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ISLAMOPHOBIA IN FRANCE

The position of the Front National on the Charlie Hebdo
and November 2015's attacks in Paris

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this case study is to analyse the position of the National Front on the Charlie Hebdo and November 2015's terrorist attacks in Paris, regarding the concept of *Islamophobia* in France, with the goal to determine whether this right-wing party is facilitating it or not.

Through the analysis of the political programme of the French political party and different statements made by its leader, Marine Le Pen, this report will explore the meaning of *Islamophobia,* the National Front's evolution and their recent rise, their stance on immigration and multiculturalism, the role the media press and intellectuals have played on the promotion of xenophobia, the attacks and how the National Front reacted to them.

This study will also observe the opinion of French university students, as well as it will provide some theoretical and conceptual analyses to the problem.

Keywords: Islamophobia, Charlie Hebdo, Le Pen, terrorism, National Front, Islam, Muslim, France.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo tiene como finalidad principal el análisis de la posición del Frente Nacional ante los ataques terroristas de Charlie Hebdo y noviembre de 2015 de París, centrado en el concepto de la islamofobia en Francia, para determinar si el mencionado partido político fomenta y promueve la islamofobia o no.

Mediante el análisis del programa político del partido francés, así como el examen de distintas declaraciones de su líder, Marine Le Pen, el presente trabajo explorará el significado de la islamofobia, la evolución del Frente Nacional y su reciente auge, su postura ante la inmigración y el multiculturalismo, el papel que han jugado los académicos y periodistas fomentando o no el racismo, y, por último, la reacción de todos éstos ante los ataques. También se observa la opinión de estudiantes universitarios franceses, así como el desarrollo de un análisis conceptual y teórico para poder abordar el problema.

Palabras clave: Islamofobia, Charlie Hebdo, Le Pen, terrorismo, Frente Nacional, Islam, Musulmanes, Francia.

CONTENTS

I.   INTRODUCTION:

Islamophobia is an attitudinal bias towards the Islamic religious community, reflecting the imaginary of fear and social alarm that has been developed in the last decades – which has been extended to people from Arabic backgrounds – as a result of a set of terror attacks such as the United States 9/11 attacks, Madrid 2004 bombings, London 2007 or the *Charlie Hebdo* and November 2015 attacks in Paris.

The psychological and anthropological term of "*Islamophobia*" refers to a belief-based feeling of prevention, disgust, rejection and even hatred against the Islamic population in a general sense (Bravo, 2011). More often than not, these beliefs are then pigeonholed with a series of negative traits such as general judgements like "*all Muslims are terrorists*" as was witnessed at times without fault following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York.

Through these value judgements or moral evaluations, the whole religion of Islam is depicted as an enemy of the Western world and presented as an immutable civilization that is worthy of hostility and antagonism (Allen, 2016). Thus, Islamophobia describes the fear of Muslims and Islam as a community.

The media press and intellectuals have contributed to the rise of Islamophobia among Western societies by addressing the demonization of Muslim people as a whole, rather than discussing it and blaming individuals which have caused all the damage.

Recent political trends in Europe have been dominated by the focus on this new relation of Islam and terrorism – particularly aggravated by outbreaks of radical groups. The media has played a key role in boosting the polarisation of the European societies towards Muslims, presenting them as a threat and enemy to their people's security.

Consequently, the Muslim French Community has reacted in its own way. Being part of the French - Muslim collective was not safe after the incidents of 9/11 or 11-M Madrid bombings (Fekete, 2004), but after the Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan attacks this danger increased dramatically. The Muslim community tries to demonstrate that regardless of the terror bouts, not all of them, are in fact terrorists – even if part of the youngest are likely to fall into radicalisation.

Evidence demonstrates a causal link between the observed radicalisation of Islamic youth and their segregation within society with hard living conditions experienced as by-product associated with such segregation (Fukuyama, 2006). Political parties such as the French Front National (hereinafter "FN") have been feeding of the general feeling of fear by the part of the French people and the European people in general. The fear has been perpetuated by social media, which has aggravated their image allowing the rise of nationalism and leading political parties to take advantage of it. Political parties include in their agendas anti-Muslimism measures such as the closing of frontiers (Yilmaz, 2012), limiting the number of migrants coming from Muslim countries or banning mosques, in order to make "*France for the French*".

II. RESEARCH QUESTION

What role does the National Rally (National Front) play considering the Charlie Hebdo and November attacks in the context of Islamophobia? How does its position against the attacks connect with the French context of Islamophobia? Does the Front National promote it and how do they do it?

¿Qué rol juega el papel del FN ante Charlie Hebdo y Bataclan en el contexto de la Islamofobia? ¿Cómo se conecta la posición de Charlie Hebdo y Bataclan con el ambiente de la Islamofobia, la promueve de forma directa o indirecta?

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

An inductive or qualitative-exploratory investigation will be conducted in this work based on the accumulation of evidence and information, that serves to clarify:
   a) The context of the terrorist attacks in Paris;
   b) The reception that those attacks had in the French citizen's imagination;
   c) The interpretation by the National Front;
   d) The reading made by intellectuals and academics; and
   e) Determine what is the role of Islamophobia as a factor of manipulation and political manipulation at the social level.

Within the theoretical framework of qualitative research is necessary to develop a conceptual analysis as a specification and clarification of key categories in research. So, the set of premises studied are mainly the fundamental ones to this work, later analysed in the following sections.

As a theoretical Framework I will use three fundamental theories that offer an interpretation of Islamophobia in France:

a) <u>Constructivism</u>, according to Walt (1998), focuses on the impact of ideas, thus considering the interests and identities of States, perceiving them as the result of specific historical processes. It centres on the prevailing social discourses as they are a reflection of societies' interests, beliefs and accepted behaviours among it. While power is not irrelevant, the creation of national identity and ideas, as well as how they evolve and shape their own way of understanding and relating to others is more important. Transnational communication and shared civic values are considered to undermine national loyalties. In short, constructivists focus on the social discourse ability to determine how political actors adjust themselves to social demands (Walt, 1998).

b) The <u>social identity theory</u> is based on the belief and feeling of being part of a social group that distinguishes itself from other social groups. Social identity aims to unite its member, share their way of thinking resulting in the uniform general mindset. The group is made up by similar members who agree and share their opinions but differentiating themselves from other groups (Stets and Burke, 2000). In order to understand this theory, there are three fundamental elements: social categorisation (being part of a particular group), social identity and social comparison. Individuals are psychologically linked united between them by considering their belonging to the group, thus they create their own positive identity (Magnum and Block, 2018). The social identity theory is useful for this investigation as it helps to understand the link between ethnoculturalism and immigration. Ethnoculturalism is an ideological stance characterised for seeing immigration as a threat to national values, arguing that it should be slowed down or even banned. The core of the current debate is how Islam and immigration revolve around personal interests, national economic concerns and group identities (Mangum and Block, 2018).

c) <u>World risk society and reflexive modernisation theories</u>: both theories defend that contemporary societies – understanding by contemporary Western societies – no longer undergo abrupt changes or transformative crisis, yet they're in a constant transformation flux undermined by global risks (Beck, 2002; Krzyzanowski, 2013).

This permanent transformation can be perfectly seen in the field of politics. Nowadays, the West is experiencing a political crisis as political parties are failing to meet local demands, global trends and social evolution. Subsequently, this situation is an ideal habitat for the germ of extremism to spread. In the case of our concern, the refugee crisis and Muslim population in France have led to the success of the FN. Likewise, these parties offer simple solutions to complex situations. Whether that would be criticising the political system, the lack of security, the threat of Islam and highlighting the disenchantment of society. These parties reinvent themselves by focusing on an issue and developing a sole solution to that problem, making themselves room in the media and constantly campaigning for political power (Krzyzanowski, 2013).

Beck (2002) identifies three axes of global risk: ecological, economic and transnational terrorist networks. These risks are three-dimensional: spatial, as these risks are cross-border and most of them come from other countries; temporary, as far as we know sometimes is impossible to acknowledge the long-term effects of actions committed today; and social. The risks are unequally distributed, depending on the historical background of each State they'll have different effects. However, the new global risks require globalised solutions (Beck, 2002).

Finally, I will provide my own interpretation of the relationship between these theories and the facts, concluding that all three theories abovementioned explain the facts. The World Risk Theory explains the link between the rise of the FN and the risk of terrorism, the Social Identity theory can be useful to understand how the FN electorate feels about a different social group such as Muslims, and Constructivism focuses on the ideas and beliefs which is also useful for our analysis.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This case of study will now proceed to explain the method followed to gather information for this research. As said before, this research paper shall pursue to understand the impact of the terror attacks that targeted Paris in 2015 and the position of the National Front (FN from now on) in light of the events, as well as how it affected Islamophobia in France. Therefore, it will be essential to comprehend the meaning of Islamophobia, the role of intellectuals and media press, and the evolution of the political discourse on immigration of the FN throughout its history.

The analysed information has been extracted from the following sources:

    A) Primary sources: interviews with French university undergraduate students about their opinion on the matter studied;

    B) Secondary sources:

- Newspaper and journalistic texts: due to the rise of radical parties across Europe, it has been necessary to analyse its rise, as well as the study of racist and Islamophobic discourse in Europe and the analysis of the terror attacks of 2015. Numerous media press texts and bulletins both international (The Guardian, The Independent, France24, New York Times) and Spanish (El País, ABC, El Mundo).

- Journal articles: theoretical approach. A wide reading, analysis and synthesis of different research articles has been carried out. Trying to analyse and offer a definition of Islamophobia, the role of the media and the position of the FN.

- Reports from international or national organisations: such as the French Commission or the EU commission analysing the increasing level of Islamophobia in European Member States.

The principal analysis technique of the present work is the case study. Once all the information was obtained through the primary and secondary sources previously described, an exhaustive analysis of them was undertaken. This method allows the researcher to dive deeper into the research in order to obtain a qualitative study that allows to know in greater detail the factors that have led to Islamophobia and the stance of the FN in this regard.

V.   THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

Once having studied and read exhaustively numerous journal and research articles, it is common to assume that no author offers an equal definition and typology on Islamophobia. In fact, each one offers a slightly different definition of the term, although in general the vast majority agree that it is a concept and subject of public matters.

Recently, the term has gained a central position in public discourse. Authors like Chris Allen raise the meaning and validity of the term. Many authors analysed by this work, agree that it is a relatively new term, based on three historical statements:

    a) The controversial origin of Islam and its different branches;

    b) The long-time based confrontation between Christianity and Islam; and

c) The imperialist and racist hatred discourse held by European powers in the 20th century.

There is also a general agreement on denoting that Islamophobia is a new social reality unleashed and aggravated by the Iranian revolution (1979) and the attacks of September 11 in the United States of America. Yet, authors like Allen do not go back to the Iranian revolution but to Great Britain in the 1990s when anti-Muslim discourse emerged.

Islamophobia is sometimes defined as a process with a consequent product or result, with three steps on the process definition:

1) Stereotyping Islam and the Muslim world as an opponent to the West;
2) Associating public symbols such as the hijab or headscarf to Islamic fundamentalism; and
3) Identifying those wearing djellaba, hijab or niqab as terrorist, influencing people's mindset on Muslims.

In the same lines, there are certain statements often repeated that fit in the various definitions of Islamophobia:

a) Islam and the Muslim world are both seen as an intransigent "monolith";
b) Islam is perceived as potential enemy for the Western world yet considered to be less or low-graded than the West;
c) Islam is repeatedly seen as a whole, but reality demonstrates there are different branches of it;
d) Muslims are seen as manipulators and liars;
e) Muslims critics on the West are rejected instead of being considered;
f) Discrimination towards Islam and Muslims is not criticised yet embraced by the elites; and
g) Anti-Muslim hatred discourse has become natural to Western societies.

Scholars usually base their studies on data on hate crime statistics, harassment against Muslims and several reports collected by NGOs, Commissions or EU agencies. Some of them, like Doyle or Fukuyama, have pointed out that European Muslims are immigrants and they are marginalised equally socially and economically. They highlight the necessity of integrating them, as the second generation and youths often fall into high rates of unemployment,

marginalisation, de-schooling or less likely to attend school, which makes them targets of radicalisation and criminalisation.

Due to marginalisation, they rely on Islam as a support, which clashes with French *laïcité,* as they are not allowed to freely practice their religion in public spaces. It is extended among society to think that wearing visual symbols such as the hijab shows cultural and moral resistance to Western culture. From the West perspective, this demonstrates they do not know how to adapt to European norms, even though the European Union claims to promote multiculturalism and tolerance. Orientalism has also functioned as a major aggravator of Islamophobia. This theory just like Islamophobia, has been and still is used to delegitimise the political and military domination of the West.

