

THE INTEGRATION OF ETHNIC AND
RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN
EUROPE: INEFFECTIVE POLICIES
OR REJECTION FROM THE PART OF
RECEIVING SOCIETIES? THE CASE
OF ASSIMILATIONIST FRANCE AND
MUSLIMS

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THE INTEGRATION OF ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN EUROPE: INEFFECTIVE POLICIES OR REJECTION FROM THE PART OF RECEIVING SOCIETIES? THE CASE OF ASSIMILATIONIST FRANCE AND MUSLIMS

Abstract

Integration is a two-way, continuous, dynamic and long-term process of mutual adaptation that still possesses difficulties in some countries. For being fully integrated, a person must be granted with three closely related dimensions: the political (legal status and rights, equal opportunities, and representation), socioeconomic (access to work, healthcare, housing, education, social networks...) and cultural (adaptation and acceptance). There are two main models to deal with this: assimilationism and multiculturalism. The French assimilationist model uses positive discrimination towards French-Muslims in their integration and as a result they are not integrated: restrictive policies, discrimination in employment and housing, "Othering" and crisis of identity.

Resumen

La integración es un proceso bidireccional, continuo, dinámico y a largo plazo de adaptación mutua que todavía plantea dificultades en algunos países. Para estar plenamente integrada, una persona debe contar con tres dimensiones estrechamente relacionadas: la política (estatus legal y derechos, igualdad de oportunidades y representación), la socioeconómica (acceso al trabajo, la sanidad, la vivienda, la educación, las redes sociales...) y la cultural (adaptación y aceptación). Existen dos modelos principales para abordar esta cuestión: el asimilacionismo y el multiculturalismo. El modelo asimilacionista francés utiliza la discriminación positiva hacia los franco-musulmanes en su integración y como resultado no se integran: políticas restrictivas, discriminación en el empleo y la vivienda, "Othering" y crisis de identidad.

Resum

La integració és un procés bidireccional, continu, dinàmic i a llarg termini d'adaptació mútua que encara planteja dificultats en alguns països. Per estar plenament integrada, una persona ha de tenir tres dimensions estretament relacionades: la política (estatus legal i drets, igualtat d'oportunitats i representació), la socioeconòmica (accés a la feina, la sanitat, l'habitatge, l'educació, les xarxes socials...) i la cultural (adaptació i acceptació). Hi ha dos models principals per abordar aquesta qüestió: l'assimilacionisme i el multiculturalisme. El model assimilacionista francès utilitza la discriminació positiva cap als franc musulmans en la seva integració i com a resultat no s'integren: polítiques restrictives, discriminació a l'ocupació i l'habitatge, "Othering" i crisi d'identitat.

Keywords: Minority integration; Integration models; Dimensions of integration; European Union, Assimilationist France; Muslims.

Palabras clave: Integración de las minorías; Modelos de integración; Dimensiones de la integración; Unión Europea, Francia asimilacionista; Musulmanes.

Paraules clau: Integració de les minories; Models d'integració; Dimensions de la integració; Unió Europea, França assimilacionista; Musulmans.

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1. INTRODUCTION

An inclusive society is one that considers all people as having equal rights and when a society does not recognize the equal value of all its members, the basic foundations of dignity are undermined, and as a result, inequality, discrimination, stereotyping and injustice are fostered. All societies should be inclusive, must adapt to the differences between people and must focus on offering everyone the same opportunities for development and well-being, without taking into consideration their nationality, religion, culture, ethnicity etc. Diversity must be perceived as an opportunity for all and equality must prevail over differences. However, there are some societies that are more receptive to integrate people and some countries consider integration a wicked problem because the state is sometimes incapable of accommodating various cultural differences as well as societal interests, and “from the perspective of the receiving society, exclusionary policies are an expression of a general perception of immigrants as outsiders, which inevitably adversely affects immigrants’ integration” (Penninx & Garcés-Mascerañas 2016, p.16).¹

I argue that for being fully integrated into a society, the person who wants to be integrated must have all dimensions of integration fully anchored: the political, the socioeconomic and the cultural. These dimensions are interconnected and coexist with each other and are all equally important for integration processes. On the other hand, to be politically integrated would mean to have a citizenship, and with it having the legal status and rights, and equal opportunities and representation in the political sphere. On the second hand, being socioeconomically integrated would mean having access to work, healthcare, housing, education and one of the most important elements, having social networks (with the receiving society). Along with this, cultural integration involves adapting and accepting the other’s beliefs, customs, language etc. In other words, being fully integrated would mean having access to the national community and its rights and duties but also being socially and culturally accepted by the receiving society. However, these dimensions are managed differently and therefore they can take different paths depending on the model of integration states decide to use.

There are two main integration models used by European states to integrate new minorities: assimilationism and multiculturalism. Assimilationist policies involve the process of making the person who is being integrated similar to the receiving society and

¹ Penninx, R.; Garcés-Mascareñas, B. (2016). *The concept of integration as an analytical tool and as a policy concept*. *Integration processes and policies in Europe*. IMISCOE. 11-29.

policies are created so that the racial and/or ethnic distinctions, as well as the cultural and social differences of the people who want to be integrated disappear. On the other hand, multicultural policies are based on the equal appreciation of all cultures without considering that one is better than the other.

The following paper is going to focus on the integration of the new minorities (second and third generation of immigrants who arrived in Europe in the post-World War II scenario), because even though there are also others who arrived to Europe for better living conditions (new immigrants, climate refugees, etc.), new minorities have been living in Europe too long for not being integrated yet. In addition, special attention is going to be given to Muslims among these new minorities, as they are one of the three main minority population in Europe that pose a major challenge to diversity (Triandafyllidou 2011, p.11),² and because although they constitute a large part of the European population settled in European countries long ago, they still face discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes. The issue is that due to migration flows happening in Europe, together with globalization processes, all European states are multicultural, including both traditional and new minority groups, which has created a political debate around the integration of these people, trying to find a way of integrating them while taking into account the cultural differences that this presents (Turnsek et al. 2009, p.1)³ to host societies. Moreover, this paper analyzes whether European countries are the ones that have “bad” integration policies, and therefore, bad integration models or whether there is a problem with the receiving societies when welcoming new minorities. The present paper answers this question by analyzing the three dimensions of integration (political, socioeconomic and cultural) as well as the two models of integration used in European countries (the assimilationist and the multiculturalist). I argue that the level of integration of new minorities depend very much on the model the country decides to use. Furthermore, a special focus is given to the French assimilationist model applied to the most visible ethnic minority in the country: Muslims. I have chosen this country because since the beginning of the century it has been creating restrictive policies towards Muslims and because it is hard to believe that an ethnic minority such as the Muslim, who has been settled in France for so many years does not feel integrated into French society yet. For

² Triandafyllidou, A. (2011). *Addressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Europe. A comparative overview of 15 European countries*. European university Institute.

³ Turnsek, N.; Hinge, H.; Karakatsani, D. (2009). *An inclusive Europe: New minorities in Europe*. Cice Guidelines, No. 11. 1-19.

this reason, the second part of the paper focuses on analyzing the three dimensions of integration applied to the French-Muslim case.

Moreover, this paper is a deductive and qualitative type of research done using both primary and secondary sources in order to answer the question just mentioned. It is an embedded case study with multiple units of analysis, and primary sources have been some first-hand interviews of Muslims in France and, secondary sources such as books (and book chapters) and articles both in English and Spanish. The paper starts by defining the key concepts for understanding the issue and afterwards, what being politically, socioeconomically and culturally integrated is explained. After having explained these matters, the two main models of integration used in Europe are analyzed: the assimilationist and multiculturalist. Next, there is a focus on the European Union (EU) and a brief explanation is given about the historical background of newcomers in the post-WW2 scenario and afterwards, how EU multilevel governance works in relation to integration policies is explained. After explaining the way in which the EU manages integration and listing some of the strategies and directives undertaken by the same, the paper focuses on how the French assimilationist model deals with the integration of Muslims, and for doing so, the three dimensions of integration are tested in regard to this new minority in French territory.

