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THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE MARCH 11TH TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE LIVELIHOODS OF MADRID'S MUSLIM MIGRANT POPULATION

LOS EFECTOS SOCIOPSICOLÓGICOS DEL ATENTADO TERRORISTA DEL 11 DE MARZO EN LAS VIDAS DE LA POBLACIÓN MIGRANTE MUSULMÁN DE MADRID

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ABSTRACT

The rise of far-right movements within the European Union has precipitated a consequential surge in anti-Muslim rhetoric, further amplified by the increased occurrence of terrorist events. The exploitation of these tragedies to promote xenophobic agendas by framing Muslim communities as inherent security threats not only fuels public fear and suspicion but also legitimizes discriminatory policies and social exclusion, deepening the marginalization of Muslim populations across Europe. This thesis specifically examines the socio-psychological effects of the March 11, 2004 (11M) Madrid terrorist attacks on the livelihoods of Madrid's Muslim migrant population. The study integrates quantitative data from surveys and qualitative insights from interviews and academic writings, to explore the multifaceted repercussions experienced by Muslim migrants in Madrid after 11M. Key findings highlight an increase in social alienation, anxiety, and a lessened sense of belonging among this population within the Community of Madrid after the March 11th attacks.

Keywords: Muslim, terrorist attack, belonging, migrants, Madrid

RESUMEN

El ascenso de los movimientos de extrema derecha dentro de la Unión Europea ha precipitado un aumento consecuente de la retórica antimusulmana, amplificada aún más con el aumento de eventos terroristas. La explotación de estas tragedias promueve agendas xenófobas al enmarcar a las comunidades musulmanas como amenazas a la seguridad, no sólo alimentando el miedo y la sospecha públicos, sino que también legitima políticas discriminatorias y la exclusión social, amplificando la marginación de las poblaciones musulmanas en toda Europa. Esta tesis examina específicamente los efectos socio-psicológicos de los ataques terroristas del 11 de marzo de 2004 (11M) en Madrid en relación con las repercusiones sobre la vida de la población musulmana migrante. El estudio integra datos cuantitativos de encuestas y conocimientos cualitativos de entrevistas y escritos académicos, para explorar las repercusiones multifacéticas experimentadas por los inmigrantes musulmanes en Madrid después del 11M. Los hallazgos clave destacan un aumento de la alienación social, la ansiedad y un menor sentido de pertenencia entre esta población dentro de la Comunidad de Madrid después de los ataques del 11 de marzo.

Palabras claves: Musulmán, atentado terrorista, pertenencia, migrantes, Madrid

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STUDY TOPIC

By drawing on scholarly writings and first-hand interviews, this thesis delves into the **socio-psychological consequences of the March 11th, 2004 terrorist attacks on Madrid's Muslim migrant community.**

MOTIVATION

Spain's rich and diverse cultural history is profoundly influenced by Islamic heritage, evident in the intricate designs of the Arab-influenced architecture and the introduction of ingredients like saffron and almonds in traditional dishes. The blend of Moorish and Spanish styles, known as Mudejar, is a testament to the lasting impact of Islamic culture in the country. However, these Islamic influences that were once essential in forming the Spanish identity are often forgotten in present-day Spain. Recent years have witnessed a troubling trend—a resurgence of far-right movements leveraging Islamophobia for political gain within the European Union, specifically Spain. This rise in xenophobic rhetoric and the new wave of anti-Muslim racism has painted the Muslim population as scapegoats, fueling societal divisions and marginalization. The global war on terror, the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the 9/11 attacks in 2001 all contributed to an environment in which extremist ideologies could flourish. Therefore, the March 11th terrorist attacks in Madrid exacerbated these pre-existing tensions within the community, fostering a climate of suspicion and hostility towards the Muslim community. The most prominent demographic affected by these events was Muslim migrants, due to the frequent association of Islam with immigration. Although these events were not the *sole* catalyst for the radicalization of the Muslim migrant population in Spain and Europe, the Madrid attacks further intensified these sentiments and contributed to the development of anti-Muslim racism in Spain.

This thesis focuses on the Community of Madrid, home to one of Europe's most deadly terrorist attacks executed by the Islamic extremist group, Al-Qaeda. This series of coordinated bombings targeted three of the most populated commuter train stations in Madrid: Atocha, El Pozo, and Santa Eugenia. Ten explosions occurred on four different trains, killing 191 people and injuring over 2,000 others (McMurtry, 2024). These attacks had a profound impact on Spain's political climate, leading to significant changes in security policies, political repercussions, election outcomes, and above all increased hostility and negative rhetoric regarding the Muslim community.

Despite the ample research available regarding the political and security-related changes observed in Spain after the March 11th bombings, there is little to no research that accurately encompasses how these bombings affected the well-being of those 320,000 Muslims that reside within the Community of Madrid. Therefore, 20 years after the attacks, this thesis attempts to shed light on the damaging socio-psychological effects that these events had on Madrid's Muslim population and their overall sense of belonging within the Community of Madrid.

Objectives: The objectives of this research are the following:

General Objective: Analyze the immediate and long-term socio-psychological impacts that the March 11th, 2004 terrorist attacks have had on the sense of belonging of the Muslim migrant community in Madrid.

Specific Objectives: 1) Study the long-term effects of the bombings on the Muslim migrant's daily lives, overall sense of belonging, and well-being in Madrid. 2) Examine how the Madrid bombings altered the Spanish public perception of Muslim migrants in the Community of Madrid

Methodology: This master thesis employs mixed methodologies - incorporating qualitative interviews by members of the Muslim community and quantitative data from surveys, and reports from Spanish State entities, and NGOs. This base of quantitative data supports the claims in the qualitative interviews.

Regarding primary sources, interviews were also conducted with specialists in the field of inter-religious inclusion, Muslim activists in Madrid, as well as with Muslim migrants who have resided in Madrid since 2004.

Concerning secondary sources, an intensive analysis has been undertaken through various publications such as scholarly journals, research articles, and official documents by international organizations.

STATE OF THE MATTER

Note for the Reader: The term Islamophobia has been deemed unethical and overused by many scholars calling this term monolithic and limiting due to its failure to express the diversity of this religion and its followers (Hafez, 2018). In recent years, this intolerance of Islam has been better characterized as Anti-Muslim Racism in an attempt to further highlight the xenophobic connotation of the term and underscore the dominant emotions that lead people to commit xenophobia actions such as hostility, hatred, and intolerance rather than fear, that is insinuated with the term phobia (Richardson, 2020). Therefore, the term anti-Muslim rhetoric and anti-Muslim racism will be used to fully exemplify the discriminative nature of the phenomenon throughout this thesis.

Anti-Muslim Rhetoric in the European Union After Terrorist Events

The consideration of Spain's responses to previous terrorist events is crucial in understanding how past events have influenced their reactions to the 2004 Madrid bombings. Given their close temporal proximity and the interconnected nature of these events, the September 11th attacks in the United States undeniably represent a defining moment in Spain's national psyche due to the heightened global focus on terrorism and the subsequent shift in anti-Muslim rhetoric.

Many academics concur that the September 11th terrorist attack, as well as the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, have continued to have a destabilizing effect on the social and political fabric of European society (Allen & Nielsen, 2002). The reactions of the European Union States to the 9/11 attacks deeply affected how most European citizens viewed the Muslim

population, alluding to the harsh effects that terrorist events can have on the rise as anti-Muslim racism.

To demonstrate this relationship, the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) created a reporting system that recorded potential anti-Islamic reactions in the 15 European Union Member States as a result of the September 11th attacks. National Focal Points (NFPs) were tasked with monitoring the following actions within their population:

> 1. Acts of violence or aggression and changes in the attitude of the EU populations towards ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities, especially Muslim/Islamic, related to the terrorist attacks in the United States of America.
>
> 2. Good practices for reducing prejudice, violence, and aggression within EU states.
>
> 3. Reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders including initiatives to reduce polarization and counteract negative national trends.

