combat what it referred to as "foreign interference" in the financing of mosques. The ban has been criticized for targeting Muslim communities and for infringing on their right to religious freedom (The Guardian, 2020). The ban on foreign funding of mosques has recommended financial independence, transparency, and community integration. It may strain resources initially, but can also disrupt perceptions and potentially condemn Muslim communities, balancing security concerns and religious freedom is crucial in its implementation.

The Dismissal of Muslim Police Officers in 2020, a Muslim police officer in France was dismissed from his job for refusing to shake hands with a female superior officer, citing his religious beliefs. The dismissal was widely criticized as an act of discrimination and political Islamophobia (The Guardian, 2020). Many argued that the dismissal infringed upon the officer's

religious freedom and that it was indicative of biases against Muslims in the workplace. The incident highlighted the need for a nuanced understanding of religious practices and accommodations within professional settings, as well as the importance of fostering an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment. Moreover, in the Crackdown on Muslim NGOs in 2019, the French government shut down several Muslim NGOs, citing concerns about their alleged links to "radical Islam." The crackdown was criticized as a form of political Islamophobia and a violation of freedom of association (Reuters, 2019). Targeting Muslim NGOs based on generalizations perpetuates stereotypes and unfairly targets the Muslim community, concerns have been raised about the impact on civil society, as well as religious freedom and the general climate of inclusion and diversity in France.

The Ban on Religious Symbols in Public Spaces: In 2004, France passed a law banning the wearing of "ostentatious" religious symbols in public spaces, including schools. The law has been criticized as discriminatory against Muslim women who wear the hijab (Time, 2016). This legislation has faced criticism for its perceived discrimination against Muslim women who wear the hijab, the hijab, a headscarf covering the hair and neck worn by some Muslim women, has been specifically targeted by this law. The question of whether this law constitutes religious discrimination remains a subject of debate and contention in France and abroad. Some have advocated for a revision of the law to better respect individual rights, while others argue that it is essential for preserving the secular principles of the French state.

The Closure of Muslim Businesses In 2021, several Muslim-owned businesses in France were closed down by authorities for allegedly promoting "radical Islam." The closures were criticized as an example of political Islamophobia and a violation of the rights of Muslim entrepreneurs (The Guardian, 2021). The actions taken by the authorities have raised concerns about discrimination, stereotyping, and the erosion of religious freedom. Critics argue that the closures disproportionately target Muslim businesses, contributing to a climate of Islamophobia and reinforcing negative stereotypes. They emphasize the need for evidence-based investigations and fair treatment of Muslim-owned establishments, rather than relying on broad generalizations. The issue highlights the ongoing challenge of balancing security concerns with protecting the rights of individuals and combating discrimination in a diverse society. The government's actions have raised significant concerns about discrimination, stereotyping, and the erosion of religious freedom. The closures disproportionately target Muslim businesses, contributing to a deeper climate of Islamophobia and

reinforcing negative stereotypes. There are important concerns about the balance between security, protection of individual rights, and anti-discrimination in a changing world.

Economic Islamophobia is characterized by the discrimination and exclusion of Muslims from economic opportunities and resources. Discrimination in Employment, in 2020, a French court ordered a supermarket chain to pay €100,000 in damages to a Muslim employee who was subjected to Islamophobic harassment by her colleagues and management. The employee was insulted and discriminated against because of her religion, and management failed to take action to address the issue (Middle East Eye, 2020). This case highlights the persistent problem of discrimination in the workplace and the importance of combating Islamophobia. The court's decision sends a strong message that such behavior is unacceptable and has legal consequences, it underscores the obligation of employers to create a safe and inclusive work environment, where individuals can freely practice their religion without fear of prejudice or mistreatment. This ruling serves as a reminder of the need for robust anti-discrimination policies and proactive measures to prevent and address religious discrimination in the workplace. The Stigmatization of Halal Products, in 2017, a supermarket in the Paris region was vandalized and its shelves of halal products were destroyed by anti-Muslim extremists. The incident was part of a broader campaign of stigmatization and harassment of Muslim-owned businesses in France (France 24, 2017). The act of vandalism serves as a distressing example of Islamophobic actions that target specific religious practices and contribute to an atmosphere of fear and hostility towards Muslim communities. The destruction of halal products symbolizes the broader challenges faced by individuals and businesses associated with Islamic practices. Such incidents not only cause economic damage but also perpetuate stereotypes and deepen divisions within society.

Discrimination in Housing, in 2019, a Muslim family in the Paris suburb of Noisy-le-Grand was evicted from their apartment after their landlord discovered that they were practicing Islam. The family had lived in the apartment for several years without any issues, but the landlord claimed that their religion was causing problems for other tenants (The Independent, 2019). In 2019, a Muslim family in the Paris suburb of Noisy-le-Grand was evicted from their apartment solely because of their practice of Islam. The landlord claimed that their religion was causing problems for other tenants. This incident exemplified the impact of discrimination on Muslim communities, as it resulted in the loss of the family's home and fostered feelings of

injustice and marginalization. Such instances of housing discrimination contribute to a climate of fear and mistrust within Muslim communities, reinforcing negative stereotypes and hindering social cohesion. Efforts to combat housing discrimination should focus on enforcing anti-discrimination laws, raising awareness about individual rights, and promoting intercultural understanding. Creating an inclusive and harmonious society requires collective action to condemn and address discrimination based on religion or any other factor.

Finally, Epistemic Islamophobia involves the devaluation and erasure of Islamic knowledge systems and the privileging of Western knowledge over Islamic knowledge. It also refers to the way in which knowledge and information about Islam and Muslims are produced, disseminated, and received in Western societies, often resulting in the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims.

Biased Media Coverage, after the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, some media outlets in France and around the world perpetuated Islamophobic narratives that equated all Muslims with terrorism. For example, the cover of the French magazine Charlie Hebdo, which was targeted in the attacks, depicted the Prophet Muhammad, which is considered offensive by many Muslims. This led to further polarization and hostility between Muslims and non-Muslims in France (CNN, January 2016). This biased coverage marginalized and stigmatized Muslims, hindering efforts to foster understanding and social cohesion. Exclusion of Muslim Voices In 2018, a French court ordered the removal of an online video in which a French Muslim rapper, Médine, performed a song about the Bataclan attack. The court claimed that the video would be offensive to the victims of the attack, but many argued that the decision was politically motivated and aimed at suppressing Muslim voices (Al Jazeera, 2018). The incident sparked debates about freedom of expression, minority rights, and the need for inclusive public discourse that respects diverse viewpoints. While freedom of expression and responsiveness to societal concerns are essential to the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, freedom of expression is a fundamental right.

According to a report titled "Bias in Education" by the Collective Against Islamophobia in France (CCIF), it was revealed that Muslim students in France have been subjected to discrimination and bullying within their educational institutions. Muslim students reported being subjected to derogatory comments, racial slurs, and negative stereotypes about their religion and culture (Middle East Eye, 2020).

The author Hatem Bazian (2015) explores the concept of Islamophobia and its impact on Muslim communities in Western societies. He argues that Islamophobia is not simply a matter of individual prejudice or discrimination, but is rooted in broader social and political structures that perpetuate inequality and marginalization. He identifies what he calls "the three evils of society" that are racism, imperialism, and authoritarianism as the underlying factors that fuel Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination. The impact of Islamophobia on Muslim communities particularly in the United States, where Muslims have faced hostility and discrimination in the post-9/11 era, is having a detrimental effect on the social, economic, and political integration of Muslim communities, into Western societies, particularly in the United States that it poses a significant threat to democracy and human rights. Dr. Bazian examines the strategies that have been employed to combat Islamophobia, including grassroots organizing, legal advocacy, and media activism, which he believes have been most effective, a coordinated and multifaceted approach is needed to address the root causes of Islamophobia and promote social justice and equality for all (2015;160).

3.5 France against radicalization and Terrorism

Aicha Bounaga and Hamza Esmili (2020) examine the French government's efforts to combat radicalization and terrorism in the country, they analyze the policies and strategies implemented by the French government between 2014 and 2019 and assess their effectiveness in combating terrorism. In fact, the French government's approach to countering radicalization and terrorism was deeply flawed and ultimately counterproductive. According to the authors, the government's policies were based on a faulty understanding of the root causes of radicalization and were often driven by considerations rather than evidence-based strategies. Bounaga and Esmili argue that the French government's approach was characterized by a lack of political will; the French government's approach has been characterized by a heavy emphasis on surveillance and security measures to the detriment of addressing the assumptions of social and economic factors that contribute to radicalization. The authors also criticize the government's reliance on a narrow and often stigmatizing definition of "radicalization," which they argue is not of "radicalization," which they say has led to the targeting of marginalized communities and to the suppression of dissent. They analyze the broader political and social context in which government policies have been implemented, including the rise of the opposition, government policies, including the rise of far-right political movements, and the impact of ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. The

measures put in place by the French government to combat radicalization are de-radicalization policies and prevention programs, the origins of radicalization in France are due to social, economic, and political factors that have contributed to the rise of extremism. The French government's responses to the threat of radicalization have included the creation of a ministry dedicated to the fight against extremism and the establishment of de-radicalization programs. The impact of de-radicalization policy is having an impact on dialogue and understanding between the two cultures and Orientalism and Islamophobia have contributed to a climate of fear and suspicion towards Muslims in the West. They also express reservations about the current state of relations between the two cultures, believing that much remains to be done to combat Islamophobia and promote better understanding (2020;35).

According to Randa Elbih (2018), Islamophobia is often used to justify Western imperialism and military intervention in Muslim-majority countries and the war on terror is an excellent example of this, where Muslim individuals and countries are presented as a threat to Western security and democracy. The complexity and multifaceted nature of Islamophobia is not simply a matter of individual prejudice or hatred but is often deeply rooted in cultural, political, and economic systems of power and oppression that these stereotypes continue to be perpetuated by through media representations and political discourse. The phenomenon of migration is a problem for all those Islamophobes, in fact, the refugee crisis has been accompanied by a rise in Islamophobia in many parts of the world, one of the main reasons for the rise of Islamophobia during the refugee crisis is the association of Islam with terrorism. This association has been perpetuated by media and political leaders who use inflammatory language and images to portray all Muslims as potential terrorists. This not only stigmatizes Muslim refugees but also fuels xenophobia and racism that fuels anti-refugee sentiment. Another factor contributing to Islamophobia during the refugee crisis is the perception of refugees as a group of people who do not have an identity and as a threat to national security and cultural identity. Some believe that refugees, especially Muslims, will bring with them a foreign culture that will erode the cultural fabric of their country. They are fleeing war and persecution and are seeking a safe place to live. In fact, refugees can bring valuable skills and diversity to the European Union, and their host countries. It is also important to hold politicians and the media accountable for their language and actions. Political leaders must avoid using rhetoric inflammatory that stigmatizes Muslims and

perpetuates Islamophobia the media must strive to provide accurate and balanced coverage of Islam and Muslims, and avoid sensationalizing news related to terrorism and violence (2012;48).