2. KEY CONCEPTS

Firstly, minority refers to any national, religious, ethnic or linguistic group that is composed of a smaller number of people in relation to the rest of the population or, like in this case, the host society, whose members share a sense of identity. Today, the term “new minorities” is used to refer to the minority groups that resulted from post-World War II immigration flows that arrive at many northwestern European countries (Turnsek et al. 2009, p.6),⁴ for economic or political reasons. Therefore, ethnic minority refers to a group in society that is distinguished by its language, religious, cultural, linguistic, racial and/or geographic values and it is numerically inferior to the majority group. Throughout Europe, almost all societies contain types of ethnic minorities such as indigenous people (i.e., Sami people of northern Scandinavia), landless or nomadic communities and

⁴ Ibid.

immigrants (ibid. p.4-5). Ethnic minorities in Europe are the main group discussed in this paper, and more specifically, in the second part of the present analysis the discussion deals with one of the most visible and recognized ethnic minorities in Europe: Muslims.

Moreover, the term integration is a concept that is based on several constitutions, and it can also be referred to as inclusion, assimilation, adjustment etc. In fact, there are many different definitions among many authors. For the present paper the most adequate one is the following definition given by Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas (2016),⁵ who define integration as “the process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration” (p.11) and it encompasses “three analytically distinct dimensions in which people may (or may not) become an accepted part of society: the legal-political, the socio-economic, and the cultural-religious (p.14). It must be said that integration means a different thing depending on the country, as each country has different models of integration and therefore uses different policies for integration and defines the term differently. In this paper, the three dimensions of integration, which are intertwined and connected, are going to be discussed: the cultural, political and socioeconomic; and I argue that when a new minority obtains all three, it is considered to be fully integrated in the new society.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. The integration of minorities

There are many definitions of integration, and the process of integration depends on the country of settlement and it is the socioeconomic, political and cultural integrations what gives minorities the capacity to get involved and become part of the host societies. To this end, this section will explain what being culturally, politically and socioeconomically integrated involves, but it should be clear that all these dimensions are interconnected and affect each other. I want to make this last point clear, since all the dimensions are closely related to each other and although it has been decided to divide the dimensions in this way, there are other authors who have differentiated them in another way (i.e., cultural-religious or socio-political), even if the result are ultimately the same because the factors

⁵ Penninx, R.; Garcés-Masareñas, B. (2016). *The concept of integration as an analytical tool and as a policy concept*. *Integration processes and policies in Europe*. IMISCOE. 11-29.

to be analyzed remain the same. Afterwards, the two main models of integration will be discussed: the assimilationist and multicultural models.

3.1.1. The Political integration of minorities

In order to be politically integrated I argue that it is important to define the term “citizen”, because, I understand that when someone is integrated into a society, it has become a citizen of it. So, who is a citizen? And who has access to become one in the host society? Some authors describe the term citizen as “a form of membership” (Bloemraad et al. 2008, p.154)⁶ or as the “set of legal rights and duties of individuals that are attached to nationality under domestic law” (Triandafyllidou 2011, p.16),⁷ or as a legally recognized inhabitant for a particular place. In fact, the term is not being internationally used in the same way (Turnsek et al. 2009, p.6).⁸ For example, European countries developed their integration models according to what they believe citizenship and nationhood are (Doomernik & Bruquetas-Callejo 2016, p.67)⁹ and as a result, there are opposite integration policies.

In Europe as a whole, being a citizen grants membership to a political community and it also establishes the belonging to a particular state (Odmalm 2007, p.20).¹⁰ Bloemraad et al. (2008)¹¹ argue that it can be disaggregated into four dimensions: their “legal status, rights, political and other forms of participation in society and sense of belonging” (p.154) and having all would mean the person is fully (politically) integrated into the host society. Even so, I believe it is also important to measure (equal) opportunities and representation. In fact, participating in the host society depends on the institutional factors that are related to formal and informal aspects of the context and both group and individual factors depend highly on the socialization of politics and political activism in their backgrounds, families and group resources. Moreover, I argue that

⁶ Bloemraad, I., Korteweg, A., Yurdakul, G. (2008). *Citizenship and Immigration: Multiculturalism, Assimilationism, and Challenges to the Nation-State*. Annual reviews. 153-179.

⁷ Triandafyllidou, A. (2011). *Addressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Europe. A comparative overview of 15 European countries*. European university Institute.

⁸ Turnsek, N.; Hinge, H.; Karakatsani, D. (2009). *An inclusive Europe: New minorities in Europe*. Cice Guidelines, No. 11. 1-19.

⁹ Doomenrik, J.; Bruquetas-callejo, M. (2016). National immigration integration policies in Europe since 1971. In Garcés-Mascreñas, B., Peeninx, R, (Ed.), *Integration processes and policies in Europe. Context, levels and actors* (pp. 57-77). IMISCOE.

¹⁰ Odmalm, P. (2007). One size fits all? European citizenship, national citizenship policies and integration requirements. *Representation*, 43:1. 19-34.

¹¹ Bloemraad, I., Korteweg, A., Yurdakul, G. (2008). *Citizenship and Immigration: Multiculturalism, Assimilationism, and Challenges to the Nation-State*. Annual reviews. 153-179.

political participation involves three different elements: First, institutional factors, which are related to political opportunities at the national (legal frameworks such as voting rights and citizenship regimes) and local levels (policies that encourage or not collective participation, voting etc.), and it is also related to the process of building collective identity and actors (Martiniello 2005, p.3).¹² Second group factors, which, are related to the migration history, the socio-economic status and other relevant aspects of the political sphere. And third, individual factors, such as the social, political and economic resources as well as migration-related experiences and their status. The combination of three levels would mean there is a substantive representation of immigrant in the political sphere. In other words, immigrants develop participatory forms based on the conditions that are imposed by institutions in the receiving society.

Therefore, the political integration would be defined by the active dimension of citizenship and it depends on the city government to promote the inclusion or exclusion of these people, as it is based on policies and it is the local government the one that experiences the policy changes that immigrant pose. Moreover, it is also important to know that the state can recognize a person's needs or it can treat them. On the one hand, a state can recognize their needs based on an individual approach or on a groups-based approach. The first one reflects the concept "the groups as bearers of rights", because it gives each person the same rights and discrimination is prohibited, even if it is positive discrimination, while the second one includes positive discrimination, recognizes there are different groups within the same society, and it understands each group has distinct needs and there is a representative distribution of opportunities. According to Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham (1999),¹³ it is a two-dimensional continuum: on the one hand, we can find the ethnic-civic dimension, which guides institutional practices as well as legal traditions on a broad or narrow understanding of who is a stranger and who it is not. On the other hand, we find the monism-pluralism dimension, which measures the degree of receiving societies when accommodating the cultural identity of outsiders and it recognizes (or sometimes not) the "special" rights of groups for certain practices or obligations such as their ethnic or religious view.

¹² Martiniello, M. (2005). *Political participation, mobilization and representation of immigrant and their offspring in Europe*. School of International Migration and Ethnic Relations, Malmö University. 1-23.