The colonial domination of European powers over Africa and the subsequent postcolonial framework provoked hostility towards Europeans. Nonetheless, with globalisation millions of immigrants left their countries to start a new life full of choices in Europe. Globalisation, the flow of immigrants, the greater presence of Muslims in European territory, and the declining power of the West have increased the tensions among these two civilizations, Fukuyama highlights the clash between them.

Therefore, three elements have shaped islamophobia as a global phenomenon: orientalism embedded in many societies', the contemporary transnational power that allows to influence negatively on the Muslim presence worldwide; and Islamophobia and globalisation which rises lots of doubts as many Westerners see Muslims as a threat to their security and financial wellbeing.

VI.   ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

1. Front National in France

1.1. Far-right rise

Across Europe, since the end of the 1980s, the far-right or radical right has managed to organise a coordinated electoral audience that allows them to keep polling strongly. Despite predictions, radical right parties are now a settled political force in a considerable number of European states (France, Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, etc.) as they have managed to recruit a loyal

electorate – apart from gaining popularity between the youngest and new generation of voters – and took advantage of some events such as 11 September 2001 or the financial crisis (Fekete, 2004).

Radical right parties have been capable to evolve and change which has benefitted them as now they have risen support from every type of worker (Goodwin, 2011). Instead of focusing on the idea of the workers and what category of workers their speech is calling out, they have directed their policies to other controversial issues such as immigration, diversity and Islam (Yilmaz, 2012). Cultural diversity – by way of the presence of immigrants in European societies – has been blamed to have undermined welfare system (Kundnani, 2007).

These far-right parties look for a certain type of voters. While focusing on target groups in not new practice in politics, the far-right prey on those consumed by anxiety, fear and reject minorities like immigrants or foreigners. Usually, this audience asks for stronger policies, tougher orders, laws and measures. Traditionally, this vision of minorities has been aligned with the right rather than the left parties but again, these parties have focused on current issues to attract voters from every political spectrum (Mayer, 2012).

Explanations of how and why the populist far-right mobilization has occurred include the following points: the polarization of the political spectrum and the lack of trust of the political representation system, erasing the left-right distinctions towards a new major threat, anxieties created by structural changes, popular discontent with political system and the aggravation and politicization of immigration issues (Yilmaz, 2012).

Once the labour parties started to implement neoliberal policies, promoting free markets and hiding growing inequalities, the left-right political division disappeared which opened a new opportunity to radical right parties letting them focus on new issues (Goodwin, 2011). Then populism turned and changed completely its nature, coming from the right and focusing on a new threat to Europe's cosmopolitism: Muslims. Far-right parties took advantage of it and built their agendas around immigration, immigration is what they appeal to voters generating more anxiety against the system (Yilmaz, 2012).

Their ideological framework emphasizes "nativism" as the conception that promotes the idea that states should be populated just by natives, and that foreigners are a serious threat to the

states well-being and homogeneity (ethnic nationalism). All the far-right voters have in common the anti-foreigner's attitude and the rejection of immigrants, in particular Muslims. These parties present themselves as the protectors of Western democratic liberal values against the Islam's fanaticism and intolerance (Mayer, 2012).

European right-wing political parties attribute the Islam world differences (culture, ethnicity, values, religion, social institutions) to European societies to make Europeans citizens aware of the "threat" that Islam supposes, highlighting issues like culture, tradition and obviously religion (Kundnani, 2007). Their success has been done by elevating domestic welfare issues through and an anti-immigration discourse on national sovereignty, linking this question to the threat of the Islamic world (Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou, 2014)

Populist right have managed to paralyse the opposition, which have accepted the Islamophobic/xenophobic perspective, establishing a racist hegemonic vision. Far-right parties have managed to frame media debates, persuading population and even other political parties to accept the premises of their perspective on immigration. The right turned the immigration issue in a cultural question, pushing it to the centre of their political discourse in an environment already debating the Islam issue (Yilmaz, 2012), as it can be seen in the case of France.

1.2. Jean-Marie and Marie Le Pen – Front National (FN) in France

The Front National (FN), now called Rassemblent National[1], is a French far-right party considered one of the main logistic forces behind racism in France. When it was first founded in 1972 by Jean-Marie Le Pen – with the only aim of unifying all French nationalist movements – it was not very successful, yet in the 1982-1983 elections it advances started finally breaking through the 1984 European election (Veugelers, 1997). Ever since it broke through the 1984 elections, the FN scores in national elections have increased along time, in 2012 the FN led by Marine Le Pen scored the best result in national elections ever achieved – including in her discourse the concern of the amount of Muslim immigrants, foreigners' right to vote, restoration of death penalty and opposition to the EU – , showing how polarized are European societies (Mayer, 2012). Marine Le Pen is not ashamed of statements such as "*behind mass*

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[1] The Front National was founded in 1972 by Jean-Marine Le Pen as Front National. In June 2018 the current president Marine Le Pen changed the name's party to *Rassemblent National* to give the party a breath of fresh air. However, this paper will stick to the traditional name of Front National (FN).

immigration, there is terrorism", *"suspend all legal immigration"* (BBC, 2017) or *"Immigration and Islam are not a chance of France but a tragedy"* (The Local, 2017). It ought to remember that her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, once said Ebola would solve Europe's immigration problem (Willsher, 2014).

Again, the FN voters are no longer from a right or left spectrum, highly educated or low educated, working-class voters conform its electorate as well as educated people; which supports the weakening of the left-right cleavage explained before. Nowadays, French society sees EU as an open door to threats, insecurity and economic crisis, the lack of security and confidence forces to look for protection which is what Le Pen is trying to sell.

The FN focuses on national identity, security and domestic welfare issues through an anti-immigrant rhetoric, attracting voters from every political spectrum due to its capacity of adaptation to current fears and issues (Turner, 2017). Their voters reject immigrants strongly, calling out for law and order, high level of intolerance, embrace ethnocentric-authoritarian attitudes as well was the strong opposition towards globalisation and European integration (Mayer, 2012).

2. Front National's position regarding immigration and multiculturalism

The latest European political trends are a growing national and international concern as they manifest a striking resentment towards the Muslim presence in the continent. Equally, this is not only worrisome for Muslims communities who peacefully reside in Europe, but also for those organisations that watch out for human rights. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the 9/11 incidents, London attacks, Madrid train bombings and the numerous attacks within European cities, have spread panic among European citizens and steered the birth of new Islamophobic expressions and trends (Mohammed, 2014).

Within the European territory, the regions adjoining the Mediterranean Sea, have established singular relationships with the Muslim world and its citizens. Frequently, when speaking about Muslim presence in Europe, it is directed to Maghreb migrants, leaving out of the counting the high number of conversions to Islam by European residents. Certain national circumstances based on historical situations must be taken into account when considering Islamophobia (Doyle, 2011).

Leaving aside plurality, diversity and ethno-cultural differences amid the Muslim collective, the rejection of Islam has spread like wildfire since the 1990s in the European political sphere, rescheduling the European ideological and political reality. There is a tendency among nationalist, populist, right-wing or far-right European parties to include a strong anti-Muslim component in their electoral programs. These tendencies arise both at the same time as the theory of European Islamisation and the constraint of stopping it (Mohammed, 2014).

European Islamisation theory argues that Islam and its faithful believers, tend to neutralise the national cultures of hosting states. This theory is supported by the extreme nationalist movements, but surprisingly by certain political parties that advocate social progressivism. Islamisation unifies parties since it feeds xenophobia's regeneration in Europe. These Islamophobic and xenophobic trends target their discourse to certain factions of the population that are usually unhappy with the social context, especially after *trigger events* such as terrorist bouts in France (Britton, 2015).

Not only do we find political parties of this political tendency in France, it is a phenomenon spread throughout the European continent. Marine Le Pen followed the example of her Nordic analogue of *"demystification"*, in order to win people over it. Chambon (2012, cited in Mohammed, 2014) illustrated how Marine Le Pen followed the same steps as the leader of the Danish People's Part to redevelop the constituency of the FN. According to Chambon, Marine Le Pen renamed and restructured the party making it an eye-catching option for the population. Both Le Pen and the leader of the Danish People's Party, turned their political groupings into indispensable and necessary coalitions for the liberal and conservative right. So as to be a necessary support they implemented certain measures articulated in the following way: no official contact with xenophobic movements (neither homophobic, anti-Semitic nor extreme); offering a unified image without internal dissidence and lack of support; spotlighting Muslim immigration and return to a greater French nation and the defence of the well-fare State; by the opposition to multiculturalism as it undermines the security of the state (Mohammed, 2014).

Marine Le Pen and FN have formally separated themselves from the extremists, far-right, radicals and anti-Semitic movements. This strategy has been labelled as an intent to cleanse the party, although it seems to be more a formalisation of her new stratagem (Reynié, 2016; Shields, 2013). However, that has not stopped from connecting immigration with criminality

as the FN portrays immigrants as the cause of crime, especially after the wave of Islamic terrorism that has shaken Europe in last years (Ivaldi and Dutozia, 2018).

"Demystification" or *"Dédiabolisation"* initiated by Marine Le Pen after being elected in an internal election in early 2011, had a main goal which was gaining republican legitimacy, trying to leave behind its refractory and cold-shouldered outsider appearance. Le Pen's slogan also targeted her opponent to the Front National elections, she tried to present him as the extremist old-fashioned and old generation that would plunge the party, rather than presenting a new package of reforms (Almeida, 2013).

The Islamisation theory varies among States and regions yet has basic sharing features (Moran, 2017). These common features which it is based on are the following (Doyle, 2011; Almeida, 2013):
- The so-called "*Islamic demographic boom*" (i.e., youth bulge) a demographic threat due to the high fertility rates. Particularly, this one was developed in the 1950s regarding the influx of Muslim immigrants and their growing visibility.
- Islam's alleged intention of "*invading*" the West through the creating of worship places, births and Muslims markets.
- The need to defend Europe's civilization, progress and democracy. This necessity of protection has been the sustenance of the rhetorical and ideological renewal of nationalist parties across Europe. They proclaim themselves as women protectors, homosexuals, apart from presenting Islam as a monolithic block that is identified with the European society antithesis.

This last feature that underlies the theory of Islamisation has also been adopted by political parties that were not necessarily right-wing ones. In addition, intellectuals, political scientists, democratic movements or governments have mentioned "the Muslim problem", recognising Islamophobic attitudes (Ruiz Estrada & Koutronas, 2016). As in the case of France, it has been repeatedly become a political consensus that has ushered the capitalisation of populist movements (Mohammed, 2014).

In case of arguing that Islam is a problem for Europe, it should be done based upon the increase of violent outbreaks on European soil in recent years under Islamic discourse (London, Madrid, Paris, etc.), as well as the shifts on the practice of Islam, such as the building of more worship

places, or the newly presence of Salafism – more conservative and radical branch of Islam. I note, not all violent attacks suffered are perpetrated by Muslims, there have been others carried out by Catholics or political groups.

The political creation of a "European Muslim problem" has specific effects on the lives of Muslims. Depending on the European region in which someone places themselves the problem will be faced in one way or another; in France due its *laïcité* the issue of the Islamic veil or headscarf or gender equality amid Muslims are the bases of the debate. In fact, France has approached the issue through the legal solution of banning it (Laitin, 2010; Doyle, 2011; Lequesne, 2016), which has been seen by many as an illiberal and discriminatory measure.

It is fundamental and vital to recognise Muslims in the European political construction in the current context, in which weight and relevance of Islamophobic postulates advance alarmingly, even entering the European Parliament. Member States are not responding in an encouraging way to the Muslim population inhabiting Europe. The situation is beyond aggravated by the revolutions in the Arab world post 2011 and the radicalisation of certain Islamic political parties that refer to the use of violence against civilians and the Western world.

2.1. Laïcité in France. A basic conceptual analysis.

More than a century has gone by since the 1905 French law, yet today the *laïcité de combat* is invoked once again. The difference between 1905 and the current French society is one: in 1905 *laïcité de combat* was legitimised and aimed against the intransigent Catholicism in order to neutralise the clerical threat – a recurring political battle in the history of France since the processes of "dechristianisation" of 1792-93 (Almeida, 2017).

Still, today, the French republic is not able to fight against a new clerical "threat", as this analogy between the two Abrahamic religions is problematical. French Islam is of Sunni majority, and it does not present a virtually strong political counterculture to French republicanism. In other words, French Islam does not have its own structures of socialization and practical means – unlike the Catholic Church – and the presence of formal clergy in Islam is conspicuous by its absence, which makes the identification of a clerical enemy in Islam an arduous task (Almeida, 2017, p.260). In the same way that terror outbreaks based on religious

reasons, it cannot be plausibly considered a phenomenon that represents the attitude of every Muslim residing in France (Almeida, 2017).