Christopher Allen and Jorgen Nielsen with The University of Birmingham were tasked with analyzing the results of this EUMC Research and were able to come to the following conclusions:

- Within the European Union as a whole, **acts of aggression and violence** were amplified after September 11th, 2001. Nonetheless, relatively low levels of *physical* violence were

identified in most countries, although *verbal abuse*, *harassment, and aggression* were widespread.

- These reactions were primarily **visual**, based on those who "looked" Muslim, such as women with hijabs, people with dark features, or those wearing traditional attire.
- There was a general rise in **anti-Islamic actions** such as the **rise of right-wing extremist neo-Nazi groups** throughout Europe and the harmful rhetoric manifested by these groups.
- **Good practices to reduce prejudice** were given visibility throughout different European countries such as interfaith groups, academic institutions, and other organizations that worked to foster intercultural tolerance between the two communities although there was no evidence that these events reduced discrimination.
- The **reactions by politicians and other leaders** towards the 9/11 attacks varied according to European countries. Nonetheless, the NFPs noted that there was a strong political rhetoric that intertwined immigration and the terrorist attack on September 11th.

To analyze the case of Spain, Allen and Nielsen explain that Spain also experienced a significant change in perceptions towards Muslims and/or migrants of Arab descent. According to these academics, in the weeks following the 9/11 attack, there were very few reports of verbal or physical threats towards Muslims or those who appeared to be of Arab descent in Spain. Nonetheless, a few isolated incidents of attacks on Mosques approximately six months after the attacks, however, it was unclear if these incidents were connected to the aftermath of the September 11th attack (Allen & Nielsen, EUMC Research, 2002).

Spain's NFP expressed that this change in attitudes amongst Spaniards was less physically and verbally aggressive towards Muslims, but more expressed through an overall

negative rhetoric amongst Spaniards themselves when speaking of migrants of North African descent (Allen & Nielsen, EUMC Research, 2002). This could be attributed to Spain's close geographic proximity to Northern Africa and their historical ties regarding issues of immigration. A rise in right-wing activity in regions of Spain that were more ethnically diverse such as Catalunya, Madrid, and Andalucia was also reported (Allen & Nielsen, EUMC Research, 2002).

As a result of the factors highlighted above, Muslim community members in Spain not only expressed fear of retaliatory attacks (Allen & Nielsen, 2002) but also feelings of resentment towards the Spanish government as they felt as though they did very little to break down these prejudices after 9/11 (Allen & Nielsen, 2002). This inaction by the Spanish government after the September 11th attacks led to feelings of alienation amongst many Muslims living in Spain at the time. Similar trends were witnessed three years later as a result of the March 11th attacks in Madrid.

The Rise in Hate Crimes After Terrorist Events

The rise in misdirected backlash caused by the wrongful association of Muslims with the actions of Islamist terrorists is the result of the spread of misinformation regarding Muslim communities after terrorist events. Scholars Emma Hanes and Stephen Machin with *The Journal of Contemporary Justice* study this historical rise in hate crimes as a result of terrorist attacks by comparing the 7/7 terrorist attack in London and the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York. Throughout their research, they were able to prove that there was a significant rise in hate crimes against Muslims after these attacks and that this trend had a peak that lasted for around 2 to 3 months with the effects persisting for perhaps years afterward (Hanes & Machin, 2014). The authors explain the psychological theory of *Herding* to underscore this relationship between terrorist events and the rise in hate crimes. Herding can be understood as the imitation of group

behaviors rather than deciding independently based on one's information (Hanes & Machin 2014, as cited in Baddeley, 2010). That is to say, the rise in sensational media and the increase in general fear amongst civilians can lead individuals to follow the beliefs of the majority population, making irrational decisions out of the influence of others. An example of this concept would be members of a far-right group collectively verbally or physically assaulting a Muslim migrant as he leaves the mosque. Although each individual can make their own ethical decision, the environment in which they are present influences the nature of this decision. An alternative perspective emphasizes the *individual* aspect of hate crimes, categorizing them to be an action of passion or emotion—where feelings of anger and rage dominate the individual's rational decision-making process (Hanes & Machin 2014, as cited in Gordon 2001). According to Gordon's theory, when an individual is overwhelmed by a negative emotion, they make the reactive decision to lash out at the demographic at hand, without sense or logic.

These psychological phenomena exhibited in the reactions to the 7/7 London terrorist attack and the 9/11 terrorist attack are not isolated occurrences. This rise in hate crimes was witnessed during the months following the Madrid bombings as well.

The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) documented this phenomenon in a 2006 report highlighting the significant rise in crimes against Muslims in Spain between the years 2004-2005. Analyzed by Madrid's most prevalent Arab Cultural Center, *Casa Árabe*, these reports detail the months following the attacks.

According to Casa Árabe, these reports encompass approximately thirty "possibly Islamophobic" crimes committed against persons: three against individuals, five against properties, and 22 threats and verbal insults (Casa Árabe 2007, as cited in EUMC Analysis, 2006). Although the nature of these crimes was not specified, the stark increase in hate crimes as

a result of the March 11th attacks is evident. Madrid-based NGOs, *SOS Racism* and the *Movement Against Intolerance* also reported a wide range of violent incidents against people and properties during the two years following the attacks, some were even committed by public officials, or *funcionarios* (Casa Árabe 2006, as cited in EUMC Analysis, 2007). The temporal proximity of the incidents illustrated in EUMC's report underlines the substantial connection between terror attacks and the subsequent rise in hate crimes, leading to an overall sense of insecurity within the Muslim population.

Manifestations of anti-Muslim Rhetoric in Spain: Today in Age

It is important to note that the Madrid bombings were the first large-scale Islamic terrorist attack in Spain. It was the first and most defining moment that represents Spain's response to global terrorism, marking a new wave of anti-Muslim hate within Spain. However, the emphasis on the spread of misinformation through *social media specifically*, did not play as big a role in the formation of this negative rhetoric as it does today. The second wave of anti-Muslim hate within Spain was incited by the 2017 Barcelona terrorist attacks where sixteen people were left dead and more than a hundred were injured in a series of vehicle ramming attacks in Las Ramblas and Cambrils (Ajuntament de Barcelona, n.d.). The perpetrators of these events were proven to be radicalized Moroccan nationals living in Spain. The relentless advancement of technology at the time allowed for an alarming surge in anti-Muslim rhetoric targeting specifically Moroccans on digital platforms all over Spain. Consequently, a wave of technological "islamophobia" was incited as a result of the 2017 attacks in Barcelona and remains extremely prevalent today.

A Spanish Observatory Against Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE) 2022 report regarding anti-Muslim manifestations online highlights this prominent presence of anti-Muslim

rhetoric on social media. This report highlights specific hate speech being spread online in which the main collectives represented were the following: immigrants (collectively) (40% of total discourse), North Africans (30%), Muslims (24%), and other ethnicities of African descent (20%) (Gracia and Bolaños, cited in OBERAXE data, 2022)[1]. Of the data presented by OBERAXE, it can be assumed that the majority of this hate speech was directed at Muslim community members.

The access to technologies allows for the fast, uncontrolled spread of hate. This enhancement of technological devices and access to them represents why Spain witnessed a stronger rise in virtual anti-Muslim hate after the 2017 Barcelona attacks than the March 11th Madrid bombings.

Anti-Muslim Rhetoric within the Community of Madrid After 2004

There are a total of approximately 300,000 Muslim community members within the Community of Madrid. As of 2022, there were nearly 196,000 Muslims with Spanish nationality in the Community of Madrid, followed by Muslims with Moroccan nationality comprising approximately 77,000 individuals. The remaining Muslim communities in Madrid belong to other nationalities with the highest presence being Nigeria (7,608), Bangladesh (6,776), and Senegal (3,325) (Statista, 2022). Of these 300,000 Muslims, over 30% of them are migrants. This percentage does **not** take into consideration naturalized migrants who are now Spanish citizens. It must be noted that although the purpose of this research is to show how the March 11th bombings affected Muslims of **all** backgrounds, it should be considered that first-generation, second-generation, and even third-generation Muslim migrants received the most first-hand

[1] Appendix A

discrimination due to the color of their skin, the difference in language, and the traditional garbs often worn on the streets that made them visual targets in the aftermath of these events.