¹³ Koopmans, R., Statham, P. (2000). *Political claims analysis: Integrating protest event and political discourse approaches*. 1-31

There are many idealistic and utilitarian views around integration but another important fact when building inclusion or exclusion three approaches it have to be in mind: the rights-based approach (the policy and political traditions), the historical approach (the historical relationship or treatment of minorities and the understanding of territorial, religious, ethnic tensions), and the practical approach (the ideological elements in the political arena). It is not a mystery that integration policies are of great importance since it is a process of principles of action that seek good guide and direction. These policies can be general, cross-sectional and aimed at the population as one, or targeted, which are aimed at specific groups, and sometimes laws are made for the local-or receiving society but affect migrants. They can be multi-level (national, regional and local) or they may involve state and non-state actors (i.e., governance of immigration policies).

3.1.2. The socioeconomic integration of minorities

This dimension looks after the social and economic status of new minorities, which is a major indicator for their overall integration into the host society, as well as the degree of cohesion and equality. For this reason, I believe that what involves being socioeconomically integrated is “measuring” the position of the integrant in respect to the host society in terms of access to work, healthcare, housing and education provided to them, but I also believe social networks are crucial for integration because they have “an ambivalent role in the process of the immigrants’ entry into the host society” (Budyta-Budzynska 2008, p.52).¹⁴ In fact, social and economic inclusion of new minorities is promoted by different actions that are aimed at changing previously mentioned circumstances and habits. Being economically integrated would mean having the opportunity to find a job in the work market that enables the new minority “to provide material security for him or herself and his or her family through labor” (p.49). On the other hand, being socially integrated would be measured by the functioning of the new minority with the new social environment and how he or she makes use of such networking (p.52).

For example, educational systems contribute to the integration process, and it does in two ways: on the one hand, it creates a common sense of belonging by socializing in school, and, on the second hand, it can lead to more or less social stratification. However,

¹⁴ Budyta-Budzynska, M. (2008). Chapter 3. Adaptation, integration, assimilation- an attempt at a theoretical approach. 43-63.

for some minorities language becomes a strong challenge and, according to Zorlu & Hartog (2018),¹⁵ language skills are an essential first step on the socioeconomic integration since they “create a foothold for immigrants to explore opportunities and to integrated in the host society” (p.2). Furthermore, even when minorities get involved or integrated in the economic sphere by having jobs, these are usually the dirty, dangerous and downgraded types of employments, and are usually in sectors such as agriculture, domestic care, construction etc. And the type of employment is usually seasonal, temporary, subcontracted or even illegal. Even so, research has shown that having a job does not always involve with being socially accepted (Li & Heath 2017, p.3).¹⁶ In regard to socializing, some new minorities find difficulties because some live within ethnic communities with already established social ties, which meanwhile creates the lack of ties with the host community and its members (Gauthier 2016, p.19).¹⁷

Being socially excluded would mean being blocked from, or denied full access to many rights, resources and opportunities that are essential for living and that are normally available to members of the society and being socioeconomically excluded would mean the host society preventing them from participating fully in the political, social and economic life. If this were the case, they would face difficulties to find a job or a house in the short term, while, in the long-term, this would end up with stigmatization, prejudice and ignorance on the part of the receiving society, which would affect the overall social mobility of the country. According to Nová (2016),¹⁸ being socially excluded can be the result of low income and poverty and this can worsen discrimination, poor living conditions and inadequate education while be cut off from the social networks, educational opportunities and so on (p.676). In fact, socioeconomic exclusion has created, not the settlement of new residents, but of what the host society calls “outsiders”, “the different” (Turnsek et al. 2009)¹⁹ or “others” (Woods 1998),²⁰ people completely alien to

¹⁵ Zorlu, A.; Hartog, J. (2018). *The impact of language on socioeconomic integration of immigrants*. IZA Institute of Labor economics, No. 11485. 1-25.

¹⁶ Li, Y.; Heath, A. (2017). *The socio-economic integration of ethnic minorities*. Social Inclusion, Vol. 1, No. 1. 1-4.

¹⁷ Gauthier (2016). *Obstacles to socioeconomic integration of high-skilled immigrant women. Lessons from Quebec interculturalism and implications for diversity management*. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal. Vol. 35, No. 1. 17-30

¹⁸ Nová, M. (2016). *Migration – models and principles of immigrant integration*. In, *International Conference on European Integration 2016*. 673-679.

¹⁹ Turnsek, N.; Hinge, H.; Karakatsani, D. (2009). *An inclusive Europe: New minorities in Europe*. Cice Guidelines, No. 11. 1-19.

²⁰ Woods, N. (1998): *Globalization: definition, debates and implications*. Oxford development Studies. Vol. 26. No. 1.

the state due to their different origin. This, in turn, creates feelings ranging from fear to empathy on the part of minorities. These “other” people are living parallel lives, where “residential segregation, effectively separate schools, different places of worship, divergent community associations, discrete social networks and separate places of leisure” (Vertovec 2010, p.85)²¹ and are everyday occurrences of their social exclusion. The aim is to make the stranger disappear by making it marginalized by defining what atypical is and is not and thus “creating its Strangers through time-honored exclusionary practices such as social stigma, economic and political exclusion and physical segregation” (Alexander 2003, p.413).²²

3.1.3. The cultural integration of minorities

Regarding this dimension, perceptions, and practices (such as religious, language, cultural competences etc.) of the host society and the integrant and their reciprocal reactions to the differences and diversities is measured, and it is summarized as the attempt to assimilate new minorities’ beliefs, values, and ways of living from the part of the host society. In other words, the cultural integration is shaped by one’s beliefs, traditions and customs and the perceptions and understanding of differences, which “affects the sense of community and social solidarity” (Algan et al. 2012, p.2).²³ Culture is described by some authors as the main identifying aspect of human society (Alcañiz 2007),²⁴ which has gone through unprecedented changes throughout the decades, and it has not only changed the material culture of society, but it has also involved the expansion of values, customs, behaviors etc. as never seen before. In the past, formation of the modern state created a massive cultural homogenization and diversity was a normative standard, but now, we live in increasingly heterogeneous societies, in part due to globalization because it impacts the relations between new arrivals and the host society (Martiniello & Rath 2014, p.14)²⁵ as the process of globalization is making cultures (and people) alike.

²¹ Vertovec, S. (2010). Towards post-Multiculturalism? Changing communities, conditions and contexts of diversity. UNESCO. 83-95.

²² Alexander, M. (2003). *Local policies towards migrants as an expression of Host-Stranger relations: a proposed typology*. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. 29:3, 411-430.

²³ Algan, Y., Bisin, A., Verdier, T. (2012). Introduction: perspectives on cultural integration of immigrants. In Algan, Y.; Bisin, A.; Manning, A.; Verdier, T. (Ed.), *Cultural integration of immigrants in Europe* (pp.1-44). Oxford.

²⁴ Alcañiz, M. (2007). *El desarrollo local en el contexto de la globalización*. Convergencia Castellón. Vol. 15, No. 47. 285-315.

²⁵ Martiniello, M.; Rath, J. (2014). *An introduction to immigrant incorporation studies*. Amsterdam University Press. IMISCOE. 11-18

Religion for example continues playing an important role in the cultural, but also the socioeconomic integration of minorities since the connection between it and their nationhood is still very close for many. In other words, religion could influence socioeconomic as well as cultural integration through “its function as an identity marker, religious content and individual characteristics attributed to religious affiliation, resources acquired through religious participation, signals conveyed through religious membership, and finally, majorities’ over discrimination against some religious minorities” (Kogan et al. 2020, p.3546).²⁶ In fact, in Europe, the religious character of new minorities has been considered problematic for their cultural and social integrations, and not their racial origins (Turnsek et al. 2009, p.16)²⁷ even if the EU guarantees fundamental rights for its citizens, including religion and its freedom.