For example, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has found that Muslim refugees in Europe are particularly vulnerable to Islamophobic hate crimes. These hate crimes can range from verbal abuse to physical assault and can have a negative impact on the mental health of victims, and Muslim refugee communities in the U.S. To combat Islamophobia during the refugee crisis, governments and civil society organizations can take a number of steps. These include:

To provide legal protection, governments can pass laws that prohibit discrimination based on religion and ethnicity and provide legal remedies for victims of hate crimes. Promoting interfaith dialogue initiatives that bring together people of different faiths and cultures can contribute to understanding and promote tolerance. Encourage positive media coverage, the media can be encouraged to report positive stories about refugees and to avoid sensationalizing news stories related to terrorism and immigration. Provide support and resources, Muslim refugees may need specialized support and resources, such as counseling or language classes, to help them adjust to their new environment. Muslim refugees may need specialized support and resources, such as counseling or language classes, to help them adjust to their new environment. Addressing stereotypes, efforts to challenge stereotypes, and promoting diversity and inclusion can help combat Islamophobia and promote cross-cultural understanding. Islamophobia and promote understanding between different cultures and religions (FRA, 2021).

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the complex phenomenon of Islamophobia in France, highlighting its various forms and its consequences for Muslim women. It discusses the analysis of different definitions of Islamophobia by multiple authors, highlighting the recurrent and intense negative evaluations of Muslims and the unjust discrimination they face. The role of media and political discourses in stigmatizing Muslims and perpetuating Islamophobia, with the far-right being the most active, is examined. Islamophobia in Western society, including France, manifests through prejudice, stereotypes, and physical and verbal violence that Muslims, particularly Muslim women, face on a daily basis. The impact of terrorist attacks is also analyzed to shed light on the drastic rise of Islamophobia in France and understand how these tragic

events, particularly those perpetrated in France in 2015 which were the first attacks in France, have reinforced negative stereotypes and contributed to the exclusion of Muslims. The tensions between secularism, freedom of expression, and the rights of Muslim women are examined in the context of debates surrounding Charlie Hebdo and similar incidents.

Islamophobia and the challenges posed by French secularism are closely intertwined and have a significant impact on the lives of Muslim women. The rise of Islamophobia in France exacerbates the difficulties faced by Muslim women in a secular society. Islamophobic behaviors can manifest in daily interactions, contributing to social isolation and a hostile environment for Muslim women. This creates a barrier to their full participation in French society and hinders their empowerment and integration. The combination of Islamophobia and the challenges of French secularism creates a complex and multifaceted problem for Muslim women, requiring a comprehensive approach to address these interconnected challenges. Empowering Muslim women in the face of such adversity involves combating Islamophobia, advocating for their right to religious freedom, and promoting inclusivity within the framework of secularism. However, it is important to note that secularism is not necessarily the direct cause of Islamophobia in France. Islamophobia is a complex phenomenon influenced by broader social, political, cultural, and economic factors.

3.6 Unraveling the Complexity: Gender Equality and Muslim Women

This section will analyze Gender equality as an ongoing topic of discussion and debate worldwide, and within this discourse, the treatment of women in Islam has often been a central concern. As one of the major religions in the world, Islam influences the lives of millions of followers, and its teachings have significant implications for the roles, rights, and status of women within Muslim communities. The question of gender equality for women in Islam is complex and multifaceted, shaped by diverse cultural practices, interpretations of religious texts, and historical developments.

3.6.1 The Place of Women in Islam

Saneya Saleh (1972) Islam considers men and women as equals, but this equality does not imply a complete identity between the two genders. Let's consider the example of two students who have both passed the same exam. In the first question, student A chose the wrong answer, while student B chose the correct answer, and vice versa for the second question. However, in the end, both students obtain the same grade. Can we say that student B is superior to student A? Or, on the contrary, should we argue that student B is superior because of the good answer given in the second question? Or are they equal because they achieved the same grade? In this context, it is clear that men have certain advantages, and likewise, women have advantages in some situations. They are biologically, physically, and psychologically different, which leads to different rules and roles for each gender. It is mentioned in the holy book that most physical strength has been given to men, and consequently, men are considered protectors of women (1972:38).

Rashad Sharif (2017) provides a nuanced understanding of the place of women within the faith. She argues that Islam respects women's rights and highlights Prophet Muhammad as a liberator of women. The essential parts of her analysis include the elimination of female infanticide and the historical engagement of women in Islamic and economic activities. Sharif acknowledges that gender inequalities exist due to patriarchal interpretations and socio-cultural factors. She emphasizes the need to differentiate between Islamic teachings and local customs, highlighting the perspective of Islamic feminism, which advocates for women's rights within the framework of Islam (2017:254).

According to Nasr (2003) “Islam is a living reality faced with multiple problems and challenges, but still deeply anchored in the Islamic tradition and the truths that have guided its destiny since the descent of the Qur’anic revelation more than fourteen centuries ago” (pp. 185-186); yet, Muslim women have not been treated as Muslim men’s equals. Islamic clerics have imposed a system of inequality, which they have justified by their interpretations of Qur’anic passages and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, even though the Qur’an’s egalitarian message guarantees Muslim women equality within Islam. The role of Muslim women has changed significantly in the centuries since Islam’s revelation, Furthermore, Muslim women are currently grappling with a sense of identity loss, as they encounter intricate challenges arising from the nuanced nature of the Holy Qur’an, which presents numerous complexities and lacks a simple and straightforward code of law, thus motivating Muslim women to seek gender equality via Islamic theology (Kalam) in order to attain basic human rights, thus, proposing the Holy Qur’an has several interpretations. As such, laws can be reshaped to ensure that the unalienable rights of Muslim women and the egalitarian message of the Holy Qur’an are not distorted and restricted by Islamic clerics whose goal is to remain in control of Muslim women’s lives (2003:3).

3.6.2 Women in Muslim-Majorities Countries

Haddad and Esposito (1998) argue that Arab women have engaged in a long-standing debate on their roles within rapidly changing societies, discussing women's rights within an Islamic framework. While modernists advocate for liberal interpretations, conservatives argue for restrictions on women's roles. Islam itself promotes gender equality and guarantees women certain rights, such as education, property ownership, and inheritance. However, gender relations in the Middle East have been influenced by patriarchal norms and interpretations of Islam, leading to societal restrictions on women. Prominent scholars like Ali, Mumtaz, and Amin have advocated for women's rights within Islam, challenging practices such as polygyny, child marriage, and limited education. The Qur'an emphasizes the equality of men and women in religious duties but also places women under the care of men. The evolving roles of women in Islamic-majority societies remain a contentious and debated issue. Deconstructing gender bias and promoting gender equality in these societies require holistic interpretations of the Qur'an and a recognition of women as individuals with rights. Understanding the historical and cultural

construction of gender differences is essential to address women's empowerment within an Islamic framework. (1998:5)

While El Fadl (2005) argues that Quranic revelations regarding women were intended to protect them from exploitation and inequitable treatment. However, many Islamic-majority societies today struggle with balancing national leaders' goals of improving women's roles with traditional customs influenced by Sharia law. Muslim women in these Islamic-majorities societies face challenges due to social and intellectual segregation, which has been justified as a means of limiting fitna (discord). The separation of the public and private spheres is supported by religion, national ideology, and family laws that privilege men and subordinate women. However, Islam as a diverse religion also provides avenues for women to challenge patriarchal roles. There is an internal conflict in Islamic majority societies between traditionalists and moderates seeking women's liberation through education, political participation, and economic empowerment. Discrimination and the subordination of women have been justified in religious terms, creating a distorted social reality. Despite these challenges, Muslim women argue for the equality of men and women inscribed in the Qur'an and their shared responsibilities in building a just society. Controversial issues facing women in Muslim-majority societies today include women's rights, sexuality, and loss of belief. However, the experiences of women in these societies vary greatly based on class, mode of production, time, and place. In many Islamic-majority societies, women spend a significant part of their lives in the private sphere, further complicating efforts to achieve gender equality and address the diverse needs and aspirations of women (2005:20).

Michael A. Messner (2018) stated that Women in Muslim-majority societies actively engage with their faith to advocate for gender equality. While the private sphere, including the home and family, holds significance in their lives, they also view Islam as foundational to their society. In the public sphere, women challenge negative practices and injustices within Islamic thought. However, they face subjugation due to patriarchal and misogynistic discourses, limiting their active participation in society. Despite this, they use Islamic theology to demand gender equality, challenging oppressive laws and violence against women justified in the name of Islam. These Muslim women have long struggled for equality and fundamental rights, facing challenges posed by patriarchy, religious conservatism, and cultural norms. The Middle East, in particular,

has deeply entrenched patriarchal structures and limited public roles for women, enforced through religious justifications and harsh punishments for perceived transgressions (2018:50).

3.6.3 Muslim Women's Representation in European Societies

According to Rahat Raja (2014), Western influence has played a significant role in shaping perceptions of Muslim women and Islam. The dominant Western image often portrays Muslim women as passive, exotic, and veiled victims, hindering the progress of women's rights in Islamic-majority societies. Islamophobia, which intensified after 9/11 and terrorist attacks by Muslims, has further reinforced negative stereotypes and hindered the acceptance of Islamic feminism on a global scale. Structural violence, such as inadequate education and healthcare, exploitation in employment, and poverty, has been recognized as a significant aspect of gender oppression faced by women. Islamic feminists have been inspired by the writings and actions of feminists from both the West and the Third World, but they also face the challenge of navigating conflicts between Islam and the Western world (2014:5).

James Messerschmidt (2018) analyzed the controversies surrounding the hijab and burqa which have become flashpoints for conflicts between Islam and the West. The media's focus on Islam often neglects the historical development of repressive regimes and the role of the United States. Western media, religious groups, and other interest groups perpetuate Islamophobia, creating obstacles for Islamic feminists fighting for gender equality. Despite these challenges, Islamic feminism has emerged as a courageous movement that challenges the notion that feminism is a Western phenomenon irrelevant to Middle Eastern and Muslim women. The internet has provided new spaces for women to access knowledge and transform it, fostering political independence, economic prosperity, and military might within the framework of Islamic feminism. Many outspoken Muslim women who condemn the inferior roles ascribed to women in their societies do not reject their Islamic faith entirely but advocate for the right to choose within the faith (2018:22).

Jane Freedman (2007) explored the political engagement of Muslims in France, taking into account the complexity of interactions between religion and politics. Despite the advanced secularization of French society, certain contemporary forms of mobilization reference Islam. It is essential to dispel misunderstandings and recognize that Muslims are also subject to the

influence of the secular environment. They experience varying degrees of religious practice, questioning their relationship with religion and its imperatives, and some even advocate for disengagement from religion altogether. The study focuses on the different forms of political engagement among Muslims, emphasizing the impact of secularization on their experiences. The diversity of religious expressions and ideological currents within French Islam is also considered. The notion of "islamité" (Islamic identity) is viewed as a form of plural identity, showing that Muslims do not solely identify through their religion but also through other social, cultural, and political characteristics. The social context and various social positions occupied by individuals significantly influence their political behaviors, resulting in a distinctly pluralistic "Islamic." The main objective of the author is to highlight the necessity of a pluralistic approach to comprehend the political engagement of Muslims in France. Muslims are not solely defined by their religion; they are subject to multiple influences in their political engagement. It is crucial to recognize the diversity of identities and religious practices among French Muslims to fully grasp the intricate interactions between religion and politics in their public engagement (2007:110).

3.6.4 FUNDAMENTALISM

Dorothea E. Schulz (2016) Islamic fundamentalism represents a complex and multifaceted phenomenon rooted in the search for a perceived authentic Islamic identity in the face of modern challenges and cultural influences. Islamic fundamentalism seeks to establish a strict and uncompromising interpretation of Islam, often characterized by the claim of a monopoly of truth and absolute adherence to the Qur'an. Fundamentalists exert control over women's lives, considering them the property of men and holding them responsible for men's behavior. They enforce practices such as veiling and emphasize women's roles in procreation and submission to patriarchal values. Islamic fundamentalists often focus on what separates Muslims from non-Muslims and use religion as a tool of oppression, rather than seeking common ground in forgiveness and mercy. Fundamentalism is seen as a reactionary movement that gains strength through suppression. However, it has also pushed religion to the center stage, providing an opportunity for Islamic feminists to advocate for gender equality within the Islamic framework (2016:33).

