

MOSQUES IN FRANCE: THE VISIBLE PRESENCE OF ISLAM

Ashley Patricia Arnold, B.A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2011

APPROVED:

Marie-Christine Koop, Major Professor and
Chair of the Department of Foreign
Languages

Christophe Chaguinian, Committee
Member

Lawrence Williams, Committee Member
James D. Meernik, Acting Dean of the
Toulouse Graduate School

Arnold, Ashley Patricia. *Mosques in France: The Visible Presence of Islam*. Master of Arts (French), May 2011, 84 pp., 33 titles.

Numerous laws are being directed toward subduing the visible presence of Islam throughout France, and in return French Muslims are becoming bolder in the projection of their faith. This thesis examines the presence of Islam in France throughout history and in contemporary French civilization. Specifically, this thesis addresses the issues regarding the visible presence of Islam in France through such institutions as mosques and how they are the key symbols representing the prominence of Islam in France. It looks at what lies in the collective French mind that creates such an influence on today's policies and outlook, as well as identifies the key characters that dominate the current affairs surrounding Islam in France. The thesis reviews the country's past relations with the visible presence of Islam through the controversies surrounding the construction of famous mosques. In addition, this thesis underlines key areas where both the State and the Muslim population must make concessions in order to avoid further conflict.

Copyright 2011

by

Ashley Patricia Arnold

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: THE CRESCENT AND THE HEXAGON.....	4
La Bataille de Poitiers	4
Les Croisades.....	4
Side Effects of Colonialism and Present Day Discrimination	5
Enter Le Front National.....	10
The Desire for Equality: Enter Harlem Désir and SOS-Rascisme.....	11
Discrimination of French Muslims	13
Home Sweet Home - Les Banlieues	13
ZEPs and the Backlash of Positive Discrimination.....	14
Fighting Back.....	16
Violent Responses.....	19
Treatment of Women in the Islamic Religion	20
CHAPTER 3: THE KEY POLITICAL PLAYERS	23
La Grande Mosquée de Paris	23
Tariq Ramadan: Muslim Moralist	25
The Political Voices: From Left to Right.....	26
Nicolas Sarkozy	26
Loi de laïcité: The Official Separation of Church and State.....	29
From Paris to Lyon	35
Strasbourg: A Project Halted	36
The Great Mosque of Marseille: A Work in Progress.....	37
Acts of Violence	39

CHAPTER 4: A MONUMENT OF VISIBLE PROPORTIONS: MOSQUES IN FRANCE.....	33
From Paris to Lyon	35
Strasbourg: A Project Halted	36
The Great Mosque of Marseille: A Work in Progress.....	37
Acts of Violence	39
CHAPTER 5: THE VISIBILITY FACTOR.....	41
A Game of Propaganda and Rhetoric.....	41
A Threat to National Identity	43
A Secular Home for a Religion.....	46
Communalism.....	47
CHAPTER 6: A POLITICAL DEBATE OF EPIC PROPORTIONS.....	50
Sarkozy and the Republic.....	51
Tariq Ramadan: Alleged Double Talker	55
The Need for Resolution	57
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION: TOWARD A COMPROMISE.....	59
Working Towards Coexistence	69
Making A Collaborative Effort	76
Compromise	80
WORKS CITED	82

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité” [Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood]. These words ring true as the creed by which to live since the birth of the French Republic. France stands as a multicultural and pluralistic epicenter in Europe. However, the valiant words of the French creed have come under recent attack. The French Islamic population has raised its voice in protest to what they describe as blatant discrimination. For a large portion of the French society the creed resounds more as a hypocritical taunt by which politicians can validate their actions of discrimination in the name of equality. While such strong accusations have incited cries of disapproval, the existence of discrimination cannot be denied. The current tale is one the world has seen played out in numerous accounts of history. For example in the United States foundational document proclaiming equality the phrase “all men are created equal...” excludes the slaves. As history points out, the strategy did not play out for the Americans, nor is there confidence that it will have a different end for the French. Laws that marginalize citizens into desolate corners of society are looked upon by future generations with a sense of scrutinizing clarity, one that normally underlines past racism, as was the case for the Nuremburg laws in Nazi Germany. This *maladie française* or French sickness is not a new phenomenon but has traversed centuries and is even referenced in

1721 in Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*. Today, the scene is no longer being played out in a literary novel, but in the Parisian streets that are blocked off by Muslims protesting the governmental denial of a place to worship.

Currently, France has the greatest number of Muslims in Europe estimated around 5 to 6 million or 10% of France's total population. An estimate is the only available data since the gathering of official data regarding people's religious affiliations or natural origins was prohibited in 1872, just prior to the 1901 law on associations that led the way to the separation of church and state (Godard 24). This portion of French population brings with it the second fastest growing religion, Islam. Although France has had little problems with integrating and accepting many cultures, that has not been the case during recent years for the Islamic French population. The Islamic population continues to see itself marginalized and its followers subject to a vicious cycle of poverty. France's politicians are notorious for their handling, or mishandling, of issues surrounding the Muslim population. Laws prohibiting Islamic traditions and customs are continuously being passed; from the 2004 law prohibiting the Islamic headscarf in public schools, classifying it as an "ostensible" religious sign to the 2010 law that banned the wearing of the Islamic *burqa*, Islam is becoming a tougher religion to follow in the Hexagon (a term commonly used in political discourse to refer to the Republic of France). Current trends lead one to conclude that the next law on the list will involve banning the construction of mosques on French territory. The constant tug-of-war between those of Arab descent and the French government

is causing tensions to build. Each time the French government tightens its hold on the Hexagon the Muslim population becomes increasingly bolder in its visual projection of Islam. Therefore, the more the French government attempts to repress the Muslim identity, the more dramatic the increase in the Islamic population's Islamification, or taking on of fundamental Islamic cultural characteristics. A continuation of misinterpretation between the two cultures will only ensure the increase of hostility and the growing separation between a people and the country it calls home. The French Islamic population will no longer stand to be "comme des êtres publiquement français et en privé musulmans" [publically French and in private Muslim] (Wieviorka 140). They desire to be recognized by the French government as French Muslims despite the laws of *laïcité* due to their long felt discrimination for being French Arabs. The testimony published by the Muslim population is one that rings true on a global scale. Countries that segregate and consider discriminatory policies take heed; you may be creating your own worst enemy.

To more accurately understand France's complex relationship with Islam, one must take a look into the collective French mind. Why has this once welcomed religion become ostracized and the subject of a radical and heated conflict? Is the current trend nothing but a loop in the cycle of history? To answer such questions and understand both sides of the conflict one must begin by delving into the rich depths of French history.

CHAPTER 2

THE CRESCENT AND THE HEXAGON

La Bataille de Poitiers

The contention between France and Islam can be dated as far back as 732 A.D. at the Battle of Poitiers. The significance of this historic battle not only involves French history but the collective European history, as well. The victory of Charles Martel marked France as the unifying force against the invading religion of Islam. The unification of the Occident against the Islamic Orient has evolved over the centuries into a strong sense of eurocentrism and shaped the general regard for those outside of Europe as “other” (Arkoun 15). It is this sentiment that dwells in the minds of the French today. Those of non-European descent experience unprecedented amounts of discrimination. The perception of people of “other” races “invading” French territory is a common outlook by those having historical French lineage. Despite its medieval beginnings, politicians in their regard for immigration often justify this attitude by supporting anti-immigration policies.

Les Croisades

A major historical factor that is influential in the mind of the French is the period of 1095 to 1270, the Crusades. The Crusades marked a turning point for the Christian religion. Prior to the Crusades, Christian faith still held fast to the

preaching of Jesus Christ that focused on love and pacifism (Arkoun 82). The coronation of Constantine as the Emperor of a “Christian” Empire began a transfiguration of sorts. The church and state began to work hand in hand. When a threat from the Orient appeared on the shores of Italy, Spain, then France and the Catholic Church engaged in a “just” war. The Orient population was transformed from enemy into “other” after the Battle at Poitiers. In the same manner, the crusaders incited a regard that casted the Muslims as diabolic. Propaganda during the Crusades cast those of Muslim faith as violent devils that were idol worshipers and greedy for women and luxury (Arkoun 150). These perceptions of Muslims may not be mirror images today, but they have influenced policies well into the twenty-first century including those of colonialism. Parallel beliefs permeate throughout political discourse and legislation. This medieval stance closely resembles that of the current far right party, the Front National, in its current quest to eradicate immigration in the Hexagon. Today it is the use of fear rhetoric, instead of outright propaganda, used by the global media that has cast the same sort of negativity onto followers of the Muslim faith.

Side Effects of Colonialism and Present Day Discrimination

The current debate questions whether the issue is simply one of globalization, cultural pluralism, or even outright racism. Conflicts of such a grand caliber, such as the one currently taking place in France, however never have simple answers nor can they be traced back to a single motivating cause. France’s long and involved history with Islam reaches far beyond the Hexagon

and stems into the once colonized regions of Algeria and parts of North Africa. The French took Algeria in 1830 and annexed the country in 1834. The force used to take the “barbaric” country was even then criticized. Alex de Tocqueville described the manner of fighting as more barbaric and cruel than any action previously taken by the Arabs (Arkoun 544). While the colony was subject to its prior laws, native Algerians were economically exploited and treated as inferior subjects. In 1904 France initiated a policy of *circulation libre*, or the free flow of people and goods, between French Algeria and the Hexagon. Colonial subjects were then able to obtain temporary work visas. But it was the start of World War I that truly brought forth a demand for millions of immigrant workers and soldiers. An estimated 120,000 to 150,000 Algerian soldiers fought bravely alongside the French in the World Wars between 1900 and 1945 (Arkoun 751). In commemoration for their service politicians brought forth an idea dating from 1895 for a monument in the form of an Islamic cultural center. The concept of the Great Paris Mosque would not take form until 1922, but is known for being a sign of gratitude for the Algerians’ service. The immigrants from Algeria and North Africa were accepted into French society, but have never been fully integrated even after the Algerian War of Independence of 1962. The years of colonialism and a structured social hierarchy only served to reinforce the “us” and “them” attitude of the French toward the Arabs.

The desire to promote France as a strong power in the Islamic world inspired France to implement open policies in the late nineteenth and early

twentieth century. In addition to implementing more open borders, the Society of Pious Trusts and Islamic Holy Places was initiated in 1895 with a very particular goal (Bowen 2007, 37). Not only did the society encourage Algerian Muslims to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, it created the Muslim Institute in Paris also known today as the Great Paris Mosque. "In the minds of the ruling powers at the time, this undertaking satisfied a threefold concern: to reinforce the cohesion of the colonial empire, to conduct an active Muslim policy, and to demonstrate symbolically the mother country's recognition of the sacrifices of the many Muslims killed in World War I" (Amselle 110). In order to establish such policies, a sort of political contortionism took place. Due to strict laws concerning *laïcité*, or the separation of church and state, the government made sure to promote the mosque as a cultural, not religious center. "Because the 1905 law concerning *laïcité* prevented the state from directly financing religious activities, the government made sure that the Institute would be a cultural center, with conference rooms, a library, residences, a bath, and a restaurant as well as a mosque" (Bowen 2007, 37).

Such political tactics are common throughout the French political framework, especially when they pertain to laws concerning *laïcité*, and are commonly employed today. While the establishment of the Paris Mosque in 1922 was presented to the public as a sign of benevolence, the structure did much to enhance political relations between France and the Arab world. Due to a chaotic immigration policy, waves of immigrant workers poured onto France's shores

after 1945, and again in the 1960s after Algeria's independence. Immigration saw exponential growth until the economic crisis of the 1970s. The price of oil skyrocketed and so did unemployment. Immigrant workers and their families became the easiest target to blame. In 1974 the French government suspended the immigration of workers from Middle Eastern countries. Due to the policy of *regroupement familial* (a policy in which the family of an immigrant worker could join them in France) the closing of French borders caused a dramatic increase in family members entering into the country to join their loved one (Arkoun 800). This increase in the Muslim portion of the population, now clearly visible, sparked the flames of the present debate. Once again, Arabs found themselves being looked at as outsiders invading European soil.

Since the largest portion of immigrants entered into France on temporary work contracts the early immigrant population did not consider themselves at home. Early immigrants in the country did not see themselves as part of the French population and did very little to change their new environment. Due to the projected limited duration of their stay, these immigrants preferred to remain invisible. Previously, Muslims in France had taken to practicing their religion in private; "la dimension collective de l'islam se pratiquait dans l'espace intime des demeures ou plutôt des foyers, des hôtels garnis ou des arrières-boutiques" 'overall the Islamic population practiced in intimate dwellings such as homes, furnished houses or the back of shops' (Cesari 35). This private attitude extended to their projection of their religion, therefore, visible signs of Islam such

as mosques, scarves, and burkas remained unseen and of little interest to the French public. The idea of returning home was ever present in the immigrant population's mind as well as in the French mindset.