According to data from NGOs SOS Racism Madrid and Movement Against Intolerance, in April of 2004, there were several attacks against Muslims of Sub-Saharan origin in Madrid. The first incident was the physical attack of an Algerian man, violently assaulted by six neonazis. He was hospitalized in critical condition upon leaving his community Mosque in Madrid in June 2004 (Casa Árabe 2006, as cited in SOS Racism data, 2004). Both NGOs believe that these acts of aggression could have been reactions to the March 11th terrorist attacks due to the proximity of the events.

It is clear that the anti-Muslim hate has steadily grown within the Community of Madrid over the past twenty years. In fact, in 2016 there was another aggression at a mosque off of the M-30 interstate, where messages appeared that generated a climate of clear hostility and violence against the Muslim world (Gracia & Bolaños, 2022). The attack was later attributed to a Neo-Nazi leader in the alt-right group, Hogar Social.

Aurora Ali with the Muslim Association for Human Rights released a report in November 2020 highlighting anti-Muslim hatred in Spain. Ali carried out this research with Rights International Spain (RIS) and the Implementation Team of the International Decade for People of African Descent in Spain (IDPAD) where they highlighted over 70 racist incidents and institutional discriminatory practices within Spain. At the time that the research was developed, Madrid ranked as the region with the highest number of complaints of discrimination towards community members of Afro-descent and Arab Muslims, making up 40% of the complaints; followed by Catalonia (21%) and the Basque Country (8%) (Ali, 2020). This self-perceived discrimination explained by Ali affects essentially every realm of their lives. These prejudices

contribute to a climate of exclusion, impacting both the social and emotional well-being of the Muslim population in the city. The immediate and long-term effects highlighted above contribute to the overall marginalization of the Muslim community, leading to a loss of sense of belonging and well-being.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

How Negative Rhetoric Affects Muslim Communities' Emotional Well-Being

One of the most prominent ways in which the Muslim population in the Community of Madrid was affected by the March 11th terrorist attacks was through the amplification of negative rhetoric surrounding the Muslim migrant community. This rhetoric was not only projected in media publications and broadcastings after the events but also within political discourse and everyday conversations amongst non-Muslim Spanish citizens. This trend is consistently observed after terrorist events in Muslim migrant populations. There is a strong theoretical basis that suggests that this rhetoric influences one's overall sense of belonging and well-being.

Thurka Sangaramoorthy with the Medical Anthropology Journal explains that negative rhetoric often leads to forms of individual and institutional discrimination (Sangaramoorthy & Carney, 2021). Ultimately, resulting in self-perceptions of social inferiority, internalized feelings of hopelessness, a lack of control, and otherness (Sangaramoorthy & Carney, 2021). Sangaramoorthy highlights the direct correlation that racism has on minority groups by stating, "racism can affect health indirectly by restricting minoritized populations' economic opportunities and social mobility and produce adverse consequences for health more directly through residential segregation, bias in social and health care, stress and violence from everyday

experiences of discrimination, and the internalization of inferiority" (Sangaramoorthy & Carney, 2021). In summation, the culmination of everyday marginalization experienced by migrants, combined with the institutional barriers oftentimes impedes a migrant's ability to flourish in their community, leading to an overall sense of discomfort, restlessness, and anxiety, affecting both the psychological and physical morale of the migrant.

Leo Chavez with the Social Science and Medical Journal compliments Sangaramoorthy and Carney's theory on how negative rhetoric poses a question to the issue of self-perception. Chavez explains that political rhetoric inflames public perception and negatively portrays particular groups, leading to internal doubt regarding one's belonging and legitimacy as a full-fledged member of society (Chavez et al., 2019). As a result, migrants often doubt their role within the community, prompting identity crises and prolonged stress. On the other hand, Chavez explains that *positive* rhetoric elicits positive feelings and emotions which in turn lowers stress and increases perceptions of well-being. Whereas negative rhetoric has the opposite effect on minority populations (Chavez et al., 2019). The normalization of xenophobic attitudes fosters an environment where discrimination and social exclusion become more prevalent and normalized, further contributing to the overall poor health of minority groups. The Muslim migrant experience in the Community of Madrid is defined by this gradual increase in negative rhetoric surrounding their communities, which caused many Muslim community members to question their sense of belonging in a community that they call their own.

How Marginalization Affects Muslim Communities' Sense of Belonging

For Muslim populations, terrorist events frequently precipitate a wave of marginalization and discrimination, driven by heightened public fear and the scapegoating tendencies of some political narratives. This exacerbates feelings of isolation and alienation within Muslim communities, undermining their sense of belonging and integration in broader society. To properly understand their experiences, the reader must consider the work of Floya Anthias with the KLA Working Paper Series on *Identity and Belonging.* Anthias brings into question the concept of how the experiences of discrimination and marginalization affect the sense of belonging amongst migrant community members. Anthias brings special attention to the distinction between general belonging and the *politics* behind this belonging (Anthias 2013, cited in Yuval-Davis 2006). Stating that the idea of *belonging* can be understood from two different perspectives: 1) as a personal, intimate feeling of being at home in a place (place-belongingness) or 2) as a discursive resource that constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion⁄exclusion (Anthias 2013, cited in Antonsich 2010). This multilayer definition of the term helps us to understand not only one's self-perception of belonging based on their origin, experiences, and class but also the **political roots** in which belonging is embedded. It is a paradoxical concept between emotions and institutionalized identity norms. For example, a second-generation Muslim migrant child that has grown up in Madrid may *feel* as though they belong or fit within Spanish society, however, institutional restrictions or barriers such as the limited access to Halal options on school menus, the celebrations of Catholic religious traditions in the public sector, and the lack of translations for their Arabic or French speaking parents of official school reports are examples of the politics behind this sense of belonging. This understanding of belonging denotes the debates and struggles around who does and who doesn't

belong (Anthias, 2013). In this sense, governments and political agendas choose *who* belongs to which category of society through the implementation of institutional norms and practices, bringing the following question to the table: *Do they want me to feel as though I belong*?

Anthias also explains that elements of deviance, deficit, and danger come into play in demarcating certain categories of the 'desirable' versus the 'perverse diverse' (Anthias, 2013). For example, the heterosexual white male has a heightened sense of both political and self-belonging as this group is considered to be “desirable,” proven in all aspects of civil life (preference when being hired, increased sense of safety, less societal expectations, legal protections, etc), whereas an immigrant male often gets categorized into this “undesirable” group, institutionally impeded by employment challenges, documentation difficulties, housing instability, limited access to health care, discrimination, etc. The difference in everyday normalities between the two demographics contributes to a skewed sense of self-perception by minority demographics to be “different” or “other”. The epitome of this social construct is experienced by the Muslim population in Western Societies. Although many Muslim migrants have resided in Western Societies for the majority of their lives, the fundamental blocks presented to them in the scope of civil life bring their true sense of “belonging” into question.

This thesis will discuss the specific case of the Muslim population within the Community of Madrid and how the immediate effects of the March 11th bombings affected the sense of belonging within this demographic.

ANALYSIS

Contextualization of the March 11th Attacks: The Socio-Political Climate in Spain.

The socio-political context during the March 11th attacks in Madrid was marked by a tense pre-election atmosphere and the longstanding threat of domestic terrorism from the Basque separatist group ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna)(Michavila, 2005). This focus on ETA initially led the government to prematurely attribute the March 11th bombings to the separatist group. However, it soon came to light that the attacks were orchestrated by the Islamic extremist group, Al-Qaeda, in retaliation for Spain's involvement in the Iraq War. This revelation regarding the perpetrators of the event dramatically shifted public sentiment regarding Spain's internal politics and initiated a new wave of anti-Muslim racism in Spain.