Hence, the indeterminacy of a clerical danger has favoured the appearance and fixation of external signs that in theory present a fundamental threat against the Republic (for instance: the headscarf, burkinis, long skirts, niqab, hijab, etc.).

The allegedly crisis of France's secularism could be considered a result of the failure to adapt the key narratives associated to a substantial reading of the French secularism of the 21st century. If the connotation and meaning of French secularism continues to mean the struggle of republicanism against those communities whose loyalty is, by definition, uncertain and must then continue to apply emancipatory measures (such as the prohibition of religious symbols in public spaces), the FN will not only have successfully achieved entering the field of republican legitimacy, but it will have become the French republican party quintessentially (Almeida, 2017).

2.2. Front National's evolution

According to Almeida (2013), to be capable of understanding the transformations in the Front National's agenda, is useful to portray some principles linked to the shifts made:

a. political conflict has multiple scopes that never obey an identical path;
b. internal forces amid political parties restrict the possible political transformations;
c. certain issues are more relevant to the electorate; and
d. political parties are capable of modifying their framing yet retain the same ideological and strategic preferences.

So, FN first focused on the rejection of the traditional French political system. Immigration started to be a central issue in the 1978 legislative elections campaign. Following 1978, FN expanded its focus on not just immigration but anti-globalisation and Eurosceptic agenda. As an example of the fourth principle, the FN always opposed to abortion by promising that if they were elected it would be banned by their government. However, in 2007 there was no sign of opposing to abortion nor any intention of banning it. Same example with *laïcité* as the FN used to identified itself with Christian values, but with Marine Le Pen's leadership that image was left behind. Still, *laïcité* for Le Pen does not have a meaning of secularising the state but of

forbidding any civic exhibition of being part of another community other than France and presenting Islam as an enemy or potential threat to France's security (Almeida, 2013).

Under Marine Le Pen's campaign some ideological changes that are relevant to this work must be mentioned, such as the presentation of a poster in which Marine Le Pen transfers two essential features of her party renewal plan: *"a conception of nationality purged of racial premises and a newly found devotion to laïcité."* (Almeida, 2013, pp.171). Moreover, Marine Le Pen embraces all French no matter what their religion or social background is. Nevertheless, she still distinguishes between two different groups of migrants: on one hand, the ones capable of assimilating into French society and values who usually come from Poland or South Africa. On the other hand, those migrants coming from North and Sub-Saharan Africa who are characterised by not being capable of assimilating and adapting themselves to the French society (Almeida, 2013).

However, when Marine Le Pen took over the leadership of the FN people believed that because of the same surname, Jean-Marine Le Pen's rhetoric and thoughts would still remain within the part, yet his daughter took a new path introducing basic changes toward a new populism. This new populism is developed from social concerns on globalisation, clash of cultures, maintenance of the well-fare state and aging population (Reynié, 2016). Contrary to old populism which opposed to liberal democracy, Marine Le Pen's insists that she herself is the guardian of liberty and the French as a whole, blaming the flaws on protecting the French values and rules of democracy by the other political forces. What is more, she continues to accuse the other political parties for being unworried about Islamism and the arouse of multiculturalism.

The current populism wave is based on feigning concern for the critical state of secularism, gender equality and freedom of speech and press; that is, in the concern and need to protect fundamental freedoms that allegedly are terribly threatened by Islam and immigrants. That facade of protection of fundamental freedoms, which enables them not to base their discourse on xenophobic or racist statements, is a form of neo-racism. Now, they self-proclaimed themselves as protectors of journalists, intellectuals and defenders of liberties (Reynié, 2016).

Marine Le Pen has made, direct or indirect, statements or comments on Islam which can be comprehended as Islamophobic, such as when she misleadingly declared that all meat products

distributed in a French region are slaughtered following a Muslim ritual or when she compared Muslim public prayers to an occupation form (Reynié, 2016). Again, *laïcité* for the FN must be understood in relation to Islam, as Islam is negatively framed (Almeida, 2013).

Back in December 2010 when the leader of the FN referred to Islam as a force of "occupation" she was condemned to follow her father path, but she was opposing to Jean-Marie's. Marine Le Pen follows the same lines as the intellectual and Italian author Oriana Fallaci, who strongly believed that immigration is a new contemporary form of fascism. Le Pen states that she follows Joan of Arc example, by opposing to the anti-French forces same as the French Army battled in the Second World War (Reynié, 2016).

Oriana Fallaci (1929-2006) was an Italian journalist and intellectual, famous for her different works. In the last years of her life Fallaci published *La rabia y el orgullo,* where she takes the destruction caused by the September 11 attacks to the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, venturing to issue an alarm call over Islam. Fallaci emphasised the open and historical struggle for world domination between the West and Islam, in addition to the religious and cultural incompatibility between both.

Focusing on that premise, Fallaci – in this essay useful to understand Islamophobic rhetoric – exposed and reeled her thinking. Fallaci continued to explain how imams are the tip of the iceberg of international terrorism, and like Marine Le Pen, she believed that Halal butchers in places where meat was sacrificed according to the Koran. The Italian essayist warns the reader about the danger of Islamic immigration, alleges that it is a premeditated form of invasion. By using Italy as an example, Fallaci explains the moral and intellectual disaster that the West is suffering; affirming that the West is turning a deaf ear and does not want to see the danger of Muslims, described as people determined to conquer through barbarism.

The main issue with 'heritage populism' – as Reynié labels it – is that it has spread all over Europe and France seems to follow the same steps. Now, what concerns many is that if the FN starts condemning immigration in name of democracy, it will be hard to dissuade people from voting them. On top of that, economic and financial crisis mismanagement of the Government enhance the appeal of heritage populism as a worthy substitute. Working-class and middle-class families are voters who are concerned about living standards and to annihilate the threats to them, therefore there's a wide range of potential voters.

Marine Le Pen has demonstrated she is perfectly capable of attracting these working-class voters by putting forth an agenda that includes working-class greater worries in a format mixing nationalism and socialism. In the presidential campaign in 2011 in Nice, she showed France that she was capable of doing so. She blamed the lack of job to the insufficiency of pay levels, defended the welfare state but only for the French even reaching the point of restricting it and ensuring only the French would benefit from it *"France for the French!"* (Shields, 2013).

The threatening enemies Marine Le Pen is ambitious to battle are virtual enemies such as globalisation, massive immigration influx, technocracy of the international organisations (like the International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and the European Union). Islam of course, attempts to destroy France's secularisation and she pledges loyalty to *laïcité* and to do anything in order to defend it.

In fact, as Dominique Reynié (2016, p.54) notifies: *"in the December 2015 regional elections – held within a month after the Bataclan attacks in Paris – the FN attained an all-time high with 27.7 percent, finishing ahead of both the rightist coalition (26.6 percent) and the Socialist-led alliance (23.1 percent)."* Nevertheless, time proved Reynié wrong as the author stated that Le Pen *"will in all likelihood reach the presidential runoff"* (Reynié, 2016, p.56), which left the European Union released and was like a breath of fresh air to society, implying that multiculturalism and tolerance are still alive.

3. Islamophobia

3.1. Analysis of the term

The world of Islam is often seen as the antithesis of the West due to lack of progress and development compared to the Western world. Islam is seen as a failure within this context because of human rights violations, gender inequality and its incompatibility with democracy among other factors.

Islamophobia is the conveyed image of Islam as an enemy. The negative perception of Islam is based on the idea that Islam in general is the incarnation of a fundamental threat to core Western values. Muslims are considered the enemy image par excellence, an ominous group or community threatening another group, which in this case is European society (Bravo López,

2011). Still there is no consensus on the definition of the term according to the European Union report on 'Discrimination and Islamophobia'.

The term designates the fear of the Islamic world and the judgments of the Muslims as a dangerous enemy that supposes a threat to the Western world. Islam is labelled as a bloc dull of hostility (Rana,2007). Islamophobia is an aggressive attitude against the Muslim community and Islam, prompted by the demonization of its image and Europe's fear of failed well-being (Bravo López,2011). Despite what is believed, Islamophobia is not necessarily a form of religious intolerance – European countries have decreased the level of religiosity and claim to be secular countries – yet another form of cultural and political racist rejection (Bravo López, 2011).

Either way, tensions between non-Muslims in Western Countries or Muslim states with Non-Muslim states, the general attitude is based on simplification (e.g., "most Muslims are terrorists, they oppose to diversity or debate", etc.) and alarmism (e.g., "Muslims threat our security"). In order to explain these existing tensions a historical background has been used – in a way in which the past is a symbol and reference for our days.

The image of Islam was dramatically aggravated by the 9/11, Madrid and London attacks, putting it in the spotlight, demonstrating the existence of terrorist networks around Europe and not only in Muslims countries, as well as bringing to debate different issues such as the secularity of the state, oppression of Muslim women and how Muslims respond to radicalisation and judgmental states in the media (Doyle, 2011).

In the past there were many conflicts between Islam and Christianity, however the past should not rule the present but teach a lesson. So, once Islam was an enemy to the West, yet it is not now. Islam is not like Communism or the Ottoman Empire trying to reconquer Europe or win segments of the so-called "West" (Allen, 2016). Therefore, the question here is the following one: is Islam faith a real threat to the West or are Muslims as a group of people, usually immigrants, the "real threat to the West"? According to Halliday (1999), the press – political, scholars or the news – attack widely Muslims but not Islam as a faith as the author claims there are no publications questioning the Koran or Muhammad.

In relation to Halladay, Islamophobia is not the fear of a faith but the fear of a people. The author claims that "anti-Muslimism" would be a better term to use regarding the matter. (Halliday, 1999, p.898). Another generalised flaw of the West is thinking of Islam as a whole, as one united faith so there is one thing to direct the phobia to. As opposed to assumed there is not one Islam, as there are different branches or communities. Additionally, the main critiques exposed by Islam are related to politics or society and have nothing to do with religion. (Halliday,1999).

Islamophobia cannot be considered just a psychological or cultural problem, it is also a political problem that is worsened with ignorance and lack of education. Here, the mistake is to agree and accept the generalised negative value judgments on Muslims. There is not one true Muslim answer, but many of them, not all terrorist are Muslims or all Muslims terrorists (Halliday, 1999). The haphazardness of the term has a moral dimension that is able to stigmatize everything related to Muslims. The term is highly interlinked with 'xenophobia', understood as the hatred outlook towards foreigners and migrants (Zúquete,2008).

3.2.Islamophobia in France

This term, that splits society considerably, was born from tensions emerged in France because of the need to reconcile industrial society, immigration, colonial empire and the French state (Lebourg, 2007). The origin of the term is set on the connection of the discussion on radicalisation to a reflection on the post-industrial and post-modern evolution of French society – during the post-war period and the following industrialization period of the country the transition to a new economy and the immigration programme clashed (Doyle, 2011). Given that, French intellectual debates on Islamic radicalisation started and were and have been enriched with different situations and historic events.

Along Islamophobia, concepts such as ethnicity and xenophobia emerged between 1825 and 1901, however it is not until the nineteenth century, the Iranian Revolution and the 9/11 attacks that the term was used on daily basis or used as a tool for political actors such as the French National Front (Lebourg, 2016). Moreover, this term can also be used to mute critiques of national states and elites same as what imperialism did (Halliday, 1999).

In all fairness, it is true that the target of the 9/11 attacks were the United States – which is considered to be the central player against the Islamic representation of the world – yet the executors were, in a way, connected to Europe. These events did nothing but bolster the terror of Islam, already triggered by the 1979 Iranian Revolution, resulting in the unacceptance of Muslims minorities as a permanent piece of the social scenery of European societies (Doyle, 2011).

Due to the past colonies in North Africa, France currently counts with the major Muslim minority across Europe – 6.5%-8% of the French population was Muslim in 2001 (Doyle, 2011, p. 476) – and was the first Western state to deal with the integration of Islamic community in their society. What differentiates France from the other European Member states is its own peculiar notion of secularity, as its political model of secularity is often categorised of illiberal when concerning religious matters. *Laïcité* or secularity for the French is characterised by the intolerance towards any type of expression religious faith in public (Lebourg, 2016). The 'conspicuous signs of religious identity' law in 2004 spotlighted the prohibition for girls to wear headscarfs in public educational institutions, more recently the ban of the niqab and burqa in public spaces put in the world's eyes these secularisation measures.

These measures highlight the differences on how France understands secularity and modern democracy in comparison to other Western countries (Joppke, 2009). According to Rosanvallon (2007), the clash between an intransigent ideology that emphasises the primacy of the state, and a series of pragmatic adjustments carried out throughout history regarding social and cultural pluralism, is what distinguishes France from other states. French policies regarding religious matters, particularly Islamic issues, brings under the spotlight a new European tendency in which Islam is seen not only as a threat to security but also to its identity. Thus, French legal measures are nothing but an intense expression of the trend.