Today, the Muslim presence in France has multiplied since the first wave of immigrant workers. As immigrants began to stay for extended amounts of time, families formed and established a permanent home in France. The idea of returning to a "home" land diminished with time and the idea of being a French Muslim was initiated. However, as John Bowen points out in "Can Islam Be French?" the conflicting values of these two institutions create a conflict of identity in the present French Muslim population (Bowen 2009, 8). It is at this point that the present-day conflict began to take shape. Past experiences with colonies led the French to believe that assimilation was met with little resistance; however, starting in the 1980s the Muslim population, especially second and third generations, have not been quick to cast off their cultural or religious heritage and have little interest in remaining unseen. A sort of inner struggle with their dual identity has led Muslims in France to demand more from the government and the country they now call home. France, however, operates on a central belief of equality and *laïcité*; equality for all meaning special recognition for none. Immigrants who entered the country were asked to assimilate and take on French values in order to become Republican citizens of France. Christopher Pinet notes that in 1974 with the installment of the policy of *regroupement familial*, the "French model of assimilation, whose goal was to make all equal

provided that they cast off their cultural and religious specificity, made it difficult for the new immigrants and their children to fit in” (159). Arab immigrants came to the country with a completely diverse manner of dress, religion, and idea of the State’s role. Never before had they had to separate their political power, Islam, from their religious power, Islam.

Enter Le Front National

In 1983, the Muslim population in France became the preferred target for a now notorious politician. Jean-Marie le Pen began a tirade against immigration. He focused especially on immigration from Algeria and North Africa that brought large waves of Muslims into France. The Front National was founded by le Pen in 1972, and is an extreme right-wing French nationalist party, that took advantage of the political and economic turmoil of the late 70s to base its platform on battling against immigration principally from Arab and North African countries. The group holds a strong influence in the south of France due to the one million French *pieds-noirs* who had to flee Algeria during the war of independence (Pinet 158). Unemployment climbed sharply and tensions between the two divergent cultures mounted in the 1980s. As tensions mounted, it was only a matter of time before the French and its Muslim population clashed. The once welcomed cultural group was now being ostracized. The elections of 1983 and 1984 made it clear that immigration had worn out its welcome. Le Pen managed to win support in the municipal elections and the Front National went on to win 10 percent of the vote in the national election. The message was clear. French Muslims, however,

did not back down. In response to the now open sentiment of racism, in October of 1983, they marched from Marseille to Paris in the Marche des Beurs. *Beurs* is a slang term formed through the vernacular found in the ghettos of France by a sort of reversal of the syllables in the word *Arabe*. While the term has a negative connotation, it is often used by French Arabs in reference to themselves. The famous march to Paris in 1983 brought national attention to the word and exposed the oppressed status of Arab immigrants and their children.

While the rhetoric of the FN has no doubt done much to fan the flames of xenophobia and racism, the effects of placing immigration and the immigrant presence in the national spotlight have not been entirely negative. One of the reactions to the anti-immigrant stance of the FN and its growing strength at the polls was the development of a number of “associations” seeking to combat racism. (Toner 165)

The Desire for Equality: Enter Harlem Désir and SOS-Racisme

In 1984 Harlem Désir entered the stage from the left-wing Socialist Party to confront the extreme right party the Front National. The organization *SOS-Racisme* rallied against the racist sentiments and gave a political voice to immigrants and their children. With its slogan “Touche pas à mon pote,” or [Don’t touch my friend] Désir and the newly-founded organization faced the battle against racism head on. The organization has withstood countless battles against discrimination from its founding in 1984 and throughout the present day. In addition, the movement for equality sparked by Désir has inspired countless other organizations to take up the battle and put discrimination and its negative effects in the spotlight. But was it enough in 1984 to turn the tides? Not quite.

When their demands were essentially ignored by the major political parties, and in spite of the creation of SOS-Racisme by Harlem Désir in 1984, some of the *Beurs* became alienated. Some insisted on a more public practice of Islam, began to dress in a more Islamic way, and called for the building of mosques. (Pinet 159)

Denied by their country, French Muslims turned to the side of their culture that would accept them. Islamic movements have since permeated throughout the French political landscape. French Muslims are still fighting the battle by the same tactic of turning more to their Islamic roots. They have developed a strategy that works significantly on the French sense of identity. The more French Muslims develop a visual presence in France the more feathers they ruffle. The Islamic debate in France has recently turned into a clash over defining a French national identity.

In 1989, amidst a country already saturated with racism, *L'affaire des foulards* began in a school outside of Paris in Seine-Saint-Denis. The debate would be fought over for 15 years before the final concluding blow in 2004 ruled the wearing of the Islamic headscarf in governmental institutions, such as schools, a violation of *laïcité*. Discrimination grew rampant throughout the 90s, and fear rhetoric dominated the media. So much so, that le Pen received enough votes to proceed to the second round of voting in the presidential elections of 2002. The controversy surrounding the *foulard* or the *voile* is only the tip of the iceberg; an infinite number of social problems lie just beneath the surface.

Discrimination of French Muslims

Neither citizen nor foreigner, nor really on the side of the Same, the 'immigrant' is found in this 'bastard' place of which Plato also spoke, the frontier between the social being and the social non-being.

– *Pierre Bourdieu*

Generations of French Muslims have felt the sting of discrimination and prejudice. Although prior generations endured this hardship rather quietly, current generations have a much louder voice. Discrimination is felt in all aspects of their lives and the more they turn to their cultural heritage the more they are shunned by the country they call home. The neighborhoods in which they live classify them as foreign. The schools that they attend identify them as *Beurs*. Their difficulty in finding employment qualifies them as social outcasts.

Home Sweet Home - *Les Banlieues*

The French Muslim population is concentrated in the suburbs of major cities such as Marseille, Paris, Lille, and Lyon. Unfortunately, they have the highest rate of unemployment and their communities in the suburbs are more appropriately referenced as ghettos or "banlieues." These neighborhoods, which were built with the intention of housing migrant workers in the 1950s, became notorious for their status as HLMs (habitations à loyer modéré) or housing for families of moderate income. HLMs are infamous for being traps for their inhabitants. Eighteen percent of all France's population lives in HLMs; of that 18 percent, 50 percent are North African immigrants, 37 percent African immigrants, and 36 percent are of Turkish origin (Bowen 2010, 19). Often found in the

headlines are the neighborhoods of Seine-Saint-Denis, Clichy-sous-Bois, Pas-de-Calais. Normally, these neighborhoods are referenced in relation to stories of violence and riots. It is in these ghettos France's Muslim population is victim to a viscous cycle of prejudice and discrimination.

L'Ile St-Denis is among the "suburbs" around French cities where immigrants, notably from former North African colonies, have been housed since the 1960s. Blighted by bad schools and endemic unemployment, the suburbs are hard to escape. The immigrant's children and grandchildren are still stuck there – an angry underclass that is increasingly identified through religion. Ten years ago these youth were seen as French "Arabs". Now most are commonly referred to, and define themselves, as "Muslims". ("Ghettos Shackle")

The *banlieues* are often the beginning and the end for many French Muslims who are predestined to remain in their low social status due to their ethnic origin as well as their neighborhood.

ZEPs and the Backlash of Positive Discrimination

The practice of *discrimination positive* (affirmative action) and the classification of most schools located in the *banlieues* as ZEPs, (*Zone d'éducation prioritaire*) teach immigrant children at an early age that they are different and not considered completely French. ZEPs were instituted in 1982 and then revised in the 1990s under the Jospin laws with an aim to "give more to those who have less". The system was inspired with the objective to democratize schools and create an equal footing for those coming from less privileged backgrounds. Despite these programs, there are still serious problems in the ZEP areas. The youth of these neighborhoods are on the road to having no

success, no diploma, no future nor any respect for the country that oppresses them. Even though ZEP programs focus on teaching ideal citizenship, violence in the scholastic neighborhoods continues to climb. ZEP programs were established in the 1980s, in response to the more pronounced acts of violence. ZEP initiatives focused on “remplacer la violence physique par le respect de l’autre, à accepter et à comprendre la nécessité d’une loi qui s’applique à tous” ‘replacing physical violence by teaching respect for others, acceptance and comprehension of universal laws’ (Koop 2005, 91). However, how can a school teach youth a universal law if all they have ever experienced is discrimination? The violence that is rampant in ZEP neighborhoods is a result of this plurality between the hypocritical stance and the reality of which the students have been victim.

Teachers and administrators in ZEPs are often stressed, outnumbered, and overworked. Lack of communication between parents, who often cannot speak French, and teachers, who cannot speak Arabic create even wider barriers. Children are often discouraged from choosing careers that are highly specialized and often do not have a role model at home that can offer hope. Those who do succeed in obtaining their *baccalauréat* or BEP, a diploma granted after rigorous testing, are discriminated against in the job market by their social origin, and thus they are trapped in the ghettos despite their desire and will to escape. In fact, many students from the ghettos have stated that their education did more harm than good by serving to identify them as “other.” “Schools were

not a means of integration but a way of reproducing, indeed guaranteeing, existing social hierarchies” (Scott 110).

Fighting Óack

In 2004, the Haute Autorité de Lutte contre les Discriminations et pour l’Égalité or HALDE (High Authority of Anti-Discrimination and Equality) was created to bring social and political attention to acts of discrimination. One of the actions of this organization is to carry out tests of discrimination or “testing” to reveal the common occurrence of discrimination throughout French society. The tests are done using a system of measurement put into place by the International Labor Office in 1992. The “Bovenkerk” method identifies situations as discriminatory when the threshold of 15 percent is reached between application refusal rates of the minority group subject and the reference group (HALDE 2010). The organization targets three key areas where discrimination is highest, employment, education and housing. In 2009, HALDE received 10,545 complaints with 28.5 percent of complaints concerning discrimination on the basis of origin (HALDE 2009).

In one such “testing” sociologist Jean-François Amadieu collected data comparing identical resumes of a woman, a North African man, an older man in his fifties, a handicap person, a man with a not so appealing face, and a white man living in a Parisian ghetto against a control subject. The control subject, the one of more “European” descent received seventy-five requests for a follow-up interview while the woman received sixty-nine, the Parisian forty-five, the less

appealing male thirty-three, the man in his fifties twenty, the North African fourteen, and the handicapped man five. The results of Amadieu's test speak volumes about the French outlook toward those they perceive as "other." Intolerance and discrimination are rampant across the Hexagon. Continually the subject of discrimination, the Islamic population is marginalized into a vicious cycle of social problems. HALDE, along with other organizations such as MRAP (Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples), Movement against racism and for friendship among all people, continue to battle against such acts of discrimination and break the cycle to which so many within the borders of the Hexagon are subjected.

Discrimination and racism are a legitimate hardship that the French Muslim population encounters on a daily basis. Statistics show that North African immigrants are four times as likely to be unemployed as other citizens (Koop 2007, 205). Why then does the Front National rest a large part of its claim on unemployment due to immigrant workers? March 1st of 2010, declared as *La Journée Sans Immigrés* (The Day Without Immigrants), set out to disprove the extreme right's economic argument. In a period of twenty-four hours France witnessed the halt of all economic activity including buying, selling, and working, by the "immigrant" population. The participating immigrant workers' goal was to demonstrate that their presence allowed the French economy to function more effectively, rather than the Front National's claim that they hinder economic growth. The movement aspires to be an annual event by which the organization

hopes to change the attitude of French society toward immigrants and their children. The 2010 rally received a notable amount of media coverage and support.

Integration into French society has not been an easy ordeal for immigrants, or for their offspring. In fact, even though many young individuals belong to the second or third generation, they are still referred to as “immigrants” rather than French citizens (Koop 2007, 206). This separation is causing French Muslims to become more Muslim and less French. These cultural and religious Muslims without a tangible nationality are becoming increasingly susceptible to fundamentalist groups and have less of a desire than their predecessors to be quiet victims of discrimination. If they do not believe their voices are heard through organizations such as HALDE they are more and more likely to go where their voices will be heard without question, through violence. Michel Wieviorka describes the current problem as a

prise dans un entre-deux, entre la mentalité passéiste des parents d'origine immigrée et la mentalité française à laquelle on participe sur le mode négative de l'exclusion... Dans cet entre-deux, l'islam apporte une solution radicale au jeune qui s'en réclame [stuck in a no-man's land, between the pacifist attitude of their parents of immigrant origin and the French mentality of discrimination... In this grey area, Islam offers a radical solution to the youth by whom it is readily claimed] (138)

Due to the desire to follow Islam, French Muslims are demanding, louder than ever, the right to publicly practice their religion. French society, by its unhindered fear, has marginalized the Muslim population and in turn created the very sense of communalism that it now seeks to stomp out. Discriminated against by France

and lacking a rooted sense of a “home” country, the religion of Islam has become the preferred method of identification for those of Arab descent. While such a cultural decision would normally not be met with a negative reaction by the government, the undeniable religious influence of such a choice causes the Republic great alarm.

Violent Responses

In the fall of 2005, the Hexagon witnessed a sharp uprising of tempers as acts of violence broke out in the suburbs of Clichy-sous-Bois. Two teenagers of North African origin were killed after receiving severe electric burns at an electric substation while attempting to run from the police. Riots flooded the streets in the Parisian suburbs. Car fires, gunshots, and petrol bombs exploded throughout the streets of the *banlieues*. The French, and for that matter the international media, went wild. The violent display by the Muslim population was compared to terrorist action, and speculation that an extremist organization was behind the scenes put the country on an even higher alert. A similar occurrence took place in 2007 when two teenagers of Algerian descent were killed by a police car. Do these incidents mean that all French Muslims are violent? That is most assuredly not the case. Although the media portrays them as villains, much like the propaganda during the Crusades, only a small percentage of French Muslims turn to terrorist organizations. The backlash of Islamic action toward the state is coming after years of discrimination; the Muslims are responding in the only way they know how, through religion. Unfortunately, due to their marginalized status

in society and after years of living in the ghetto, many Muslims only know how to have their voice heard through violence. Most of these violent acts are not attributed to the possibility of a *seuil de tolérance*, or a tolerance threshold, which is common in the ghettos, but are blamed on the “violent” nature of the Islamic religion.