While Valentine M. Moghadam (2004) stated that Islamic fundamentalism is a response to the challenges of modernity, and is characterized by a deep disappointment with the failures of modern experiments and a fear of cultural domination by the West. Islamic fundamentalist movements seek a return to an imagined 7th-century Arabia, viewing the Qur'an as immutable and divine. While not a homogeneous movement, Islamic fundamentalism adheres to a narrow set of principles and often uses fear to gain absolute power. The Taliban is an example of Islamic fundamentalism, which implemented severe restrictions on women's liberties and erased them from public life. Inspired by a combination of religiopolitical ideology and radical pluralism, the Taliban closed girls' schools, confined women to their homes, and imposed strict adherence to traditional Islamic values. The Taliban's rise to power coincided with geopolitical interests, such as the War on Terrorism, which diverted attention from their human rights abuses. Islamic fundamentalist movements reflect the contradictions of modernization and the conflict between traditional and modern norms, particularly regarding women's rights and the structure of the family. Islamic fundamentalism is not solely a response to Western culture but is also influenced by Western politics. Its absolute power and rejection of modern ideas impede progress and economic development. Western governments, driven by their own interests, often turned a blind eye to the plight of Afghan women during the Taliban regime (2004:138).

According to Afary (2004), Islamic clerics argue men and women are equal but have several different capacities according to their assigned gender roles, thereby, Islamic clerics “demand greater control over women’s bodies, emphasizing the depiction of women's bodies in Islamic contexts often accentuates their roles in procreation and highlights the call for women to conform to patriarchal values, emphasizing the expectation of women's submission (p. 131). He argues that unless patriarchal values and patriarchal structures are dispensed with, male attitudes toward women will continue to be one of domination (2004:297).

CONCLUSION

The issue of gender inequality among Muslim women is a dynamic and evolving landscape, influenced by cultural, historical, and religious factors, while Muslim women in Western countries have made notable progress, those in Arab countries continue to face significant challenges. To combat gender inequalities, the researchers propose to establish dialogue, and promote inclusive policies that prioritize women's rights.

4. The Impact of French Secularism on the Lives of Muslim Women

This chapter will explore the impact of French secularism on the lives of Muslim women, examining both its intended goals and the challenges it poses. It will delve into the controversies surrounding the wearing of religious symbols, particularly the hijab, and the various legislative measures implemented to regulate religious expression in public spaces. Furthermore, it will analyze the potential consequences of these policies on Muslim women's access to education, employment, and social integration. The discussion surrounding French secularism and Muslim women is multifaceted, encompassing issues of religious freedom, cultural identity, gender equality, and social cohesion. It is important to approach this topic with sensitivity and recognize the diverse perspectives within both the Muslim community and French society as a whole.

The marginalization of Muslims by the French state through education, secularism, and illiberalism. It highlights how these factors contribute to the exclusion and stigmatization of Muslims in France, education in France plays a crucial role in the marginalization of Muslims. The mention of 2004 law banning conspicuous religious symbols in public schools, primarily affected Muslim girls and women who wear the hijab and has been criticized for its discrimination against Muslims and its impact on their access to education and professional opportunities. The French secular policies have negative consequences for Muslims, indeed, the 2010 law banning the wearing of full-face veils in public spaces is presented as an example of this approach. This law was justified on grounds of security and gender equality, but primarily targets Muslim women, restricting their freedom of expression and religious practice (Sage Journals,2021).

There are concerns about the way in which secularism is being used as a weapon to discriminate specifically against Muslim women, rather than serving its original aim of religious neutrality and the protection of individual freedoms. The article criticizes certain French policies, in particular, the ban on full-face veils in public places and the ban on veils for underage in public schools. It is necessary to take into account the importance of intersectionality, i.e., the way Muslim women face double discrimination on the grounds of gender and religion. By focusing solely on the principle of secularism, France overlooks the specific inequalities Muslim women face and fails to offer adequate solutions to remedy these problems (The Oxford Student, 2021).

According to Edgard Morin (2015), sociologist and philosopher, there was an evolution after a great gathering whose origin is spontaneous, this gathering had the meaning it is forbidden to kill for freedom of expression, France is not a champion of freedom that served as a springboard to a new assault of terrorism; Radical Islam is a doctrine and not a religion and Charlie Hebdo and his attack and its demonstration was the anti-Islamic caricature. Indeed, France over the years has become multicultural and thus multi-religious, with people who have different values and cultures from the one that France has always known, the emergence of new religions in this nation have put this secularism to a severe test in the sense that some religions advocate strict rules that must be respected not totally in agreement with the values of the republic and its principle of secularism. Indeed, the Muslims of France saw themselves as becoming modernized so that they can adapt to the European countries and their standards, it is a modernized Islam, France which knew many contexts of historical evolution sees Islam as an easier way to accept religious pluralism. France tends to collaborate in a reciprocal way with this pluralism and tends to prefigure the face of the multicultural society, a process that is based on reciprocal learning and adjustments with regard to the Muslims of France become consequently the principle of secularism, an important principle of secularism should be widened to allow this community to better integrate just like Brazil and Morocco two countries which integrated multiculturalism in their constitutions (Mediapart, 2015).

Jean Bauberot (2017) proposes a revaluation of secular principles insofar as the fight of yesterday that secularism led was to promote freedom, today's fight is for the equality of citizens. He invited to adjust to the modern age of these societies and to the framework of European societies, the presence of Muslims in France, which is a minority in French history, is unprecedented, indeed, the Muslims of the first generation directly from the immigration have had to make efforts in learning pluralism, modernity and political modernity as Catholicism did before and that without renouncing its own values. It was thus possible to live one's religion in peace without having to appeal to have to call upon a Muslim state which makes unedited the evolution of French societies but in a more global angle of the European societies but new challenges arise. Islam is practical in a non-Muslim environment but even worse an environment that does not recognize any religion, Muslims must be faithful to their religions but also ensure respect for democratic values. The Muslim legal tradition has evolved since the 8th century in the sense in the Muslim legal sciences study the religion and the Koran in a way that adapts it to the current, modern era in which we find ourselves. The renewal of Muslim theology and thought in the

Western world, emphasizing freedom of thought and adaptation to modern times, holds the potential for transformative change in both Western societies and Muslim countries (Jean Bauberot, 2017).

There are different ways to combine citizenship and religion: the practitioners of secularism are detached from the religion and are firmly committed to secularism. Public officials maintain neutrality and refrain from displaying their religious beliefs while carrying out their duties. Teachers who provide education on different religions in an objective manner do not promote any particular faith. Lawmakers who uphold the separation of church and state and work towards creating laws that do not discriminate based on religious beliefs, but also the citizens who respect the beliefs and practices of others while asserting their own right to freedom of religion or belief and finally organizations that promote interfaith dialogue and work towards creating a society that respects diversity and pluralism (Nancy Venel, 2011).

The accommodators try to reconcile their double belonging to both Muslims and French. Politicians who support policies aimed at integrating religious minorities into society, such as funding for community centers and language classes, the employers who provide reasonable accommodations for employees' religious beliefs, such as allowing time off for religious holidays or providing prayer spaces. Schools that offer classes on different religious traditions and allow students to wear religious symbols or clothing, interfaith organizations that work towards promoting understanding and tolerance between different religious groups and religious leaders, who promote peaceful coexistence and dialogue with other faiths, while also respecting the laws and values of secular society (Stephanie Doestzer, 2005).

The contractors, refuse to see themselves reduced to a single belonging whatever it is: Edwy Plenel (2019) is a journalist and founder of the investigative news website Mediapart, who identifies as both French and Algerian. He has written extensively on the issue of identity and belonging in France (Edwy Plenel, Verso, 2016). Amin Maalouf (2000), Maalouf is a Lebanese-born French author who writes about identity and cultural diversity. He states that "people should not be reduced to a single identity but rather should embrace the complexity of their multiple identities" (Blinkist, nd). Rokhaya Diallo (2021), is a writer and activist who is of Senegalese and French descent. She has been vocal about the need for France to acknowledge and

celebrate its diversity and has written about her experiences as a Black woman in France (Onair, 2022).

The neo-communitarians tend to submit to Islamic values for most of them are purely imported from the traditions and customs of their countries. Tariq Ramadan (2007), a Swiss scholar of Egyptian origin, he's a well-known neo-communitarian who advocates for the revival of Islamic values in Western societies. He has been criticized for his controversial views on issues such as women's rights and homosexuality (Berkley Center, 2007). Hassan Iquioussen is a French imam of Moroccan origin (2015), he is known for his conservative views and his support for Islamic values. He has been criticized for his comments on Jews and Israel (Radio France International, 2022). Marwan Muhammad (2016), a French activist of Algerian origin, he's the former director of the Collective Against Islamophobia in France (CCIF). He has been accused of promoting a separatist and communitarian agenda (Anadolu Agency, 2022). Indeed, these Muslims of France live in a purely democratic and pluralistic society where religious references no longer occupy a central place in social and political life. Secularism in France is a constitutional principle that separates the State and religions. It guarantees the freedom of conscience and worships for all citizens, as well as the neutrality of the State in matters of religion. However, the implementation of this principle may have different impacts on Muslim women in France.

Secularism can be seen as a tool to protect Muslim women from social or family pressures related to their religion. It allows them "to free themselves from religious norms and codes that are discriminatory or restrictive for them". For example, Muslim women have the right to work, to marry whom they want, to whom they want, or to dress as they wish, regardless of religious constraints (John R. Bowen, 2007). Secularism can be also perceived as a source of discrimination or exclusion for Muslim women. Some secular measures can be seen as discriminatory or stigmatizing for Muslim women. For example, the ban on wearing the full veil in public spaces, which was in France in 2011, may be seen as an infringement on the freedom of religion and dignity of Muslim women. Similarly, the controversies around the organization of swimming pools reserved for Muslim women can be seen as attempts at segregation. The impact of secularism in France on Muslim women can be variable and dependent on the context;

secularism can be seen as protecting or undermining the rights of Muslim women, depending on the secular measures that are put in place and their interpretation (John Wallach Scoot, 2007).

The different secular measures and practices in France that have an impact on Muslim women, some examples will be discussed below:

4.1 The law on the prohibition of the wearing of Headscarves in public spaces (2010)

This law has been put into effect on October 11, 2010, and prohibits the wearing of the full hijab (Niqab or Burqa) in public spaces, the law applies to all public places, including streets, parks, public transportation, and government buildings. It does not apply to private residences or religious buildings; the intention behind the law is to promote French values of secularism, gender equality, and security (United Nations, 2018). According to the law, anyone found wearing a face-covering garment in public can be fined, and in some cases, required to attend citizenship classes. Additionally, anyone who forces someone else to wear a face-covering garment can face higher penalties. The implementation and enforcement of the law have sparked debates and discussions surrounding religious freedom and cultural identity in France. Some Muslim women who wear the full veil have even decided to stay at home rather than be forced to remove it in public (Samia and Maya, 2019). For the past few years, swimming pools reserved for Muslim women have been created in some French cities, to allow those who wish to do so to swim in privacy, without being in complete privacy, without being seen by men. This practice is often criticized by those who see it as a form of segregation, especially towards Muslim women. For the latter, this practice can be considered as a way to preserve their intimacy and their modesty, without being confronted with uncomfortable situations (CNN, 2019).