The roots of this tendency come back to the 1960s and 1970s, when different governments of Europe received purposefully a large influx of unskilled labour force coming from Muslim countries. Moreover, as Doyle (2011) affirms, these unqualified workers major aspiration was the self-fulfilment which can provoke a kind of frustration that allows to lay the seeds of religious radicalisation and reach this community of immigrants triggering their own specific alienation to their Muslim identity.

In order to comprehend Islam in the contemporary France, it is necessary to look back to the 1990s. Back then, extreme right-wing elites fuelled the discussion over the hijab. The National Front not only boosted the controversy, but also justified anti-immigration by imploring the national threat the Muslim culture abided to their personal integrity.

The National Front attributed the different and complex social problems to merely a question of race, pointed out cultural differences, and proclaimed itself the defender of the French identity. At the time, the political parties defended and promoted Europeanization as a feasible and practical solution to economic problems hitting France. As Europeanization was consolidated, France's national identity was targeted and attacked by immigration. The previously mentioned immigration program, instead of being seen as a positive and work tool for economic growth and sustainable development, became a threat to French employment and society. In addition, the nervousness among the French society – specifically after seeing the augmentation of minor criminality and delinquency in a segment of the French youth unemployed and excluded from the employment market – were justified merely in ethno-cultural terms (Doyle, 2011).

As a matter of fact, it is important to mention that Islam is not the only religion or faith that the French society or government has legislated about. In the nineteenth century, Catholicism was perceived as a threat to the "*French civil religion of patriotism*" (Doyle, 2011, p.478). This intolerance against religion is not just towards Islam yet any form of religious congregation. For this, in 1905 the Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State was passed, in order to establish diversity, religious freedom by inhibiting any display of religious identity.

The concept of State neutrality regarding religious matters can lead to confusions, misunderstandings and finally the hard conceptualisation of issues such as cultural diversity. Besides, lack of knowledge of the French Muslim profile has fed the perception of Islam as a threat and its incompatibility with the French secularity and Western society, which has been taken advantage of by the media and political parties like the National Front. However, under the administration of President Chirac, the Stasi report – commended to a commission of experts – came out aiming the goal to look for measures which promote peaceful application of the French principle of *laïcité* (Chirac, 2003).

The commission, chaired by Bernard Stasi, tried to tackle through the report two hitches: the anti-Muslim attitude boosted by the National Front and the segregation and alienation of young Muslims. One of the highlighted points made by the Commission were the flaws of consecutive administrations to promote the social integration in order to avoid radicalisation of the second generation of Muslims. This second generation of immigrants that is made up by young people, mostly Muslim or with Arab backgrounds, faced different obstacles and difficulties when it comes to find a job (Doyle, 2011).

These difficulties are disproportionate since the labour market is very competitive, as well as they compete in a very hostile social and labour context, usually on disadvantage in comparison with young Europeans – who are supported by populist political parties as a way to combat immigration (Doyle, 2011). In fact, these unemployed young people presence in France is the result of the immigration program implemented by the French government and whose magnitude was impossible to anticipate. Despite the financial incentives offered by the government to return to their home countries, workers used the right to family reunion to settle permanently in the country. However, these reunited families were segregated by the size of this collective influx and the lack of preparedness of the government concerning the immigration issue (Doyle, 2011).

The Stasi Commission realised that the secularity issue was highly linked to the cultural results of segregation. For this, the Commission made 26 policy recommendations in order to tackle the question of Muslims immigrants, these suggestions protected the neutrality of the State as well as the plurality of faiths. Nevertheless, the Government did not take into account the goal of the recommendations and only followed one regarding the ban of religious symbols in the education atmosphere (Doyle, 2011; Zuber, 2004).

 The media played a key role at the time, influencing the government and directing the debate in its own interest. A way of doing this, for instance, was building an opinion of the issue, based on the opinion of biased experts which led to the rise of Islamophobic tendencies in both political and social areas. The media directed the debate towards the question of 'female oppression' justifying or alleging that the hijab or headscarf was a symbol of male oppression towards women, this symbol was illiberal and not democratic (Tévanian, 2005). Furthermore, not only the media alleged these Islamic symbols were signs of male oppression against

women, but also, they claimed and raised the idea that other Islamic clothes such as the burqa or the niqab found a risk to the state security.

The *Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France* (CCIF) which was established to argue and combat the devilish image and representation of Islam in the Western society, noticed that one of the most frequently assisted debates is the hijab. Furthermore, the CCIF also noticed that women wearing the hijab are likely to be targets as they are easily identified as Muslims. President Sarkozy claimed that Islam should not be conceived as a threat to the French but went on to discuss the question of women's rights (Sarkozy, 2015).

3.3. Redefining 'European identity'

On account of understanding the question of Islamophobia, addressing the issue of the European identity is needed. These questions are essential to understand the Islamophobic attitudes:

a) What constitutes the Western identity?
b) What place does religion take in understanding European modernity?

It seems that Islam challenges European identity, due to the highly secularisation trends that this continent has lived lately. The public sphere has adopted a particular attitude towards religion which could be summed up in the classic division between Church and Government. This separation between Church and Government could be considered the keystone of Europe's identity (Lilla, 2008).

The so-called European identity is interconnected to the European values. These so-called "European values" were born from the attempt of the European elites to secure the legitimacy of the European Union calling or appealing to common values shared among the Member States, these values are committed to tolerance, freedom, multiculturalism and division of powers and so on. Thus, Islam subverts the European identity and values, or at least that is what the media and political elites have made believed. Authors like Doyle or Burgat claim that this pluralist view of society is incompatible with the current reality.

Likewise, Burgat (2003) explains the difference between Islam and Islamism. Islamism is the political and religious tendency raised in North Africa since the 1970s – as a reaction to the autocratic regimes imposed by the West in the Middle East. These regimes tried to implement

modernization counting on the support of the West and were seen in these States as cultural violation, so Islamism promoted the Islamic form of modernisation.

Burgat (2003) continues to explain that Islamism led to radicalisation due to the modernisation that Western elites wanted to impose or implement in those countries through Muslim elites or autocratic regimes. Islamism and those who embodied it only had social and religious purpose when they first started, yet outstanding the success they had among people, elites (supported by Westerners) implemented despotic measures that inevitably triggered radicalisation. This sequence supports Burgat's theory that violent radicalisation of Islamism was a reaction against the post-colonial elites supported by Western elites.

In the French case, similar to the European case, the understanding of modernity is characterised by a permanent battle between the conception of religion restricted to a private sphere and the collective life without religion. It establishes a hierarchy; the nation-state is more important than religion promoting the 'civil religion'. In the French nation-state boosted individualism as each person acquired autonomy from tradition and religion can only be practised in an individual sphere.

Despite this religion freedom in everyone's individual sphere, France is yet to embrace pluralism. The French are suspicious of any kind of religion radicalism, suspicious of Catholics and Islam, particularly Salafism as it is considered to be a radicalised and stricter version of Islam which promoted aggression against the West. Individualism and practising religion privately, has prompted the decline of religious practice regarding religions such as Christianity or Catholicism but coincided in time with the revival of Islam in second and third generation of Muslims living in Europe (Doyle, 2011).

In France, the interactions amid State, society, religion and market, are essential to the spread of Islamophobia. This is caused by the fragmentation of the society in order to maintain the Welfare State, based on multiculturalism. Hence, Islamophobia in France can be perfectly understood regarding the cultural structures of its society, which poses the question that if this liberal and secularised state is actually compatible with postmodern societies and Arab-Muslim immigrants (Lebourg, 2016). This postmodern society divides and has prompted segmentation of the social and political French reality, resulting in the exploitation and hypertrophy of the term Islamophobia.

For these Muslims born in Europe but suffering segregation, Islam is helpful to build their own identity and connect themselves with their "true origin". Building their Muslim identity is a way of scape or to fight segregation. For this marginalized section, Islam has guided them and, in most cases, enables them to live peacefully alongside society, yet in others a neo-fundamentalist view of Islam boosts and provokes radicalisation and the desire of fighting European societies or escaping from them (Doyle,2011).

3.4.Muslim identity

In addition to the historical differences mentioned above, the question of 'the Muslim identity' must be regarded too. All those whose religion is Islam, have the common belief that their religion is part of their identity. That is, they celebrate Muslim holidays, they name their children after with Islamic names and assiduously practice the five principles of Islam (Halliday,1999).

Worthy of mention is the feeling among Muslims of sharing a common connection or identity with oppressed Muslims around the globe. In many cases, Islam becomes the fundamental form of political and social identity; hence, part of the Muslim population come to understand Islam as a lifeline from European societies. Still, this is not the only interpretation of Islam as there are ethnic divisions within them, that sometimes weigh more than a unique religious identity. Therefore, Islam is not useful when explaining the critical social situation of the communities, but simply useful to highlight the bad (Doyle, 2011).

Therefore, the affirmation of a shared unique 'Muslim identity' is a distortion if what is sought is the primacy of it. Moreover, if it implies a single interpretation of that tradition, it can be classified as a distortion too (Fukuyama, 2006). Probably the greatest damage of the Islam's invocations regarding traditions, community and identity, is that it distorts how Islam is conceived by other collectives and what is meant by Islam. The problem of fundamentalism, whether political or religious, is that they claim to be the true interpreters of an immutable or perennial given, therein lies the legitimacy of their authority (Halliday, 1999).

It can be reasoned that, this representation and study of Muslim societies offers a negative vision, categorised of patriarchal and sectarian. Presenting Islam as a one true answer, might lead to the misunderstanding of Islamism as a radicalism synonymous. Islamism can be

interpreted in two ways, one intransigent and oppressive (small minority, like the Taliban's interpretation of women), and another compatible with modernity and democratic societies (Halliday, 1999).

Since the last half of the twentieth century, the growth and visibility of the Muslim population in Europe has increased significantly (Laitin, 2010). The growth of this community is not just from migration, but also fertility rate. The problem is that the growing Muslim population usually lives in ghettos at the outskirts of the cities, so they are isolated, and interaction with host societies does not often occur (Savage, 2004).

The isolation fosters sentiments of disapproval, even hate, and facilitates radicalisation (Fukuyama, 2006). Radicalisation towards radical Islam must be understood as a quest for identity in politics that explains the process of radicalisation. When analysing this community, distinction between generations must be regarded:

- First Muslim generation: they carry their traditional social practices with them, which means that they have not made a psychological break with their land of birth (Fukuyama, 2006).
- In contrast, second-generation clash with Western societies because they fear that the integration and association with these societies, public demand and institutions will strip their Islamic identity (Savage, 2004). In addition, Islam is a very legalistic religion which makes it even harder to fit in with Western values. Moreover, they are influenced by their parents' traditional practices and become disapproving of integration. The result? A generation stuck between two clashing cultures, the appeal of jihadism and re-Islamisation – supporting supranational organizations instead of Islamic movements (Roy, 2003) – and embracing even more their religion.

Muslims feel the price of integration in European societies is very high, because if they do, they might not be allowed to maintain their Islamic identity and practices. Most of them feel that Europe poses a great pressure to conform to its values. According to Fukuyama, the *"Muslim identity becomes a matter of inner belief rather than outward conformity to social practice"* (Fukuyama, 2006: pp.10). Thus, Islamic identity is given by the individual personality and the social environment surrounding the individual – family, imam, political

structure, society, etc.) – and unfortunately, they feel that Europe does not support it (Fukuyama, 2006).

> The biggest mistake of Western societies, whether influenced or not by the media and xenophobic elites, has been to accept just one interpretation of the Muslim response. In other words, to understand that the true interpretation of Islam is the most conservative one. Furthermore, this error is dramatically aggravated by the association and identification of Muslims with terrorist or fundamentalist groups – often demonised by the media or academics such as the work of Gilles Kepel *"Allah in the West"*, that according to Halliday (1999, p.898) misunderstands and misrepresents the Muslim community of France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Europe claims to be a union of liberal societies and the acceptance of multiculturalism, celebrating the lack of identity due to pluralism, yet it is a fact that Europe's identity still exists and is probably the main reason why integration is so hard (Fekete, 2004). Its cosmopolitan self-image of tolerance toward difference is doubtful when Muslims come to terms, it is clear that Christian values are still present in decision-making (Laitin, 2010).

It is obvious that Europe has failed to include this community which not only is the tipping point of terrorism, hate and violence but has also opened a gap for far-right political parties (Fukuyama, 2006). Europe discriminates Muslim community in many different atmospheres such as employment, education or housing apart from dealing with issues like poverty, racism, discrimination and violence, the aftermath is the embrace of Islam as a badge of identity, despise of liberal and democratic values, and the development of Europhobia (Savage, 2004).