Treatment of Women in the Islamic Religion

In addition to the complex and violent history, another thought is instilled in the French mindset. Reports on the treatment of women in Muslim countries have shocked the French for decades. As a result, Islam and the oppression of women now go hand in hand in the French opinion. One of the biggest arguments, made by politicians in reference to the Muslim scarf controversy, references the discrimination and humiliation felt by Muslim women. If a woman wears a veil, it was not necessarily because she chooses to do so, but because she is being pressured and forced to by an authoritative male figure that is subjecting her to the oppression of Islam. The scarf is referenced as being “the sign of subservience, whether consensual or imposed, in fundamentalist Muslim society” (Bowen 2007, 209). The scarf issue does not stand alone as the defining point, however; reports of polygamy, gang rape, and female circumcision have also dictated French opinion about the Islamic faith. Furthermore, the progressive change of vocabulary used when describing Islamic women’s dress can attest to the media’s hand in promoting a negative connotation of the Muslim faith. When the scarf issue began in 1989, the *hijab*, or Muslim headscarf, was translated as

a *foulard*, a headscarf. Today however, the media has inserted a different twist by calling the *hijab* a *voile* or veil (Bowen 2007, 69). While the choice in vocabulary seems minimal the two words produce two completely different connotations. When one hears that women are subjected to wearing a veil, one thinks of something that covers a total area, more like the *burqa*. French women have been famous in fashion circles for decades for wearing scarves yet no one has ever considered them as victims of a menacing religion; rather they are considered *fashionistas*.

Unfortunately, several negative memories shape the majority of French opinion surrounding Islam and the Arab culture. This mindset pervades political policies and prevents a peaceful union of the two cultures. While both sides hold equal blame, due to a stubborn stance by either side not to compromise, in order to move forward new attitudes and original policies must be implemented. In the absence of a new approach, one can only assume that such a tension-filled relationship will only result in a major conflict. The more France segregates and discriminates against its Arab population and denies it the right to publically express their religion, the more Muslims will turn to Islam for acceptance and push against separatist policies. For example, in response to recent political denials and delays of building mosques to accommodate people going to Friday prayers, French Muslims have taken to protesting in the streets, literally. Muslim men are blocking off Paris streets during Friday prayer hours to protest against the politicians' campaign to impede the building of more mosques. As the

movement spreads, similar actions are being taken by French Muslims in Marseille. The major political voice for French Muslims, the CFCM (Conseil Français du Culte Musulman) or French Council of Muslim Faith, described the protests as proof that there are not enough mosques to accommodate the ten percent of those who follow Islam in the Hexagon. The Front National, however, described the protests as an invasion and compared them to the Nazi occupation of France during the second World War. These two political organizations are a perfect illustration of the current struggle within the French mindset regarding the Muslim presence in France.

CHAPTER 3

THE KEY POLITICAL PLAYERS

Just as any intriguing novel is incomplete without the appearance of a fairy godmother or evil antagonist, reality would be incomplete without corrupt politicians and religious dictators. There is a long list of essential characters that play vital roles in the drama that is unfolding in France. The difficulty surrounding the acceptance of this 'foreign' religion should be nothing new for the French due to its Jewish population. While there is no denying that anti-Semitism has had a long and turbulent history in France, as seen in the Dreyfus affair, the tides of French public opinion have now turned against Islam. The values associated with both religions are similar in the practice of religious diet, worship, and rituals. However, the question remains. Why has Islam come under greater attack than other religions? Understanding the key political players is essential to understanding the conflict and the impact it is having on the country. While the visible presence of Islam is at the very core of the struggle, each player has its own set of reasoning for its stance against Muslim integration and their actions.

La Grande Mosquée de Paris

As the first and by far the grandest powerhouse of Islam in France, the Paris Mosque or Grand Mosque is a fundamental figure in the recent conflicts surrounding the visibility of Islam. At its inauguration in 1922 by a secular state,

the grandeur of the ceremony along with the presence of the President of the Republic attested to the favor and fraternity displayed during that era by the French towards the Arabs (Arkoun 724). Not to mention that a significant portion of the funding was supplied by the state, as well as other overseas sources.

The Paris Mosque assigns Imams, or Islamic priests to the different regions of France and controls the direction of funds for education and the construction of additional mosques. The Paris Mosque oversees a network of affiliated mosques throughout the Hexagon. The Great Mosque has been a valuable ally for French politicians during the recent years and is often a key political voice in the Hexagon on religious affairs.

Lieu symbolique, elle représente un ressourcement dans un environnement moins familier et revêt un enjeu symbolique en termes d'affirmation d'une identité. Du point de vue des pouvoirs publics, du maire, elle est la meilleure manière de consacrer cette reconnaissance. ("A symbolic place, the mosque represents the opportunity to return to one's roots in an unfamiliar environment and takes on a symbolic risk in terms of establishing an identity. From the perspective of the public office of mayor, the mosque is the best manner to sanction such recognition.") (Goddard 101)

The construction of the mosque was supposed to seal the French and Algeria, and other Arab nations, in a lasting friendship. Today, however, for many French Muslims it stands in the Latin Quarter as a symbol of a friendship betrayed. The Mosque has since its very beginning had very close relations with Algeria and up until the death of its President Benghabrit in 1954 it continued to mediate relations between Algeria and France. Various arguments have arisen due to the perceived dominance over the Paris establishment by the Algerian government, most notably in the lineage of Algerian rectors presiding over the

mosque. The current director, also Algerian, is Dalil Boubakeur. Boubakeur was also the first President of the French Council of Muslim Faith until 2008.

Boubakeur has taken on the mission of presenting Islam as a peaceful, universal, and welcoming religion to the French public as well as establishing the Paris Mosque as symbol of unity for all Muslims regardless of origin.

Tariq Ramadan: Muslim Moralist

Tariq Ramadan is an Islamic sociologist, modernist, and moralist.

Although Ramadan often faces discrimination due to family ties (his grandfather founded *Les frères musulmans*, an often violent and radical Islamist group) he has entered into French political discourse as a voice proclaiming moral reason. His Swiss birth has put him in a prime location for taking up the debate between Europe and its Muslim population. Although he is not a politician, he is considered a key figure due to his knowledge of the Qur'an and Islam. He offers guidance to the British government concerning its Muslim population and teaches at Oxford University (Godard 317). Ramadan, however, does not receive a warm welcome in the United States, nor in France where his entry into the country has been threatened with denial. By promoting Islamic-based education and stating that the separation of church and state is not possible for a religion such as Islam, Ramadan often receives negative attention from the French government and media. In addition, Ramadan is often accused of using "double talk," or changing his position depending on his audience (Bowen 2007, 190). This reputation gets him into various political debates, but he is found to be inspiring

by the French Muslim youth. Despite these claims, Ramadan points out areas in which both Muslims and the French Republic should make alterations in order to peacefully coexist.

The Political Voices: From Left to Right

Several major political figures of France stand out and stand firm in their positions pertaining to Islam in France. The mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë of the Socialist Party, is just one major example of the politicians across France who support and even participate in Islamic cultural issues. Political lines are drawn between the left, who often supports issues regarding the Muslim faith, and the right who are more often in strong opposition to sentiments of anti-assimilation and immigration. On June 28, 2010 the Prime Minister François Fillon, of the right wing party Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP; Union for a popular movement), participated in the inauguration of a new mosque in the suburbs of Paris. The act was looked on by the political left as a public relations opportunity; however, the event allowed the Muslim community to feel a sense of relief in regards to the controversy surrounding their national identity.

Nicolas Sarkozy

Nicolas Sarkozy gained national political attention prior to his presidency during his post as Minister of the Interior under President Jacques Chirac. Sarkozy's active approach to Islam in France is noteworthy due to his constant shuffling between the two sides in order to create a sort of equilibrium. He has

since commenced a policy of *discrimination positive*. Regarding the *loi de laïcité*, his stance is one that is quite unique. His uniqueness has been revealed in his statements regarding the responsibility of the Republic to the different religions of France. “The Republic accepts all religions and favors none. The state has to watch to ensure that each religion has exactly the same rights as the others. The first Republican value is not equality but fairness.” Although Sarkozy stands for fairness, he is notorious for interpreting the meaning of fairness depending on the situation and possible political outcome. Sarkozy supports French Islam, but not Islam in and of itself. In order to win favor, Muslims must take on the values of the Republic and be subject to French laws rather than the values of Islamic nations and laws. John Bowen, who attended a speech Sarkozy made in April of 2003 to the Union des organisations islamique de France (UOIF; Islamic Organizations of France), describes one such occasion that bears witness to his political approach. Sarkozy received a warm welcome to the exhibition, but did not receive a gracious farewell. His speech centered on making Islam more aligned with French values, and touched on French Muslim women being mandated to take off the Islamic headscarf for identity photos. His speech ended in booing, and Islamic leaders compared his announcement about headscarves to the Nuremberg laws that required Jews to wear yellow stars (Bowen 2007, 102). Since his presidency, Nicolas Sarkozy has taken a vociferous stand against immigration, so much so that he has been compared to Le Pen. However, he has

implemented various programs aimed at helping the French Muslim youth who choose to take on Republican values.

CFCM- Le Conseil Français du Culte Musulman

Le Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (CFCM; French Council of the Muslim Faith) is a political organization that was officially created in 2003 by Nicolas Sarkozy while he was still then Minister of the Interior. The organization is a representative body of the French Muslim faith on a national and political scale. The creation of this political body was a collaboration between major political powerhouses including the Paris Mosque. The CFCM has been assigned the large task of defending “la dignité et les intérêts du culte musulman, de favoriser et d’organiser le partage d’information des lieux de culte musulmans auprès des pouvoirs publics” ‘the dignity and the interests of the Muslim faith, to promote and organize the sharing of information pertaining to Muslim religious establishments alongside the public powers’ (Goddard 349). This large and looming task is built along the conditions of the law of 1901 regarding institutions, and the CFCM is therefore not considered to be a religious organization. In this manner, the CFCM is more of a political counterpart for the French government that mediates policies between the government and mosques (Bowen 2007, 48). While blueprinting the foundations of the council, Sarkozy advocated for equal representation from Muslim countries in order to assure an equal representation for France’s Muslims who come from numerous countries. The council therefore stands as a democratic representation of Islam in France (Arkoun 853).

Le Front National

The political party created in 1983 by Jean-Marie Le Pen is now greatly influenced by his daughter Marine Le Pen became Vice President of the political party in January of 2011. The FN has served as an influential source by being both a dividing force in politics regarding immigration and creating social outcry by its often-racist statements against immigration and French Muslims. The FN is notorious for taking such a strong stance against immigration that it describes non-French citizens as the gangrene of the country. The FN proposes several measures that the State should carry out to solve its immigration “problem.” One is to put into place a policy of deterrence by allowing only French citizens access to social security and to reform laws pertaining to national citizenship, making it more difficult to become a French citizen. Also, the FN wants to strengthen the state’s requirement of assimilation. While a law that requires assimilation has yet to be voted, the FN would like to see a more aggressive approach by the state to require assimilation for citizenship, as well as do away with Sarkozy’s implementation of *discrimination positive*.

Loi de laïcité: The Official Separation of Church and State

The laws of 1901 on associations, and 1905, separating the church and state are the main defense French politicians have against the growing visibility of Islam, especially against religious symbols in the public sphere such as administrative buildings and schools. The 1901 law provides a legal framework

for religious associations in the Hexagon. While the 1905 law establishes the State as a neutral institution regarding religion. It states that the Republic “ne reconnaît, ne subventionne et ne salarie aucun culte” ‘does not recognize, subsidize, nor pay wages for any religion’ (Assemblée Nationale). The law does more than divide a line between government and religious affairs; it designates “the role of the state in protecting individuals from the claims of religion” (Scott 98). This solid barrier makes the law more comparable to the Berlin Wall than to the American idea of separation of powers. The law goes one step further, by enacting such laws regarding the formation, practice and visibility of established religions it also allows the State to control, and in the end have ultimate power over, religions in the Hexagon. However, in 1905 the Islamic faith did not have a huge influence within the Hexagon. “Il n’y avait donc rien à séparer entre l’Etat et l’islam” ‘There was nothing therefore to separate between the State and Islam’ (Arkoun 708). The 1905 law was created at a time when the State’s main concerns were the influential powers of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths. For a significant period of time, the Islamic faith was able to form and follow its own set of rules even throughout France and its colonies. Although this loophole existed for a limited time, the State used these special allowances to control the Islamic faith and use it for the progression of its own political agenda in the Middle East. It is not until recently therefore that politicians have incorporated Islam into the *loi de laïcité*. Ironically, today the *loi de laïcité*, which

was created in order to protect individual freedoms regarding religion, is now being used to discriminate against followers of a particular religion.