The Immediate Impacts of the Attacks

1. Immediate Security Responses

Spain's national security underwent significant transformation after the March 11 bombings, with heightened security measures and increased counter-terrorism efforts, yet the humanitarian aspect of these events was overlooked and the effects that these reforms had on minority populations were not taken into consideration. *The Club of Madrid,* an international non-profit organization and journal summarizes the policy initiatives discussed at the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security in Madrid in March 2005, the first anniversary of the Madrid train bombings (Storbeck et al., 2005). Amongst the many topics discussed, police policy reform was among the most emphasized, as it is seen in all spheres of civil life and security. The summary of reforms was the following (Storbeck et al., 2005):

i. **The prevention of terrorist activities (the appropriate handling in cases of suspicious entry and transit)**
ii. **Ensuring preparedness (Border police trained in suspicious behavior)**
iii. **Effective responses to terrorist attacks (Readiness)**
iv. **Investigate all forms of terrorist crimes to identify, trace, and arrest terrorists**

The Club of Madrid authors emphasize the effectiveness of these preventative counter-terrorism strategies throughout their analysis. Nonetheless, the effects that these security measures had on the Muslim population in Madrid went unconsidered during these heavily security-based debates in Spain's capital. Consequently, during the years following the March 11th attacks, there was a significant rise in ethnic profiling and discriminatory policing.

Rights International Spain (RIS) conducted research on unfair policing in 2008, exactly three years after the March 11th attacks. This research, conducted in cooperation with the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) analyzed profiling amongst various minority groups. As a result of their research, they found that only 12 percent of White people reported being stopped between 2006-2008 in Spain, compared to 42 percent of people of North African or Arab origin (Neild, 2019). Although it is unclear if these cases of police profiling were directly related to the governmental reactions to the March 11th attacks, the close period suggests that there is a correlation between the two. In fact, of the nine testimonies featured in the research, over half of the victims were racially profiled by police in the Community of Madrid. This increase in unfair policing towards Muslim migrants not only alienates them from the rest of their community but also instills within them a sense of insecurity due to the fear of being unfairly stopped. One of the Muslim migrants featured in the research describes being stopped

on the street by the police as an "embarrassing, frightening, and humiliating experience" (Neild, 2019). Additionally, the majority of these stops are usually concentrated at urban transport hubs with large crowds (Neild, 2019) causing anxiety and emotional distress for the victim as the onlookers' attention is usually brought toward the situation. Longterm, this unfair policing leads minority groups to make changes in their day-to-day lives to avoid being stopped such as taking different routes to work or avoiding these areas during high traffic hours. Several Muslim migrants attest to the effects of these heightened security changes after March 11th and describe the sensation of alienation that occurs from being stopped.

One specific community member, and Muslim Activist, Mohammad Elahi Alam Alam, founder and director of the Madrid-based NGO *Valiente Bangla*, recounts his experiences upon first arriving in Madrid in 2004, stating that a month after the attacks he was arrested for not having his documentation on him, once he was released, he was unfairly questioned again by police just three days later in Sol, one of Madrid's most frequented plazas.

He went on to tell me that he believes that highly diverse neighborhoods, especially with prominent Muslim communities in Madrid such as Lavapiés particularly suffer from these offenses by police, often leading to public humiliation from those being unfairly questioned[2].

Similar testimonies were expressed from other migrants interviewed throughout this research, one Moroccan woman specifically explained that security policies were exaggerated and targeted against the Muslim migrant population at the time. She explained her frustrations with these security changes as she felt that the Community of Madrid neglected the Muslim Community at the time:

[2] Appendix B

"No one asked the politicians or the police to respect us and to protect us as Muslims as well" (Muslim Woman, Second-Generation Migrant from Morocco).

It is clear that in the moment in which the Muslim Community most needed protection and support, the Community of Madrid took measures in the opposite direction with the implementation of these security policies. The culmination of these testimonies by the Muslim migrants above attests to Anthias' idea of "political belonging" versus "individual belonging" (Anthias, 2013). Many of the migrants accounted for above have formed a part of the Community of Madrid for the majority of their lives, yet due to the institutionalized anti-Muslim racism exhibited within these discriminatory policing measures, most question if their environment was truly protecting them as equal community members after the attacks.

2. The Media Response to the Attacks

Another immediate reaction to the March 11th attacks that played perhaps the biggest role in the shaping of illegitimate stereotypes regarding the Muslim community was the increase in sensational news coverage. The rhetoric being broadcast suggested the link between Islam and terrorism, fostering a climate of fear and suspicion amongst consumers of this media. Images of women in hijabs and dark-skinned men with the words "Islamista" (Islamist) written above them lead to a significant increase in the marginalization of the Muslim Community. One Algerian woman recounts the effect that these images that were being produced by the media had on her experience as a young child during the weeks after the attacks: *"Due to the perception of us [Muslims] that was being portrayed in the media, people had become even more afraid. I would witness people literally moving away from the women that wore the veil" (Muslim Woman, Migrant from Algeria).*

This woman's memory of feelings of social ostracization represents one of thousands of similar stories. Nonetheless, these harmful generalizations exuded within Spanish media at the time, unfortunately, are not an uncommon occurrence after terrorist attacks.

According to Caroline Corbin with the *Fordham Law Review* on the media representation of Muslims and Islam in Media, when reporting about terrorist acts perpetrated by Muslims, media often will use terms such as "Islamic fundamentalism", "Islamic extremism", and "Islamic radicalism", while, when reporting terrorist acts committed by non-Muslims, they tend to choose more cautious descriptions such as "hate crime" (Corbin, 2017). That is to say, there is an inherent connection made to Islam and terrorism amongst most media sources after terrorist events. This idea of generalization expressed by Corbin is exemplified in El Mundo's news archive (2005) on the left. The image on the right is the title of a news article written by *Libertad Digital (2005)*. These are two examples of the many news articles released during the months following the attacks that contained vocabulary that marginalized this demographic. The use of words such as *los islamistas* (Islamists) and titles such as "*El vínculo entre los marroquíes y Al-Qaeda*" (The link between Moroccans and Al-Qaeda) suggest that all Muslims or all Moroccans have ties to terrorist groups due to these sensationally written headlines.


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VARIAS PERSONAS ESTÁN AÚN EN BUSCA Y CAPTURA

Los islamistas huidos del 11-M

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MADRID.- Abdelmajid Bouchar era uno de los pocos sospechosos de haber participado en la ejecución de los atentados del 11-M que no había muerto en el piso de Leganés o aún no había sido detenido.

El juez de la Audiencia Nacional Juan del Olmo había cursado una orden de busca y captura internacional contra él el 26 de abril de 2004. Ese mismo día, Del Olmo ordenó la detención de otras cuatro personas, presuntos responsables de **financiar y dar alojamiento e infraestructura** a los autores materiales de la masacre de Madrid. Se trataba de Hicham Ahmidan, Mohamed Belhadj, Mohamed Afalah y **Mohamed Bouharrat,** este último detenido en un bar de Fuenlabrada (Madrid) poco después de dictarse la resolución

Mohamed Afalah, uno de los huidos de Leganés. (Foto: EL MUNDO)

ADEMÁS...