4. Media press and intellectuals on Islamophobia

As previously mentioned, the perpetuation of the fear and demonization of Islam carried out by the media and part of the intellectuals and scholars, has aggravated the radicalisation of politicians and society towards the Muslim world. Likewise, media exposure is an elemental element in moulding people's emotional reactions, media coverage can trigger the arouse of anxiety and fear. According to Oksanen et al. (2018), the higher the amount of time a person spends watching TV or coverage of an event, the more this event becomes part of their lives, like the case with terrorism which is an example of fear of crime and media effects.

Media press grants society access to information enabling citizens to form biased assumptions and opinions on different issues. Therein lies the medias power to not only reach the masses, by conveying information concerning events, people and places, but also influence society's perception upon these topics (Rane, Ewart & Martinkus, 2014). Hence, the way media press informs people about Islam and the Muslim world is very important. How they frame this matter has direct implications on the understanding, assumptions and perception of the Europeans regarding this collective. Thereby, the power and potential of the media is able to even change the understanding of the Muslim world, creating tensions among societies. Indirectly, the way in which news media informs of events often imposes on people what to think or how to feel about certain matters – thus influencing people's minds. Like this, the way in which the information is drafted and framed may have direct consequences on the socio-political landscape of a given community (Rane et al., 2014).

Similarly, to journalists, who are empowered to intervene in how readers understand the news through writing and framing, news editors are vested and determine what is considered prevalent and what the audience needs to be informed about (Nevalsky, 2015).

Then, the main issue with "Westerners" covering news from the "Muslim" world is not the inaccuracy, but the focus and generalization on the actions of individual or group of radical Muslims responsible for acts of violence. Evidently, these acts committed by an individual or small group are purported against Western values in general, so the central problem is the attention on these actions and the lack of any other. Thenceforth, what the audience receives is a narrow perspective which leads to the building of the Muslim radical, fanatical and terrorist stereotype. Unfortunately, this stereotype does not represent the whole Muslim community as the majority of them are against violence (Morey and Yaqin, 2011).

Western media often focuses on attacks or violent bouts carried out by terrorists with Arabic background or Muslims perpetrated in Europe. However, attacks perpetrated within Muslims countries against the same Muslims are usually not covered by the media. Not only they suffer stigmatization from the West media, but also the current situation on their states of origin. The dialogue with the West has helped realised part of the Muslims the violations of human rights committed, against Muslims themselves in the name of religion (Halliday, 1999).

According to authors like Said, Morey and Yaqin, the problem here is that the Muslim representation by the media does not correspond to the reality. There is a mismatch between media representation of reality and the life of real people. The media press only spotlights on a small group or proportion, especially after the 9/11 attacks. Provided that media press is essential and enables society to know about events, it plays a key role as in how people in the Western world perceive Muslims or people with Arabic background. That is to say, frequently, the so-called "Westerners" have a barely inaccurate knowledge of Islam and Muslims (Rane et al., 2014).

Although the anti-Muslim and Islamophobic discourse started back in 1979 with the Iranian Revolution (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016), the 9/11 attacks and the war on terror dramatically changed the discourse of the media and politicians. The adoption of a new discourse on Islam resulted in even more assumptions and labels to the Islamic religion, drawing on cultural stereotypes and hostility towards Muslims. As said earlier, the media press centred its speech on Muslims and Islam on violence, oppression, terrorism, extremism and a threat to the West well-being (Jackson, 2007). Is not possible to talk about 'Islamophobia' and the media without mentioning 'Islamic terrorism' or other negative labels attached to this religion.

In order to comprehend how the media covers the events three notions must be regarded: "selection, presentation and prevalence of the news" (Rane et al., 2014, p.4). In the lines with what has been said above, how the media covers the Muslims world needs to be understood in the context of *Orientalism*. In is the way of approaching everything related to the Islam world from a stance of opposition, difference, even hostility and confrontation. In particular, Rane et al. (2014) analysed three aspects of the media press coverage:

a) News values: concerning the worth of the events, in other words, it refers to the "value" of an event when choosing stories. The newspaper or media platform will decide if that event is worth regarding the criteria news organization. Here, Galtung and Ruge (1965, cited in Rane et al.,2014) established or identified twelve factors usually followed by the media in order to select events – such as unexpectedness, negativity or elite nations among others. For instance, the Charlie Hebdo attack met all the requirements or twelve factors. Moreover, the media coverage of the event was broadcasting a video of the Kouachi siblings saying, 'We avenged the Prophet Muhammad!', disseminating it in

all news after the attack; which led to reinforce the stereotype of "all Muslims are jihadist" (Połońska-Kimunguyi and Gillespie, 2016).

b) Framing: how they "deliver" the information to the masses. Framing encompasses the selection of the main aspects of the subject that will be covered, this means there will be information left behind and how the media words the event will have important consequences on how it will be interpreted and understood. An example could be the way media press focus on the theoretical threat that immigrants pose to European societies. Spikes on negative attitudes toward Muslim immigrants occur due to the fact that threat triggers the reduction of cognitive functions, in other words, it simplifies people's mindset (Jungkunz et al., 2018).

c) Agenda-setting: refers to the importance given to an event, currently with globalisation internet, social media and media press are more powerful and persuasive, telling people, in some way, what they need to be concerned about. The importance of agenda-setting is the relevance and level of focus they put on an event, as the audience will be beyond concerned about that particular matter (Rane et al, 2014). For instance, coverage of terrorist incidents in European States or the United States are usually on the spotlight of every breaking news, whereas more deadlier attacks in other regions outside the Western countries barely receive any coverage (Jungkunz et al, 2018).

Moreover, according to Jackson (2007), after the 9/11 attacks some assumptions or elements can be acquired from different texts from scholars, politicians or the media press, these assumptions basically agreed with Ahmed and Matthes (2016) research. Firstly, Islam and violence are inherent to each other. They explain this assumption through the division of powers that Christianity carries out, yet Islam does not. However, the majority of Muslims believe in the democracy and division of powers (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007).

Then, *'Political Islam'* and violence are often interlinked due to the lack of division between political powers and religion; even more often the assumption that terrorism is born from radical forms of Islam is heard, and so *'implying that violence is culturally embedded within Islamism'* (Jackson, 2007, p. 404). In the same line with violence, is terrorism, the simple use of "Islamic terrorism" reinforces the connection between both, assuming that terrorism

emerges from religion as far as they fight or commit terror attacks in the name of Allah (Jackson, 2007).

The deep resenting between Islam and the West is also one of the assumptions mentioned by Jackson (2007). The author explains this is caused by the ineffectiveness of the Muslim world to develop economically and achieve modernization. However, Muslims are concerned with their relationship with the West world and believe in cooperation and dialogue between both cultures (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007). As a matter of fact, the most relevant assumption claimed over an over is the national threat to the States' security as politicians take advantage of it and focus their campaigns on it.

Furthermore, this way of covering the Muslim and Islam world has been given the name of *Orientalism* by Edward Said (1978, cited by Rane et al. 2014). *Orientalism* assumes the confrontation between both, West and Islam, due to the lack of progress of the Muslim world. The "Western" media perceives Islam as an antithesis to their values, when the reality is quite simple, Muslims have their own beliefs and traditions that sometimes differ from the Western ones and form their identity. Difference does not necessarily mean confrontation. Islam is often labelled to represent negative events, provoking fear and anxiety among Western societies. *Orientalism* was boosted after the 9/11 attacks, often covering events that try to show evidence of Islam's violation of human rights, mistreatment to women and discordance with democracy.

As shown by Nicolas Lebourg (2016), in the case of France the ideological debate around Islamophobia is intense due to the fact that the debate has been taken by media press and politicians and not by scholars or academic. Lebourg (2016) calls those academics and scientists "first market" and the media press the "second market". As the author state "the hypertrophy of the impact on French society attributed to this conflict has made any impartial assessment of France's tensions impossible, in particular those tensions that involve identity" (Lebourg, 2016, p.6).

Political discourses on issues, such as Islamophobia or Islamic terrorism, are never hegemonic. Scholars, scientists and intellectuals should take on this gap and defy the speech of the media press discourse by including new expressions and leaving behind all those labels and connotations that Islam has (Jackson, 2007). New terms must be used, in order to stop the misunderstanding or the "Muslim world" or "Islam" as not all of them are radicals. In fact,

Islamic values are likeminded with democracy and polls have shown that the vast majority of Muslims would choose democracy over any other political system (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007; Jackson, 2007).

5. The attacks: Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan

Not only has France long been a target of modern jihadist organizations, such as the Islamic State's or al-Qaeda, but also has the largest number of 'foreign fighters' fleeing the country, combatting in Syria and returning to France to plot against the West. France has been a victim of recruited lone-wolfs and also more complex attempts of simultaneous multiple attacks aiming the more amount of fatalities they could.

The year 2015 for France, in terms of security, was a disastrous year. Paris suffered the most lethal attack on European territory since the Madrid bombing on March 11, 2004. The aftermath of the perpetrated attacks in the French capital, inferred that the Islamic State was no longer a regional threat but a global one. In this chapter the Charlie Hebdo and November 13, 2015 attacks will be analysed, as well as the aftermath of the events.

Remarkably, after the January outbreak against Charlie Hebdo magazine and the Kosher supermarket hostage, hundreds of raids revealed that numerous plans proved connections between the Islamic State with "foreign" fighters established and settled in Europe. The provided evidence of these plots exposed that those who pledge loyalty to the Islamic State and Islamic State cadres are way more organised and carefully thought out the planning before executing it (Bogain, 2018). These results in the assumption that these Islamic State fighters take into account the security measures and law enforcement against them. It clearly shows a high level of preparation, changing the trends of the previous terrorist attacks associated to the Iraqi and Syrian context (Brisard, 2015).

Despite the fact that the scale of casualties of the November attacks were way higher than the Charlie Hebdo magazine incident, Charlie Hebdo meant a turning point for France. Charlie Hebdo was described, on the 9th of January 2015, by the newspaper Le Monde as the 9/11 French attacks. Before the November outbreaks, Charlie Hebdo was the worst spell over French territory since 1995, the media framed the attack as the ultimate form of attacking French *laïcité* and freedom of speech, as well as the attackers were French citizens whose radicalisation occurred within the European State (Moran, 2017).

5.1.Charlie Hebdo

Back on January the 7th, 2015, France was traumatised by the unexpected and fatal onslaught on the offices of the Charlie Hebdo magazine. This event occurred after the release of *Submission*, Michel Houellebec's novel, which envisioned France under the sharia law and governed by a Muslim president and appeared on the Charlie Hebdo magazine. Two gunmen burst in the satiric magazine office in Paris and murdered eleven people, including in the recount the editor Stéphane Charbonnier, also known as *"Charb".* During the following couple of days, six more people were killed in terror bouts all over Paris (Velasco, 2015).

Charlie Hebdo did not only mean that the Islamic State and other jihadist organisations became a global threat, but also an attack to France's values of equality, laïcité and equality, as well as an ulterior assault to freedom of expression and speech (Moran, 2017).

As the Charlie Hebdo attack was executed by the two French Algerian siblings, Chérif and Saïd Kouachi, which led to the killing of the staff and a police officer, it was asserted by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Meanwhile, another terrorist, Amedy Coulibaly – who vowed allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, or also called ISIS) and had synchronised his actions with the Kouchi brothers – murdered a police officer prior to the slaying four captives in a Kosher supermarket in the same city. Altogether, the three aggressors were struck by gunshots by the police (Ray, 2018).

Charlie Hebdo was targeted due to the depicting, disrespectful and satiric cartoons and portrait that the magazine featured on the prophet Muhammad. Even after the bombing back in 2011, the Charlie Hebdo magazine still went on running cartoons of the prophet and Islam, because according to them by stopping terrorist would be winning the battle (Majerol, 2015).

The aftermath of the attack commanded an intense escalation in national safekeeping security, with Hollande assuring an 850 million euros to finance the works on counterterrorism. Following the attacks, the number of Islamophobic spells against the Muslim French communities experienced an augmentation. Known that France is the host of the biggest Muslim community in Europe, the spread of Islamophobic incidents is a perturbing development (Velasco, 2015).

In spite of the investment on funding's directed to support counterterrorism, there was another attack to a passenger's train in August. Fortunately, this attack failed even though another militant who pledged to the ISIL burst in the train and fired towards the crowd. The incident was stopped by two United States military citizens that were on holiday. France continued to bomb the territories occupied by the ISIL in Syria (Ray, 2018).