While French politicians argue that the 1905 law ensures equality, leaders of Islam argue that the practice of their religion is being discriminated against more than the other established religions present in the Hexagon. Until recently, Muslim students were not allowed the option of taking off Muslim holidays. France as a whole still observes Catholic holidays although it has declared itself separate from the Church. “There is, therefore a contradiction in the fact that the so-called secular public schools do not make accommodations for students to celebrate Jewish and Muslim holidays, even though Islam is now the second-fastest growing religion in France” (Koop 2007, 207).

The *loi de laïcité* is the cornerstone of all the debates surrounding religion and the Republic. The law was established as part of the Ferry laws in order to form a French Republic that is *laïque*, or secular. Although the words never appear in the 1905 law, *laïcité* is defined by President Chirac as the protection of one’s freedom to believe or not to believe. He describes *laïcité* as “the privileged site for meeting and exchange, where people find themselves and can best contribute to the national community. It is the neutrality of the public sphere that permits the peaceful coexistence of different religions” (Bowen 2007, 29). While the law was established in order to protect individual freedom, it seems in recent years to cause more harm than good and many are wondering if the law is in need of reform especially due to its disruption of education. Indeed, the law was

supposed to aid schools in being the “agent of assimilation; the goal of its pedagogy was to instill a common republican identity in children from a diversity of backgrounds” (Scott 99). Instead, the law has marginalized students of different origins and denied them not only their religion but a future as well. Is the *laïcité* law discriminatory? Is it a modern day version of the Nuremberg laws used to marginalize German Jews pre-World War II? While the law may have had good intentions when it was established to create a non-discriminatory Republic, it appears that if used only against one religious group the law in fact allows the Republic to be incredibly biased.

The political playing field of the French government is often a rough battlefield. The key players have determined allies such as organizations, political parties, as well as international support. French policies are influenced by international events such as 9/11. The final decision of the scarf controversy was greatly influenced by increasing reports of Islamic sponsored violence across the globe. In addition to a common history and an overabundance of fear rhetoric employed by the media, France is driven by a constant fear of becoming engrossed in a violent battle with Islam and terrorists organizations. It is this fear that poses a threat to the Republic when faced with the visible signs of Islam on French soil.

CHAPTER 4

A MONUMENT OF VISIBLE PROPORTIONS: MOSQUES IN FRANCE

More than it being a simple problem with the Islamic religion, French culture and secular tradition have a historical contention with “religion” as a fact and particularly with its visible presence.

--Tariq Ramadan

Although the Islamic presence in the Hexagon has been predominantly ruled by media reports regarding headscarves in French schools, another major visible souvenir of French Muslims are the notable edifices which they build, mosques. Mosques are a unifying point for the Muslim community in France. Due to mounting accounts of discrimination and the ugly truth of racism, mosques serve as a safe place where French Muslims can be confident in their identity and feel at home. In Islam not only do mosques offer a place to pray and worship, they are centers of education and social services. Mosques attempt to shape the Islamic presence in France, and additionally do damage control after media bashing. However, the Great Paris Mosque stands as an exception rather than the norm. The Muslim population experiences notable inequality in the construction of their religious structures.

Si l'expression « l'islam des caves » ne correspond plus aujourd'hui à la réalité, il en reste encore bien de traces. Les nombreux projets de construction de mosquées mettent du temps à se réaliser, même dans les grandes villes, et se heurtent toujours dans un premier temps à des oppositions. (“If the expression ‘Islam of caves’ no longer corresponds to today’s reality, traces of this policy still rest.

Numerous construction projects take time to fabricate, even in large cities, and are always met with opposition.”)(Arkoun 782)

Mosques appear in a variety of shapes and sizes across the Hexagon; from small prayer houses in basements located in the French ghettos to grand cathedrals like those in Paris and Lyon. The estimated total of Mosques in France is around 1,500-2,000 depending on religious versus political sources (Andriamanana 1). As recent demonstrations have pointed out, however, this meager number of buildings in ratio to the followers who require a sanctuary is not enough. The installation of the Great Mosque of Paris is an exception when compared to the amount of effort and activism it takes to construct a mosque under current political conditions. Sarkozy has won immense support by criticizing the lack of mosques compared to the grand number of cathedrals and sanctuaries allowed for other religions in the Hexagon. Politicians across the board, however, do not share this sentiment and often stall or obliterate the plans to build mosques in more communities. The issue is one of vital importance due to the perceived loss of the right to wear Islamic dress. The French continue to respond negatively towards the visible presence of Islam, relying on fear rhetoric rather than forming their own perception of Islam in France. Bit by bit the state has chipped away at the Islamic community in a very discriminatory manner. The marginalization of French Muslims only serves to create more opposition towards the state. Undeniably, the refusal to grant a place to worship for followers of a religion is a discriminatory act. While politicians have not outright banned a

mosque from being built, numerous politicians and French communities have delayed construction for extended periods of time.

From Paris to Lyon

The number of grand mosques is limited and they mainly appear in large city areas such as Paris and Lyons. Only about one hundred of France's mosques are classified as "great" or "cathedral" mosques (Godard 103). The Great Mosque of Lyons has a much more diverse history than that of the Paris Mosque. It was established in 1994 and much like the Paris Mosque, received portion of its funding from the State while the main allotment was given by Saudi Arabia. Unlike the relatively smooth installation in Paris, the Great Mosque of Lyons experienced a drama-ridden battle on the road to its inauguration. Although it was guaranteed by Giscard d'Estaing during the presidential elections of 1981, the project for the mosque did not start until 1992 after many years of political turmoil surrounding building permits. In 1984, the committee responsible for the campaign, the ACLIF (Association Culturelle Lyonnaise Islamo-Française), received their first building permit by the Mayor of Lyon Francisque Collomb. Due to great objection by residents living in the eighth *arrondissement* (sub-division), the Administrative Council of Lyons revoked the building permit under the pretext that the land was a protected forested area. In August of 1989 they received a new permit to build, which moved them from the eighth *arrondissement* to Pinel Boulevard. The residents' association once again objected to the permit and in November of 1989 the *Front National* supported a

major strike in the streets of Lyons in order to show their disdain for the new permit and their objection to the land lease agreement. It was not until 1994 that the Great Mosque of Lyons opened to followers as a place to pray, and to receive education and social services. Lyon welcomed as many as 10,000 Muslims worshipping at the mosque at one time. The mosque is currently under the leadership of Kamel Kabtane who is a notable “moderate” figure much like Dalil Boubakeur in Paris.

Strasbourg: A Project Halted

The project for the Mosque in Strasbourg became controversial prior to even the drawing of the blue prints for the cathedral. The 1905 *loi de laïcité* covers the Hexagon and its territories, but it excludes the region of Alsace-Moselle, which was still under German control at the time of the law’s enactment. The region did not return to the French until after World War I and thus continues to operate on a Church and State partnership. Therefore, funding as in the case of the Mosque of Strasbourg can come directly from the State. In the beginning stages of its formation the city government led by the left promised to provide land as well as 10 percent of the funding needed for the construction. However, a new city government was elected that was dominated by the right. The plans to build a large mosque incited a fear of the “*islamisation*” of Alsace (Ravinel). In 2007, the city government quickly dismissed the project, which forced the mosque to shelve plans of building until new permits, land, and funding were obtained. Finally in 2009, after twenty years of planning the Great Mosque of

Strasbourg began to take shape. Today the mosque is still undergoing construction but will call to prayer up to 2,000 followers at a time. The mosque boasts a 17 by 10 meter copula and there are current talks of including a minaret.

The Great Mosque of Marseille: A Work in Progress

Marseille is a frequent destination for immigrants due to its coastal location on the Mediterranean Sea. The city is home to more than 250,000 Muslims who are primarily of North African descent. The city offers only 63 makeshift prayer houses for such a large population of Muslims. The majority of these places of worship come in the form of apartment basements and warehouses. Once completed the mosque will be France's largest Islamic cathedral. Covering a prayer space of 3,500 square meters, boasting a minaret soaring 25 meters, and holding up to 7,000 followers, the mosque will be a grand gesture to Marseille's population. The compound will include an Islamic school, library, market, restaurant and a tearoom. Muslims in the area are hoping to create a positive image surrounding Islam despite the spread of "Islamaphobia" that has spread across Europe. The committee behind the project has made several compromises such as allowing the minaret to call followers to prayer not by sound but by a purple light that will not interfere with other lights used in the port city. The Mosque has received international attention due to its grandeur as well as its placement in the south of France, which is considered a stronghold for the *FN*. The mosque project has been in the works for decades but did not receive backing until the Mayor decided, much in line with Sarkozy's philosophy,

that the Muslim population would assimilate into France if given the opportunity to feel welcome. In 2001, mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin finally gave his support to the Islamic population and in 2009 delivered the building permits required. The FN has responded with numerous demonstrations calling the mayor “*le maire de la honte*” ‘the mayor of shame’ (“Marseille: rassemblement”). Non-supporters of the mosque in Marseille base their resistance on the presence of such a large Muslim structure on the same ground as the *Bonne Mère de Marseille*. The belief is that the century-old Catholic cathedral that boasts a statue of the Virgin and Child stands as the guardian and protector of the city. The port city is often identified by the *Bonne Mère* structure, and the inhabitants call themselves *les enfants de la Bonne Mère* (children of the Good Mother).

The mosque is projected to be finished in 2012 but has seen recent delays due to a number of objections including building permits, projected parking, funding, and disputes between the Algerians and other sub-cultures of Islam. While the project began with high hopes and good intentions, the mosque now sits with only one stone set into place. Many wonder if the project will continue or if the development will persistently be delayed by disputes or eventually be abandoned altogether.

Overall, mosques are the “most obvious architectural signs of the Muslim presence in Europe” (Bax). While the constructions of mosques seem to be increasing compared to previous decades, that does not mean they are being met with support throughout the European Union. In France, thirty-nine percent

of the population is opposed to the construction of mosques due to its solidification of Islam as a permanent presence in the Hexagon (IFOP). Indeed, French people see the Islamic edifice as a rejection of French values and the superimposing of Islamic values on French territory.

Acts of Violence

Most recently, the feeling of *islamophobie* is spreading throughout the Hexagon and causing mosques to be the object of acts of vandalism and violence. While the phenomenon is not new, the occurrence of such acts has increased dramatically since late 2009 (*Le Monde* 2010). Mosques across the Hexagon have seen their doors littered with swastikas, profanities, and even pig heads. The Strasbourg mosque has seen numerous attacks due to its location, including inscriptions on parked cars reading “*minarets non*” (no minarets) or “*islam dehors*” (Islam leave). The Muslim and Jewish cemeteries in Strasbourg have also recently been vandalized. In an effort to stop the attack the mayor of Strasbourg released a statement which condemned “toute forme de racisme, d'antisémitisme, de xénophobie, et d'incivilité républicaine” ‘all forms of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and uncivil republicanism’ (Cordilier). The mosque in Obernai was accosted in February of 2010, only a year after its inauguration. Four teenage boys climbed to the roof of the mosque and tore down its golden crescent. While the culprits were apprehended the experience left the Muslim population feeling threatened. Indeed, the increase of violence toward the Muslim population illustrates the tensions felt throughout the Republic. No longer a battle

between the government and religious institutions, the people of France need a resolution before clashes become even more violent. Something must be done to aid both the people of France and the French Muslims to better understand one another and coexist.

CHAPTER 5

THE VISIBILITY FACTOR

The previous chapters have focused mainly on the collective history and policies that have had a major impact on French-Muslim relations. While there are a plethora of factors that have brought the debate to where it is currently, the visibility of the Islamic faith lies at the heart of the controversy. The most tangible and symbolic representations of their faith, mosques, are becoming the focalization of contempt. The call to increase the number of mosques is causing the tempers of the French population and flames of the controversy to burn even brighter. But what is it about the visibility of the Islamic faith that makes it a “menace” to the French? While the saying goes “seeing is believing” seeing in this case causes the French to panic. Numerous factors cause this alarm, of which media and political rhetoric are key figures.

A Game of Propaganda and Rhetoric

During the Medieval period stories brought back from merchants and sailors cast Arabs as strange people and eventually during the Crusades, propaganda defined them as devils posing a serious threat to Christianity. This was as close as most Europeans came to a visible recognition of Islam at the time. Thus propaganda, much like the media of today, ruled public opinion. The colonial period did little to improve the image of Arabs and their culture to the

French, as they were subject to colonial leadership, which came with its own oppressing hierarchy system. Constantly, throughout relations with Arab countries, Muslims have been the recipients of negative attention. The French mindset is still ruled by “the inherited images of Islam and Arabs.” “Images of ‘dirty’, ‘fanatic’ and ‘violent’ Muslims are widespread among average French men and women” (Ramadan 11). Today, international media define much of the image surrounding Islam and Muslims as violent terrorists on a deadly *jihad* searching for a promised paradise. While extremists do exist, they are not a fair representation of what the Islamic faith is based on. The domination of fear rhetoric permeates international media and causes global alarm. “In late August of 2004, a group of journalists looked back on how their newspapers and television stations treated the headscarf question during 2003-2004. They generally agreed that the question had been given too much attention by the media and that this attention often did not involve adequate in-depth study” (Bowen 2007, 244). Such errors cause major consequences due to this era’s belief in the media’s legitimacy. Indeed, the toughening of laws directed at applying *laïcité* to Islam came due to reports of violent terrorist groups and especially after the attacks of September 11, 2001, which sent the world into a defensive stance against Muslims.