Muslim women can be confronted with discrimination because of their choice of clothing, in particular by wearing the veil. They can be victims of insults, harassment, or physical violence. Muslims are estimated to number 5 million in France from different regions, some from the Maghreb, others from the Middle East, Turkey, sub-Saharan Africa, or Asia (Jonathan Laurence, 2001). The recent history of the veil in France called “The Headscarf Affairs” happened for the first time in 1989, indeed this problem went up in 1989, “when 3 young schoolgirls in Creil, a suburb of Paris, were suspended for wearing the veil in their public school”. According to Jean-

Louis Debre, the former president of the national assembly "the secularism guarantees the freedom of religion and that France respects all religions but it is asked to the citizens to exert the exercise of its work in the respect of the limits of the republic". But it didn't stop there because after many requests and complaints finally in 2004 a law was voted in France against the wearing of the veil in public schools, a law that does not only target Muslims but also Jews and Christians, the first goal of the prohibition of ostentatious signs was to limit the wearing of the veil by young women (Professor K. Wing. A and Nigh. Smith .M, 2005). In the autumn of 2005, there were two weeks of pure violence of demonstrations in more than 200 cities in France, due to many causes such as unemployment, poverty, and discrimination known by all people of color, i.e., Maghrebians and Africans to a larger extent who are to a larger extent who are in majority of Muslim confession (Christiane Amanpour,2005).

The wearing of the veil had not aroused indignation until a crime on the international scene changed forever the fate of millions of Muslims in fact after the attack the first terrorist attack in the history of Muslims became enemies. From that moment on, it became difficult for Muslims to continue to live freely in their practices of faith, women were discriminated against in public places, schools, and in the workplace. However, very few women are listened to and invited to television debates in which they are solicited. Sara El Attar a veiled Maghrebi who is today a coach and consultant in communication made a sensation on France 24 by speaking about the debate around the veil according to her: The debate is biased in advance, indeed the extremists of both sides took the decision to substitute themselves for her: The debate is biased in advance, the extremists took the decision to put themselves in the place of young women and to speak for them without taking into account the reality, nor respecting the fundamental notion of free will. While for some, they refuse to defend or debate their faith considering it a private matter (CNews, 2021).

4.2 Discrimination in Employment

But the veil debate is not the only one that Muslim women, in fact, Muslim women can be also confronted with discrimination when seeking employment because of their appearance or their family name perceived as being of Muslim origin. They may also face stereotypes related to their gender and religion, which may limit their access to certain jobs or career opportunities (HAL,2022). Muslims in France experience workplace discrimination due to their origins in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, leading to unfounded accusations of job theft.

Mahmoud Bourassi argues that they unfairly bear the consequences of the country's economic challenges, emphasizing the need to address and rectify this issue (Pulitzer Center, 2015).

Muslim women who wear the veil may be discriminated against in hiring because of their religious appearance. Indeed, some companies refuse to hire veiled women, considering that it can harm their image or their effectiveness. Ratiba Zahdali is a French entrepreneur engaged in the sale of baby food, indeed she offers small halal pots cooked in an artisanal way for children. The idea behind her business is that the food market for children is very rarely accessible for parents who wish to feed their children with Halal products. Having graduated from one of the best schools in France, her goal was to find a job that would offer her a good living environment, but the job market is still a difficult place for Muslim women to access, and she was asked to choose between her veil and the job, so she gave up the job search. In 2020, Ratiba Zahdali expressed the view that Muslim women encounter a world where they are offered limited or almost no opportunities for advancement (Ratiba Zahdali, 2020).

According to a study conducted by Olivier Esteves (2023), a professor at the University of Lille, Muslim intellectuals are leaving France in droves for countries such as Canada, Dubai, the UK, and the US. After conducting a survey on 1074 Muslims who left France, two-thirds said they fled the country to be able to practice their religion freely, while more than 70% said they left to avoid any prejudices, discrimination, and racism that might occur in the professional environment. According to the professor, they are tired of being treated this way and therefore prefer to go into exile in a country where the exercise of religion does not represent a threat, in his survey he interviewed Natasa Jectovis holds a Master's degree in political economy at the Institute of European Studies in Saint-Denis, she is one of those who left France to settle definitively in the United Kingdom in order to be able to exercise her religion freely and to be able to get jobs that will correspond to her competencies. Finally, the move was successful as, since her temporary installation in London, she was promoted several times and now earns double her salary in France. This situation can lead to social and professional exclusion for Muslim women who wish to work (Anadolu Agency, 2023).

During the 14th edition of the barometer of the perception of discrimination in employment, according to Claire Hedon, human rights defender, young people are the most exposed to discrimination in employment, according to the ILO (International Labor Organization)

thanks to a sampling carried out on the population of young workers from 18 to 34 years old (3201 people) more than of one young person out of three reports having been discriminated against or having been to discriminatory harassment during their job search. In fact, by 2021, nearly 90% of young workers report having experienced a situation in which they have been subjected to devaluation during their professional life (HRD and ILO, 2021). Women are the most affected by this discrimination due to the fact that because it is easier to recognize a Muslim woman by her veil than a Muslim man of this fact the discrimination is bound to employment and forces her as it was in some cases to be refused to exercise a job. From a gender perspective, native women have a high unemployment rate compared to men of foreign nationality and this difference is even greater when it comes to foreign women (Reuters,2012). Muslim women with a migrant background face multiple problems in the professional environment: they are rarely hired for indefinite work contracts and if they are taken in these positions with this contract, they work more than 30 hours a week, they are estimated to be 18% of them have a permanent job and 46% of them have a part-time job hold a part-time job according to the "Center of Studies and Research on Qualifications". It is important to note that young Muslims are more likely than older women; young women from parents who grew up in their countries of origin and then migrated to France are more vulnerable than the second generation who were born and raised in Europe since they are considered or even treated as natives (Marjorie Moya, 2016).

The report (DDD,2014), it was reported 3673 cases of discrimination at work in the public and private sectors, out of a total of 78,822 complaints. The majority of these complaints were due to 'origin' only a few complaints were due to religion and gender. According to economists and demographers more than it is complicated to put in the form of tables or data, it is important to note that women who have a name that sounds Muslim are three times less likely to get an interview for work than a candidate with a Christian-sounding name. French women of non-European origin are the most affected by discrimination. Testing has been carried out and has that non-Europeans are more disadvantaged than French people of French origin and that there is a very strong correlation between discrimination experienced at work and in hiring. In other words, the injustices experienced by these immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb are similar to what is called "ethno-racial discrimination"(Montaigne Institute, 2015). The Muslim religion is associated with two kinds of stereotypes: The first one refers to an extremist practice of the religion and the second assumes that there is unequal treatment between men and women. This

would cause recruiters to be fearful of accepting their applications. It has been carried out testing called Valfort-Institut Montaigne (2020) which conducted a study to verify the institutions and to analyze the reasons for this discrimination against Muslim women (Institute Montaigne,2020).

In public administration, secularism is applied in interactions between state agents and citizens, guaranteeing the religious neutrality of public services and prohibiting any form of religious discrimination. State employees are required to respect religious neutrality in the exercise of their functions, which means that they must not manifest their religious affiliation in the exercise of their duties, for example by wearing conspicuous religious symbols. In the area of law, secularism is enshrined in the French Constitution and in the laws, which guarantee freedom of conscience, freedom of worship, and freedom of religious expression. However, French secularism has often been used to justify policies that restrict religious practice, especially for religious minorities, including Muslims. The debate on the veil and secularism in France is therefore complex and often emotionally charged, on the one hand, there are those who defend the right of women to wear the veil as a personal choice and an expression of their individual freedom. On the other side, there are those who consider the veil a symbol of women's subordination and a threat to gender equality. In addition, there are fears that secular policies will be used to stigmatize and discriminate against religious minorities, especially Muslims (Abdessamad Belhaj, 2022).

These stereotypes are often linked to a racialized representation of Muslim women, who is perceived as an "Other" different and inferior to different and inferior to the Western norm. In the Western imagination, the veil is often seen as a symbol of the oppression of Muslim women. However, this simplistic view does not take into account the complexity of the motivations of women who wear the veil. Some Muslim women wear the veil by personal choice, for religious or cultural reasons, and do not feel oppressed by this choice. Other women may wear the veil under pressure from their family or community, but this pressure should not be generalized to all Muslim women. In addition, the portrayal of Muslim women in the Western media is often biased, as it does not reflect the diversity of these women's experiences of these women. Muslim women are often reduced to their physical appearance, particularly the veil, rather than their individuality and their complexity as human beings. This reductive representation can reinforce stereotypes and prejudices against Muslim women in Western societies (Dermana Seta, 2016).

The concept of the "racialized veil" refers to the idea that the wearing of the veil is often associated with racial stereotypes, particularly in France, where the debate over the veil is highly polarized. Muslim women are often perceived as foreigners, immigrants, or descendants of immigrants, and their veiling is therefore linked to their racial affiliation rather than their religious practice. This racial perception can reinforce discrimination and prejudices against Muslim women in Western societies. The debate on the veil in Western societies is complex and raises important questions about women's rights, freedom of religion, cultural diversity, and the fight against discrimination. It is important to deconstruct the stereotypes and prejudices associated with Muslim women who wear the veil, respect their personal choice, and recognize their individuality and complexity as human beings (Lila. Abu-Lughod, (2002), Ziba Mir-Hosseini, (2003)).

Discrimination in employment against Muslim women in France is a concerning reality that requires particular attention. Muslim women often face additional barriers when seeking employment or advancing in their careers due to their religious identity. These forms of discrimination can take various forms, including negative stereotypes, biases, and discriminatory recruitment practices. Muslim women can experience discrimination at all stages of employment, from job searching to professional advancement. This discrimination against Muslim women in France is concerning not only from a human rights and equality perspective but also from an economic and societal standpoint. By marginalizing a portion of the workforce, society misses out on the opportunity to benefit from the skills and talents that Muslim women can bring.

4.3 Discrimination in Access to Education and Schooling

Muslim women can be confronted with discrimination because of their choice of clothing, in particular by wearing the veil. They can be victims of insults, harassment, or physical violence. Muslims are estimated to number 5 million in France from different regions, some from the Maghreb, others from the Middle East, Turkey, sub-Saharan Africa, or Asia (Jonathan Laurence, 2001). The recent history of the veil in France called "The Headscarf Affairs" happened for the first time in 1989, indeed this problem went up in 1989, "when 3 young schoolgirls in Creil, a suburb of Paris, were suspended for wearing the veil in their public school". According to Jean-Louis Debre, the former president of the national assembly "the secularism guarantees the freedom

of religion and that France respects all religions but it is asked to the citizens to exert the exercise of its work in the respect of the limits of the republic". But it didn't stop there because after many requests and complaints finally in 2004 a law was voted in France against the wearing of the veil in public schools, a law that does not only target Muslims but also Jews and Christians, the first goal of the prohibition of ostentatious signs was to limit the wearing of the veil by young women (Professor K. Wing. A and Nigh. Smith .M, 2005). In the autumn of 2005, there were two weeks of pure violence of demonstrations in more than 200 cities in France, due to many causes such as unemployment, poverty, and discrimination known by all people of color, i.e., Maghrebians and Africans to a larger extent who are to a larger extent who are in majority of Muslim confession (Christiane Amanpour,2005).