The train attempt was not the only one that year, as further on will be seen, jihadist organisations were determined to target France, even more after it joined the international coalition in Syria. Security services were able to stop numerous plots against France in 2015; yet, unfortunately, the November bouts were unstoppable (Brisard, 2015).

5.2.November 13, 2015

The attacks took place in Paris on the evening of November 13,2015. These attacks left 130 deaths and more than 300 people were badly injured, classified as the worst terrorist attacks in French history (Bogain, 2018).

The French authorities intuited in a way, that sooner or later, France would be target of terror attacks within the state, without knowing when, where or how it was only a matter of time until it happened. Charlie Hebdo on January 7th, on the same year has now been seen as the preface to the November bouts, complying with the dramatic forecast of Hollande and other authorities.

On the evening of that Friday, there were a series of coordinated terrorist attacks across the city of Paris, exactly six simultaneous bouts in three hours of panic and terror struck out the French capital. Firstly, there were three bombings in the surroundings of Saint Denis stadium where the French national soccer team played against Germany, with François Hollande as part of the audience. During the game, an attacker's bomb belt was noticed in one of the main entrances of the stadium, when the security team tried to stop him, he detonated the bomb killing one pedestrian. According to the media, the bomb belt was made out of unstable explosive constituents, which were the same as the ones used by the attackers later on that evening ("Paris attacks: What happened on the night", 2015).

The attack did not stop there. While the two detonations shook the Stade de France in the northern suburb, the other terrorists launched an attack on several popular restaurants and

nightspots in downtown Paris like 'Le Petit Cambodge', 'Belle Équipe', the bar 'Le Carrillon', the 'Boluevar Fontaine' and the Bataclan Theatre. All of the above were the scenes of bouts perpetrated by armed men carrying *Kalashnikov* and shouting "Allah is great" and other accusations of France's military intervention in Syria – firing at point-blank range against anyone crossing their path, provoking what is to date the worst attack France has ever suffered in its history ("Paris attacks: What happened on the night", 2015).

The Bataclan concert hall, where the Eagles of Death rock group was hosting a concert, was where the worst happened. Out of at least 1,500 people who were part of the audience, 89 were killed in the concert hall. While the rock group played, the armed men dressed in black came through, confusing the audience as they thought they were part of the show and fired on the audience. Straight away, as the shooting started the Bataclan concert hall turned into a bloodbath. In videotapes shared by the media, several panic-stricken attendees can be seen shouting and struggling to escape from the massacre. Concertgoers said the gunmen shouted *"God is greatest"* again before firing on the audience, the gunmen held hostages and killed indiscriminately throughout two hours, before French security services stamped the concert hall. Two of the aggressors discharged their suicide belts, and the third one blasted unexpectedly when hit by security forces shots (Velasco, 2015).

Meanwhile, the spectators in the Stade de France, while the siege at Bataclan was taking place, became aware of the situation in the city. The soccer game attendees were not allowed to leave the stadium due to security reasons until nearly midnight, when about to exit the crowd sang the national anthem. François Molins, the General Attorney, confirmed that the terrorists were coordinated in three groups and evoked both Syria and Iraq before perpetrating the outbreaks (Ray, 2018).

5.3. Response to the attacks

Whilst the hostage crisis in Bataclan had not come to an end, Françoise Hollande announced France on the "state of emergency" on the same night of the attacks – November 13, 2015 late night. France's security forces investigated throughout the city and as a product of said investigation it was confirmed that out of the nine terrorists who perpetrated the attack, seven were dead. The day after the attacks, ISIS or DAESH declared responsibility for the attacks, warning France that it would be the first of many to come. Hollande declared three days of

national mourning and qualified the events as an act of war. Hundreds of raids took place the consecutives days after the terror bouts and two days after the vehicle used by the perpetrators was found. On the same day, French forces bombed Al-Raqqah in order to fight against ISIS (Chrisafis, 2015).

The investigations found that the intellectual author of the attack was Belgian with Arab backgrounds, particularly from Morocco. Abdelhamid Abaaoud grew up in Brussels, in a suburb that had been drawing experts attention as it was considered a *"hotbed of militant Islamist extremism"* (Ray, 2018). Abaaoud had set up talks and connections with some of the Paris attackers, he was also associated with a failed attack in August 2015. Another neighbour of the suburb was also arrested, although later released.

However, Abaaoud was discharged after the outbreaks, even after finding his finger prints in the AK-47 used in the attacks and having been located in the surrounding area of Bataclan. In the morning of November 18, the security forces of France raid and converged on Abaaoud apartment's in Saint-Denis. After an intense combat, Abaaoud, his cousin and a third person identified as another terrorist of the Paris attacks were found dead. Hollande defied anti-immigrant political elites, as they blamed and linked the attacks with the European migratory crisis.

The months that followed the Paris attacks, Belgian and French agents kept on investigating and looking for the responsible. They found in Brussels, in 2016, Abdeslam fingerprints, – another ringleader of terrorists in Belgium who had been in contact with Abaaoud –, and after following him for four months he was arrested and prosecuted in Belgium for murder and later on, prosecuted in France for the Paris attacks.

5.4. Results of the investigation

The investigation uncovered that all the identified assailants who carried out the attack were French citizens, sidewise the instigator. Likewise, eight of the plotters, counting attackers and architects of the plot, were foreign fighters who just came back from Syria. It is believed that Abelhamid Abaaoud – a well-known Belgian foreign combatant – alongside with French Salah Abdeslam, plotted, prepared and coordinated the Paris attacks (Cragin, 2017).

The majority of the conspirators returned to Europe that summer, three months prior to the attacks, at least three of them entered Europe through the refugee influx process via Greece. Once in Europe, they travelled several times from Paris to Brussels and vice versa. In those trips between the European capitals, they bought, rented safe apartments across Paris, and set up the assaults. The guns used in the attacks were obtained from the black market or criminal networks (Brisard, 2015).

The plot implicated the coordination of three separated terrorist cells that simultaneously committed bouts in different parts of the French capital. France's General Attorney revealed to the press that the instigators of the November attacks, were planning another assault targeting a shopping centre and a police station (Cragin, 2017). Correspondingly, the network investigation disclosed that all the three cells had interlinked one another and several overlapping associated running ISIS cells in Europe. Relatedly, these links associated either hidden cells or lone wolfs. Foreign fighters worked as connective tissues between these separate cells (Brisard, 2017).

As a matter of fact, following the timeline of the events, the aggressors and instigators organised, planned and strategized the attack embodying a superior threat than what initially considered. Additionally, the November attacks demonstrated that ISIS was not only capable of executing its strategies in the Middle East and the Syrian conflict, but also able to connive against the West within its territory. Noticeably, intelligence and security forces could have intervened prior to the attacks; yet, this supposes a challenge to intelligence and police services as the pattern, threats and Islamic rhetoric must be understood and followed in order to prevent further attacks (Cragin, 2017).

Besides, the high-level planning and varied tactics in all different plots against France, as well as synchronised attacks and involvement of foreign fighters determined to shake the West, in addition to conceived plans in multiple states at the same time makes it even harder for intelligence services to disrupt the operations and carry out the proceeding detentions (Brisard, 2015).

5.5. Social attitudes after the Paris 2015 attacks

Throughout the latest twenty years the West has been target of numerous terror attacks. Altogether, these outbreaks of violence have led to thousands of dead people and spotlighted the debate on immigration, Islam and Muslim world in Europe and the United States. Studying the social, emotional and political consequences of the attacks is important in order to understand the current debate on Islamophobia and Muslim migrants (Jungkunz, Helbling and Schwemmer, 2018).

Even if people are not directly affected by the attacks, they feel that the attack was enacted against them, as if they were the victims too (Majerol, 2015). This empathy is common in the Western world. For instance, after the 9/11 attacks a great proportion of the American population felt depressed or tried to avoid public spaces in order to reduce their own exposure to terror attacks. Terrorist attacks are empowered to increase and spread fear among society, studies demonstrated after the 9/11 and Paris 2015 triggered lower trust, personal victimization and prejudice toward a minority (Oksanen et al., 2018). Nevertheless, this attitude towards Muslim triggers that Muslims feel discriminated, which provokes the Muslim youths becoming targets of jihadist groups that aim to radicalise them and turn them into foreign fighters of the jihad (Majerol, 2015).

> In fact, after the Charlie Hebdo and November occurrences, the worst fear of the Muslims living in Europe became a nightmare. In the following days to the attack, there was an increase on the number of Islamophobic incidents – more than 100 anti-Muslim acts – surrounding mosques or against Muslims women (Majerol, 2015). Aside from the social and psychological effects the attacks had on French citizenry, they also had profound economic consequences in commerce and the consumers' confidence in terms of not exposing themselves to public spaces (Ruiz Estrada & Koutronas, 2016).

Two of the worst after-effects of terrorist attacks are hate and fear. Nowadays, a new form of hate can be found too: cyberhate. Cyberhate doesn't distinguish between collectives or individuals, it is a current world-wide experience taking the form of distressing, offending, intimidating or making statements considering people's physical appearance, faith, social background or sexual orientation as examples (Oksanen et al., 2018). For instance, Britton (2015) relates how two of her relatives – after the November events – while closing their shop,

were threatened and injured with a knife. This experience suffered by two European Muslims, show how Muslim in European societies are unprotected as well as they are never portrayed as victims of violence (Britton, 2015).

Cyberhate creates and upsurges odious acts off-line and encounters within communities; however, it not only involves social media, but public discourse and anxieties too. This type of hate changes along time, it is a dynamic concept in line with social context, trends and public discussion; which explains the reason why some social events – *trigger events* – are capable of disrupting and boosting cyberhate (Oksanen et al,2018). Terror attacks, such as the Paris 2015 attacks, are categorised as disruptive events, as they increased social fear, anxiety and bolstered intolerance towards the Muslim community.

After the Charlie Hebdo and November events, rumours were distributed on the media which led to polarisation of society and clashes among it. In this case, social media trigger the augmentation of perceived fear of threat which is one of the main goals of terrorist when committing an attack. Nonetheless, the negative role cyberhate takes can aggravate not only the social situation by augmenting discrimination towards the Muslim community but also increase the possibilities of radicalisation among this community (Oksanen et al.,2018).

Media press narratives presented Muslims as dangerous citizens, disloyal people who would challenge national laws and France's values. Symbolic violence is verified by the narrative held regarding the Islam world, and how Muslims are criticised as a whole rather than individually. Right after the attacks it was almost compulsory for Muslims to state *"Je suis Charlie"* to corroborate they were not terrorist (Britton, 2015).

A general mistrust towards the European Union could be also perceived, as the attackers and instigators were allowed to travel back and forth between European Member States without any kind of control. This is one of the reasons why terrorism also generates scepticism concerning the European Union and issues such as border controls, reason why in November 2015, after the attacks, the French government re-established national controls at frontiers with the Schengen nations. Why? As evidence showed before, the attacks were planned and instigated in Brussels which generates a lack of trust and disagreement with the European Union measures (Lequesne, 2016).

As a matter of fact, France approached the United States military stance following the attacks. Support provided by the American state can also be seen in John Kerry's speech after the November attacks when he highlights the fact that France is their oldest ally. What is more, according to Lequesne (2016), France was harsher than the United States in the Iranian negotiations on nuclear weapons in 2014-2015. Lequesne explains the new approach to the US instead of the 'De Gaullist' one as a desperate way of France trying to seek the protection of 'Western values' rather than Western interests. However, France activated Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union, since it was more useful than activating the Article 5 of NATO, as this way would make states like Russia inclined to collaborate (Neuwhal, 2016). The cooperation with Germany in these interventions, like Syria, boosts the interest of France to lead them as it reinforces the influence of the French as Germany will not compete for the leadership (Lequesne, 2016). The general outcome of the outbreaks of violence that France suffered in 2015, is that French society strongly believes in the necessity of fighting terrorism within its territory and overseas.

Although following the incidents, social media and press burst in disseminating rumours and cyberhate was boosted; within hours the whole French society was united against terrorism. The '*Je suis Charlie*' motto was mainstream in Twitter as a mode of fighting, in their own way, against the assault toward freedom of speech. Far beyond expected, the incident urged unexpected and exceptional display of national unity among French citizens, also bolstered by the politicians who left aside their political tendencies for the French (Moran, 2017).

6. Front National's reaction to the terror attacks

Marine Le Pen declared that the November attacks were an exceptional barbarity, an escalation of Islamist terrorism and sadly the sixth time France was attacked in the same year. She highlighted the necessity of clawing back border control permanently for the bet of France, defying the European Union, albeit she demanded a crackdown on hate preachers and extremists (Chrisafis, 2015). In fact, she held that Islamic extremism must be crushed (Willsher, 2015). This declaration is in line with the one back in 2012 after the Islamic attacks, Marine Le Pen qualified "radical Islam" as a "gangrene" and as "cancer", swearing to crackdown on it if she were president as *Le Nouvel observateur* in March 25, 2012 informed.