The current myth that is permeating throughout the media and Europe, regards the symbolism behind the minaret and the copula. Rumors, that characterize the construction of mosques as symbols of domination over a

country, have recently spread and frightened many, not only in France but also across Europe. Spain for example feels the Islamic presence is a threat and references its history, much like that of France in the medieval period, to incite another *reconquista*. The idea stems from the medieval period when Islamic crusaders conquered the majority of Europe and attempted to implement Islam as the dominant religion. In order to accomplish this a number of mosques were constructed throughout Europe. As discussed previously, the Muslims were eventually defeated by Charles Martel in 732 and pushed out of Europe and back behind the Pyrenees. Spain conquered its land and pushed out the Muslim presence, a phenomenon which it considers reenacting today. Spain is not the only European country to take action, in 2009 Switzerland voted in a referendum proposed by the Swiss People's Party (SVP) to ban the construction of minarets by a staggering fifty-seven percent. Although Switzerland's government does not completely agree with the final decision, it has carried out the proposal while at the same time trying to reassure its Muslim population that it is still welcome in the country. Supporters of the ban expressed their concern of *Islamization* and their belief that minarets stand as a symbol of Islamic power ("Swiss Voters Back Ban").

A Threat to National Identity

Vincent Geisser, a scholar of Islam and immigration at the French National Center for Scientific Research states, "Today in Europe the fear of Islam crystallizes all other fears," Mr. Geisser said. "In Switzerland, it's minarets. In

France, it's the veil, the burqa and the beard" (Erlanger). Islam in the Hexagon was allowed to exist without too many problems up until the 1980s when its visibility increased. Since that period, the visible features that mark the presence of Islam in France have come under great attack. Starting with the scarf controversy and progressing to controversies over the construction of mosques the visibility of Islam is the major point of contention between France and its Muslim citizens. Exactly what is it that causes the French to be so alarmed at visible signs of religion? The visibility that Islam presents causes fear in the French due to an ambiguous sense over their own national identity. A recent poll by the IFOP, the French Institute of Public Opinion, found that almost half of the country, forty-two percent, believes that the presence of the Muslim community is a threat to their national identity (IFOP). This is not the first publication surrounding the fear felt over France's national identity. The fear has in recent years become so defined that in 2009 the Minister of Immigration and National Identity held a debate over the National Identity that lasted for over three months. The debate concluded in February of 2010 with a press release outlining the steps to be taken by the government to underline the values of the French Republic. The list included steps to increase education to youth over citizenship, to focus attention on the French flag and the national anthem, as well as a plan to reinforce the integration of immigrants into accepting French values.

The French are threatened by the Muslim religion because it is presented as an all-inclusive force. Islam, unlike other religions that were subject to the *loi*

de laïcité, does not have a sense of separation between religion and State, and therefore does not hide its values or traditions. The introduction of Islam into French society instead of Muslims assimilating into French values is a huge cause of alarm across the Hexagon. This “*Islamism* as commonly understood in France violates both the private character of religion and its quality of promoting social citizenship” (Bowen 2007, 188). France had a similar encounter with its Jewish population, but with very different results. Most Jews, during and after World War I, or people of Jewish ancestry either assimilated into French culture, accepting the laws requiring a quieter religion, or gave up their religion altogether. Many sociologists believe that if Islam were to privatize its religion it would be met with greater acceptance. The threat of a religion that has, in part, marginalized itself with its often ‘ostentatious’ displays of a religion that is misunderstood by the majority of Europe creates a rift that is hard to rectify. This approach falls much along the same lines as the political stance of President Sarkozy. The Islamic religion is welcome in the Republic, but in order to operate it must take on more Republican values and consider itself subject to the French Constitution.

Arab immigrants, by turning more toward their Islamic roots in search for acceptance found the ultimate card to play against the French who have long struggled with their identity. France is easily threatened by globalization and the necessary change that comes with the introduction of new cultures. Even within its language structure, France has enacted laws that ensure the survival of the

authenticity of French. The *loi Toubon* for example, was adopted in 1994 and reinforces the second article of the Constitution naming French as the official language of the Republic. The law was adopted in order to defend the authenticity of the French language and stand against imposing threats such as slang, vernacular, and American or Arabic terms being used in documents or signs. The visible presence of Islam is seen as a similar threat in the French mind. In order to protect what they believe defines them as French men and women they cling to laws that shut out non-European customs and traditions. Thus, the images of Islam throughout the Hexagon are recipients of national and political disdain.

A Secular Home for a Religion

In addition to France's uncertainty over national identity, the French population sees the visible presence of Islam as a threat to their homeland. The construction of mosques is perceived as a sign that Muslims feel at home in the Hexagon. The mosque is considered to be the most symbolic and visible sign of sedentarism. However the process of Islamic sedentarism in France is unfolding "dans un contexte de crise de la société locale qui favorise une ethnicisation des rapports sociaux fonctionnant à partir de la représentation d'une population radicalement différente, étrangère et impossible à incorporer. Le succès du Front National s'explique en partie par ce mécanisme" "in the form of a social crises which favors classifying ethnic groups and is fed by the image of a population (Muslim) radically different, foreign, and impossible to incorporate. The success

of the Front National is in part explained by this practice' (Cesari 123). The discriminatory response taken by the French in regarding a classification of people as "outsiders" goes against the very Republican ideas that it set forth after the 1789 Revolution. "There is a contradiction at the root of the French Republic, between natural law and the rights of man on one hand and the management of cultural differences on the other" (Amselle ix). For a country with a creed dedicated to equality, the French are intrinsically set against allowing France to become the home country for those of non-European ancestry. The attitude of *eurocentrism* is in this case still prevalent throughout French society. The French population does not like the idea of sharing their home or country for fear of it becoming something "other" than what its European values have shaped it to be.

Communalism

Communalism is the "loyalty to a sociopolitical group based on religious or ethnic affiliation" (*Communalism* 2011). Looked upon as a refusal to integrate, communalism goes against the French philosophy that all must subscribe to the same set of values. Politicians cry out against this practice, which they decree allows Muslims to avoid assimilation. However, one could argue that French policies are the master and creator behind the communalism that exists today throughout the Hexagon. Through practices such as positive discrimination, which still marginalize the targeted group, Muslims are issued an "other" status by the government.. "In reality, the indirect rule of entire sectors of the population has been set into place, mirroring the system attempted during the interwar

period with respect to the Italians and the Poles...the French state and French employers practice a sort of internal colonialism” (Amselle 109). The policies set forth do indeed mirror the practice of colonialism during the beginning of the twentieth century. Since the government treats it as such, so do the people of France. However, the situation is the epitome of a catch-22. The French government and people treat Muslims as a community, but are dissatisfied and find reason to fear the Muslim community because of its communal values and attitude.

Overall, the French response to the visible installation of Islam in the Hexagon is anything but welcoming. While political moderates and Islamic organizations attempt to build more mosques in order to accommodate the growing number of Islamic followers, the country’s unease continues to grow. Previous to the shift from the unseen to the seen, Islam was accepted because its status as invisible or quiet led the French to believe they were accepting the Republic’s value of secularism. Yet, after receiving so much support from the political sphere, the Islamic faith began to become more public and visible. Thus, like other religions they built places of worship and formed organizations and political representatives. It was at this point contentions that had laid dormant for decades exploded back into the limelight. The insistent media coverage and discriminatory rhetoric by politicians characterized the public image of the Islamic faith as one to be feared and controlled or expelled. By not following the rules of the republican game, the Islamic faith has placed itself as a major opponent in

the Hexagon. The threat of a faith that is visible and far from secular frightens the French due to the foundation of their State as a Republic that prides itself on insuring equality. The perceived threat posed by Islam to France's national identity and country causes a defensive stance that influences the very behavior that the country is fighting against. Although politicians argue that the actions being taken are to ensure equality and maintain the secular values that are the core of the French Republic, one cannot help but catch a hint of classical French stubbornness at maintaining French pride.

CHAPTER 6

A POLITICAL DEBATE OF EPIC PROPORTIONS

In the late fall of 2003, a political showdown between two major representative figures from the opposing sides took place on national television. The media put the story in headlines and declared it a win for the State. Yet, while the media focused on issues surrounding what is perceived to be “double talk” the symbolism and importance of the exchange was lost. The discussion that took place between the Interior Minister Sarkozy and the Muslim moralist Tariq Ramadan is one that is arguably the most authentic representation of the current struggle that divides French society.

During the exchange, he (Ramadan) ducked Sarkozy’s invitation to condemn the Islamic penalty of stoning women (which Tariq’s brother, Hani Ramadan, recently had excused in a column in *Le Monde*). Ramadan responded by calling for a “moratorium” on such penalties, during which he and others could carry out “pedagogy” in the Muslim world to “change mentalities.” *Le Monde* picks up the story at that point: “The camera came to rest on the worried face of Mme Sarkozy, seated in the audience. ‘A moratorium? What does that mean? We are in 2003,’ retorted the Interior Minister” Sarkozy then urged Ramadan to prove that he was a “moderate” “by ‘asking girls to take off their voiles in public spaces...Otherwise it is the ‘double discours’ concluded Sarkozy, before a speechless Ramadan. (Bowen 2007, 191)

The scenario that unfolded mirrors the national scenario playing in French society since the 1980s. The State stands firm in its position much like the argumentative posture of Sarkozy, while the Muslim presence is baffled by the

defensive approach from the entity that once welcomed and solidified its presence throughout the Hexagon. Ramadan's response to the aggressive nature of Sarkozy's statement is considered double talk by Sarkozy and the media, but is arguably more of an attempt by Ramadan to explain the diverse values of the Islamic culture and point out that the State needs to work with Islam to create an outline of what French Muslims should adhere to and follow. Outside influences like *fatwas* (opinions released by Islamic scholars that can be turned into declarations of war), will only continue to have an influence on French Muslims if they do not have a model on which to base their differences from other Muslims, most notably Muslims that define their faith by violence. Therein lies the struggle, those of Islamic faith look for a foundation in the Hexagon and are continuously met with disdain. Due to the State's firm stand not to interact with religion in their eyes a religious cultural group cannot be considered French as this would betray the country's secular position. The focus here is not on the argument that took place in actuality but the symbolic representation made by each of the public figures and the values they embody.

Sarkozy and the Republic

For a number of years, first as the Interior Minister and now as President, Sarkozy has taken on the Republic's struggle with the Islamic faith. In general, his policies contend with the Muslim community from a more willing standpoint than other politicians before him. Sarkozy's vital work with Islam is often overshadowed by his tough stance on immigration during his Presidency.

Sarkozy's waltz of policies surrounding Islam parallel the attitude of the Republic.

Sarkozy's personification of the State's stance regarding Islam is threefold.

His formation of the CFCM in 2003 is a perfect example of how he attempts to approach the Islamic quandry and produce a resolution that is fair, not only for Islam, but all religions as well as the Republic. Sarkozy's moderate stance is often misunderstood due to its seemingly hypocritical profile. The President is considered a champion for finally settling the difficult problem of forming a political council to represent Islamic issues. Sarkozy attributes this accomplishment to his desire to create an equal footing for Islam. When confronted about his involvement with the organization and accused of crossing the line of secularism he replied: "The Republic guarantees organized religious practices without favoring any single one. I devote equal energy to allow all our compatriots to live their faith. Islam is today the only religion without a national unifying organization" (Bowen 2007, 101). The basis of Sarkozy's work to guarantee Islam a political voice is a similar goal of the Republic regarding all religions. By providing an organization in which to address key issues, the government brings religion under its direct control. Sarkozy would rather have a "French" Islam than a foreign Islamic presence dominating opinion in the Hexagon. However, this stance does not mean that he accepts the Islamic religion to its full value. There are foreseen changes that he advocates must be effected prior to having an Islamic religion that can be practiced successfully in France. For instance, Sarkozy advocated against having a law put into place to

officially ban the wearing of headscarves, because he believed that this would cause the Muslims great humiliation and result in Muslims turning against the Republic. He did not agree with other politicians that a law was the necessary method of action to take, but preferred a case-by-case approach. However, Sarkozy does encourage Muslims to integrate into French life and not wear the *hijab*, as is consistent with his previous statements addressed at the UOIF in 2003 (Bowen 2007, 103).

Indeed, Sarkozy's attitude parallels that of the Republic. His works include a campaign to make Muslims conform to French values rather than strictly to Islamic laws. Sarkozy and the Republic believe that there is no room in the Hexagon for an Islam that is more completely foreign and dominated by an outside country. Assimilation policies attempt to shape Islam into an Islam under French leadership. An attempt that is not welcome in many Islamic circles including the UOIF. This is why the Republic has leaned on what it considers *moderates* to head major organizations as was the case with the appointment of Dalil Boubakeur as the first president over the CFCM. In this manner, the Republic can have a method by which to persuade Muslims to conform to a more moderate Islam closer to the French ideals surrounding religion. In order to respect to France's liking however, French Muslims would have to become secular—a feat almost impossible to be completed by a religion that expresses itself as a political theory, a culture, and a set of specific socialisms. This unbending request made by the Republic and Sarkozy, comes from a

fundamental fear that Islam in all its religious force is the biggest threat to French *laïcité*. Islam questions the very foundation of *laïcité*, which encourages other religions to do the same. Hence, why the visible presence of Islam is regarded with such contempt and fear. The ultimatum is delivered at such a level that the Republic would rather discriminate against the Muslim population than allow Islam to permeate through the barriers of secularism it has worked so hard to construct since the Revolution.