Institutions also play a key role in the cultural integration, as the creation of policies may be different depending on the integration model used by policy makers when creating them, which in turn will have an impact on minorities’ sense of belonging and identity. However, even if policies are created to culturally integrate minorities, there are host societies with established stereotypes, prejudice, discriminatory attitudes, and behaviors towards newcomers. In fact, self-determination lies within the cultural integration of the new minority because it is related to the “sense of community and national identity” (Budyta-Budzynska 2008, p.48).²⁸ This may sometimes be challenging due to the homogenization of culture, which is making people be more alike but completely different compared to what others believe in, which challenges cultural integration for many minorities. The marginalization by the host society has a very significant impact on self-determination, because, culture, understood as the building block of a common “language, ethnicity, history, religion and landscape” (Watson 2008, p.420),²⁹ plays an important role when it comes to societies who live together but do not have any of these factors in common, because it is an element that transcends ideology and it is the main element of identity among individuals from the same society.

²⁶ Kogan, I., Fong, E., G. Reitz, J. (2020). Religion and integration among immigrant and minority group. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46:17. 3542-3558.

²⁷ Turnsek, N.; Hinge, H.; Karakatsani, D. (2009). *An inclusive Europe: New minorities in Europe*. Cice Guidelines, No. 11. 1-19.

²⁸ Budyta-Budzynska, M. (2008). Chapter 3. Adaptation, integration, assimilation- an attempt at a theoretical approach. 43-63.

²⁹ Watson, M. (2008). Global trade and global finance. In J. Baylis, S. Smith, & P. Owens, *The globalization of world politics. An introduction to international relations*. (pp.417-430). United Kingdom: Oxford Press University.

3.2. Models of integration

This section will focus on the two main models of integration: the assimilationist and multicultural models. These two models are the ones used by the most European governments and it is interesting because “integration models are inseparable from types of state” (Choquet 2017, p.1).³⁰ Even so, it should be mentioned that there are other integration models (i.e., the discriminatory model), but we will not focus on them because this paper focuses on those used by European countries.

3.2.1. Assimilationism

The assimilationist model involves a process of adaptation of the new minority into the receiving society that requires the acquisition of the culture, customs, and way of living of the host society and therefore leaving aside his/her own, and therefore, making his/her condition of “stranger” disappear (Retortillo et al. 2006, p.126).³¹ This model expects the new minority to abandon their social, cultural and language characteristics and it is when this is achieved that he/she becomes fully integrated. Consequently, the assimilationist model of integration is considered one-directional because the migrant is expected to leave apart his/her particular ways of living and incorporate or adapt to the dominant culture because he/she is expected to be permanent and assumes that their otherness will disappear while they unavoidably assimilate into the host society (Alexander 2003, p.419).³² In other words, becoming a “native” is the goal and it is done by minimizing the ethnic dimension.

Moreover, there are two types of assimilation: firstly, the civic-assimilationism, which aims at cultural monism but it does so by making it easy for immigrants to have a legal citizenship; and, secondly, the ethnic-assimilationism, which also aims at cultural monism but the legal citizenship is legally difficult to achieve. According to Martiniello & Rath (2014),³³ the assimilation model can be used in three ways: as a way of describing the state of the art of the position of immigrants and their composition of the society; as a reflection of the general vision of the way both society and government would orient

³⁰ Choquet, S. (2017). *Models of integration in Europe*. European Issues, No. 449. Fondation Robert Schuman. 1-8. <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0449-models-of-integration-in-europe>

³¹ Retortillo, A., Ovejero, A., Cruz, F., Lucas, S., Arias, B. (2006). *Inmigración y modelos de integración: entre la asimilación y el multiculturalismo*. Universidad de Valladolid. 123-139.

³² Alexander, M. (2003). *Local policies towards migrants as an expression of Host-Stranger relations: a proposed typology*. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. 29:3, 411-430.

³³ Martiniello, M.; Rath, J. (2014). *An introduction to immigrant incorporation studies*. Amsterdam University Press. IMISCOE. 11-18

themselves; or as a way to refer to a specific set of policy instrument and support mechanisms for accommodating immigrant incorporation (p.14).

To sum up, the assimilationist ideology is based on the homogeneity as a starting point, the homogeneous society as a goal, unilaterality in the process of change, cultural integration as complete integration, the disappearance of prejudices and discrimination once integration is done (effective assimilation) and the naturalness and inevitability of the assimilation process. In other words, using the assimilationist strategy, “assumes the possibility and necessity of making the different similar” (Alexander 2003, p.414).³⁴

3.2.2. Multiculturalism

Also called the plurality model and completely contrary to the assimilation model, we find multiculturalism, which recognizes the different values and cultural practices within the same society and calls for the recognition and accommodation of minorities at many levels: the normative (political theory), the ideological (a political party or government) and the policy one. It can be defined as the first expression of cultural pluralism (Rex 2002, p.127),³⁵ or it is also known as “accommodation and tolerance” (Ortega 2017, p.115)³⁶ and its basis is non-discriminatory (ethnic or cultural). It defines the state as a political community that is made of cultural-ethnic heterogeneity and it entails equal rights and implication in all areas of society for newcomers while keeping their cultural-ethnic autonomy and heritage (Caponio & Borkert 2010, p.15).³⁷

This model provides opportunities for groups to be represented in local and national governments (Vertovec 2010, p.84)³⁸ with the equal access and accommodation for minority differences. The theory demands the accommodation and recognition of cultural minorities, including immigrants and it is the state the one creating policies and allowing them to participate in the society within their communities. An example of this is newcomers as ethnic or religious minorities demanding their right to be differentiated

³⁴ Alexander, M. (2003). *Local policies towards migrants as an expression of Host-Stranger relations: a proposed typology*. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. 29:3, 411-430.

³⁵ Rex, J. (2002). *Multiculturalismo e integración política en el Estado nacional moderno*. University of Warwick. 29-43.

³⁶ Ortega, E. (2017). *Minority rights for immigrants: from multiculturalism to civic participation*. Mexican Review Law. Vol. 5, No. 1. 103-126.

³⁷ Caponio, T.; Borkert, M. (2010). *Introduction: the local dimension of migration policymaking*. Amsterdam university press. IMISCOE reports. 9-23.

³⁸ Vertovec, S. (2010). *Towards post-Multiculturalism? Changing communities, conditions and contexts of diversity*. UNESCO. 83-95.

and allocated in a space to be so (Martinieli & Rath 2014, p.15).³⁹ Such theory implies the term multicultural citizenship, and it involves the allegiance and participation within the state through civic and political attachment (Bloemraad et al. 2008, p.160).⁴⁰

However, critics of multiculturalism argue that these policies do not favor the interaction between different cultures and that they do not promote the existence of a common identity in the country and that the implementation and creation of multiculturalist policies entails some issues such as the fact that it contributes to the marginalized in the following way: multiculturalism fosters differences, which leads to communal separateness, which, in turn, entails the lack of socioeconomic mobility, the failure of social relations, what grounds for conflict and a potential for extremism and even terrorism (Vertovec 2010, p.86).⁴¹

4. THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE INTEGRATION OF (NEW) MINORITIES

Integration is fundamental for Europe, but, before analyzing EU integration processes and policies, I will start by explaining the context of already settled new minorities in Europe. Next, I will explain how the EU functions when having to make decisions and I will end up by explaining some initiatives and measures the Union has taken in regard to integration as well as its competences in this area.

4.1. Some historical background

After World War II, a huge migratory flow arrived in the northwestern European countries, bringing with it guest workers, due to the advanced economies represented by those European countries (Martiniello & Rath 2014, p.12).⁴² These people were only coming to Europe in order to work and earn some money, but this turned into their indefinite settlement. Many of them decided to start a new life in Europe, what involved

³⁹ Martiniello, M.; Rath, J. (2014). *An introduction to immigrant incorporation studies*. Amsterdam University Press. IMISCOE. 11-18

⁴⁰ Bloemraad, I., Korteweg, A., Yurdakul, G. (2008). *Citizenship and Immigration: Multiculturalism, Assimilationism, and Challenges to the Nation-State*. Annual reviews. 153-179.