Behind Hollande's measures in response to the terror attacks – such as tougher border control, armed police, revoking citizenship of already convicted terrorists that had French nationality

and were born in France – Le Pen claimed that Hollande had taken this measures out of her political agenda and programme, saying it was nothing new but a mere copy of what she would implement in case she reaches power (Chrisafis, 2015).

The FN fed itself from the national feeling of being under threat, triggered by the November and Charlie Hebdo attacks, in addition to the current European refugee crisis. Some Front National members have commented the attacks on social media or media press. Maréchal- Le Pen stated that the unconditional love for France was what united the FN in contrast to the Socialist government or opponents (Chrisafis, 2015). Louis Aliot, another Party support called out Manuel Valls, former Prime Minister, rhetorically asking if he was able to see that the danger was among them (Willsher, 2015).

Above that all, Gilbert Collard also a FN supporter published in his Twitter account that National identity was in danger blaming those who defended Islam and its main injunctions and even saying those defenders should be the ones in prison. As many believe, this kind of events, such as violent attacks against a State, usually boost the popularity and voting intention for political parties like the FN (Willsher, 2015).

The attacks on 2015, particularly the ones occurred in November, boosted Marine Le Pen's political gains after them. In spite of everything, opinion polls were misleading as they suggested that Marine Le Pen would do much better in the 2017 presidential election than what she actually did. Notwithstanding, engaging anti-immigration and ethnocentric policies is appealing for some portions of society who are angry at society after trigger events (Vasilopoulos, Marcus, Valentino and Foucault, 2018).

On the whole, the FN leaders are careful when distinguishing amongst Islam and Islamic radicalism. Despite that, statements of Marine Le Pen in regard to the terrorist attacks inquiries the veracity of the so claimed distinction. With regard to the 2012 attacks in Tolouse, the FN runner claimed that those gunshots were cost and price of the laxity concerning immigration policies. Beyond expected, later in 2015, after the assaults on the offices of the satirical magazine of Charlie Hebdo and the slaying of hostages in the Kosher supermarket, Marine Le Pen reacted by saying that those incidents aroused from Muslim communism and the immigration problem that is ravaging Europe (Almeida, 2017).

In Le Pen's political speech, terrorism is presented as the last and most extreme consequence of Muslim and Islamic presence on French soil. Hence, the FN continues to build and form an interconnection amidst the Muslim religion, its public displays of religiosity and terrorism or petty crimes, as a whole this connection is an act of symbolic violence against French unity (Almeida, 2017).

Taking advantage of different factors such as fear of terrorism, industrial decline, globalisation and petty crime, the FN has grown in recent times. Voters who believe in FN are voters whose greater worries are terrorism, national security and the maintenance of living standards. The FN believes in cracking down immigration, clawing back border controls and bolster security measures for the best of France's interest (Chrisafis, 2015). Must be mentioned that FN electorate is made up of voters who have not actually suffered terrorist outbreaks first hand, whereas those who lived the terror attacks are less inclined to vote Le Pen's party. The ones not directly exposed to the attacks are usually more concerned due to the media coverage and shocking broadcasted images and videos (France 24, 2015).

The FN was the only political party that said would not fight in Syria and withdraw troupes from the conflict. To the Islamic State's eyes or other jihadist organisations, the withdraw of French troupes probably sounded attractive. Therewith, the November's outbreaks were perpetrated only three weeks prior to regional elections, which is above and over the same thing that happened with the Madrid bombings in 2004 (France 24, 2015).

Some believe that the instigators and executers of the attacks chose carefully the day and time, as so to create democratic unbalance, upset France's citizenry and trigger the conflict among political parties and increase the social fear and anger (Vasilopoulos et al.,2018).

7. **Islamophobia and the Front National: is it possible to apply the connotation of Islamophobic to the Front National? Does the Front National promote Islamophobia?**

According to Allen (2016, pp. 187) *Islamophobia* is a convinced recognisable phenomenon which employs a multitude of statements and products through which meaning about the Muslim world is disseminated and attributed inaccurate and discriminatory statements focused upon Muslims or Islam, and it has been extended over Europe.

Prior to the attacks of Charlie Hebdo and November 2015 in Paris, Marine Le Pen, president of the FN, was already instilling, speculating and parlaying fear of Islam, hatred discourse regarding immigrants on French soil and to open borders with the sole objective of seeking political support and join forces in support of counterterrorism. After the onslaughts, Le Pen seized the opportunity to expand her message, adapting it to the social circumstances, influencing the media and the French population, underlining the importance of her message along with similar ones in Europe. All across Europe, it has been ordinary to tighten and strengthen immigration policies, often overlapping them with security concerns (Allen, 2016, pp. 112).

Marine Le Pen, therefore the FN too, sustains that neither France nor its population are longer safe due to the permanent threat in defiance of its security and integrity, as it has been possible to observe in the several Islamist attacks suffered by France (Chrisafis, 2015).

Aforementioned, the outbreaks of Islamist violence provided Le Pen and her party with an auspicious push regarding the elections, which strengthened her campaign as a presidential candidate back in 2017. Then, Le Pen managed to gradually shift France's politics centre of gravity towards the right, therefore leading the main centre-right party to adopt FN ideals concerning certain matters such as immigration. Thus, normalising the Marine Le Pen's xenophobic ideas, suggestions and measures, which were later adopted by socialist President Hollande (Nossiter, 2017).

In the following days of the November attacks, Le Pen gave a speech in which she dived more deeply into the danger of immigration and reinforced her theory with the discovery of a Syrian passport – later identified as the passport held by one of the terrorists – in the vicinity of the Stade de France. Marine Le Pen herself, her niece and one of her closest advisors – Florian Philippot – mulled over the question of terrorist infiltrations in Europe through refugee processes (Naïr, 2018). In eyes of the FN, terrorists benefit from the refugee crisis that is ravaging Europe, to infiltrate themselves and then commit terror attacks. Henceforward, reaffirming her theory and claiming is irresponsible to accede to the reception of immigrants.

Likewise, Maréchal-Le Pen FN party activist, niece of the FN's leader, supported the statements made by her aunt and her counsellor. Maréchal-Le Pen railed against immigration on television, declaring that immigration is the seed that enables the development of Islamism. This reduction of immigration to Islamism, which equals to terrorism, is an essential factor that the FN uses to play with the minds of voters and convince them of the threat it constitutes (Naïr, 2018).

Crépon, expert on FN, affirmed that history repeats itself and does not forget, exemplifying it with the similarity between the train attacks in 1995 and the popularity that Jean-Marie Le Pen obtained with his FN (Nossiter, 2017). In 2015, the same story took place, both father and daughter established the same link between immigration and security.

Nonna Mayer, among other experts, reports that FN claims to have warned and predicted for a long time about the danger that immigration poses to France (Nossiter, 2017). This tendency follows the European line where terror attacks are being capitalised and its likely to hear general prejudices like "*All refugees are terrorists*" (Farand, 2017). In fact, Marine Le Pen declared that what she had anticipated and presaged for such a long time, finally arrived in French soil, speaking of the terror attacks. The FN leader proclaimed the essential necessity of cracking down Islamists in France, so as to combat this situation (Nossiter, 2017).

Marine Le Pen's political skills are admired by many as the FN leader has managed to attract more voters. In fact, polls and analysts suggested that support for the FN would be strengthened in the following months after the violent events and each future coming attack would strengthen and boost their popularity, even if its exclusionary political discourse is detrimental to France (Farand, 2017).

Behind the attacks, the FN toughened its excluding speech by suggesting and demanding drastic measures such as the expulsion of immigrants who preach hatred on French soil, revoking French citizenship to Islamists who possess dual citizenship (Nossiter, 2017). These measures were adopted by Hollande and Valls, who established that the measure would only apply to those convicted of terrorism regardless of their place of birth (Bogain, 2018). President Hollande, by adopting Marine Le Pen's measures, normalised the anti-Muslim and exclusion speech (Bogain, 2018).

Other French politicians, like Sarkozy back in 2005, suggested and advocated for a tougher selective immigration policy and against liberal multiculturalism, resulting in the modifications of legislation in May 2005. Sarkozy, among other, contributed to the normalisation of the FN discourse in respect to Muslims. Nicolas Sarkozy, many times, referred to Islam arguing that those who wanted to come to France must accept the publication of cartoons, women accepting to have identity photographs taken without the headscarf, hijab or niqab among other measures. Sarkozy's political speech was made up by anti-immigrational arguments (Allen, 2016).

However, not everyone supports or adopts the measures proposed by Le Pen. Macron criticised the FN saying that Le Pen and her party are the ones who betray France's historical values. France's moral standards such as equality is violated when her party defends that a some are less than others, or French fraternity is deceived too in light of the discriminations by virtue of physical and facial qualities when they do not resemble their own (Farand, 2017).

Marine Le Pen's political speech and rhetoric moderation is conspicuous by its absence. The FN declared it is clear that we are under threat from two *"totalitarianisms"*: Islamic fundamentalism and economic globalisation.

In her runoff campaign for presidency, the leader of the FN made some racist and Islamophobic statements, such as mosques, prayers in the streets and Muslim women veil or headscarf wear are threats to the culture and French values. Therefore, no French person nor any republican attached to their dignity should accept these attacks against their culture.

Marine Le Pen proclaimed *"We do not want to live under the yoke of the threat of Islamic fundamentalism"* at a conference in Lyon (Farand, 2017). Le Pen blames globalisation and massive immigration influx – it should be bear in mind that the majority of immigrants hosted in France come from countries were Islam is the major faith – that the French themselves feel deprived of their own nation. In addition, the French leader added that globalisation allowed the seed of Islamic fundamentalism, *"ideological enemy of France"*, not only to settle in its territory but to spread (Farand, 2017).

Islamic fundamentalism is attacking France from inside the country. Marine Le Pen compared Islamic fundamentalists with wolves in a chicken coop, alleging that this ideology permeates in the weakest minds and the most vulnerable neighbourhoods. If Le Pen had won the elections,

she would have closed Islamic preaching places and religious cult places, hatred propagators would have been condemned and expelled from France's soil (Farand, 2017).

Immigration and animosity to radicalisation, particularly the one concerning Muslims and Islam, have been recurrent and consistent themes for the FN, always emphasizing terror attacks. Not content with that, Le Pen continues to attack the world of Islam in saying that this religion levies the adaption of hosting society, in this case French society, which is irrational, unreasonable and unconceivable attitude, as they should be grateful for being hosted.

Le Pen emphasizes too the Christian heritage of her state, saying that the attempt of imposing Islam – which is an opposite mentality to the French – is a major threat (Farand, 2017). Thus, these pronouncements reaffirm the party's anti-immigrant, protectionist, Eurosceptic and populist stance. Le Pen no longer distinguishes between left or right, but amid patriots and globalists. Globalisation and Islam feed themselves mutually, wanting France to buckle under them (Smith, 2017).

7.2. Marine Le Pen's 144 campaign commitments.

The FN published a manifesto which contained 144 campaign commitments including its campaign and electoral program, seen not as a revolution in comparison to previous postulates but an evolution (Smith, 2017). Within these 144 points, the FN leaders intends to restore freedom to France and economic wellbeing under seven major themes: freedom, security, prosperity, fairness, national pride, power and sustainability (Le Pen, 2017)

According to the leader, the last years have impoverished the middle and lower social classes, whereas big companies have been enriched and public funds have been squandered through uncontrolled immigration (Smith, 2017). In view of the 144 commitments of the FN manifesto detailing its electoral program, this paper analyses and focuses on those issues considered most relevant to the investigation.

- The exit of the European Union and abandonment of the Schengen area in order to clawback control of borders. These two measures are related to the necessity, alleged by Marine Le Pen, of controlling immigration and borders.
- Recovering freedom and restoring sovereignty for the French.