Muslim women may face barriers to accessing education, particularly because of their gender and religion. They may face discrimination when enrolling in certain schools or universities. Most discrimination takes place in the education and professional stack as well as in the public and private environment; the debate of the veil is the cause of whether or not these women can be accepted to practice or access the classroom with a headscarf (CCIF, 2015). Since this Veil Ban law prohibits ostentatious religious signs in public schools, Muslim women wearing the veil have faced difficulties in continuing their education. This ban has been recently extended to women in university in 2019, with potential sanctions for those who wear the veil in universities. Muslim women may face stigma and racism in schools, which can manifest itself in insults, discriminatory and racism in schools, which can manifest as insults, discriminatory remarks, or physical attacks. These behaviors can have a negative impact on their well-being and academic success; indeed, a veiled student was questioned about her reasons for wearing the veil during her interview for a preparatory school for therapists in France, and the director of the school informed her of his dissatisfaction with this situation and that this situation goes against his establishment which indignant the concerned one who saw her social values threatened. Another student in the master of law in a big university in Paris was refused access to the course for the same reason. (Fatiha Ajbli, 2020). Indeed, the professor of law at this university recognized that access to the course had been refused to her because of "her veil". A teacher at an elementary school in Saint-Denis, a Paris suburb, refused to give a grade to an 8-year-old student who wore a hijab (The Guardian, 2015), the teacher explained that the grade was not given for religious reasons, but for not respecting the school's rules prohibiting the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols. In

2018, a Muslim student was excluded from a preparatory class in Paris because of her scarves; school management justified the exclusion by the need to respect secularism and guarantee the neutrality of the school (Le Monde, 2020).

The debates on the teaching in France, the teaching of religious facts is compulsory in schools, but it must be given in a secular manner, that is to say, without preaching or promoting a particular religion. However, some parents and Muslim associations believe that this teaching is inclusive and does not take into account the diversity of religions present in France, including Islam. These debates can have an impact on young Muslim girls, who may feel stigmatized or ignored in their school careers. On the one hand, secularism has influenced the practice of Islam in France, Muslims in France have had to adapt to secular rules, especially with regard to religious practices in the public space. For example, the ban on wearing the full veil in public spaces has led some Muslim women to opt for lighter and less ostentatious clothing, so as not to be excluded from French society. On the other hand, the Muslim presence in France has also influenced the practice of secularism. Indeed, the presence of a significant Muslim population in France has had an impact on the practice of secularism, or *laïcité*, in the country. The debates and discussions surrounding the accommodation of religious diversity, including Islam, within the framework of French secularism, have become increasingly prominent. France's concept of secularism historically aimed to create a strict separation between religion and the state. However, the growing Muslim population and the visibility of Islamic practices have challenged the traditional understanding and implementation of secularism. The presence of Islam in French society has prompted discussions on how to reconcile religious freedom and cultural diversity with the principles of secularism (EARS, 2021).

Muslim women can also be discriminated against in the choice of their educational orientation. Prejudices can lead to an orientation towards less prestigious, less remunerative, or less rewarding fields of study, or may be discouraged from pursuing higher education for cultural or religious reasons. Prejudice about their religion or culture can lead to discriminatory behavior or unequal treatment, including in the evaluation of their skills. Muslim women may be discriminated against in the French education system for religious, cultural, or ethnic grounds. These examples show that Muslim women may face discrimination in the French education system because of their religious or cultural affiliation. These discriminations can take different forms,

but they all have different forms, but they all have negative consequences on the lives and fulfillment of Muslim women (Leslie J. Limage, 2000).

Some argue (Tariq Ramadan, Marwan Muhammad, Jean-Louis Bianco, and Caroline Fourest) that the practice of secularism should evolve to better accommodate religious diversity and ensure equal treatment of all religious groups. They advocate for a more inclusive interpretation of secularism that recognizes and respects religious rights and practices while maintaining the neutrality of the state. Secularism in France is a complex concept that applies to several levels of society, notably in education public administration, and law. In the field of education, secularism is included in school curricula, and schools are required to respect the principles of religious neutrality and freedom of conscience of students. Ostentatious religious symbols are prohibited in public schools, including the Islamic veil, but also Jewish yarmulkes and large Christian crosses (Elsevier, 2020).

Several reports and investigations have highlighted cases where Roma children in France were disproportionately placed in special education or segregated classes, often without proper evaluation of their individual needs. This practice raised concerns about discriminatory treatment and limited access to quality education (Roma Children, 2009).

Muslim women in France encounter discrimination such as the ban on wearing visible religious symbols in schools, which restricts their ability to freely express their religious identity. This can impact their active participation in the classroom and their sense of belonging within the school environment. Furthermore, Muslim women may face negative stereotypes that affect their educational opportunities. Biases and misconceptions can limit their choices of educational paths or discourage them from pursuing higher education. These educational discriminations have profound consequences on the lives of Muslim women, compromising their personal development, autonomy, and career prospects. It also creates an inequality in access to opportunities and reinforces existing social disparities.

4.4 Discrimination in the public space

In France, Muslim women may face discrimination in public spaces because of their religious affiliation and their choice of clothing. This includes the ban on the burkini, several

French cities have banned the wearing of burkini on public beaches, including Nice, Cannes, and Menton. This ban was justified by the need to preserve secularism and equality between gender. However, it has been widely criticized for being discriminatory towards Muslim women who choose to bathe in the burkini for religious or cultural reasons. They may also be victims of identity checks abusive because of their physical appearance or their choice of clothing (NACHR, 2016). In 2016, a woman wearing a headscarf was forced to undress in public during an identity check in Cannes, which sparked a wave of indignation (The Guardian, 2016). In 2018, a woman wearing a hijab was assaulted by a man in the Paris metro; a year later another woman wearing a hijab was insulted and shoved in a supermarket in Perpignan. They feel excluded or rejected from French society because of their choice of clothing or their religious practice (AA, 2022).

The discrimination against Muslim women in public spaces in France is a significant issue that requires specific attention, these women face various forms of discrimination that hinder their full participation in society and restrict the exercise of their rights. Muslim women in France often experience discrimination based on their religious attire, such as the hijab or niqab. This discrimination manifests in different ways, including verbal insults, physical attacks, and social exclusion. These acts not only violate fundamental principles of equality and freedom but also contribute to the marginalization and stigmatization of Muslim women. Moreover, education plays a vital role in combating discrimination. Educating the public, including schools, workplaces, and community organizations, about the experiences and contributions of Muslim women could help dispel misconceptions and foster a more inclusive society.

4.5 Discrimination in the justice system

Muslim women can be discriminated against in the judicial system in France. For example, they are treated unfairly in court because of their religion or ethnic origin. Unfortunately, there have been several cases in France where Muslim women have been discriminated against in the field of justice. The lawyer filed a complaint of discrimination, claiming that her religious freedom had been violated. In 2018, a French court denied a Muslim woman entry to court for wearing a headscarf, citing a 2004 law that prohibits religious symbols in public schools (France 24, 2018). In 2016, a Moroccan woman who had been living in France faced a denial of French citizenship by a French court. The reason cited for this denial was that her practice of Islam was deemed incompatible with French values, even though she had been

residing in the country for an extended period. (Al-Jazeera, 2018). These examples show that discrimination against Muslim women in the justice system in France is a reality, despite laws prohibiting religious discrimination. Judicial authorities in France have to take steps to protect the rights of Muslim women and respect their religious freedom.

4.6 Discrimination in Housing

Muslim women may face discrimination in the search for housing because of their religion or ethnicity. They may be denied rentals because of their name or perceived to be of Muslim origin. There have been several cases of housing discrimination against Muslim women in France. Here are some examples below:

In 2015, a Muslim woman wearing a hijab was turned down by a housing owner in the Paris area because of her religion and appearance. In 2017, a Muslim woman wearing a veil was turned down for a rental apartment by a real estate agency in Toulouse. The agency claimed that landlords did not want tenants wearing religious symbols. In 2021, a Muslim woman faced discriminatory comments when she looked for housing in Marseille. Several landlords expressed a preference for non-Muslim or non-practicing tenants (SRD, 2022).

The discrimination faced by Muslim women in France can have a significant psychological impact on their well-being and mental health indeed it can lead to psychological distress, decreased self-esteem and self-confidence as well as increased stress and anxiety. Muslim women may also experience feelings of anger, injustice, and powerlessness in the face of discrimination. The negative stereotypes and social representations that are often associated with Muslim women in France may also have a psychological impact on their well-being and may feel pressure to conform to norms and expectations which can lead to identity confusion and a sense of confusion and a sense of isolation. In addition, the experience of discrimination can lead Muslim women to develop defense mechanisms such as avoidance or withdrawal, which can have negative consequences on their mental health. It is important to note that these psychological effects are not only individual but also have social and collective implications as well. The discrimination can lead to obstacles in their participation in the public, political, and economic life of the country because of their religion (Ummul –Kiram Kathawalla, Moin Syed, 2021).

Discrimination in housing against Muslim women in France is a concerning reality that addresses significant and timely issues. These women face discriminatory barriers that impede their access to decent and equitable housing. One of the most important issues is Islamophobia and prejudice, which lead to discrimination during housing searches, Muslim women experience rental refusals or discriminatory treatment based on their religious affiliation, name, or physical appearance. This situation contributes to the marginalization and social exclusion of these women, depriving them of their fundamental right to adequate housing. Moreover, the housing crisis in France exacerbates the discrimination faced by Muslim women, the shortage of affordable housing, and the lack of effective policies to combat discrimination further intensify the challenges these women encounter in their housing search. This creates a vicious cycle where discrimination hinders access to decent housing, which in turn reinforces marginalization and inequalities.

Conclusion

This chapter examined how the principles of secularism in France intersect with the rights and freedoms of Muslim women, influencing their experiences in areas such as education, employment, and public spaces. The introduction of certain laws, such as the 2010 ban on full-face veils in public spaces and the 2004 ban on ostentatious religious symbols in public schools, has marginalized and excluded Muslim women, leading to feelings of discrimination and exclusion. Those women face various forms of discrimination in their daily lives, even when they comply with state regulations. Access to employment is one of the main challenges, with the frequent exclusion of Muslim women from the labor market due to their religious identity. Housing is another major challenge, with cases of rental refusals and discriminatory treatment when searching for accommodation, they face difficulties in finding decent and equal housing, which impacts their well-being and social integration.

By studying these intersections, the chapter shed light on the barriers and discriminations those women may face due to the implementation of secular policies and regulations. The objective was to analyze the complexity of these challenges and offer strategies that empower Muslim women and promote a more inclusive and equitable society within the context of French secularism. French secularism, has had a significant impact on the lives of Muslim women in France.

5. Navigating the Challenges: Empowering Muslim Women in the Face of Adversity

This chapter will examine the ways in which Muslim women have been actively working towards their own empowerment and advocating for change. We will highlight grassroots initiatives, community organizations, and advocacy efforts that aim to challenge stereotypes, combat discrimination, and promote the rights and agency of Muslim women. By highlighting these stories of resilience and activism, we aim to inspire and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the complex realities faced by Muslim women in France.

Secularism, a fundamental principle in France, presents unique challenges for Muslim women in their religious practice and identity. In this study, we will examine the challenges faced by Muslim women due to the application of secularism in France and explore the pathways through which they can overcome them. Within this exploration, various channels through which Muslim women can find solutions and empowerment are explored. Individual and collective initiatives, social movements, non-governmental organizations, and government programs that support equal rights and recognize cultural and religious diversity are analyzed.