The term “*discrimination positive*” is a relatively new notion in France and was inspired by the United State’s policy of affirmative action (Koop 2005, 85). Nicolas Sarkozy stimulated the use of the policy towards France’s Muslim population in 2003. Although the use of discrimination is contradictory to the Republic’s values, he stated, “positive discrimination is necessary to reestablish equal opportunity” (Bowen 2007, 105). The policies affected by this new method stem from the funding of mosques to the implementing of priority education or ZEPs. By enacting affirmative action the State attempted to enable French Muslims to live a fuller, all be it “French” life. However, the policy thus far has only served to marginalize Muslims and create an even stronger sense of communalism in the Islamic population.

The representation of the Republic through Sarkozy’s rhetoric and attitude during the debate with Tariq Ramadan allows one to observe the national debate on a micro scale. The manner in which Sarkozy encourages Ramadan to conform to French values by asking women to refrain from wearing the Islamic

headscarf is typical of the Republic's request of the Muslim population. Sarkozy's campaign to apply affirmative action towards Muslims resonates with the Republic's discriminatory attitude towards the religious group it views as an outsider. The struggle to be fair and equal towards all people and religion is a quest that is innate in the French mindset since the dawning of the French Republic.

Tariq Ramadan: Alleged Double Talker

While Tariq Ramadan has positioned himself in the center of the debate his stance is not as a theologian or a politician but rather as a "moraliste musulman dans le siècle" 'Muslim moralist for this century' (Godard 58). Tariq Ramadan's role in the debate represents the Muslim population in France that wants so much to become a part of French society and treat it as its own. However, it is this same population that challenges the State. Ramadan underlines in his rhetoric that a modernizing of Islamic beliefs as well as recognition by France of Muslim's French identity must take place before French Muslims can progress. He believes that the conflicts can be traced back to two major problems. Both the Republic and the Muslims are unaware of each other's fundamental values. For the Muslim population it is the lack of knowledge surrounding French laws and consequences. The Republic is also guilty for not having an accurate knowledge of Islam and letting prejudices guide its judgments (Ramadan 19). One area in which Ramadan points out that the State is not fulfilling its role is in education. Ramadan calls for action to be taken in the form of implementing Islamic

education not only for the benefit of Muslims but as well as for the Republic. “They expect their society to provide them with all they need to achieve their religious duties and so live in harmony with their intimate creed” (Ramadan 39). This, however, is an area where the French Republic stands firm. As a general guideline to following *laïcité* the Republic cannot and will not sponsor religious education. Ramadan proposes that if the Republic were to provide for its Muslim population, in the form of mosques, education, *halal* meat then, the Muslims would not feel marginalized, nor want to lash out against the State. “Among the youth, marginalized and unemployed, we are witnessing a tendency towards confinement, rejection, and radicalization” (Ramadan 10). The very marginalization that Ramadan warns against however, he also incites. It is in the area of social engagement that Ramadan finds himself being accused of double talk. While he warns the State against marginalizing Muslims, he encourages youth to form Muslim organizations. In the same manner, Muslims across the Hexagon claim they want to be welcomed into French society but they end up forming “pockets of resistance” in order to protect their new found Muslim identities (Ramadan 39).

The denial of Ramadan to answer Sarkozy’s ultimatum and his call for a moratorium are parallel to the French Muslims’ attitude regarding their identities. The integration of French Muslims into French society is fairly recent. Considered immigrants for decades (and still today), it is difficult for French Muslims to define their identity because they are not sure what to base it on. Their perceptions of

Islam come mainly from foreign imams (an occurrence the Republic is vigorously attempting to change). These generations of Muslims are breaking off into a new subgroup of French society. Although they are unsure of their new identity since it does not belong to the past generations they are “determined to claim that their identity demands respect” (Ramadan 34).

The Need for Resolution

While the media looks upon the debate between Sarkozy and Ramadan as a win for the Republic, the debate has done little to promote policies that move the Hexagon forward. The debate put two distinguished interlocutors from opposing sides up against each other and they each valiantly represented their platforms. Sarkozy stands for an acceptance of the Republic by the Muslim population while Tariq stands for an acceptance of Islam by the Republic. Sarkozy represents the unmoving Republic, clinging to its laws of secularism. Ramadan presents the platform for the Muslim population by clinging to Islam as a religion that encompasses all aspects of a follower’s life.

However different their platforms may seem, the debate sets up two of the most probable characters involved in the issue that could work towards a compromise. The contender’s platforms have opposite goals, but that does not disqualify the possibility for concessions to be made on the road to reaching those goals. Action must be taken regarding the presence of Islam in France before tensions break into violence. While either side does not wish to abandon the debate, a compromise must be met in order to appease the differences felt

on both sides. Prejudice and discrimination are already rampant across the Hexagon. The *FN*'s rallies, contesting the building of mosques, are receiving more and more support. Violence and vandalism are becoming preferred methods over discussion by French youth. Future generations are at stake, and the responsibility to begin a dialogue working toward a solution lies with the present generation. The Republic must approach the issue of Islam without preconceived stereotypes and notions. It must encourage the Islamic population to integrate its French identity with its Muslim beliefs. "It is not possible to build a future based on peace and mutual respect by ignoring the longings of young generations for a true recognition of their Muslim identity" (Ramadan 40).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A COMPROMISE

The visible presence of Islam does not appear to be diminishing any time in the Hexagon's near future. The Republic and its Muslim population must come to terms or else they risk an even bolder confrontation. While the history of the two cultures is littered with differences, that does not exclude the possibility of a peaceful compromise. The religious confrontations of the medieval period and the Crusades embedded the feelings of eurocentrism that have since compelled the French to look at Muslims as outsiders or invaders. The colonial years reinforced this attitude by establishing a hierarchy in the French mind that put those of Arab descent at the bottom rung. Such sentiments dominate the thoughts and attitudes of the French Republic currently. The attitude permeates through policies and rhetoric and serves to marginalize the French Muslim population. This can be seen especially in the rhetoric of Le Pen and the Front National, but is even present in the daily life of the French. The increase of support of the Front National as well as IFOP's recent poll findings conclude that negative attitudes and resentment on all sides are the fruit born of such strained relations. Something must be done to change the collective French mind that is satiated with eurocentrism. The mindset has only served in the past to spawn violence and if left unchecked, the same result will be produced in this

generation. The Republic needs to live up to its promise of liberty, equality, and brotherhood. So set in their foundation of laws and Constitution, the French have forgotten to live by their beloved creed. A nation so welcoming in words should be just as welcoming in their actions, or else they are guilty of *double discours* as well.

From colonialism to political exploitation, France's relationship with Islam has often been considered one-sided. Discrimination, both blatant and concealed, defines relations between the Republic and the Muslim population. In order to establish itself as a global force, France used the opportunity of forming relationships with Muslim countries, such as Algeria and the rest of Maghreb. Thus, France established itself as an influential European power in the Islamic world. The Great Paris Mosque stands in reference to the supposed friendship that was to occur between the Hexagon and the Islamic world. Although majestic and symbolic, the Mosque has done little to alleviate the growing problems faced by Muslims. Also, the Republic welcomed Muslims into the Hexagon through a series of policies and organizations. For example, the founding of the Society of Pious Trusts and Islamic Holy Places in 1895 was a political organization that aided the building of the Paris Mosque. During World War I France leaned on its colonies for military support. Post World War II, France relied heavily on immigrant workers to keep up with the economic boom of the *Trente Glorieuses*. The economic crisis of the 1970s brought an end to the friendship between France and its immigrant population. French Muslims came to be viewed as the

problem, instead of the solution. Unemployment was blamed increasingly on the immigrant population and the Arabs were viewed as taking jobs away for the French. Discrimination became more apparent and practiced at all levels of society. The rhetoric employed by Le Pen and governmental officials at the time inspired insurmountable fear of a Muslim *invasion* throughout France. Today, as a direct consequence of public fear, the Muslim population is suffering from the same discriminatory sentiments. They are denied housing because of their origin. They are denied employment because of their ethnicity. They are denied equal education because of their culture. Continuously turned down and turned away Muslims are being oppressed by the country they call home. The sentiments shown toward the Muslim population only serve to cause an innate sense of contempt for the Republic. After decades of enduring such animosity, the Muslim population buried itself in its own culture. Now, Muslims no longer quietly endure being oppressed, and by an expression of cultural force, their voices are growing louder and call for much needed change.

The French Muslim population is becoming more visible across the Hexagon, both as in a unified voice and in appearance, as are the organizations that represent them. Unfortunately, while the *Marche des Beurs* attempted to call the nation's attention to their plight, they were met with minimal response from the government. Inspired, Harlem Désir led the change for the Muslim population with his creation of *SOS-Racisme* to fight against discrimination. This bravery to stand up against racism also inspired others across the Hexagon to stand up as

well. The creation in 2004 of HALDE is one such organization that found its inspiration from *SOS-Racisme*. The organization gives voice to the oppressed throughout France despite their ethnicity, gender, or position in society. Through their efforts to call attention to discrimination and their direct dialogues with politicians, the public is becoming more knowledgeable of the problem of racism. Despite their efforts the Muslim population is still subject to discrimination especially in the areas of employment, education, and housing. Even discrimination in just one of these areas subjects French Muslims to be drawn into a vicious cycle of poverty. These organizations provide a voice and call attention to a serious problem, but do not have enough political power to change the current situation alone. Desperate for change, the Muslim population is exploring new avenues to obtain change, even if they must use violence to reach their goal. "Marginality, juvenile delinquency and increasing poverty have created a volatile situation" (Ramadan 9). Currently France is seeing the uprising of such a situation in the Hexagon. Little improvement has been seen since the intervention of organizations against discrimination, now Muslims are searching for a different solution. Muslims, who feel betrayed and hurt by their country, receive in the Middle East a captured audience in the form of terrorist organizations willing to fight against whom they deem *infidels*. By rejecting, discriminating, and marginalizing the French Muslim population the Republic is instilling contempt in a generation that is looking increasingly to its Islamic roots. The major problem arises because a portion of the Islamic world is more and

more becoming controlled by the influence of fundamentalists. In order to keep Muslims from falling victim to such groups, France must stop discriminating against the Muslim population and pushing Muslims to the point where they feel they are beyond all hope. It is when people lose sight of hope that desperation and fear lead to violence.

Throughout the 1990s, after feeling the sting of discrimination for over a decade, violence throughout the Hexagon escalated. The incidents in the Parisian suburbs, which sparked violence in 2005 and 2007, stand as an example where French Muslims felt that all hope previously placed in the Republic was lost. The fact that in two instances, teenagers of Arab ethnicity were killed while under police pursuit causes one to question the Republic that in theory is so dedicated to protecting human rights. While two wrongs never make a right, the riots in the Parisian *banlieues* were precipitated by violent acts condoned by the State. If the Republic wants to maintain peaceful relations within its borders, then they must first stand as an example of peace and respect for others. History serves to remind the Republic that prior to the Revolution of 1789, the French themselves were subjected to similar discrimination. They spawned a Revolution to obtain equal rights and liberties, which they are now denying to a percentage of their population.

Several characters have come forth, surrounding Islam who are significantly calling both positive and negative attention to the current debate. There are those who wish to continue to deny the Muslim population their rights,

but there are also those who hold to the French creed and wish to provide equality to all French citizens regardless of ethnicity. While Le Pen and the *Front National* are the most notorious for their negative projection of Islam and those of Arab descent, they are only two in a long list of many who have made detrimental remarks toward Muslims; and these include Presidents Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Chirac, and even Sarkozy. The negative rhetoric by both politicians and the media serve to encourage *eurocentrism* and discrimination. The political power that is demonstrated by the *Front National*, especially in the southern areas of France such as Marseille, validates that such rhetoric encourages discriminatory action by the French population.

The Great Mosque of Paris and the CFCM are both important organizations in the political realm of France, yet they are not used to their full potential. Although the two organizations represent the Muslim population, they have made little progress between the State and Islam concerning major areas of disagreement (Godard 15). More often than not, political agendas supersede religious values, and the Muslim population is left scrambling to clarify between religious and political rulings. Islam is a religion based on total religious control and does not value the idea that a separation between religion and politics is possible. Underlining these issues Bernard Godard states that Islam

“n’a pas offert les conditions de possibilité d’une secularization de l’Etat ni donne la possibilité des penseurs politiques et théologiens de s’exprimer pour construire, philosophiquement, la separation des

instances (rappelons que l’apostasie est encore considérée comme un crime puni de mort dans les pays qui entendent appliquer strictement la charī’a) ? (“does not offer conditions for the possibility of a secularized State nor does it give the possibility to politicians or theologians to philosophically construct or give voice to such thoughts (remember that apostasy is still considered a crime punishable by death in countries who strictly apply *shari’a* law?”) (13)

Tariq Ramadan encourages Muslims to regard the Qur’an as their Constitution but stay true to French laws. However, problems arise when French Muslims receive such mixed signals. Due to the strong separation placed by the *loi de laïcité*, the realms of politics and religion do not compliment one another in the Hexagon. This rift between the two institutions is the area wherein the most critical differences arise.