- Ensure freedom of expression and digital liberties by including them in the fundamental freedoms protected by the Constitution, strengthening the fight against cyber-jihadism in the Internet.
- In relation to women rights, fighting against Islamism due to the fact – that for the FN – that it constrains their fundamental liberties.
- Draw up a disarmament plan for suburbs and areas beyond state control. The main goal of the plan is annihilating the gangs and criminals identifies by the intelligence services. To prevent reconstruction of these areas, restraining orders will be issued.
- Automatically expel criminals and foreign criminals, through the establishment of bilateral agreements that allow foreign convicts to serve their sentences in their country of origin.
- Restore national borders within and outside the Schengen area as well as recruiting 6,000 border agents.
- Impossibility of regularising or naturalise illegal aliens, proceeding to their expulsion of French soil.
- 10,000 legal aliens allowance per year. Furthermore, ending grouping and family reunification, as well as the automatic acquisition of French nationality by marriage.
- French nationality will only be acquitted by descent or naturalisation whose conditions will also be hardened.
- Disposal of double extra-European nationality.
- Return to the original spirit of asylum law, which will only be granted in attention to requirements held by French embassies and consulates.
- Prohibiting and dissolving organisations considered to be linked to Islamic fundamentalism as well as the expel of all foreigners linked to Islamic fundamentalism.
- Closure and ban of extremist mosques, prohibition of religious cult places financing.
- Fight against jihadists: deprivation and withdraw of French nationality, followed by the obligation of leaving the territory.
- Restore national indignity crime for those found guilty of crimes related to Islamist terrorism.
- Strengthen human and technical resources of internal and external intelligence services and the foundation of a single agency which will only attend terrorism, threats and operational coordination.
- Promotion of birth rate only reserved for French families.
- Increase of conditioning French nationality to twenty years of residence.

7.3. Xenophobic discourse

Thereafter, analysing the FN political discourse and general statements toward Muslims, it could be said that hatred seems to be embedded in France. The racist and xenophobic discourse is present in other 'normal' conservative parties, not merely the FN.

There is a difference that must be distinguished amid political and ideological victories. On one hand, political victories in democracy can change over time as well as they can be manipulated or distorted as has happened over and over throughout history. On the other hand, ideological victories last longer, sinking its roots in the general mindset, even becoming elements of the collective identity (Naïr, 2018). Not to mention they turned into cultural traits which are way more difficult to modify (Allen, 2016).

Society must question itself whether racism – particularly islamophobia – and other phobias or irrational attitudes against certain collectives born from the great process of globalisation, will then culminate in a tragic cultural regression of democracies in the so-called Western world or an outbreak of confessional, genre and ethnic wars (Naïr, 2018). The problem is socio-cultural context turns out to be increasingly unbreathable and airtight. The media press and politicians often go hand in hand with preaching, inciting and indoctrinating hatred and loathe unscrupulously.

What once were the characteristic signs of far-right political parties – anti-Islamic and anti-immigration speech – unfortunately are now mainstream or normalised features assumed by conservative parties across all the political spectrum, either right- or left-wing parties. This means nothing but the ideological victory of the extreme right. The FN rhetoric of hatred and exclusion has seeped into France's society, it is enough to read the newspapers or listen to political leaders to realise how well this discourse has permeated.

7.4. Promoting Islamophobia?

Marine Le Pen's FN offers a critique of an Islamism that subverts France as a whole, categorising itself as the post-modernity party. The FN invokes a bygone France, unified, industrial and united, opposing to multiculturalism and minorities' individualism. Marion Maréchal- Le Pen is also capable of playing with the unitary and unifying argument, harshly

criticising the religious communitarianism in France, claiming that France has youths who do not have anything in common with the French; with that, France's big challenge is to reunite those youths with the Republic (Chrisafis, 2015).

The FN biggest enemies are the media press, intellectuals and journalists, as not all of them are Islamophobic or support Islamophobic speech in any way. The FN upholds an ethnocultural society that has its roots in a nativist ideology: France for the French; hence why, immigration is considered to be a national threat and French society's Islamisation the worst globalisation consequence.

Not only immigrants are a national threat to France's security but too France's economic and financial wellbeing. Through humanitarian crisis sweeping across Europe, the FN has reinforced its radical, anti-immigration and anti-Muslim rhetoric, in the threat that immigration poses relies the necessity of applying the national priority principle.

Aforementioned, Marine Le Pen has chosen the republican discourse of *laïcité* and integration, promising to fight religious communitarianism striking in France. Indirectly and tacitly, these ideas of fighting religion and safeguarding *laïcité,* are referring to Islam. More than once the party leader has pointed terrorism risks out, linking terrorism with Islam and immigration and pledging to claw back power on borders, closing frontiers and banning most radical mosques (Longhi, 2017). See through the eyes of the FN, immigrants should be more controlled (Chrisafis, 2015).

Note, the FN's positions are further tilted to destroying the place of Islam within France as opposed to promoting the values fundamental to the French democracy and values. They might lead to different or perhaps the same result in some areas but undoubtedly the intention is different.

7.5. *What do university students think about it?*

This study has analysed what the media, politicians, scholars and other people's opinion on the FN. It is interesting to realise that most of them acknowledge or confirm, either directly or indirectly, that Islam supposes a threat. However, what about the youth? This paper has asked

some university students what their opinions on the concerning matter are, resulting on the conclusion that most of them are aware of the inaccurate statements of the FN.

"It is not called anymore Front National (FN) but Rassemblement National. They changed the name because it was too strong in the French people mind and we did not have a good image of them. Then, I have the feeling that when we are not in a time of Presidential Election, they are quite discreet and, except Marine Le Pen which is sometimes in the media for the buzz and to give her idea, however I have the feeling that media are more focused on the actual government than the other political organisations (such Rassemblement National). However, it's true that they have this image anti-Islam, close the borders, go out from European Union, etc. Everyone knows it but... French people with all the terrorism and the news on the media are afraid and think that Rassemblement National could finally be an option. I don't think it is. It is extreme political, and I think where they are good is about their communication. People trust them because they communicate well (even if they did mistake, essentially at the second round of the Presidential Election were Marine Le Pen totally failed in the TV debate)." – **Undergraduate student from Grenoble Business School, France.**

"FN is a French nationalist and populist party. It is very controversial, and I personally have a bad opinion on it. In the past years, it clearly promoted islamophobia, homophobia, racism and antisemitism. Today, the new president of the party, Marine Le Pen, tries to change the image of FN (that's why she decided to change the name of the party into RN) and to be softer in their positions. Nevertheless, FN is still associated with populism and extreme positions". – **Undergraduate student from University of Lille, France.**

"So yes, the FN is known for promoting hate toward Muslims, Jews, migrants etc. Of course, it is not directly said but they hang out with some very controversial people (Le Pen's attendance to a controversial party in Vienna in 2012), they use an implicit wording to manipulate people through the radio/tv/social media and they defend awful values. If you are not sure yet, I hate them. They are against Europe and innovation, even if it's the best way to have a healthy economy, they are against abortion, they are intolerant and racist" – **Graduated student from IAE Aix-Marseille School of management, France.**

"The FN is exploiting the fact that some people feel « excluded » from the society and not taken into account by the politician to spread hate in France and divide everyone. They spend their

time saying what is wrong but never give any solution, like they are against everything but never stand for something. FN explode the ignorance of people not « well educated » to do generalisation and make them believe wrong things like « all the refugees are criminals » or « refugees are stealing our jobs ». This party is very dangerous but at least now his existence « force » the official party to take into account people who feel left apart." – **Undergraduate student from HEC Paris and La Sorbonne, France.**

"The FN has a very strong image. Thus people (even more, those who don't care about politics) have « preconception » about FN without being able to give you tangible facts, and I am part of this group. There's something like a taboo or political correctness, if you say you vote for Melanchon it's ok, but for Marine Le Pen people would see you as a racist. Then, FN is given a bad image through media, really make fun about them. FN carry weight of the image of Jean Marie Le Pen, and his bad behaviours during war" – **Undergraduate student studying Business/Management in Grenoble Business School, France.**

"First of all, I do not support FN. I think they have extremist visions over many topics but have been trying to "smoothen" out their positions and trying to at least appear less extreme as in the past. However, you should know that most of their positions, taken individually and "anonymized" are supported/accepted/agreed by a huge part of the population. I think that their propositions address several, practical and deep, concerns of people. Even if they are not very reasonable or realisable in my opinion and that's why I do not support them. Regarding islamophobia I do not follow with enough attention their political interventions in order to tell in a yes/no manner. However, I think that at least indirectly they probably contribute to a tenser environment towards Islam" – **Undergraduate student from ESCP Europe in Paris.**

With consideration to the perspective of the students of France a lot of insight into both the French perspective and society of modern day can be found. The literal interpretation of the perspective of the students demonstrates a strong dislike for the FN group. However, the questions must be asked of the authenticity of their answers when polls across the demographic demonstrate some variation in opinion of the FN group. Perhaps, the sample size of those I asked was too small. On the other hand, perhaps given the sensitive topic Islam within France is now the students did not feel comfortable expressing how they feel on record as they might have in a private poll. That is not to automatically assume political correctness but is certainly a point worth considering.

VII. CONCLUSION

What is Islamophobia then? According to Allen (2016, pp.190) the most accurate definition of Islamophobia would be the one that places this phenomenon as an ideology, with similar aims and means to xenophobia and racism. This ideology does nothing but perpetuate the connotations and negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the current context by using similar forms as yesteryear, in other ways, as they did in the past. History, directly or indirectly, influences interaction, response and social action, therefore the understanding, perception and attitude of social consensus that builds up the Muslim and Islam as the "other".

Despite all that, there is not a clear definition of Islamophobia, whether it is an ideology, a psychological bias, or an attitude towards the Islam world, or "*an attitude towards Islam based on the belief that Islam is an implacable and absolute enemy*" (Bravo López, 2011, p.563). Scholars have not reached a right definition or typology that enables the correct use of the term. Islamophobia can modify and vary itself within different societies and measures, to fight against it will not be the same in every State.

Exclusion, mistreatment and minority's position in the political and social landscape, the rise of nationalist and far-right movements that share Islamophobic postulates – even reaching the European Parliament –, the normalisation of xenophobic discourse by the media and intellectuals, is important at the same time as worrying for the political construction of Europe.

In addition, the lukewarm attitude shown by most of the EU Member States, which have tacitly recognised Islamophobia, is indeed not an encouraging message for the Muslim community, many of whom are legal EU citizens. Neither the geopolitical context, nor the revolutions in the Arab world, nor the Syrian conflict and rise of political movements in the Muslim world which are labelled as Islamic fundamentalism that promote violence against civilians, indifferently from their religion, does not improve the situation of societal tension in the West.

European far-right political parties have highlighted differences (regarding religion, culture and tradition) between the Islam world and the Western society, trying to scare its citizens and aware them of threat it supposes to their well-being. The inability of the national political parties to address national issues has given the opportunity to the far-right to capitalise upon popular discontent and disillusionment (Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou, 2014). However,

Islamophobia should be understood as a cultural-ideological, maybe even political, outlook that tries to attribute global society illnesses to this religion. Islamophobia's conceptualized political acts and violence in terms of religion and incompatibility with modernity, civilization and western values.

The allegedly crisis of France's secularism could be considered a result of the failure to adapt the key narratives associated to a substantial reading of the French secularism of the 21st century. If the connotation and meaning of French secularism continues to mean the struggle of republicanism against those communities whose loyalty is, by definition, uncertain and must then continue to apply emancipatory measures (such as the prohibition of religious symbols in public spaces), the FN will not only have successfully achieved entering the field of republican legitimacy, but it will have become the French republican party quintessentially (Almeida, 2017).

Islamophobia in France can only be comprehended by analysing the social and political structures of this nation. Ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall, France has been targeted by multiple terror attacks such as the ones mentioned in throughout this work. The dismantling of jihadist interlinked terrorist cells within France's territory has shown that the threat is no longer in a far Middle East nation bar indoors France.

Demonization of Islam by the media, new legislation, counter-terrorist measures and a hate discourse are normal now, it has steered the tension and intolerance toward the Muslim community. Marine Le Pen and her political party have been able to use this social tension to call for France's unity again. Radicalisation of politicians and society, Muslim and European, is a fact. The failure to include and integrate them in its society plus the radicalisation opened a gap for far-right political parties, through this narrative these parties have accomplished the redefining the debate of immigration in Europe (Halikiopoulou And Vasilopoulou, 2014). The shift to radical right parties must be considered a problem.

The second wave of globalisation brought along cultural impact amid different civilisations. Globalisation, once again, has triggered social authoritarianism in order to invoke France's values and combat for them. This explains the rise of the far right in France. Lebourg (2016) advocates that "*the spread of Islamophobia in France stems from deep transformations in the relationships between the state, society and the market*". Multiculturalism, along with Islam,

has been blamed to destabilise France's welfare state as well as culture, social dynamics and economy.

The rise of the FN is a threat, not just for the French and Muslim community but for the European societies. Is Islamophobia a temporary problem (triggered by emotional reactions) or a long-term problem? (Sheridan, 2006). If hate, violence, racism and discrimination are what Europeans are going to be surrounded of, European Union policy-makers should think about what they have provoked and solution before these tensions go too far.

As a conclusion, based on the data collected in this research, and the literature on the subject and background knowledge, it is possible to infer that the FN does promote Islamophobia. Islamophobia is not only a French problem but also a worldwide issue.

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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