France is the European country with the largest Muslim population, with approximately 5 to 6 million Muslims, of which nearly half are women. However, these women often face difficulties and prejudice because of their religious affiliation and gender. One of the main difficulties that Muslim women in France face is discrimination, which can take many forms. For example, a study conducted in France found that 80% of Muslim women surveyed said they had experienced discrimination because of their religion (CFCM,2016). Muslim women often face hostile attitudes and negative stereotypes, which can hinder their personal and professional growth. Another important challenge for Muslim women in France is their access to employment, according to a report published in 2020, Muslim women are twice more likely to be unemployed than non-Muslim women in France. Muslim women often face prejudice when looking for work, and their choice of seeking employment, and their choice to wear a headscarf may be perceived as an obstacle to their hiring (HCEFH, 2020). These women are also often victims of violence and harassment, including online harassment, the study conducted in 2019 found that 73% of Muslim women surveyed have experienced online harassment

(ACCM, 2019). This violence and harassment can have a serious impact on the mental and physical health of Muslim women, as well as their health, as well as their ability to participate fully in public life. Muslim women in France face many challenges, including discrimination, access to employment, and violence. In the current situation in France, it is complicated to remain Muslim in France as the young Parisian Kamel Fertass of Moroccan origin tells it, he wrote a song to explain their situation through a song "I fell pain of my France". He was born and raised in the province of Clichy-sous-Bois, one of the most deprived cities in France. According to him, France it is a state that belongs to all the French no matter their backgrounds. Since the various attacks that took place in France, he no longer feels serene, they feel judged and hunted (Al-Jazeera, 2015).

French women spoke about their experiences with institutional Islamophobia and their apprehensions about the future of this scourge. Aisha, a young mother who was born and raised in Mantes-la-Jolie, a town in the region of France, when she was 14 years old the government was already beginning to implement the law to ban conspicuous signs and symbols in school, 10 years before the implementation of this law. In fact, according to her, before the law was put in place, she was seen as a studious, rigorous student, but with the implementation of this law and her refusal to remove her veil, she received sanctions from her school, she could no longer participate in her classes, she did not have the same hours of recreation as the other students. This continued for months. According to her, this bill offended many Muslim and French women, first of all on the educational level, as education has always been an important theme for Aisha, which she loved to combine with learning about her religion. For a long time, she felt excluded from this society and married young but it ended in failure. Noura, a university researcher and mother of three children, in 2019 when her son was eight years old, volunteered to accompany him and other parents on a school trip to the school committee, which inevitably agreed on the phone. The next day when she arrived, the head of the school was unhappy with what he saw because the woman was asked to leave the premises because all manifestations of religious signs were prohibited in their establishments even the accompanying parents had to submit to it. When she refused, the authorities were informed and asked her to leave the premises immediately. She called this drama "institutional racism". According to Noura, the future in the country remains uncertain and negative, they are not welcome and face both physical and mental discrimination on a daily basis. Hiba Latreche 22 years old is a law student in Strasbourg but also

is the vice president and secretary general of Femyso. She and other Muslim women joined in a campaign to create the famous slogan "Don't touch my Hijab" which will be taken up all over the world by several women as well as famous women such as Ibtihaj Muhammad the American fencer as well as the Somali model and activist Rawdah Mohamed. This campaign was made after the 2004 bill was enacted in the hope that their voices would be heard. As women who wish to have the right to dispose of their bodies and beliefs as they see fit are constantly threatened by bills, this campaign was undertaken in an attempt to gain international support to show that their demands are not irrational (The Guardian, 2021).

Muslim women in France have faced various challenges related to their religious identity, including discrimination, stigmatization, and marginalization. This chapter discusses some ways Muslim women in France have dealt with these challenges:

5.1 Speaking out

Muslim women in France have been actively speaking out against the discrimination and stigmatization they face. They have been using social media platforms and other forms of media to voice their concerns and demand their rights. This has helped raise awareness about their situation and has contributed to the public debate on Islamophobia and discrimination in France. Many Muslim women in France have created accounts on social networks to share their experiences and denounce the discrimination they face. For example, they have shared stories about excessive police stops, verbal insults, and hostile behavior they have experienced because of their hijab. These stories helped to raise awareness of the reality of discrimination against Muslim women in France. Here are some concrete examples of the action taken by Muslim women in France to make their voices heard (Brut America,2021):

5.2 Social Network

Muslim women in France have harnessed the power of social media as a platform to share their stories and shed light on the discrimination they encounter. By creating dedicated accounts and utilizing hashtags related to their experiences, they have effectively disseminated their narratives, sparked conversations, and captured public attention. Through these digital spaces, they have fostered a sense of community and solidarity, empowering one another to challenge societal norms and demand equality. By sharing their stories and experiences, they have humanized the

issue, dispelling stereotypes and misconceptions. Their concerted efforts have fostered empathy and understanding, compelling broader segments of society to critically reflect on their own biases and prejudices. Some Videos of Muslim women being aggressively stopped by police have been widely shared on social networks, indeed, in 2021, Muslim women organized a rally in Paris to express their opposition to the proposed law on separatism, claiming that it stigmatizes Muslims and violates their religious freedom. This rally was widely reported by the French media and sparked a public debate on the issue (Insight Turkey, 2021). Instances of Muslim women being subjected to aggressive police stops have garnered significant attention through the widespread sharing of videos on social media platforms. Notably, in 2021, Muslim women organized a rally at "Place de la République" in Paris to express their opposition to the proposed law on separatism, contending that it perpetuates stigmatization against Muslims and encroaches upon their religious liberties. The rally received extensive coverage from the French media, igniting a public discourse on the matter. These events serve as illustrative examples of the experiences and activism of Muslim women in France, which have contributed to broader discussions concerning religious freedom, social inclusion, and the rights of marginalized communities. By participating in public demonstrations and leveraging social media as a means of amplifying their voices, Muslim women have sought to challenge discriminatory practices and engender greater awareness and understanding within society. The resulting debates have underscored the complex dynamics surrounding religion, citizenship, and cultural diversity in contemporary France (RFI,2021). Following the November 14th attack in France, officers conducted raids and house arrests that were characterized by abusive and discriminatory actions. These operations targeted not only individuals but also locations predominantly frequented by the Muslim community, such as local restaurants and mosques. Disturbingly, during these raids, law enforcement officers even went so far as to throw Qurans and other Holy books onto the floor, causing immense distress and fear among the people present. These raids were conducted in response to the November attack, as the self-proclaimed members of ISIL had declared their presence across Europe and beyond. However, it is important to note that the actions of a few extremists should not justify or excuse the indiscriminate targeting and mistreatment of an entire community. The timing of these operations, coming immediately after the November attack, exacerbated tensions and heightened feelings of insecurity within the Muslim community. Instead of fostering a sense of safety and protection, these raids further marginalized and traumatized innocent individuals who were already grappling

with the aftermath of a tragic event (Al-Jazeera,2016). The movement of "Les hijabeuses," a collective of female football players, has been prohibited from protesting illegally during the parliamentary debate on the proposed law to ban the wearing of the hijab in sports, specifically during competitions. The enforcement of this law would further reinforce the discrimination already faced by Muslim women in France, but in this case, within the sports environment. The hijabeuses movement consists of women who are passionate about football and choose to wear the hijab in accordance with their religious beliefs. They assert their right to participate in sports while wearing their hijab, viewing it as an expression of their identity and freedom of choice. These female athletes emphasize that wearing the hijab does not hinder their full and active participation in sports competitions. They argue that the proposed ban would be an unjust restriction on their rights and a form of discrimination against them. The hijabeuses collective highlights the importance of diversity and inclusion in sports, emphasizing that every individual should be able to engage in their favorite sport without compromising their faith or cultural identity. They also raise the point that if such a law were adopted, it would reinforce negative stereotypes associated with Muslim women, further marginalizing them and contributing to an atmosphere of exclusion and hostility. The hijabeuses movement has garnered media attention and sparked a broader debate on religious freedom, women's rights, and inclusion in sports, these women are fighting for their voices to be heard and for respectful solutions that accommodate both their faith and their participation in sports (Amnesty International,2022).

In addition, Muslim women in France have also participated in television shows, podcasts, public podcasts, and public events to discuss their situation and the discrimination they face. Henda Ayari, feminist activist and former Salafist, author of a book entitled "J'ai choisi d'être libre", in which she tells her life story and her commitment to women's rights. She has been invited to several TV shows, including "On n'est pas couché" in 2018, to discuss her book and her commitment to women's rights. She has also participated in public events, such as the "International Women's Rights Forum" in 2018. Nadiya Lazzouni is a journalist and writer, she has written several articles on challenges faced by Muslim women in France, including their choice of dress and access to employment. Lazzouni has written several articles for various French media, such as Le Monde, Libération, and Le Huffington Post, discussing discrimination against Muslim women in France. She has also been a guest on the television program TV show "C l'hebdo" in 2019 to discuss Islamophobia. (Le Point, 2016). The collective "Féministes

musulmanes de France" refers to a group of Muslim feminists in France who advocate for gender equality and women's rights within the context of their Muslim identity. The collective seeks to challenge and deconstruct patriarchal norms and practices that exist within Muslim communities and broader society. They aim to promote a more inclusive and intersectional feminist movement that recognizes the diverse experiences and identities of Muslim women. Through their activism, the collective strives to challenge stereotypes, address discrimination, and amplify the voices of Muslim women in social, political, and cultural spheres. Their work encompasses various areas, including gender-based violence, reproductive rights, representation, and religious freedom. The collective engages in advocacy, awareness campaigns, and community-building activities to promote dialogue, empowerment, and social change for Muslim women in France (Ancre, 2022).

Muslim women in France have also been building communities and networks to support each other. They have established organizations and associations that provide a platform for them to connect with one another, share their experiences, and advocate for their rights. In the first place, for instance, the association "Lallab" was created by Muslim women to fight against the stereotypes and discrimination they suffer in France. This association organizes events, and workshops, to raise public awareness of the diversity of Muslim women and to fight against Islamophobia. Through these activities, "Lallab" seeks to challenge prejudices and misconceptions about Muslim women, promote their autonomy and empowerment, and create a space for exchange and solidarity among them. By focusing on education, visibility, and the empowerment of Muslim women, the association aims to change attitudes and foster a more inclusive society that respects religious and cultural diversity. They play a crucial role in promoting dialogue, understanding, and dismantling harmful stereotypes that hinder social cohesion (Le Monde, 2017).

Another one, the association "Les Effronté-e-s" is a French organization formed by a group of activists, primarily composed of Muslim women, who aim to challenge and dismantle various forms of oppression and discrimination. It focuses on issues such as gender equality, feminism, and combating Islamophobia. Through their activism, "Les Effronté-e-s" works to raise awareness about the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by Muslim women, advocating for their rights and amplifying their voices. "Les Effronté-e-s" provides a platform for Muslim feminists to express their perspectives and challenge the stereotypes and prejudices they

encounter. By highlighting the intersectionality of their identities, they promote an inclusive understanding of feminism that recognizes and addresses the unique challenges faced by Muslim women. They emphasize the need to confront and dismantle all forms of discrimination, including sexism, racism, Islamophobia, and other intersecting oppressions (Respublica, 2012).

Collectif Féministes pour l'Egalité (CFPE) was founded in 2012, CFPE is a collective of feminist associations, including many Muslim women-led groups, that work to promote gender equality and combat discrimination based on gender, religion, and other factors. CFPE places a strong emphasis on inclusivity and diversity, recognizing the importance of addressing the specific experiences of Muslim women and other marginalized groups. The collective plays a vital role in raising awareness and mobilizing women's rights within different communities, through collaborative efforts, it encourages intercommunity dialogue and feminist solidarity. They are also engaged in advocacy work and awareness campaigns, challenging discriminatory norms and striving for an egalitarian society for all. By working together, the member associations of CFPE contribute to strengthening the feminist movement in its fight against all forms of oppression and actively contribute to building a fairer and more equal world for all women (Ouest France, 2022).