The *loi de laïcité* is intrinsically the issue over which the Republic and religions battle for power and control over the Hexagon. The law has been in effect for over a century and yet it still is the major cause for conflict concerning the Republic. The law was born from the aftermath of the Revolution; a bad taste for the Church was left in the mouths of French citizens who felt betrayed by the institution. Therefore, as soon as they could, the French government and its people separated from the Church; thus, they established themselves as an independent entity. The Republic began with good intentions by planning to separate the spheres so that individuals could be free from the Church’s direct

influence and freely participate in society. Without the Church influencing the citizens' every decision, they are free to choose the direction of their lives.

"Individuals must regard their social norms as open to challenge and to change, and they must not subscribe to their norms in a dogmatic manner or they will not be able to participate fully and openly in democratic Republican politics" (Bowen 2007, 186). It is this quality of the 1905 law that the Republic feels is threatened by the Islamic religion. Unsettled by Islam's connection with the political sphere, the French mindset views the religion as a resurfacing of its former self. "The idea that the Islamic resurgence represents a return of the repressed does not take only a political form. At a more diffuse level, the Islamic revival signals a cultural anxiety in the West. The West sees in Islam the distorted mirror of its own past" (Sayyid 4). The secular stance taken by France has been described in numerous ways, from a neutral public sphere to a clear separation of Church and State. The *loi de laïcité* takes on various forms for the Republic, a characteristic which at times causes trouble to arise. With so many varying interpretations the law can be used both for good and evil. The law creates the state as a neutral body, which is set apart so it can guarantee equality for every religion. However, with such a long and involved history with Islam, the Republic approaches the religion with caution and sometimes discrimination. The Republic functions with the desire to build and control Islam, shaping it by using French secular values. This desire is often due to the fact that France still looks at its Islamic population as colonial subjects, a population to exploit and control. The Republic must

change its attitude towards Islam and base its judgments not on emotions or fear rhetoric, but on facts and understanding.

The increasingly visible presence of Islam draws these fears to the forefront and the *loi de laïcité* allows the Republic to lash out against the perceived threat. Throughout the Hexagon there are approximately 1,500 mosques (Godard 103). However, most of these mosques are not comparable to the Great Mosques of Paris, Lyon and the future mosque of Marseille. The majority of mosques are in the form of prayer houses found in basements of HLMs or old abandoned factories. In an effort to accommodate the growing number of Islamic followers, makeshift mosques have sprung up throughout the Hexagon. Although such mosques temporarily solve the issue of providing a place to worship, they do not always guarantee safety. Imams in such mosques are not always peaceful prayer leaders but extremists, and may not even be trained in Islam at all. As of July 2010 Dalil Boubakeur, the Rector of the Paris Mosque, has asked that the number of mosques be doubled in France to expand to around 4,000. Dr. Boubakeur said it was "not normal for our faithful to have to pray in the streets or in the gutter" ("Rector of Paris"). The recent blocking of Parisian streets testifies to the massive number of Muslims without a place to pray. The French Republic throughout history has quietly supported religious buildings by a policy of "support religion by facilitating worship in properly built houses of worship but strictly control any "leakage" of religion into those domains where Republican unity requires secularism" (Bowen 2007, 31). Such support is

now being called into question by the right for overstepping lines of secularism, while at the same time the left is calling for a revision of the *loi de laïcité* for greater freedoms. The same policy and stretch of secular lines have been used in the building of cathedrals, synagogues, and temples. Equal support and respect should be employed by the Republic towards the construction of mosques. President Sarkozy is a crucial ally in the call for increasing the number of mosques in France. He would like to provide places of worship for French Muslims in order to create equality and keep mosques and imams accountable to the Republic. In 2003, he described his desire for equality by stating, "How can we expect them to obey the law if we don't invite them to the table?" (Bowen 2007, 39) In the same manner, Dalil Boubakeur backed his request for additional mosques by suggesting that a correlation exists between the number of places of worship and the crime rate. "Open a mosque and you close a prison," said Dr. Boubakeur, a reference which is founded on the idea that if Muslims are educated and taught by an imam who is trained both in Islam and has a solid foundation of knowledge in French values, the road towards compromise and away from violence becomes an easier road to follow. By providing and encouraging places of worship the Republic not only creates the advantage of accountability, but also creates a much needed relationship between a state and its people.

When mosques were still small, like those during the First World War, which consisted mainly of tents, the French had little to no problems regarding

the religion they knew so little about. Over time the religion of the *Moyen-Orient* became a visible presence on French soil causing alarm and encouraging acts of discrimination. The first headscarf issue in 1983 put Islamic visibility in the spotlight of the media and politicians. Numerous laws and policies continue to be passed that stifle the visibility of Islam in the Hexagon. The 2004 law banning *ostensible* religious signs came as a shock to the religious community. The year 2010 brought the debate specifically to the Islamic sphere by banning the wearing of the Islamic *burqa*. Sociologists contribute to the visibility factor to problems surrounding the terms of integration. John Bowen, for example, states that “When praying too often or wearing a headscarf (or a beard) become evidence that one has not ‘sufficiently integrated,’ then for some, French norms of gender equality and *laïcité* have been defined too narrowly, or in ways fail to take into account legitimate differences in religious institutions and practices” (Bowen 2007, 247). Once considered a land where regardless of origin one could find acceptance and brotherhood, France has shown an about face and called for a strict interpretation of *laïcité* which requires one to shrug off ethnic traditions and customs. Such fear of visible differences between cultures, calls into question whether the Republic is still a land where equality and liberty for all takes precedence.

Working Towards Coexistence

Debates that stem from centuries of conflict are not often perceived as being ones that can be solved using dialogue or compromise. However,

throughout France's history, compromise and honest dialogue are the missing pieces, which could offer clarity and resolution. The Republic and the French Muslim population both stand firm in their positions, and victory is often the goal instead of compromise. France has gained its nineteenth-century goal of being a great influence in the Islamic world both at home and abroad. Its actions therefore resound with great importance not only for France, but for Europe and North Africa as well. The Hexagon has the largest number of Muslims living in its borders and therefore stands as an example for the rest of Europe in its treatment of the Muslim population. The fear of the visible presence of Islam is not a fear contained to the Hexagon as it pervades throughout European countries; peace and compromise, therefore, are critical. In order to obtain such a resolution both the Republic and the Islamic population must make concessions and respect each other's stance. Several critical actions must be taken by one or both sides in order to shape the foundations of a resolution.

In response to IFOP's findings that the French State views the Islamic presence as a menace, President Sarkozy underlined the importance of working toward an understanding. "Si telle religion est irrationnellement perçue, chez nous, comme une menace, nous devons combattre cette réaction irrationnelle par la connaissance mutuelle et par la compréhension de l'autre". ("If such a religion is irrationally perceived in France, as a threat, we must fight against such an irrational reaction by the sharing of knowledge and the comprehension of one another") ("Rector of Paris"). Indeed, both sides are guilty of a lack of knowledge

and essential understanding of each other. Due to such an absence, the majority of actions are based on emotions and assumptions. French policies stand to exemplify such emotional influence. The French “response to the presence of Muslims in France is based more upon emotional outbursts and less on well-thought-out arguments and analyses” (Ramadan 10). While Sarkozy emphasizes an increase of understanding by the Republic, it is Tariq Ramadan who stresses the acquisition of knowledge by the Muslim community. In order to achieve a peaceful coexistence, Ramadan urges Muslims to become familiar with their rights as French citizens and to become acquainted with not just their Islamic roots but their French heritage as well. French Muslims are unique in their existence, but that does not make them incompatible with French society. They are in fact a valuable contribution to the French culture and have been so through the Hexagon’s history. The increase in disputes and violence symbolizes the great need for mutual understanding by the two sides. While this step is crucial in order to obtain a solution, many other steps must be taken as well.

The following proposals attempt to outline areas of focus essential for compromise and resolution between the French Muslim population and the Republic. This imperative compromise ideally attempts to allow both sides to retain a sense of their personal identity while at the same time showing respect and loyalty to each other.

Positive relationships between key political and religious figures must be formed in order to encourage respect instead of disdain. The political leaders of

France set an example for their people. It is figures like President Sarkozy and Dalil Boubakeur that have a significant influence over the French public. During the formation of the CFCM, Sarkozy in an effort to form lasting relations between France and the Islamic world formed a positive rapport with numerous Muslim countries such as Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia as well as less represented countries from Sub-Saharan Africa (Bowen 2007, 56). Such actions have gained him respect throughout the Muslim world. The political maneuvers performed by Sarkozy in regards to Islam are unparalleled throughout the history of French relations with Muslim countries. Although some Muslims consider Dalil Boubakeur as a representation of Algeria's control over the Great Mosque of Paris, the former President of the CFCM and Mosque director has established a critical relationship with the Republic. Boubakeur unites various factions of Islam under the Great Mosque and, through his political relations, chips away at making compromises between the two sides, especially in the areas of education and *halal* meat. Such effort put forth by religious and political leaders is essential for an eventual resolution. The formation of positive and encouraging relationships between the two actors will provide a much-needed foundation for change.

Aside from establishing amicable relations between the Republic and French Muslims, a forum for discussion must be created that includes equal political and religious input. The CFCM and similar organizations do not have a clearly defined role, and who or what they represent is left ambiguous (Bowen

2007, 58). The CFCM is viewed only as a political voice by practicing Muslims yet; secular Muslims view it as a religious voice. The lack of a clear definition of authority, that is so essential in Islam, undermines the organizations authority on matters pertaining to the French Muslim population. Due to its reliance on the CFCM, the Republic is often ill equipped for confrontations with the Muslim population, both secular and religious. An open and official forum, which provides equal respect and representation by both the political and religious spheres, is necessary for working towards a solution. Only in such a pluralistic environment can a compromise be reached.

Additionally, by acquiring knowledge, forming positive relations, and creating a forum where both the Republic and the Muslim population can meet to engage in peaceful conversation, the sensation of fear felt by both sides will disappear. No longer will the State feel threatened by a religion it understands. No longer will Muslims feel discriminated against when respect is shown for its leaders. No longer will the two sides feel that violence is an acceptable answer because they will finally, after centuries of conflict, be on their way towards a resolution.

Undoubtedly, individual efforts and concessions must be made by each side in order to work towards a solution acceptable for both the Republic and its Muslim population. France must live up to its creed and offer liberty, equality, and brotherhood for all. The Republic must broaden its horizons and embrace diversity, while at the same time forming a solid outline of French National

Identity. A long and symbolic history provides a sturdy foundation for the establishment of their national identity. France needs only to look back over its national monuments that symbolize the centuries of hard work by French men and women dedicated to the ideals of liberty and equality.

Furthermore, the negative rhetoric employed by both the media and politicians must be toned down in an effort to create a positive outlook towards the Muslim presence. The increasing negativity, which pervades French and international media, only serves to create a barrier between the world and Islam. While the acknowledging the threat of fundamentalists and extremists is important, one must not forget that Islam is not defined by such fanatics any more than Jews or Christians are defined by extremist groups who also engage in terrorist actions. Relations between the France and Islam have been influenced for centuries by rhetoric and propaganda. In order to establish positive relations, rhetoric utilized by the government and media must undergo a dramatic transformation. The media holds vast amounts of influence over the population who look toward the institution for its knowledge base. Therefore, efforts by the media are crucial to creating a positive image of the Islamic religion. The rhetoric employed to describe the visibility of Islam throughout the Hexagon must also undergo a transformation. In a democratic society, politicians will always be controlled by their constituents concerns. As long as the media, in relation with Islam and its visible presence, uses fear rhetoric, politicians will continue to follow the media's lead and project a fear of the foreign religion onto the population.

Lastly, the Republic must change its outlook towards the visible aspects of the Islamic religion. While laws have already banned religious dress in the public sphere, the crucial visible element left for the Islamic following in France are mosques. Mosques serve as a symbol of unity and safety for the Islamic religion just as cathedrals serve to let Catholics feel at peace. The successful interruption of the construction of numerous mosques in cities such as Strasbourg and Marseille demonstrates how real the threat of banning mosques has become. French Muslims are consistently discriminated against by French society due to their religious choice, and it is the visible presence that suffers the wrath of eurocentrism the most. Muslims must be allowed a credible place to worship and given equality regarding the visibility of their religion or the struggle between Islam and the Republic will continue to escalate. Islam must be given the same rights and liberties as Christianity and Judaism in the Hexagon. The Great Mosque of Paris stands as a testimony to a time when the Republic did not feel so threatened by the Islamic religion and provided equally for those of the Islamic faith. This practice must be reinstated in order to work towards a compromise. The Islamic faith in France must be allowed to keep some visible aspect of the religion that defines a great portion of its cultural identity. The French Muslim population will continue to feel discriminated against and marginalized by the society in which it seeks to establish itself, if it continues to be denied a credible and safe place to worship. In addition to symbolizing unity and peace, mosques offer Muslims a feeling of community, home and religious education. These

factors are critical to a population that is viewed by many as outsiders. By allowing French Muslims a place to worship, France would be taking crucial steps in the direction of compromise and resolution.