11-M: Masacre en Madrid


PODRÍA HABER PARTICIPADO EN LA PREPARACIÓN DEL 11-S

INFORME: Amer Azizi, el vínculo entre los marroquíes y Al-Qaeda

A primeros del mes de abril del pasado año, tras los sucesos de Leganés, el Wall Street Journal publicó una extensa investigación que situaba a Amer Al Azizi en el centro de todas las miradas. La investigación cerraría el cerco que demostraría la conexión directa con Al-Qaeda. Según la información **del 7 de abril pasado**, Amer Azizi, miembro de la red terrorista de Ben Laden, involucrado en los atentados de Al-Qaeda durante los últimos tres años y contacto de Zarqawi, fue la conexión entre la dirección de Al-Qaeda y los terroristas del 11-M. Azizi huyó de España (donde vivió unos diez años) días antes de que se arrestara a la célula terrorista que colaboró con los atentados del 11-S. Sin embargo, la Policía pensó que había vuelto. Azizi habría sido el encargado de traer la "yihad" a Europa.

Corbin's theory on anti-Muslim rhetoric in the media is complemented by theorist Chris Allen with the Palgrave Hate Studies Journal where he suggests that the media tends to create a heightened sense of "otherness". Allen's theory on the portrayal of Muslims and Islam in the media underscores the need to amplify the "profound differences" between their culture and that of the West (Allen, 2020). That is, by using terms that suggest the disparities between the two groups, as seen in the piece from *Libertad Digital* in which Moroccans are associated with Al-Qaeda. Nonetheless, Bakers' theory contrasts that of Allens' by emphasizing the concept of "sameness". Baker concludes that this "difference" is paradoxical, meaning that Muslims are usually depicted by emphasizing their ***sameness <u>to</u> each other*** and ***their difference <u>from</u> the West*** (Baker, et al, 2013). Although Baker's theory also mentions Islam's dissimilarities to the West, the emphasis lies in the categorization of all Muslims as one *homogenous* group. The media's emphasis on the differences between Western cultures and Islam is not unique to the Muslim experience in the Community of Madrid post-11M as it is usually one of the first reactions to most terrorist attacks. Nonetheless, this idea was exacerbated throughout Spanish media during the years following the attacks, often leading to alienation by the Spanish community and consequently, social disorganization and exaggerated tensions between the two demographics.

<u>3. Restrictions Placed on Mosques</u>

The most impactful immediate reaction of the Community of Madrid in response to the March 11th attacks was the implication of harsh restrictions placed on Mosques which consequently led to a profound rupture within the Muslim Community. Just two months after the attacks, the Minister of the Interior at the time, José Antonio Alonso, went on record stating that he planned to increase the control over Spain's mosques and the content being expressed during

Islamic religious services (Granda, 2004). Alonso participated in an interview with *El País*, where he made the bold claim that Spain needed to find a legal situation in which they could control the Imams in small mosques and suggested that this is where Islamic fundamentalism is born (Granda, 2004). Shortly after, the Islamic Commission of Spain fell under pressure and made the executive decision to follow Alonso's suggestions and closed mosques between prayer times in various autonomous communities, including Madrid. In an interview with Maysoun Douas Maadi, Madrid's first and only Muslim City Councillor representing the regionalist political party Más Madrid (More Madrid) and second-generation Moroccan immigrant, Maadi explained in further detail the regulations:

"After the incident, they closed the mosques in between prayers and this regulation still lasts today. Before the 11th of March attacks the mosque was open all day. You could eat, study, and gather together... It was a place of community. After that they closed it to almost every activity but the prayers. That part of the Muslim Community simply vanished - " Maysoun Douas Maadi, Muslim City Councillor

Maadi expressed that many Muslim community members felt alone as a result of the restrictions on mosques and did not feel supported by the Islamic Commission during the aftermath of the attacks. When proceeding to ask about the motivation behind the Islamic Commission's decision regarding the closure of mosques outside of prayer time, Maadi explained that she believed that this decision was made as a result of their unpreparedness after the event and expressed that she believed that the Islamic Commission was also treating them as if they were guilty. She underscores the lack of support for psychological resources by the

Islamic Commission at the time and describes this action as the "opposite of what they should have done for the Muslim Community"[3].

As expressed by Maadi, a place that once represented home, family, friendship, culture, and community for an entire population, was no longer accessible as a reaction to the Madrid 11th attacks. Places of worship serve not only as sites of religious practice but also as hubs for communal solidarity and support. With the absence of mosques, avenues for social interaction, spiritual guidance, and collective mourning were severely curtailed, exacerbating feelings of isolation and alienation among community members. The closure not only disrupted religious routines but also undermined the sense of belonging and identity that mosques typically provide.

The Impact of the March 11th Bombings on the Muslim Community's Sense of Belonging in Madrid

The overall community dynamics changed as this shift in the perception towards the Muslim migrant demographic by the general Spanish population formed. Within this research, this change in attitudes directed towards the Muslim migrant community after March 11th was measured through a questionnaire amongst 61 Spanish-born, Madrid residents. The results of the questionnaire concluded that 44.3% of the individuals confirmed that their views of Muslims and Islam changed after the March 11th attacks and of those 44.3%, 92.9% of them said that this change was negative, reaffirming that this representative portion of residents harbor pre-existing prejudices against Muslims within the Community of Madrid[4]. This change in perceptions regarding the Muslim minority aided in fostering harsh stereotypes leading to the social marginalization of this group. The Moroccan migrant population especially suffered the adverse

[3] Appendix C
[4] Appendix D, Appendix E

effects of the events as the perpetrators of the attacks were labeled as radicalized Moroccan migrants living in Spain. As of 2023, there were approximately 80,000 foreign residents from Morocco in Madrid (Statista, 2023). This makes up approximately 38% of the Community of Madrid's Muslim population (Statista, 2023). The historical roots of the Moroccan diaspora in Spain are important to consider when discussing the effects that the terrorist attack had on the Muslim community in Madrid as they began to fall prey to hysteria-born villainization.

According to Aurora Ali, anti-Muslim hatred in Spain is very rooted in historic anti-Moorish beliefs based on the narrative of the Spanish *Reconquista*, therefore Moroccan Muslims had already represented a group that "threatened" the Spanish identity long before the attacks. Moor, or "Moro" is was term once used to refer to those of Sub-Saharan descent from the 8th to 15th century (Blakemore, n.d.), yet it now holds a despective connotation, often used in a derogatory manner towards the members of the Moroccan diaspora living in Spain. Ali underscores the trend in which this historical dialogue contributed to the false association of *all* Muslims in Spain to be Moroccan as she states, "all Muslims, Spaniards, Pakistanis, [who are Muslim] become "moors' ' in the collective imaginary (Ali, 2020), undermining the diversity of the religion and its followers. Therefore, the release of the perpetrators' ethnicities intensified this already-existing discrimination towards Moroccan Muslim community members.

Anwar Ouassini with the *Social Compass Journal* compliments Ali's argument by highlighting the historical marginalization of the Moroccan diaspora in Spain, "the exclusionary tone of Spanish cultural and political discourses of anything Moroccan Muslim has racialized the communal tensions between the majority White, Spanish Catholic community, and the Spanish Moroccan community" (Ouassini, 2021). This phenomenon can be associated with the instantaneous media coverage that emphasized the ethnicity of the perpetrators, only contributing

to the further stereotyping of the innocent population. According to Ouassini's analysis, the Moroccan diaspora in Spain has always been represented in political and social discourse as unwanted and different. As viewed within the media analyzed in the above sections from *El Mundo* and *Libertad Digital*, most media sources after the March 11th attacks emphasized the fact that the perpetrators were Moroccan, which heavily influenced the historically rooted negative public opinion of the general Moroccan demographic. As a result, the consumption of this sensational media furthered the development of this phenomenon of Maurophobia or the fear of the Moor (Ouassini, 2021). In fact, in the questionnaire curated for this research, when asked about the quantitative question regarding the first word that came to mind when thinking of a Muslim Man, almost 9% of the 61 participants replied *Moro (Moor)*[5].