⁴¹ Vertovec, S. (2010). Towards post-Multiculturalism? Changing communities, conditions and contexts of diversity. UNESCO. 83-95.

⁴² Martiniello, M.; Rath, J. (2014). *An introduction to immigrant incorporation studies*. Amsterdam University Press. IMISCOE. 11-18

managing their settlement. However, this became an issue in "the social, political and public service challenges arising from new waves of large-scale immigration and the settlement of sizable communities" (Vertovec 2010, p.84).⁴³ As a result, many governments adopted a range of policies, programs and structures aimed at addressing emerging patterns of diversity. Between 1980 and 1990, the debate in the European land focused on national models of integration and, since then, integration models have tightened conditions of access to residence, work, nationality permits, increased border controls, etc.

All European countries have been affected by these migratory flows, but the integration process varies from one city to another and from one country to another and has different results and forms. Consequently, the settlement and integration of these people has become a key issue on EU policy and regulatory agendas and "immigrant integration issues have become increasingly politicized" (Phillips 2010 p.209).⁴⁴ Integration is a central topic of debate in Western Europe as it is related to many political and social anxieties about people of immigrant background living in urban areas (Martiniello & Rath 2014, p.14-15)⁴⁵ who are given the name "others", because they differ from the host society in terms of marital status, class, religious and cultural background and ethnicity (Alexander 2003, p.411).⁴⁶

4.2. Multi-level governance

The European Union is a multidimensional configuration of power that is understood as the result of a differentiated integration process in which legal systems interact and in which the states have transferred many of their competences to the community body in many areas. It uses a multi-level governance (MLG). From the many definitions founded, I believe that the one given by Daniell & Kay (2017)⁴⁷ is the most accurate, who defines it this way:

⁴³ Vertovec, S. (2010). Towards post-Multiculturalism? Changing communities, conditions and contexts of diversity. UNESCO. 83-95.

⁴⁴ Phillips, D. (2010). *Minority Ethnic segregation, integration and citizenship: a European perspective*. Routledge. Vol. 36, No. 2. 209-225.

⁴⁵ Martiniello, M.; Rath, J. (2014). *An introduction to immigrant incorporation studies*. Amsterdam University Press. IMISCOE. 11-18

⁴⁶ Alexander, M. (2003). *Local policies towards migrants as an expression of Host-Stranger relations: a proposed typology*. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. 29:3, 411-430.

⁴⁷ Daniell, K., Kay, A. (2017). Multi-level governance: an introduction. 1-32

Systems of governance where there is a dispersion of authority upwards, downwards and sideways between the levels of government (local, regional, national and supra-national) as well as across spheres and sectors, including states, markets, and civil society (p.4).

At first, the term was introduced to understand the governance of the EU because it involves “a great deal of negotiation, surrounding institutional settings and everyday practices and interactions” (Martiniello & Rath 2014, p.13-14).⁴⁸ There is a continuous negotiation and coordination among the EU and Member states and in regard to integration, European countries have a variety of state-based policies, varying from multiculturalist models to assimilationist ones.

The European Union has a unique way of governing: while it is the Council of the EU (composed by representatives of the central governments of each Member state) who take decisions, there are some areas of development of this supranational structure in which direct agreements are established between the EU and the regions (Rex 2002, p.39).⁴⁹ While it is the European Commission’s duty to “encourage a coherent approach to integration that will become integral to policy-making”, but the responsibility for implementing integration is at the national and local levels of EU’s Member states (Phillips 2010, p.210).⁵⁰ The problem comes when national governments in the European context try to target different migrant groups and seek to accomplish different goals while “each city (...) operates on a different national and regional policy context” (De Graauw & Vermeulen 2016, p.992)⁵¹ and local authorities are autonomous when responding to policy “challenges” of ethnic diversity. Therefore, the state, is not only important in deciding who is admitted or not into its borders, but also in deciding who is treated as a full citizen. There is even ambiguity among different states about the term “integration” or even at their discourses regarding it. Each country has its own policies and, in most cases, it is responsible for the border control, the access to citizenship and the immigration and asylum.

⁴⁸ Martiniello, M.; Rath, J. (2014). *An introduction to immigrant incorporation studies*. Amsterdam University Press. IMISCOE. 11-18

⁴⁹ Rex, J. (2002). *Multiculturalismo e integración política en el Estado nacional moderno*. University of Warwick. 29-43.

⁵⁰ Phillips, D. (2010). *Minority Ethnic segregation, integration and citizenship: a European perspective*. Routledge. Vol. 36, No. 2. 209-225.

⁵¹ De Graauw, E., Vermeulen, F. (2016). *Cities and the politics of immigrant integration: a comparison of Berlin, Amsterdam, New York City, and San Francisco*. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. 42:6. 989-1012.

The complexity of the MLG of the Union in relation to this present paper is that integration is not equal across different policy areas because it depends on each Member state to create policies, so it is inevitable that there are different results in each country, as well as a different models of integration or even different legal treatments (Ramírez & Mijares 2005, p.79).⁵² In other words, the Member states are the gatekeepers of EU integration regarding new minorities and they are important in the EU policy-making, especially at the time of designing the architecture of the EU and taking decisions in times of crisis, while being constantly present in the decision-making system.

The decentralization of multi-level states such as the EU, affects the way in which the policy-making of integration is being implemented and even designed. For example, there are different interpretations among Member states on what integration reflects and this could be due to the varied history of immigration, political discourses on immigration etc. (Phillips 2010, p.212)⁵³ and this is manifested “in the different levels of state control over the migrant settlement process and strategies of inclusion” (ibid.). In fact, and according to Zapata-Barrero et al. (2017),⁵⁴ the multi-level governance has two dimensions: firstly, the horizontal dimension, where the responsibility and interdependence of immigrant policies are shared between the state (local governance) and non-state actors (public, private and social actors such as NGOs and associations) in terms of arrangements of policymaking; and, secondly, the vertical dimension, where the centrality of the nation-state has been interfered by processes of supranationalism, meaning that local governance policies relate to other policymaking processes at other levels of government (p.242-243).

Moreover, the literature of the process of Europeanization does not attempt to explain why processes occur but how they occur, and it is not a process specific to external action but to all policies and practices of European integration. Such processes are reversible and have different forms of Europeanization: the first one is the bottom-up Europeanization, which happens when a country transfers its national priorities or visions to the European level and gets the other states and institutions to incorporate them as their

⁵² Ramírez, A.; Mijares, L. (2005). *Gestión del Islam y de la inmigración en Europa: tres estudios de caso*. *Migraciones* No.18. 77-104.

⁵³ Phillips, D. (2010). *Minority Ethnic segregation, integration and citizenship: a European perspective*. Routledge. Vol. 36, No. 2. 209-225.

⁵⁴ Zapata-Barrero, R.; Caponi, T.; Scholten, P. (2017). *Theorizing the “local turn” in a multi-level governance framework of analysis: a case study in immigrant policies*. *International review of Administrative Sciences*. Vol. 83(2). 241-246.

own. The second one, if the top-down Europeanization, which happens when a state modifies its organizational structure as a result of the European integration process, allowing them to be part of the European agenda. In other words, when there is a change of direction in national policies or when a country adopts or implements decisions that may be contrary to the national interest but positive for the collective interest. Third, we find the horizontal Europeanization, which involves the socialization of common interests and common identity.