One of the biggest contenders in the debate between France and its Muslim population involves the *loi de laïcité*. While the law has been used for over a century to dispel the Church's influence over the people of France, a solid interpretation of the law has never been defined. In addition, the law was voted before the Islamic religion became important in the Hexagon. A standard interpretation of the *loi de laïcité* would create an established ground on which the government could interact with the Muslim population and remain fair and true to its established laws. By such actions, the occurrence of marginalization and discrimination of the Islamic faith would decline.

Making A Collaborative Effort

While such steps would allow France to become more welcoming of its Muslim population, concessions must be made by the Islamic faith as well. The French Muslim population must work to engage itself as part of French society rather than continue to be marginalized and pushed to the outside realms of the Republic. Through a peaceful projection of their religion, French Muslims can assure that future generations never feel the sting of discrimination that has poisoned the history between Islam and France.

One of the most important measures to be taken by French Muslims involves becoming more comfortable with their dual identity. In order to set out on

this accomplishment, French Muslims must begin to accept the Republic and its values. Although Tariq Ramadan calls for Muslims to regard the Qur'an as their constitution, French Muslims must strive to understand their French cultural and political heritage in the same manner by which they strive to connect with their religious background. Significant tension is caused by a rejection of French values by the Muslim population. In an attempt to assert their religious identity French Muslims often demand respect from the Hexagon, not for their French citizenship but for their Muslim identity. This demand presents a problem to the Republic, which for so long has approached citizens on an individual basis rather than recognizing religious groups. French Muslims must become accustomed to being a part of such an individualistic society, while at the same time asserting their validity as Muslim citizens and in turn receive equality.

In order to form a successful relationship with the Republic, French Muslims must establish themselves as a separate entity from extremists and terrorist organizations. This is especially true for the Muslim youth of France, who are the most likely to feel rejected by the Republic and look towards extremists for acceptance. The fear felt by the French regarding Islam is in a large part caused by acts of violence outside of the Hexagon. Reports of suicide bombings and violence towards women only serve to give credit to the perception of Islam as a violent and oppressive religion. The majority of French policies surrounding Islam have been enacted due to violence outside of Europe. As was the case in 2004 when the State banned Islamic headscarves. In order to create a peaceful

and respectable image, French Muslims must dissolve ties between themselves and Islamic extremists. They must let the French government, as well as the French people, know that they are a religion of peace and do not have malicious intentions towards the country they consider home.

Furthermore, the French Muslim population must make great efforts in avoiding communalism. Although communalism is in part due to French policies, the Muslim population needs to allow itself to be incorporated into French society. While Muslims should not stand passively by and allow their religion to be subject to oppression and discrimination, they must make concessions that show the French they are putting forth valiant effort into being part of the Republic. A French immigrant bureaucrat stated it in this manner: “What we say is: if you want to come out of the basements, come out into the light! Don’t just say that we discriminate, that you are victims of racism. We propose these solutions; take them” (Bowen 2007, 42). Compromise requires effort by all parties involved, therefore if French Muslims desire to improve their situation they must acquiesce to the Republic’s call for them to integrate into French society.

The French Muslim population is facing its own cultural identity crisis and their often-rebellious attitude pushes the boundaries of France’s national identity. An increase in the visible presence of Islam in the Hexagon is in an effort to voice the Muslim population’s disdain for political rulings found to be discriminatory. This rebellious strategy has succeeded and now the Republic and the Muslim population are in a show down. While many issues lie at the center of the French

Islamic debate, the French Muslim population must learn French laws and traditions in order to know when to stop pushing the State's boundaries. Even though the Republic ruled to ban Islamic headscarves, there continue to be major headlines attributed to Muslim girls wearing the *hijab* to school. Recently, the argument escalated when a young girl wore the headscarf while on a field trip to the Assemblée Nationale. Such behavior only adds fuel to an already raging fire. French Muslims must change their tactics and learn to choose their battles carefully.

Additionally, it is essential that the French Muslims encourage dialogue with the Republic. Violence and protests in the streets must be replaced by discourse and negotiation. All major conflicts throughout history have ended not in sword strokes or gunshots but in words. Treaties have been the concluding remarks of numerous conflicts in history: from *Pax Nicephori* by Charlemagne to the Paris Peace Treaties that ended World War II. Words are the foundation of resolution. French Muslims ought to encourage the use of discussion rather than resort to violent acts or reserved attitudes. In addition, equal representation must be afforded for Islamic sub-cultures.

Although compromise is never an easy route, especially when dealing with two powerhouses such as Government and Religion, it is the only method by which both parties feel that their essential needs are met and that the other side is at least listening to their demands. The Republic encourages French Muslims to feel accepted by facilitating the building of Mosques while at the same time

French Muslims allow the Republic to dispel fears by avoiding communalism. If both sides work towards resolution in a fair and equal manner, the tensions surrounding the debate on the Hexagon are sure to subside.

The world is seeing an uprising across the globe in relation to Islamic ethnic groups and their countries. The United States Congress has formed congressional hearings to research and develop the government's knowledge over what they fear is the "radicalization of Muslim Americans" ("Emotions fly at"). The same fear that has engulfed France and then Europe is now sweeping across the Atlantic and manifesting itself in American policies. The time to compromise and resolve this escalating conflict has come; now is the time to compromise.

Compromise

History provides us with numerous examples in which freedom and equality were fought for and bought with a price. Those examples today allow us to heed the warning signs of oncoming conflict and search for a better and more peaceful road to resolution. The six million French Muslims now residing within the Hexagon's borders deserve a peaceful resolution. The people of France who by their citizenship desire to promote liberty, equality, and fraternity deserve the safety of compromise. Although French history is littered with monumental disputes between the Hexagon and the Crescent, that does not allow the current generation to follow the same path to conflict. The visible presence of Islam in

France is not a debate that must be bought with a price like so many disputes of the past. The presence of Islam in the Hexagon should be met with pride. Once so welcoming of Islam and diversity, France retreated in fear when faced with the unknown and different. As tensions mount and ancient mindsets return with the full force of discrimination, France and the Islamic population must urgently set out to come to terms with their fears and disagreements.

The French government has chipped away little by little at the visible projection of the Islamic faith through the enactment of laws such as the 2004 law banning religious symbols in the public sphere. The progression of laws only continues as the *FN* continues its campaign against Islam, lined with fear rhetoric and designed to cause tensions to flare. The progression of laws continues as the *FN* advances its campaign against Islam, lined with fear rhetoric and designed to cause tensions flare. Mosque projects such as the beautiful structure planned to grace the skyline of Marseille are in jeopardy, not because of the price of rent, or the projected noise and traffic but because prejudice has a deadly grasp on the French mindset. In a desperate attempt to inspire change, French Muslims are turning to the side of their culture that accepts them for who they are and proclaiming it across the Hexagon. Although such a long and history filled conflict seems to have no end in sight and no simple solution, it just might. The two sides must choose: compromise instead of conflict, grey instead of black or white. Choose to follow the wise words and take the road less traveled: compromise.

WORKS CITED

- Amselle, Jean-Loup. *Affirmative Exclusion: Cultural Pluralism and the Rule of Custom in France*. New York: Cornell UP, 2003. Print.
- Arkoun, Mohammed. *Histoire De L'islam Et Des Musulmans En France Du Moyen âge à Nos Jours*. Paris: Albin Michel, 2006. Print.
- "Assemblée: La Possible Interdiction Du Voile Ravive Le Débat Sur La Visibilité De L'islam." *Le Monde*. 29 Nov. 2009. Web. <<http://www.lemonde.fr>>.
- "Assemblée Nationale - Séparation Des Églises Et De L'État." *Assemblée Nationale ~ Les Députés, Le Vote De La Loi, Le Parlement Français*. Web. 19 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/eglise-etat/sommaire.asp>>.
- Bax, Daniel. "Symbols of Integration or Domination?" *The German Times Online*. Feb. 2008. Web. <http://www.germantimes.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3725&Itemid=86>.
- Bowen, John Richard. *Can Islam Be French?: Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010. Print.
- Bowen, John Richard. *Why the French Don't like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007. Print.
- Broqua, Alette De. "Marseille: La plus Grande Mosquée De France En 2011." *Le Figaro*. 6 Nov. 2009. Web. <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2009/11/06/01016-20091106ARTFIG00003-la-grande-mosquee-de-marseille-ouvrira-en-2011-.php>>.
- Cesari, Jocelyne. *Etre Musulman En France: Associations, Militants Et Mosquées*. Paris: Karthala, 1994. Print.
- "Communalism." Def. 2. *Merriam-Webster Online*. Web. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/communalism>>.
- Cordelier, Jérôme, and Catherine Piettre. "Le "ça Suffit" De Strasbourg Racisme. Les Profanations à Répétition Depuis Le Début De L'année Pèsent Sur Le

- Climat Politique Et L'image De La Ville." *Le Point.fr*. 25 Nov. 2010. Web. <http://www.lepoint.fr/villes/le-ca-suffit-de-strasbourg-25-11-2010-1267156_27.php>.
- Damien, M. *L'église Et Les Français: Crise De Foi, Crise Morale, Crise Sociale*. Paris: La Découverte, 1997. Print.
- "Emotions Fly at Controversial Hearings on Muslim Americans." *CNN International*. 10 Mar. 2011. Web. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/03/10/radicalization.hearings/?hpt=T2>>.
- "En France, Le Premier Ministre Inaugure Une Mosquée." *RadioFranceInternationale*. 28 June 2010. Web. <<http://www.rfi.fr/france/20100628-france-le-premier-ministre-inaugure-une-mosquee>>.
- Erlanger, Steven. "French Mosque's Symbolism Varies With Beholder." *New York Times*. 28 Dec. 2009. Web. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/28/world/europe/28marseille.html>>.
- "Ghettos Shackle French Muslims." *BBC News*. 31 Oct. 2005. Web. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4375910.stm>>.
- Godard, Bernard, and Taussig Sylvie. *Les Musulmans En France. Courants, Institutions, Communautés: Un état Des Lieux*. Paris: Hachette, 2009. Print.
- HALDE. *Annual Report 2009*. Paris: Haute Autorité de Lutte Contre les Discriminations et pour l'égalité, 2009. Web. <<http://halde.fr/2009-Annual-Report.html>>.
- IFOP. "Regard Croisé France/Allemagne Sur L'islam." *Le Monde*, 2010. IFOP. Web. <http://www.ifop.com/?option=com_publication&type=poll&id=1365>.
- Koop, Marie-Christine Weidmann. "Children of Immigrants and Their Place in French Society." *Alternative Orientalisms in Latin America and Beyond*. Ed. Ignacio Lopez-Calvo. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2007. 205-18. Print.
- Koop, Marie-Christine Weidmann. "Discrimination Positive En France: L'expérience De L'éducation Prioritaire." *Contemporary French Civilization* Winter/Spring XXIX.1 (2005): 85-104. Print.

- "Marseille: Rassemblement Contre La Grande Mosquée Vendredi à 9H Devant La Mairie." *Bivouac-ID*. 5 Nov. 2009. Web. <<http://www.bivouac-id.com/2009/11/05/marseille-rassemblement-contre-la-grande-mosquee-vendredi-a-9h-devant-la-mairie/>>.
- "Mosquées: Des Profanations En Seine En France." *Le Monde*. 23 Feb. 2010. Web. <<http://veilleur.blog.lemonde.fr/2010/02/23/mosquees-des-profanations-en-serie-en-france/>>.
- Pinet, Christopher P. "Ostensible Signs: Scarves, Veils, Kippas, Turbans, and Crosses." *France in the Twenty-first Century: New Perspectives*. Ed. Marie-Christine Koop and Rosalie Vernet. Birmingham, Al.: Summa Publications, 2010. 157-73. Print.
- Ramadan, Tariq. *Muslims in France: The Way Towards Coexistence*. United Kingdom: Islamic Foundation, 1999. Print.
- Ravinel, Sophie De. "Les Municipalités En Ordre Dispersé Face Aux Nombreux Projets." *Le Figaro*. 15 Oct. 2007. Web. <<http://www.lefigaro.fr>>.
- "Rector of Paris Grand Mosque Calls for Doubling the Number of Mosques in France." *Islam Today*. 4 July 2010. Web. <<http://en.islamtoday.net/artshow-229-3697.htm>>.
- Sayyid, Bobby S. *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*. London: Zed, 1997. Print.
- Scott, Joan W. *The Politics of the Veil*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007. Print.
- Sellam, Sadek. *La France Est Ses Musulmans: Un Siècle De Politique Musulmane 1895-2005*. France: Brodard Et Taupin, 2006. Print.
- "Swiss Voters Back Ban on Minarets." *BBC News*. 29 Nov. 2009. Web. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8385069.stm>>.
- Toner, Fred. "Multiculturalism in Debate: The Immigrant Presence as Social Catalyst in Contemporary France." *France in the Twenty-first Century: New Perspectives*. Ed. Marie-Christine Weidmann Koop and Rosaline Vernet. Birmingham, Al: Summa Publications, 2000. 159-68. Print.
- Wieviorka, Michel. *Une Société Fragmentée?: Le Multiculturalisme En Débat*. Paris: La Découverte, 1997. Print.