This change in perceptions amongst the respondents explains the shared sense of insecurity felt within the Moroccan Muslim community in Madrid following the March 11th attacks. According to the 2005 Human Rights Watch Report on Counter-Terrorism Measures in Spain, many Moroccan Muslims reported an elevated sense of fear that led many of them to alter their daily routines to keep as low a profile as possible during the months following the attacks (Sunderland 2005). Members of the Moroccan community in Madrid reported that women wearing hijabs and young men, especially those carrying backpacks, received hostile looks and verbal insults on the street and even avoided speaking Arabic loudly in the streets to avoid provoking unwanted attention (Sunderland, 2005). Several of the Muslim migrants from Morocco who were interviewed for this research confirmed the harsh retaliation by part of the Spanish community after March 11th. One Moroccan migrant woman explained the challenges that she faced fitting in with the other mothers at her daughters' school:

[5] Appendix F

"Before the attack, some of them [the mothers] used to speak with me despite the language barrier since I had only been in Spain for two years. After the attack, they stopped trying to contact me to talk about school issues or anything else. They would stare at me silently or even pretend I wasn't there when I went to pick up my daughter from preschool. From that moment on, I became very distant when it came to the Spanish community. I was sometimes afraid to interact with some mothers in the park, for example, because I thought they would reject me." (Muslim Woman, Migrant from Morocco)

The remarks by this Madrid resident illustrate this dramatic change in the attitudes of the majority group towards Moroccan Muslims as a result of the March 11th attacks. This woman's fear of being rejected by society directly relates to the worsened sense of belonging within the community presented by Anthias, Chavez, and Sangaramoorthy in their interpretation of the negative effects of this discriminatory rhetoric.

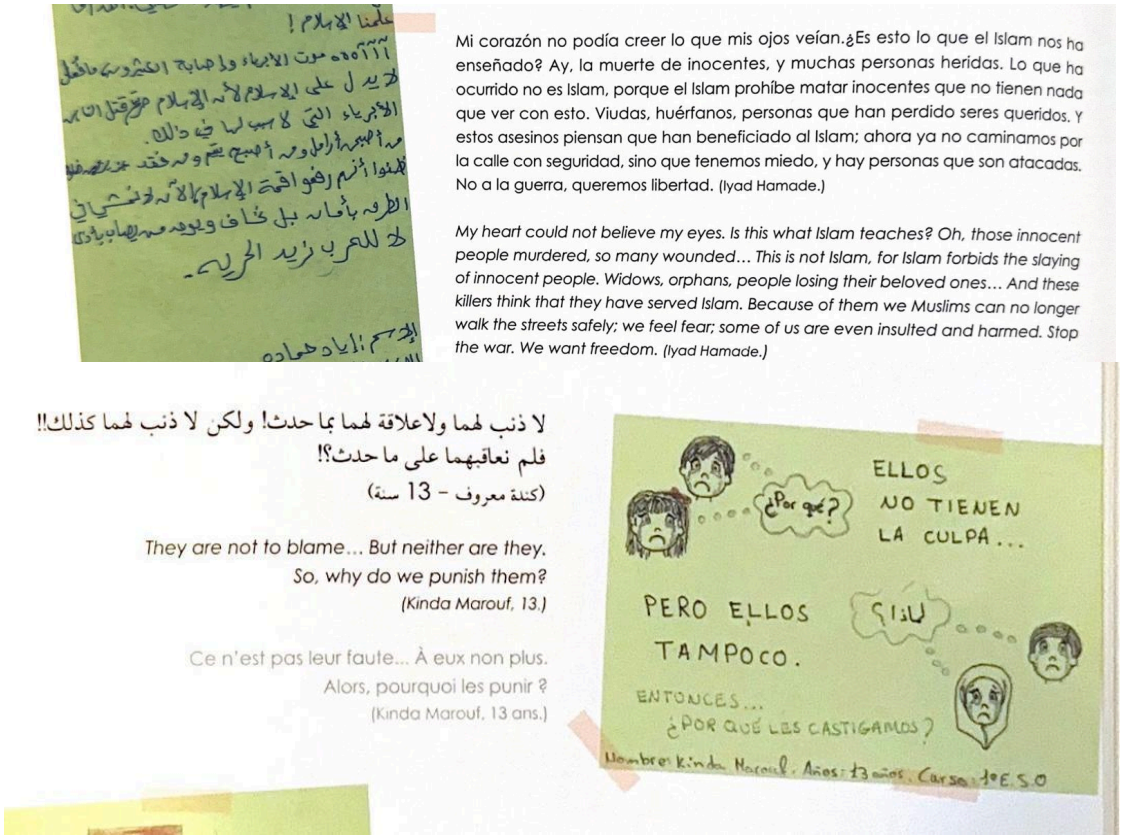
Similarly, Andrés Agudelo-Suárez with the *Journal of Social Science and Medicine* explores the emotional effects that social exclusion creates. He states that discrimination is by far one of the biggest health risk factors within immigrant populations (Agudelo-Suárez, et al.). In Agudelo-Suárez's study on discrimination experienced in the workplace and social environments, he found that environmental marginalization directly led to stress syndrome, nervousness, and emotional instability as experienced by the majority of migrants in his study (Agudelo-Suárez, et al.). This phenomenon has been mirrored by the experiences of many Muslim migrants through the increase in discrimination after the March 11th attacks. One Moroccan man interviewed explained the emotional stress that he experienced during the months after the attacks, as he was constantly worrying about the safety of his wife and daughters. He shared that he even considered sending them back to Morocco for some time while the situation settled down[6].

[6] Appendix

Willing to uproot his entire life, this testimony by the Moroccan migrant man attests to the anxiety-inducing feeling of waking up every day to an inevitable sense of fear and insecurity for one's family. The deeply rooted institutional discrimination against the Moroccan diaspora in Spain attests to the effects that this group felt as a result of the rhetoric born from the March 11th attacks. This pervasive discrimination alludes to the elevated levels of mental health issues and anxiety within the Moroccan community in Madrid at the time.

"Queremos la paz"

"Queremos la paz" (We Want Peace) is a book that compliments Agudelo-Suárez's theory on the emotional effects of social exclusion, by highlighting the emotional hardships faced by Muslim children in Madrid at the time and the mentally taxing overall sense of blame felt within the community. Crafted by the Young Muslim Association of Madrid (AJMM), "Queremos la Paz" eloquently reflects the self-perceptions of hundreds of Muslim children through the use of illustrations. These children were asked to draw pictures that represent their feelings or fears after the incident. As stated by the AJMM in the introduction, the book is a "tribute to a city they [the young Muslims] love and respect as their own, a city where they strive to live in harmony despite the attempts to make their lives here as a Muslims painful" (Young Muslim Association of Madrid, 2009). The work on the following page represents a couple of these testimonies.



Queremos la Paz, Asociación de Jóvenes Musulmanes de Madrid, 2009

The ideas that repeat throughout the illustrations represent intensified feelings of *fear* and *blame.* The images featured in the book depict scenes of violence and chaos, underscored by palpable anxiety and distress. Many of the children illustrate themselves as crying and confused, reflecting a deep-seated fear of being unjustly blamed for the actions of a few extremists. The recurrent themes of isolation, alienation, and a longing for peace within their art reveal how these young minds are grappling with a societal backlash, struggling to reconcile their identities with a world that now views them with heightened suspicion. These drawings are a testament to the emotional and psychological toll that the attacks have inflicted on not only these children but the entire Muslim community.

The Long-Term Impacts of Years of Hostility: 20 years after 11M

This final chapter will delve into the enduring social consequences that the confluence of heightened societal prejudice and institutional racism as a result of the March 11th attacks has had on the Muslim community, creating a cycle of marginalization and solitude that persists to this day.

1. A Struggle for Belonging.

The Madrid train bombings in 2004 were not necessarily the sole event that created this divide between the Muslim migrant community and Spanish society, yet it represents a defining moment that aided in enabling both institutional and social anti-Muslim rhetoric within the Community of Madrid. As a result, many Muslim community members soon felt as though they were outsiders in their neighborhoods. This change created an everlasting wound within the Muslim Community in Madrid.