4.3. The European Union and Integration

The European Union has some scope for action in many areas, but it can only intervene in those areas where it has the authorization of the Member states. This is regulated through the treaties, which specify who can enact laws in many of the areas: The EU itself, the national governments, or both. As explained, it is the Member state that implements the integration model, and therefore almost everything depends on it, but even so, the European Union plays a very important role. The EU has created different international and European organizations, initiatives, agendas etc. in order to help minorities to integrate in a more comfortable and quicker way. In addition to this, in order to give these people a voice and a vote in the institutions and to defend their communities and beliefs, the Union has developed different programs to prevent racism, classism etc. In other words, the European Commission plays a key role, usually as a promoter and coordinator of integration. It was the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam what extended the Union's legislative powers in areas of security, justice, and freedom, and when the Treaty entered into force, Member states set integration policies to guarantee opportunity and equality for all citizens. The goal was to ensure the equal treatment of people that were not EU-members that were legally residing in the EU, whose states guaranteed third-country nationals the same rights and responsibilities as European citizens (European Commission 2010, p.14-15).⁵⁵ There were two pieces of legislation that affected integration: Directive 2003/86/EC September 22nd, 2003 (the right to family reunification) and Directive 2003/109/CE, November 25th, 2003 (related to the status of third-country nationals who were long-term citizens). Moreover, anti-discriminatory legislations also were adopted: Directive 2000/43/EC June 29th, 2000 (principle of equal treatment to people from other racial or

⁵⁵ European Commission (2010). *Manual sobre la integración para responsable de la formulación de las políticas y profesionales. Dirección general de justicia, libertad y seguridad.* 13-25.

ethnic origin), or Directive 2000/78/EC from November 27th, 2000 (general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation).

Apart from these, the European Union has (recently) created other initiatives, plans, networks etc. to help people integrate. Here a list of the ones I believe are most important:

- *Action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027*. Approach undertaken by the EU about the integration and social inclusion. It complements existing as well as future strategies aimed at promoting equality and social cohesion. (Learn more: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/integration/action-plan-integration-and-inclusion_en)
- *European Website on integration*. To promote the inclusion of migrants and minorities in culture and arts. (Learn more: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/promoting-inclusion-europes-migrants-and-minorities-arts-and-culture_en).
- *IMISCOE (International Migration Research Network)*. Europe's network of scholars in the areas of migration and integration. It is a research network available for all Member states. (Learn more: <https://www.imiscoe.org/>).
- *Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief*. Document of the EU, adopted in 2013, with directions and toolkits on how to preserve and support freedom of religion and belief through external action. (Learn more: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137585.pdf).
- *Handbook on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe (2012)*. (Learn more: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/handbook-tolerance-and-cultural-diversity-europe_de).
- *European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)*. Monitoring body specialized in fighting against racism, discrimination, xenophobia, antisemitism, and intolerance. (Learn more: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/home>).
- *European Coalition of Cities against Racism*. Adopted in 2004 an action plan based on 10 points to fight against racism. (Learn more: <https://www.eccar.info/en/10-point-action-plan>).

5. CASE-STUDY: FRANCE AND THE INTEGRATION OF MUSLIMS

Multiculturalism has played a prominent role in the overall political concerns of European states and even though its policies were very supported by European countries there were two opposing objectives that coexist regarding integration: firmness for new minorities or the defense of equality; and the balance between these two varies according to the national context. However, in the early 21st century the public discourse backlashed against it after attacks of 9/11. It must be mentioned that France, together with other European countries, such as London or Madrid, has been target of terrorist attacks since the beginning of the century and this has caused serious debates about new laws that are restrictive to Muslims. The attacks perpetuated by fundamentalist Islamists, such as assassination of a teacher in Paris, the attack to the Charlie Hebdo satiric magazine in 2015, the killing of three church visitors in Nice etc. have caused French laws and society to become harsher against Muslims living in the country and they have further prohibited the public expression of Islam in France. In fact, since attacks of 2015, the French Parliament has approved exceptional measures due to the “state of emergency”, what has led to discriminatory and abusive raids and house arrests (Francois 2020).⁵⁶

This section will analyze the integration model used by France. I will start with a brief historical overview of migration flows on French territory, followed by an explanation of integration in Western Europe, and specifically integration in France. Then, the three dimensions of integration will be analyzed and discussed in relation to the integration of Muslims in France, to see if the French model of integration is really effective or not.

5.1. French immigration historical background

Apparently, France has “always viewed immigrants as a cultural threat” (C. Furlong 2010, p.689),⁵⁷ even if immigration arrived in the middle of the 19th century (Barou 2014, p.642),⁵⁸ with Arabs who decided to leave their jobs in their country of origin after the Napoleonic campaigns and the occupation of Egypt by France. France authorized the arrival of Algerian immigrants into its territory after one of the bloodiest wars in history

⁵⁶ Francois, M. (2020). “France’s treatment of its Muslim citizens is the true measure of its republican values”. *Time*. <https://time.com/5918657/frances-muslim-citizens-republican-values/>

⁵⁷ C. Furlong, A. (2010). Cultural integration in the European Union: A comparative analysis of the immigration policies of France and Spain. 681-702.

⁵⁸ Barou, J. (2014). *Integration of immigrants in France: a historical perspective*. *Identities*. 21:6. 642-657.

of self-determination, the Algerian War of Independence in the 70s, when Algeria had gained independence through war against its former colony, France. As a result, France has new minorities that come from the Maghreb, mainly Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco (Triandafyllidou 2011⁵⁹; Freedman 2004⁶⁰; Koolen 2021⁶¹; Algan et al. 2012⁶²) and these in fact are the ones who show the “greatest socio-economic difficulties” (Safi 2008, p.26)⁶³ in the country. Due to linguistic and historical ties with former colonizers and due to economic problems in the former colonies (Kaya 2002, p.25-26),⁶⁴ many of these migrants settled in France and those migrants brought their families who brought their children, who gave birth to more children, producing second and third generations. Therefore, Muslims in France can be described as native minorities, meaning they are “populations historically established in a given territory and part of the formation of the state” (Triandafyllidou 2011, p.8).⁶⁵ In fact, there are around 5,7 million French Muslims in France (Koolen 2021,⁶⁶ Alsaafin 2022⁶⁷) today.

The integration of these immigrants occurred through their contribution to the national wealth, even if their jobs were those rejected by French citizens: mostly jobs in sectors such as coal mining, factories, industry, and agriculture (El Karouni 2012, p.162).⁶⁸ Consequently, these immigrants were assimilated for the labor market and remained foreigners (Barou 2014, p.647)⁶⁹ and eventually assimilated French values and culture but remained politically and socially excluded (p.748); and although from the

⁵⁹ Triandafyllidou, A. (2011). *Addressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Europe. A comparative overview of 15 European countries*. European university Institute.

⁶⁰ Freedman (2004). *Secularism as a barrier to integration? the French dilemma*. International Migration, United Kingdom. Vol. 42, No. 3. 5-27.

⁶¹ Koolen, D. (2021). *To be secured or securitized? The dynamical process of political securitization against the Islamic community in France and its contestants in the aftermath of 'terrorist attacks' between 2015 and 2021*. Utrecht University.

⁶² Algan, Y., Bisin, A., Verdier, T. (2012). Introduction: perspectives on cultural integration of immigrants. In Algan, Y.; Bisin, A.; Manning, A.; Verdier, T. (Ed.), *Cultural integration of immigrants in Europe* (pp.1-44). Oxford.

⁶³ Safi, M. (2008). *The immigrant integration process in France: inequalities and segmentation*. Cairn Info Matières à réflexion. Vol. 49. 3-44.

⁶⁴ Kaya, B. (2002). *The changing face of Europe- population flows in the 20th century*. Council of Europe Publishing.

⁶⁵ Triandafyllidou, A. (2011). *Addressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Europe. A comparative overview of 15 European countries*. European university Institute.