5.3 Educating others

Muslim women in France have taken an active role in educational initiatives aimed at challenging stereotypes and dispelling misconceptions about Islam and the Muslim culture. Through collaborations with schools, universities, and various institutions, they have been actively engaged in providing accurate and comprehensive information about Islam and Muslims. These educational initiatives involve organizing workshops, lectures, and discussions where Muslim women share their experiences, beliefs, and values, thereby providing insights into their lived realities. By actively participating in these educational activities, they aim to counter prevailing stereotypes and address the misunderstandings that often surround Islam and Muslim practices. Their efforts seek to foster interfaith dialogue and promote a better understanding of the diversity within the Muslim community (Amani Hamdan, 2014).

There are several women who have played an active role in this purpose. They are going to be shortly discussed in this section, Fatima Khemilat is a Muslim feminist and activist who

has been working to combat Islamophobia and promote interfaith dialogue in France. She is the co-founder of the organization "Voix d'elles Rebelles" (Rebel Voices of Women), which works to amplify the voices of Muslim women in France and promote their rights. Fatima Khemilat is a Muslim feminist and activist dedicated to addressing Islamophobia and fostering interfaith dialogue in France. As a co-founder of "Voix d'elles Rebelles," she strives to empower Muslim women by amplifying their voices and advocating for their rights. Her work contributes to building a more inclusive and equitable society, challenging stereotypes, and promoting understanding between different communities (The Meydan, 2022).

Asma Lamrabet is a Moroccan-French physician and feminist who has been working to combat gender stereotypes and promote interfaith dialogue in France. She is the author of several books on Islam and feminism, including "Femmes et hommes dans le Coran", through her writings she explores the intersection of Islam and feminism, promoting a more inclusive understanding of gender roles within Islamic teachings. Lamrabet's work contributes to ongoing discussions on women's rights, religious interpretation, and social justice within Muslim communities (LDH, 2023). Marwan Muhammad, he's a French activist and the former director of the Collective Against Islamophobia in France (CCIF). He has been working to combat Islamophobia and promote interfaith dialogue in France through various initiatives and campaigns. Muhammad has spearheaded initiatives and campaigns aimed at challenging stereotypes, promoting understanding, and advocating for the rights of Muslim communities. His work has made significant contributions to the ongoing struggle against discrimination and the pursuit of social justice in France (Anadolu Agency, 2021).

Hanane Charihi was the daughter of the first victims of the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, she lost her mother Fatima Charihi in a terrorist attack on July 14, 2016, and become a powerful voice in advocating for peace and denouncing extremism. She has spoken publicly about her mother's legacy and her own determination to continue Hafida's fight against hatred and division. Through her activism, Charihi has emphasized the importance of dialogue, understanding, and solidarity among different religious and cultural communities. She decided to create the organization "Les Musulmans pour la Paix" (Muslims for Peace), which works to promote peace and interfaith dialogue in France, they honor her memory by working towards building bridges of understanding, combating hatred, and fostering unity among different communities, their

efforts contribute to creating a more harmonious and inclusive society, emphasizing the values of peace, tolerance, and coexistence (CDA, 2017). Samia Hathroubi is a prominent French Muslim activist who has made significant contributions to fostering dialogue and understanding between different communities through her organization "Parle-moi d'islam" (Talk to Me About Islam). As the founder of this organization, Hathroubi aims to dispel misconceptions about Islam and create a platform for open and respectful conversations. Hathroubi aims to encourage understanding, break down barriers, and bridge the gap of misunderstanding between different communities. Her efforts contribute to building a more inclusive and tolerant society, encouraging open conversations about Islam and promoting mutual respect and acceptance (HF,2016). Asmaa Guenifi is a French Muslim activist and the founder of the organization "Les Enfants d'Averroès" (The Children of Averroes), she has made significant contributions to interfaith dialogue and education about Islam and Muslim culture through her organization "Les Enfants d'Averroès" (The Children of Averroes). As the founder of this organization, Guenifi aims to bridge the gap between different religious communities and foster understanding and respect. Her organization assumes a pivotal role in fostering cultural cohesion, dismantling prejudiced preconceptions, and cultivating a milieu of inclusivity and harmonious coexistence among disparate communities (AFVT, 2023). Zahia Rahmani is an Algerian-French writer and historian who has been working to promote interfaith dialogue and education about Islam and Muslim culture in France. She is the author of several books on the history of Islam in France, including "France, Story of a Childhood. Rahmani's work contributes to promoting understanding, challenging stereotypes, and promoting a more inclusive and diverse narrative of Islam in the French context. Her efforts play a significant role in enriching cultural dialogue and bridging divides within society (INHA,2015).

5.4 Legal actions

Muslim women in France have also taken legal action to challenge discrimination and stigmatization. Muslim women in France have utilized legal mechanisms to challenge discriminatory practices. They have filed lawsuits against individuals and organizations that have treated them unfairly, seeking redress for the harm inflicted upon them. By resorting to legal avenues, these women assert their rights and demand justice in the face of discrimination. These legal actions not only serve as a means of personal empowerment but also contribute to the

broader struggle against discrimination faced by the Muslim community in France (LIBE committee, 2022). The first example is the Baby Loup Affair, in 2013, a French daycare center fired an employee for wearing a hijab to work, claiming that her attire violated the center's policy of secularism. The employee challenged her dismissal in court, arguing that the policy amounted to discrimination against Muslims. The case was eventually heard by the European Court of Human Rights, which upheld the daycare center's decision (France 24, 2013). The second example is the Air France Case, in 2016, Air France faced criticism after it asked female Muslim flight attendants to wear headscarves on flights to Iran, in compliance with Iranian law. Several flight attendants refused and were told they would not be allowed to work on the flights. The flight attendants filed a lawsuit against Air France, alleging discrimination. The case was settled out of court (France 24, 2016). The third one is the School Lunch Case that took place in 2015, a town in eastern France removed pork from the school lunch menu to accommodate Muslim and Jewish students. A group of parents sued the town, arguing that the decision violated secularism and was discriminatory against non-Muslim students. A court ruled in favor of the town, stating that the decision was a reasonable accommodation and did not violate secularism. The case sparked debates regarding the balance between religious accommodations and the principles of equality and secularism within public institutions (AA,2022). The last one is the Case of Asma Bougnaoui happened in 2009, the European Court of Justice upheld the dismissal of a Muslim woman who refused to remove her headscarf while working as a design engineer in a consulting company named Metropole. The court ruled that the company had the right to enforce its dress code and that the woman's refusal constituted insubordination (BBC,2016).

5.5 Engaging in Politics

Muslim women in France have recognized the power of political engagement as a means to address the challenges they face and advocate for the rights of their communities. Muslim women in France have been increasingly active in politics, breaking barriers and challenging stereotypes. Many have pursued careers in public service, running for elected positions at various levels of government. By occupying political office, these women not only represent their constituents but also act as advocates for the concerns and interests of their communities. Their presence in decision-making bodies contributes to a more inclusive and diverse political landscape. Some of these politically active Muslim Women in France are discussed in this

section (BuzzFeed UK, 2021). Samia Ghali is a French-Algerian politician who has been the mayor of the 8th arrondissement of Marseille since 2014. She is also a member of the French Senate and has been an advocate for issues such as social justice and equality. She has worked to improve the living conditions in her district and has also been vocal about the need for better education and job opportunities for young people. Ghali's dedication to social justice is her involvement in initiatives aimed at reducing youth unemployment in Marseille. She has advocated for vocational training programs, job creation measures, and partnerships between educational institutions and local businesses (Gala, 2014).

From 2014 to 2017, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, a politician of French-Moroccan origin, held the position of Minister of Education, Higher Education, and Research in France. She was the first woman and the first person of North African descent to hold this position. She has been a vocal advocate for women's rights and has worked to improve access to education for all children, regardless of their background. Vallaud-Belkacem's tenure has left a lasting impact on promoting inclusivity and equality within the French education system. During her tenure as Minister of Education, Vallaud-Belkacem prioritized initiatives aimed at advancing women's rights and creating a more equitable education system, she actively advocated for policies to address gender disparities in education, including promoting gender equality in school curricula, combating gender stereotypes, and encouraging girls' participation in traditionally male-dominated fields of study (Le Monde, 2020).

Sarah Zouak is a French-Algerian activist who co-founded the organization Les Effrontées, which works to promote women's rights and gender equality. She has also been involved in political campaigns and has worked to increase the political representation of Muslim women in France. In 2015, she ran as a candidate for the Greens party in the regional elections, further highlighting her commitment to shaping inclusive and diverse political landscapes. Her labor has contributed to empowering marginalized voices and advancing the cause of equality and social justice (La Croix, 2016). Ilham Kadri is a French-Moroccan business executive who is the CEO of the chemical company Solvay. She is one of the few women of color to lead a major corporation in France and has been an advocate for diversity and inclusion in the corporate world, she has also been involved in philanthropic work and has supported initiatives to empower women and girls in France and around the world. Her leadership and dedication have

made a significant impact in promoting equality and driving positive change in both the business world and society at large (L'Echo, 2020).

5.6 Engaging in Activism

Muslim women in France actively engage in activism to combat discrimination and stigmatization. Through their participation in demonstrations and protests, they aim to raise awareness about the challenges they face and advocate for their rights within society. By taking to the streets and joining collective actions, Muslim women highlight the injustices and inequalities they encounter on a daily basis. They seek to challenge stereotypes, dismantle discriminatory practices, and create a more inclusive and equitable society. These demonstrations serve as platforms for Muslim women to amplify their voices, share their stories, and demand equal treatment and opportunities. Participating in protests also allows Muslim women to build solidarity with other marginalized groups, forging alliances and coalitions to collectively address issues of social injustice and discrimination. By joining forces with diverse communities, they strengthen their advocacy efforts and work towards a more inclusive and pluralistic society (WION,2021). There are several examples that can be discussed, the first one is the Hijab Day campaign that occur in 2018, Muslim women in France launched the Hijab Day campaign, which was aimed at raising awareness about the hijab and challenging stereotypes about Muslim women. The campaign involved wearing the hijab in public for a day, and encouraged dialogue and conversation about the issue. It served as an opportunity to promote understanding, break down prejudices, and encourage a more inclusive and diverse society (DW, 2021). The second one is the March Against Islamophobia that happened in 2019, Muslim women in France participated in the March Against Islamophobia, which was organized in response to a surge in anti-Muslim sentiment in the country. The march was attended by tens of thousands of people and was a powerful display of solidarity and resistance (Euronews, 2019). The last one is the "Islam and Feminism" movement, this movement is growing in France that seeks to reconcile Islamic teachings with feminist principles. The movement includes Muslim women who wear the hijab and other Islamic clothing and aims to challenge patriarchal interpretations of Islam and promote greater equality and justice. The movement has organized conferences, workshops, and other events to promote greater awareness and understanding of the issues facing Muslim women in France (Laura Zahra Mc Donald,2005).

5.7 Embracing their Identity

Despite facing challenges, many Muslim women in France have also been embracing their identity and culture. They have been wearing hijabs and other Islamic clothing as a way of asserting their religious identity and challenging the stigmatization of Muslim women in France. For these women, wearing the hijab goes beyond just clothing; it is a symbol of their faith, identity, and pride as Muslim women. By wearing it, they assert their fundamental right to freely practice their religion and express their individuality. Through their choice to wear the hijab, these women challenge the stereotypes and prejudices often associated with Islam and Muslim women, they demonstrate that diversity and pluralism are essential values in French society and that every individual has the right to live and be respected in accordance with their faith and culture. Despite facing criticism and discrimination, these women show remarkable resilience and a commitment to staying true to their beliefs (Daily Sabah,2021).