Mohammad Elahi Alam Alam with Valiente Bangla, describes this gradual loss of belonging as a "never-ending cycle of hate". He explains, "*The Muslim community begins to resent the Spanish Community and local governments. Why, you ask? Because every day they are more hurt by their actions' (Mohammad Elahi Alam Alam).* Alam's reference to this *hate cycle* expresses similar sentiments to that of Anthias' theory on political belonging and that although these people have been here for decades, their sense of belonging in the community is impeded by the actions of influenceable citizens and politicians.

Similar testimonies are expressed by Maysoun Douas Maadi as she compares the effects that the 9/11 attacks had on the American Muslim Community versus the effects of the March 11th attacks in the Spanish Muslim Community:

"It was like an awakening moment for them [American Muslims] and they had a lot of sentiments of being proud American Muslim Migrants. But in Spain, I think that the Muslim population has a lot of trauma and the sentiment of belonging is not as big. There is too much islamophobia and many microaggressions that have eroded this sentiment of belonging. In the end, it's like "No one is willing to understand me so why should I make the effort to explain myself?" (Maysoun Douas Maadi)

The explanations of the two professionals exude a sentiment that over time, this feeling of being unwanted or unwelcome in their community has reduced the overall desire to interact with the majority community. Within the Community of Madrid, this lack of interest can be seen mutually from both the general Spanish population and the Muslim community, leading to a breakdown in community dynamics, caused by this indifference.

When speaking to the Muslim migrants interviewed for this thesis, there was one common theme that reappeared in almost all of the interviews; the idea that the March 11th attacks simply worsened an already-existing racism that has over time, led them to feel undervalued and forgotten by the Community of Madrid. Many members of these communities feel as though Muslims simply are not acknowledged within any level of civil life. Three main grievances surfaced:

1. Community celebrations of Eid are oftentimes shut down or not approved of by local governments.
2. No official communications from politicians or public officials recognizing Muslim holidays.
3. No currently functioning Muslim cemetery to bury their relatives within the Community of Madrid.

The topic of Eid was one of the most important issues discussed in the interviews. Not only is Eid not recognized as a holiday for the Muslim population in Madrid, but many

community celebrations of Eid are oftentimes not approved of by local governments. One specific instance in Lavapiés particularly sheds light on this issue. Every year, the leader of *Valiente Bangla,* Mohammad Elahi Alam Alam, reaches out to the local government of Madrid, asking for permission to use the *Casino de la Reina Park* in Embajadores to gather the Muslim community to commemorate the end of Ramadan, the Muslim celebration of Eid al-Fitr[7]. Nonetheless, Elahi explains that every year the local government either denies the permission to use the park or places infinite restrictions on the permission if granted. This year, almost 7,000 Muslim community members attended the prayer service for Eid al-Fitr. Even so, the local governments did not allow the use of the megaphone to project the sound of the prayer to reach those praying outside of the courts as well, due to a city regulation stating there can be no megaphone use less than 500 meters from a school (Xlavapies, 2024). Local Muslim community leaders expressed frustrations towards the local government for not making an exception for this annual celebration of the Muslim community, above all because the first prayer was at 8:30 am before school started. According to Elahi, *"Every year, for the past 17 years, Valiente Bangla and other community associations ask the local government for the basketball courts at the Casino de la Reina park and they continue to give us problems. The community of Madrid should be aware that every Spring we ask for permission to use the park for Eid" (Mohammad Elahi Alam Alam).*

This explicit institutional anti-Muslim hate and general lack of acknowledgment for the residents of the Community can lead to an increasingly growing sense of frustration and resentment due to the local government's lack of consideration for their cultural and religious events. This neglect has led many Muslim community members to feel that they are not valued as integral members of the city's social fabric.

[7] Appendix H

Maysoun Douas Maadi expressed similar feelings concerning the lack of recognition by local politicians and organizations during the celebration of Eid. She explains the sense of alienation by the lack of recognition of these holidays and explains that by not recognizing nor greeting the Muslim community, they are inherently reinforcing "Islamophobic" beliefs[8].

Muslim community activists brought another prominent issue to the discussion when speaking about the lack of a currently functioning Muslim cemetery in the Community of Madrid. According to independent journalist, Leah Pattem, "Until 2014, Griñón was the chosen cemetery of Muslims from all over Madrid and even outside of Madrid…Following a spike in burials during Madrid's first wave of Covid-19, the Griñón cemetery ran out of space, but instead of finding a new site there have been discussions about exhuming bodies that have already been there for 10 years, but not necessarily informing the families" (Pattem, 2022). This failure to acknowledge the Muslim community's need for proper burial services reflects that blatant disregard for certain cultural and religious practices. According to Alam (Valiente Bangla), if a Muslim community member wants to lay an individual to rest, they currently have to go to Burgos to do so. He explained that there is talk of opening up a new Muslim cemetery in Carabanchel (Southwest Madrid) but three years after it was agreed upon, there is still no progress.

This severe lack of Muslim community recognition in civil life has long-term socio-psychological effects on the Muslim community members' sense of belonging within the Community of Madrid as illustrated by Alam and Maadi. The scientific background behind this concept is explained by the *Royal Society for Public Health* as author Salami defines belonging as 'the experience of being valued, needed, and accepted as well as a ***person's perception*** that his or her characteristics articulate with, fit with, or complement the system or environment (Salami

[8] Appendix I

et al, 2019). By the standards of Salami's theory of belonging regarding the self-perception in which individuals' characteristics complement and "fit in" with those of the environment, the examples provided by the migrants interviewed above are not congruent with this definition. The lack of inclusion of the Muslim population in civil life by local governments exemplifies and validates their feelings of augmented invisibility and the unwillingness to embrace them as equal participants in the city's diverse cultural landscape.

Given this context, it can be assumed that the years following the 2004 attacks were filled with uncertainty and insecurity for most Muslim community members. Not only were they too healing from the losses of these attacks but at the same time were being blamed. The historical rhetoric surrounding the Muslim migrant population in the Community of Madrid has exacerbated this feeling of alienation which is further emphasized through the lack of recognition in almost all realms of civil life. The culmination of the psychological traumas that this community was faced with as a result of the events, along with the institutional impediments by local governments resulted in a sense of significant loss of belonging amongst the Muslim community in Madrid that will not be fixed until this rhetoric begins to change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

*The following recommendations have been curated as outcomes of the analysis of this thesis as well as recommendations suggested by the Muslim migrant community themselves:

a) ***The Monitoring and Reporting of Unethical Policing:*** The increase in security measures after terrorist events is inevitable. Nonetheless, the implementation of stricter policing policies must be upheld to reduce bias in stop-and-frisk procedures in some of Madrid's most vulnerable communities, specifically, ones that target the Moroccan Muslim diaspora in the Community of Madrid. The creation of mechanisms for monitoring and reporting incidents of discrimination and hate crimes is encouraged to serve as a representative for these voices. Similarly, strengthening the Civilian Complaint Review Board and making it easily accessible to the public is recommended to provide transparency within this sector. Additionally, the active participation of at least one Muslim individual on the Board is necessary to provide representation to this vulnerable demographic after terrorist events.

b) ***Media Responsibility:*** The use of positive rhetoric in media and political discourse is strongly encouraged as an integrative attempt to reshape this sense of community. This involves actively combating stereotypes and misinformation while ensuring the ethical representation of the demographic in public and political spheres. The implementation of fact-checking services that collaborate with social media platforms to flag and correct misinformation and xenophobic discourse after terrorist events is necessary to hold platforms and individuals accountable for spreading misinformation that could lead to the marginalization of the Muslim community.

c) ***Public Statements by Leaders:*** Acknowledging the presence of the Muslim community in Madrid in all aspects of civil life is crucial in bettering the self-esteem of the community and

fostering a sense of belonging ever so forgotten. This involves the recognition of Muslim holidays and celebrations by politicians and local entities. The representation of Muslim policymakers in local governments is an urgent need to ensure that the diverse perspectives and needs of Muslim communities are heard and addressed, fostering inclusivity and equitable decision-making. Ensuring that public services are accessible and sensitive to the cultural needs of the Muslim community also plays an integral part in rebuilding this sense of belonging.

d) ***Community Campaigns:*** Intercultural and Inter-religious community events that involve bridging the gap between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities will contribute to the positive rebuilding of the self-esteem of the Muslim community as well. This requires not only promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue within the community but also creating initiatives *against* religious discrimination. Events such as women's groups, collaborative community service projects for the good of the community, and shared recreational and sports activities are all examples of ways in which highly diverse communities can create more cohesive neighborhoods. These initiatives will aid in connecting both the majority and minority groups.