⁶⁶ Koolen, D. (2021). *To be secured or securitized? The dynamical process of political securitization against the Islamic community in France and its contestants in the aftermath of 'terrorist attacks' between 2015 and 2021*. Utrecht University.

⁶⁷ Alsaafin, L. (2022). “Islamophobia on the rise as French presidential election nears”. *Aljazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/3/france-election-muslims-islamophobia-macron>

⁶⁸ El Karouni, I. (2012). *Ethnic minorities and integration process in France and the Netherlands: an institutionalist perspective*. The American Journal of economic and sociology, Vol. 71, No. 1. 151-183.

⁶⁹ Barou, J. (2014). *Integration of immigrants in France: a historical perspective*. Identities. 21:6. 642-657.

1970s France closed its border for economic immigrants and decided to initiate a period of social change (Kallianteri 2021, p.45),⁷⁰ these people became French citizens since then, although a clear distinction still exists today between them and the "real" French.

5.2. Muslim Integration in Western Europe

As mentioned above, integration is not the same in all countries, as integration policies are created by each Member state, which in the end are the gatekeepers of EU integration. The European Commission considers integration as a two-way process between the host society and the new minorities (Garcés-Masareñas & Penninx 2016, p.1)⁷¹ and the host country can adopt different approaches towards minorities who want to integrate, but these approaches can be restrictive or inclusive.

According to Anna Triandafyllidou (2011)⁷² there are three minority populations in Europe that pose significant diversity challenges: the “Black” people, Muslims, and the Roma (p.11). In this paper, Muslims will be the minority group discussed since they have raised challenges of cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity in Europe (ibid. p.34) and because they are the majority ethnic minority in France. Unlike other religions, Muslim communities across Europe tend to coincide with immigrant groups, or those who have an immigrant origin, who arrived, as previously explained, since the second half of the 20th century. According to Ramírez & Mijares (2005),⁷³ this had three immediate consequences: the cult-related demands supported by communities that are made up of individuals who do not enjoy the same rights as nationals; the fact that for the State the management of Islam is part of the management of the structure of the immigrant group and not only of a religious minority; and that the countries of origin of Muslims can intervene as part of the control of their citizens, in the regulation of worship, especially when the State of origin is not democratic (p.78). Therefore, it is a fact that the integration of Muslims is linked to their former migrant status. The “issue” here with Muslims in some European countries is that it implies the arrival of ideational and behavioral components that are very different from the fundamental rights of the West. Islam, as a

⁷⁰ Kallianteri, D. (2021). *The integration of immigrants: the case of Greece in comparison to France, Germany and Sweden*. Uppsala University. Master program in roads of democracy.

⁷¹ Penninx, R.; Garcés-Masareñas, B. (2016). *The concept of integration as an analytical tool and as a policy concept*. *Integration processes and policies in Europe*. IMISCOE. 11-29.

⁷² Triandafyllidou, A. (2011). *Addressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Europe. A comparative overview of 15 European countries*. European university Institute.

⁷³ Ramírez, A.; Mijares, L. (2005). *Gestión del Islam y de la inmigración en Europa: tres estudios de caso*. *Migraciones* No.18. 77-104.

religious and ideological system in terms of its beliefs, norms, and rites, has a history and a way of positioning itself in the current process of globalization that is very different from that of the West and its countries. In fact, Islam is said to be challenging the character of Western European nation-states (Sunier 2006, p.243)⁷⁴ and it is feared by some that it will "Islamize" European countries with its presence.

5.2.1. Muslim integration in France

France has the maximum expression of assimilationism and as explained, this model implies the adoption of the French language and culture, respect and practice the republican values and participate in institutions and social spaces. In other words, the French model is based on "an indivisible French democracy" (Kallianteri 2021, p.44)⁷⁵ and the aim is to make new minorities "disappear" to make them completely Frenchmen. The French idea is that over time and over generations, new minorities become similar to the one of the host societies and therefore, become indistinguishable from one another. It is a natural process (Safi 2008, p.4).⁷⁶ For example, the French government has created tests and courses for immigrants and it has increased language requirements with the aim of making ethnic minorities and immigrants take French values and cultural practices and actively demonstrate a desire to belong to the state (Vertovec 2010, p.91).⁷⁷ These requirements have backed-up from the part of the government, which organizes and finances courses of French values for citizenship even if when acquainting French values and language, the new minority is considered to have been adhered to the state (Bonjour & Lettinga 2012, p.268).⁷⁸ In fact, by acquiring French languages and values is considered enough to induce integration. However, according to Martiniello & Rath (2014),⁷⁹ second-generation immigrants belonging to France still maintain strong ties with their "home towns" and feel they are no longer Europeans (p.13), even though they were born in

⁷⁴ Sunier, T. (2006). Religious newcomers and the Nation-State: Flows and Closures. In Lucassen, L., Feldman, D., Oltmer, J., *Paths of integration. Migrants in Western Europe (1880-2004)* (pp.239-262). IMISCOE

⁷⁵ Kallianteri, D. (2021). *The integration of immigrants: the case of Greece in comparison to France, Germany and Sweden*. Uppsala University. Master program in roads of democracy.

⁷⁶ Safi, M. (2008). *The immigrant integration process in France: inequalities and segmentation*. Cairn Info Matière à réflexion. Vol. 49. 3-44.

⁷⁷ Vertovec, S. (2010). Towards post-Multiculturalism? Changing communities, conditions and contexts of diversity. UNESCO. 83-95.

⁷⁸ Bonjour, S., Lettinga, D. (2012). *Political debates on Islamic headscarves and civic integration abroad in France and the Netherlands: What can models explain?* Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies. 1-26.

⁷⁹ Martiniello, M.; Rath, J. (2014). *An introduction to immigrant incorporation studies*. Amsterdam University Press. IMISCOE. 11-18

France and have grown up, but even these have the same difficulties as their parents in integrating into the host society (Blanc-Chaléard 2006, p.55).⁸⁰

France is characterized as being a secular state and this can clearly be seen in the construction of its model of integration, which has been mostly maintained the same since the 1990s. According to the French principle of secularism, all religious manifestation must be private, meaning that all differences in the public sphere must disappear, including the religious ones, and proposes the assimilation of people to the universal values that created the French Republic. The issue with Islam is that there are controversies between those who see in the practice of the religion a questioning of the republican values and those who consider that what the former uses is virtuous racism. The French secularism developed as a mechanism to free the state from religious influences and it guarantees freedom of belief (Lettinga & Saharso 2012, p.331).⁸¹ *Laïcité* (secularism, in English) is one of the basic characteristics of the French state that was “designed in origin to protect individuals from state intrusion and the state from religious influence” (Francois 2020),⁸² and to which Muslims seem to pose a challenge to because the concept separates the church and the state and “sets the conditions for the exercise of religion and the limits of religious forms of expression (Triandafyllidou 2011, p.37).⁸³ *Laïcité* is key for French national identity and it is “closely connected with Republican universalism and the doctrine of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*” (Freedman 2004, p.10).⁸⁴

In short, the objective of the French model of integration is to make Muslims adhere to French values of secularism, respect of human rights, free and equal citizenship, pride of feeling French, etc. And those who pledge their loyalty to France and adhere to its values (Retortillo et al. 2006, p.130)⁸⁵ will become fully integrated. However, this model’s demands for integration are highly nationalized and it does not consider new minorities’ culture of origin and it profoundly rejects groups and communities based on

⁸⁰ Blanc-Chaléard, M. (2006). Old and new migrants in France: Italians and Algerians. In Lucassen, L., Feldman, D., Oltmer, J. (Ed.), *Paths of integration. Migrants in Western Europe (1880-2004)*. pp. 46-63. IMISCOE.