The first example is Houda Benyamina, a French-Moroccan filmmaker and actress who has been vocal about her Muslim identity. She has directed several films that explore the experiences of Muslim women in France and has been a strong advocate for the rights of Muslim women. Benyamina often wears a hijab and other Islamic clothing as a way of asserting her identity and challenging stereotypes (Paris Match, 2016). The second example is the "Muslim Women's Day" campaign is an annual campaign that was launched in 2017 to celebrate and highlight the achievements of Muslim women around the world. The campaign includes social media events, panel discussions, and other activities to promote a greater understanding of the experiences and contributions of Muslim women. Many Muslim women in France participate in this campaign as a way of celebrating their identity and culture The "Muslim Women's Day" campaign provides a platform for celebrating the accomplishments and experiences of Muslim women worldwide (Muslim Girls, 2023). The third one is the "Les Musulmanes Parlent" (Muslim Women Speak) podcast, it is a podcast that was launched in 2018 by Asmae, Faïza, and Sarah, three French friends' Muslim women. The podcast features interviews with Muslim women from a range of backgrounds and covers topics such as identity, faith, and social justice. The podcast is a way for Muslim women in France to share their stories and experiences, and to challenge negative stereotypes and misconceptions (Radio France, 2023).

5.8 Activism

Muslim women in France have sought support from organizations to raise awareness about their situation and advocate for their rights. These organizations have been providing legal and moral support to Muslim women in France and have been raising their concerns on an international level. Through these organizations, they have received legal and moral assistance, shedding light on their challenges and advocating for their rights on a global scale, by engaging with international bodies, Muslim women in France amplify their voices and strive for greater recognition, protection, and equality (OIRF,2022). The first important and effective international organization is the United Nations Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice, in 2016, a group of Muslim women in France submitted a report to the United Nations Working Group on Violence against Women in Law and Practice on the issue of discrimination against women in law. The report highlighted the discrimination and stigmatization that Muslim women in France face, particularly those who wear the hijab, emphasizing the importance of addressing these issues and advocating for their rights. By engaging with international mechanisms, Muslim women in France bring attention to their concerns and work towards achieving greater equality and respect (PNI, 2018).

Another important effective international organization is called Amnesty International, it has been monitoring the situation of Muslim women in France and has been advocating for their rights. In 2016, the organization released a report that criticized France's ban on the burkini, a full-body swimsuit worn by some Muslim women. The report argued that the ban was discriminatory and violated the right to freedom of expression and religion, Amnesty International's involvement in monitoring and advocating for the rights of Muslim women in France is crucial, by releasing reports and raising concerns about issues like the burkini ban and the stigmatization of hijab-wearing women, the organization highlights the importance of upholding freedom of expression, and religion and combating discrimination (Amnesty International, 2022). The European Court of Human Rights had also shown concern about Muslim Women in France is named the, in 2014 the European Court of Human Rights ruled that France's ban on the niqab, a veil worn by some Muslim women that cover the face, was a violation of the right to freedom of religion and expression. The case was brought by a French Muslim woman who argued that the ban was discriminatory and violated her right to practice her

religion, the court's ruling was a victory for Muslim women in France and helped to raise awareness about their situation on an international level (LLC,2014). In 2020, a group of UN human rights experts expressed concern about the impact of the French government's proposed bill that would restrict the wearing of religious symbols in public spaces. The experts argued that the bill could lead to further discrimination against Muslim women who wear hijabs and other religious symbols (United Nations, 2020). The last one is called the International Campaign to Stop Stoning and Execution, in 2008, they raised concerns about the case of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, an Iranian woman who was sentenced to death for adultery. Ashtiani's case received international attention, and Muslim women in France joined protests and demonstrations calling for her release. The campaign helped to raise awareness about the human rights abuses faced by women in Iran and around the world (Reuters,2011).

Conclusion

The last chapter has explored the topic of empowering Muslim women in the face of adversity, specifically within the challenges posed by French secularism. It highlights the need for comprehensive strategies to address these challenges and empower Muslim women in a context where secularism can be perceived as a barrier to their full realization.

This section sheds light on the various initiatives undertaken by Muslim women to combat the discrimination and stigmatization they face while also educating and raising awareness among people. It addresses the core topic of the challenges posed by secularism in France for Muslim women. By exploring different strategies used to empower Muslim women within the context of French secularism, this chapter offers a comprehensive approach to overcoming the challenges they encounter. It encourages a combination of individual, community, and political efforts to effect meaningful change and establish a society that better respects the rights of Muslim women. Therefore, the chapter effectively addresses the central issue of the challenges posed by French secularism in the lives of Muslim women by providing solutions and perspectives for their empowerment and inclusion.

6-Conclusion

Laïcité is a concept that emerged in France throughout its complex history and is rooted in political, social, and philosophical events. Its emergence and development are closely tied to the separation of Church and State and the struggle for freedom of conscience and the guarantee of equality among citizens. One of the origins of secularism in France dates back to the French Revolution in the late 18th century when France was deeply influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment. These ideas questioned the power of the Church and advocated for individual freedom. The French Revolution marked the end of the monarchy and the establishment of a new republican form of government that aimed to establish principles of equality and liberty for all citizens.

Finally, in 1905, France adopted a landmark law known as the "Law on the Separation of Church and State." This law formalized the separation between religious institutions and the French State, affirming its neutrality in matters of religion. It also ended public funding for religious practices and established a legal framework for freedom of religion and conscience. As a result, secularism in France is characterized by three fundamental principles: the neutrality of the State, which does not favor any particular religious belief; the freedom of religion and the freedom to practice one's religion or choose not to believe; and the equality of citizens, ensuring fairness and non-discrimination based on religious beliefs. Regarding the differences with Anglo-Saxon secularism, it is important to note that secularism in France is often perceived as stricter and more interventionist regarding religion compared to countries like the United States or the United Kingdom. In France, the focus is on state neutrality and the protection of public space from religious influences, whereas in Anglo-Saxon countries, secularism is often interpreted as non-interference of the State in religious affairs, guaranteeing freedom of religion and worship without favoring any particular religion. These differences in the conception and application of laïcité reflect the unique historical, political, and cultural contexts of each country, as well as specific visions of the role of religion in society.

Secularism in France is a fundamental concept that aims to separate religious affairs from the state, thereby ensuring the neutrality of the state in religious matters. However, the implementation and interpretation of secularism can create challenges for Muslim women, who face specific dilemmas related to their religious identity and their status as French citizens. For

Muslim women, the issue of secularism often revolves around outward signs of their faith, such as the veil. While some Muslim women freely choose to wear the veil as an expression of their religious identity and autonomy, others may do so due to social or familial pressures. In both cases, the question arises as to whether the wearing of the veil is compatible with the principles of secularism. Legal restrictions on the wearing of religious symbols in certain public spaces, such as schools or government offices, can be perceived by some Muslim women as a limitation on their freedom of religion and stigmatization of their identity. For these women, the veil is a personal choice and a means of asserting their faith, and prohibiting them from wearing it can be seen as a violation of their rights. However, others argue that the ban on veiling in public spaces is necessary to preserve secularism and ensure equality among individuals, avoiding any form of religious pressure or discrimination based on religion. It is important to note that Muslim women are not a homogenous group, and their experiences can vary significantly. Some Muslim women may perceive secularism as a means to preserve their freedom and protect themselves from religious pressures, while others may view it as a form of discrimination and marginalization. The perception of Islam as a threat to secularism and French identity has fueled Islamophobia and contributed to policies and debates that stigmatize Muslim women and restrict their religious freedom. This link between secularism and Islamophobia in France is rooted in the narrative that portrays Islam as incompatible with French values and as a force that undermines the principles of secularism.

Islamophobia is a complex and concerning phenomenon that demands particular attention both academically and within society at large. This thesis has examined various aspects of Islamophobia, focusing on its manifestations, causes, and consequences. The analysis of Islamophobia's manifestations has revealed prejudiced attitudes, discrimination, and negative stereotypes toward individuals of the Muslim faith. These hostile attitudes can manifest in various areas of everyday life, such as employment, education, housing, and social interactions. Islamophobia limits the opportunities for Muslim individuals, fuels mistrust and marginalization, and creates an atmosphere of fear and division.

The causes of Islamophobia are multifaceted and complex, encompassing socio-economic, political, historical, and cultural factors. Global events such as terrorist attacks committed in the name of Islam, international conflicts, and polarizing political discourse can

contribute to the amplification of Islamophobia. Media and social networks also play a crucial role in the spread and perpetuation of negative stereotypes and misinformation. The consequences of Islamophobia are profound and affect both Muslim individuals and society as a whole. Victims of Islamophobia experience infringements on their dignity, freedom, and well-being. Islamophobia hinders the social and economic integration of Muslim individuals, reinforces social and religious divisions, and threatens fundamental values of tolerance, and diversity. The impact of secularism on the lives of Muslim women in France raises profound and often controversial questions. Secularism, as a foundational principle of the French Republic, aims to ensure the neutrality of the state in religious matters and to preserve the freedom of conscience of every individual. However, in practice, secularism can create specific challenges for Muslim women, affecting their religious freedom, cultural identity, and social opportunities. Debates on secularism in France have often focused on visible religious symbols, such as the veil, which is perceived by some as a symbol of women's oppression or as a challenge to the values of the Republic. This has led to the adoption of laws and policies restricting the wearing of religious symbols in certain public spaces, such as schools, government offices, or workplaces. These restrictions can directly impact Muslim women who wish to exercise their religious freedom by wearing the veil. They may feel marginalized, stigmatized, or discriminated against because of their clothing choice, which can hinder their social participation, access to employment or education, and overall well-being.

Faced with challenges related to *laïcité*, Islamophobia, and stereotypes, Muslim women have adopted a multifaceted approach to strengthen their voice, autonomy, and empowerment. Dialogue is one key strategy tool used by Muslim women to raise awareness and educate others. By participating in interfaith discussions, community forums, or public events, they strive to break stereotypes, promote mutual understanding, and build bridges between different communities. Social networks also play a significant role in empowering Muslim women. By utilizing online platforms, they share their stories, experiences, and opinions, creating a virtual presence that challenges prejudices and gives voice to Muslim women. Another powerful used by Muslim women is engagement within organizations. By joining rights advocacy groups, feminist associations, or religious organizations, they find a space where they can connect with other like-minded women and unite their efforts to promote gender equality and inclusion. Furthermore, Muslim women resort to legal actions to assert their rights. By seeking recourse in the courts, they

aim to challenge discriminatory policies, secure legal protections, and advocate for evolving laws that uphold gender equality and religious freedom. Political participation and activism are also powerful means for Muslim women to make their voices heard. By engaging in the political process, running for office, or supporting candidates, they contribute to shaping public policies and promoting more equitable representation. Lastly, an important approach embraced by Muslim women is embracing their identity. They proudly claim their faith, culture, and heritage, asserting themselves in a society that often perceives them as "the other". This self-affirmation contributes to strengthening their confidence and resilience in the face of prejudice and adversity.

In conclusion, Muslim women in France employ a multitude of channels to assert their rights and promote their active participation in society. Their engagement within organizations, dialogue with others, use of social networks, legal actions, political participation, and self-affirmation all contribute to amplifying their voices and combating oppression and discrimination. However, there is still much work to be done to overcome systemic and cultural barriers and to create a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

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