CONCLUSION

The March 11th terrorist attacks in Madrid represent one of these many instances in which a minority group became a target of unfounded fears. The rise of the far-right and consequently, anti-Muslim rhetoric in Spain in recent years is not an unprecedented occurrence; it has historically been driven by economic crises, social unrest, and nationalist sentiments that lead minorities to fall prey to this hysteria. The wounds inflicted by this pervasive rhetoric amplified after the attacks have left the Muslim community of Madrid feeling deeply marginalized and unwanted in their community. The undeniable increase in hate crimes, unfair

policing, and sensational media practices has provoked an everlasting sense of fear and insecurity in the everyday lives of Muslim community members. Not only did they experience a heightened sense of alienation from local governments and politicians, but the prompt closure of mosques in between prayer times as an immediate result of the attacks contributed to the complete isolation of the Muslim community in a moment in which this community was most sought after. As demonstrated by various scholars (Hanes & Machin, Chavez, Allen, Agudelo-Suárez & Salami), the long-term effects of this loss of sense of belonging and marginalization within minority communities ultimately lead to the poor overall psychological health and wellness of these groups everso observed in the theories featured and reaffirmed by the experiences of the Muslim migrants in question.

The combination of the factors above attests to the immediate need to emphasize the humanitarian effects of terrorist events. The immediate and long-term reactions from the March 11th terrorist attacks in the community of Madrid led to an overall sense of low self-esteem from many Muslims concerning the role they play in the local community and their identity as active members of society. By making concerted efforts to rebuild the confidence of the Muslim community and even more so the Muslim *migrant* community as a valued minority demographic and making the Community of Madrid more accessible and open for followers of Islam, Madrid can pave the way for a more inclusive and harmonious society, where diversity is celebrated and all communities can thrive together.

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Appendix A

OBERAXE Data (2022) for Gracia and Bolaños (2022)

Figure 8: Graph showing the distribution of hate speech content by target, between March and April 2022. Immigrants, North Africans, and Muslims constitute the main targets, followed by those with North African ethnic backgrounds and young migrants. **Source:** OBERAXE

Appendix B

Take from Interview with NGO *Valiente Bangla Leader Mohammed Elahi Alam Alam*

"Lavapies have a lot of problems with racism. Especially black or darker-skinned migrants. I have seen the police unfairly question these people or pat them down to the point of them being completely naked on the street. There are some NGOs in the neighborhood that Valiente Bangla works with to help with these issues but we can only do so much against the police force."

Appendix C

Take from Interview Maysoun Douas Maadi, Madrid's first and only Muslim City Councillor

"I simply think that they did not know how to manage the situation and were not prepared, nor did they ask for help so all they did was shut down and wait. But as a leadership, they should've done the opposite and opened the doors of the mosque, supported us with legal and psychological

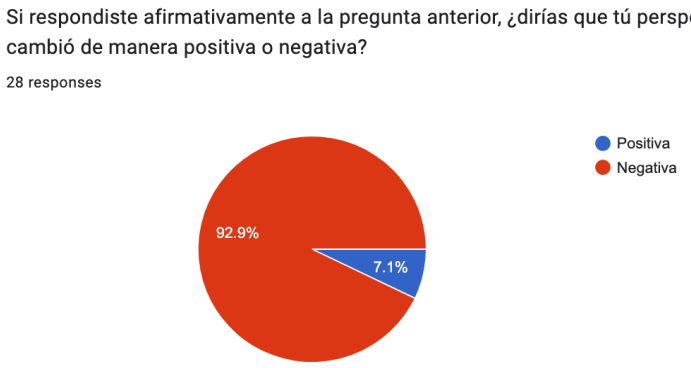
advice, anything they could've done to make the situation better because we were the victims. The worst thing about all of it is that they do not regret what they did. They treated all of us as if we were guilty too."

Appendix D

Questionnaire Results 1

Appendix E

Questionnaire Results 2



Appendix F

Questionnaire Results 3

a) *What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of a Muslim man?*

b) *What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of a Muslim woman?*

c) *What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of Islam?*

a)

b)

c)

Appendix G

Take from Interview with Muslim Migrant Man from Morocco

"From that moment everything changed in our life in Spain. I always say it was like a defining moment. The feeling before the attack was very different. There was curiosity about our religion, our country, and customs, very rarely outright rejection or disgust. After the attack, views changed completely. They became looks of disgust. I am Moroccan and it is quite noticeable because I have darker skin. That is to say, when someone sees me they know that I am Moroccan and therefore Muslim. After the attack, I felt quite insecure. Fortunately, nothing happened to me in the workplace, but the treatment I experienced from people on the street, in the supermarket, even putting gas in the car by the worker… I knew they felt unsafe. I didn't care if they looked at me badly or even called me a "moor terrorist" but I was afraid for my little daughters and for my wife who was pregnant at the time. I remember that I even told her not to go to the supermarket without me because I was afraid that some crazy person would attack her. If it weren't for the fact that at that time we were in very bad shape financially, I would have told him to go to Morocco for a while while I continued working here."

Appendix H

Photo by XLavapiés, Ramadan Celebration (2024)

Appendix I

Take from Take from Interview Maysoun Douas Maadi, Madrid's first and only Muslim City Councillor

"There are a lot of gaps in civil rights in Spain in general. It's like Spain recognizes civil rights but has a hard time implementing them in daily life. For example, there are a lot of freedoms for religion but we Muslims don't get to reap the benefits of them. Think about having Eid as a holiday, we cannot access that day in the labor market. For me it doesn't have to do only with immigration, even the Muslims that have been in Spain their entire lives are not considered in governmental decisions and civil life. This doesn't help us feel welcome or that we are taken into consideration. It hurts integration on both ends. No one even greets us for Ramadan or Eid publicly. Not schools nor government officials. If you are not putting in the work to change it, you are reinforcing these beliefs and reinforcing Islamophobia."

Appendix J

Table of Interviews

Men	Women
Moroccan Man, 65 years old (1st generation migrant)	Algerian Women, 27 years old (1st generation migrant)
Mohammad Elahi Alam Alam, Expert, 1st Generation Migrant from Bangladesh (Founder of NGO *Valiente Bangla)*	Moroccan Women, 62 years old (1st generation migrant)
	Maysoun Douas Maadi, Expert, Second Generation Moroccan Migrant (Madrid's first and only Muslim City Councillor representing the regionalist political party Más Madrid (More Madrid))

Appendix K

General Interview Guide

1. *Where are you from? How long have you been living in the Community of Madrid?*
2. *What was your initial reaction when you heard about the March 11th attacks?*
3. *How did the attacks impact your sense of security in Madrid?*
4. *Did you notice a change in the attitudes or behaviors of the general Spanish population towards the Muslim population after the attacks?*
5. *Did you experience any type of discrimination or prejudice as a Muslim after the attacks?*
6. *Do you think that the Community of Madrid provided enough support and resources to the Muslim community in Madrid after the attacks?*
7. *Did you notice a difference in your mental health during the months following the attacks?*
8. *Did the attacks have any impact on your sense of belonging within the Community of Madrid?*