⁸¹ Lettinga, D., Saharso, S. (2012). *The political debates on the veil in France and the Netherlands: reflecting national integration models?* Comparative European Politics, Vol. 10, No. 2. 319-336.

⁸² Francois, M. (2020). “France’s treatment of its Muslim citizens is the true measure of its republican values”. *Time*. <https://time.com/5918657/frances-muslim-citizens-republican-values/>

⁸³ Triandafyllidou, A. (2011). *Addressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Europe. A comparative overview of 15 European countries*. European university Institute.

⁸⁴ Freedman (2004). *Secularism as a barrier to integration? the French dilemma*. International Migration, United Kingdom. Vol. 42, No. 3. 5-27.

⁸⁵ Retortillo, A., Ovejero, A., Cruz, F., Lucas, S., Arias, B. (2006). *Inmigración y modelos de integración: entre la asimilación y el multiculturalismo*. Universidad de Valladolid. 123-139.

their identity or culture and it also means the abandonment of immigrant's identity and their links to their origins and culture. In other words, minorities are obliged to give up their identity by renouncing their own cultural or ethnic identity and adopt the one of the majorities (Medda-Windischer 2015, p.13),⁸⁶ so we could say that France exercises a positive discrimination towards the Muslim community.

5.2.1.1. The political integration of Muslims in France

As said before, for being politically integrated, what have to be measured is the legal status and rights, the political participation (or the lack of it) and the equal opportunities and representation of new minorities. To start, the political participation involves the legal status of the new minority and, in relation to this, it must be said that the French model has requirements for being a French citizen. In France, the policy coordination around integration is strongly state-centric (Scholten & Penninx 2016, p.99).⁸⁷ At the present time, there are three basic principles governing for citizenship acquisition: “learning French, civic education and vocational training in the labor market” (Kallianteri 2021, p.46).⁸⁸ By implementing this model, new minorities are required to comply or assimilate the French culture. However, the requirements for integration are “not enough to establish equal opportunities and to counter exclusion in an effective manner” (Robert Schuman Foundation 2017).⁸⁹

Rahsaan Maxwell (2012)⁹⁰ argues that there are many factors that affect the French political level of participation for new minorities: demographic variables, meaning the socioeconomic status and age of the person; individual attitudes, taking into account the absences, often linked to the alienation of the general population and the political context (p.429-431). In France, the Rassemblement national (the far-right-wing) is a significant predictor for political participation of new minorities. According to MIPEX (2020),⁹¹ in

⁸⁶ Medda-Windischer, R. (2015). *Integration of new and old minorities in Europe: Different or similar policies and indicators?* European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen Institute for Minority Rights. 1-49.

⁸⁷ Scholten, P., Penninx, R. (2012). The multilevel governance of migration and integration. In Garcés-Mascareñas, B., Penninx, R. *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe. Context, levels and actors.* (pp.91-109). IMISCOE.

⁸⁸ Kallianteri, D. (2021). *The integration of immigrants: the case of Greece in comparison to France, Germany and Sweden.* Uppsala University. Master program in roads of democracy.

⁸⁹ Robert Schuman Foundation (2017). “Models of integration in Europe”. *European issues and interviews.* <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0449-models-of-integration-in-europe>

⁹⁰ Maxwell, R. (2010). *Political participation in France among Non-European-Origin Migrants: segregation or integration?*. Journal of ethnic and migration studies, 36:3. 425-443.

⁹¹ MIPEX (2020). Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020, France. <https://www.mipex.eu/france#:~:text=France's%20temporary%20Integration%20approach%20encourage>

2019, France does not have the political will to extend local voting rights and the political participation is halfway favorable but there is not much political representation as there is “lack of political support due to the migrant-averse political climate France has experienced in the last years” (Rubio 2019).⁹²

In some European countries, there are special provisions for political representation of minorities that are so few that they are often left out of the political system (Triandafyllidou 2011, p.8).⁹³ Muslim organizations exist throughout Europe, but the status of Islam varies between countries because it differs on its legal relationship with the state. Some European countries have legislative instruments that regulate religious practices, such as the public use of religious signs or the operating of mosques (EUMC 2006, p.9),⁹⁴ but this is not the case of France which “rejects any references to national, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities” and “authorities have rejected any form of targeted measures for ethnic, religious or linguistic groups” (Gilbert & Keane 2016).⁹⁵ One of the biggest problems in relation to this is that, because of this, there is not much data on religious identity (Irving 2009, p.237)⁹⁶ nor on the ethnic and racial background of Muslims in France and, therefore, there is no way to measure the socioeconomic status of origin of many of them.

In the recent years, the French Government has created many, what I believe are, restrictive policies towards Muslims. A clear example is the law the French Parliament passed in the 2004 that banned Islamic headscarf in all schools, but they also banned the wearing of signs or clothing that left clear their religious affiliation. The same year, the same government created restrictive policies towards religious symbols in public places and particularly in schools (Triandafyllidou 2011, p.39)⁹⁷ such as veils, which were prohibited in schools because they were seen as provocative to the French republic due to its secular characteristics, “adopted with the support of major left-wing opposition parties”

[s,two%2Dway%20process%20for%20society](#)

⁹² Rubio, D. (2019). “Why France’s assimilation model failed to integrate its cultural diversity”. https://medium.com/@danielrsanchez_/https-medium-com-danielrsanchez-frances-cultural-assimilation-model-food-for-thought-af6109f631f1

⁹³ Triandafyllidou, A. (2011). *Addressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Europe. A comparative overview of 15 European countries*. European university Institute.

⁹⁴ EUMC (2016). *Muslims in the European Union. Discrimination and islamophobia*. European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia. 1-116.

⁹⁵ Gilbert, J.; Keane, D. (2016). “Why France’s outdated integration model makes minority invisible”. *Newsweek, Opinion*. <https://www.newsweek.com/france-integration-migrants-minorities-fraternite-520874>

⁹⁶ Irving, P. (2009). *Measuring integration in Europe*. Vol. 5, No. 3. Democracy and Security. 223-348.

⁹⁷ Triandafyllidou, A. (2011). *Addressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Europe. A comparative overview of 15 European countries*. European university Institute.

(Bonjour & Lettinga 2012, p.270).⁹⁸ At the same time, Muslims have also “called for building of mosques and the recognition of their religious rites” (Barou 2014, p. 649)⁹⁹ and instead of granting them, some religious leaders have been accused of choosing their God over the laws of the state. Moreover, in 2010 former President Sarkozy cleared half of France’s Roma camps to restore the French republican order (Nügge & Van der Haar 2016, p.82)¹⁰⁰ or he also prohibited the full-face veils in public spaces because in 2008 the State Council argued that wearing a niqab was contrary to being a French citizen because it meant being adhered to a radical religious practice (Lettinga & Saharso 2012, p.319 & 327).¹⁰¹

As said before, the French secularism developed as a mechanism to free the state from religious influences, and it guarantees freedom of belief and see schools as key places of influence French politics and society (ibid. p.31). In fact, French citizenship is based on the shared universal values that can be acquired in public French schools (Bonjour & Lettinga 2012, p.268).¹⁰² In other words, French schools are being radically secularized under the idea that republican school systems would assimilate Muslim women in accordance to the secular vision of modernity (Lettinga & Saharso 2012, p.332)¹⁰³ and this is due to the French notion of *laïcité*, in which neutrality of religion must be guaranteed in all public spaces. In fact, these actions were seen as an “existential threat to the European peace project” (Mügge & Van der Haar 2016, p.82).¹⁰⁴ Moreover, in 2007, The National Front and the Union of the Popular Movements called for “French people first” in areas of health, education, employment etc. in their program, reverting the French integration policy to its assimilationist roots. In fact, for the past 6 years, the French government has tried to persuade the French public about the existential threat posed by

⁹⁸ Bonjour, S., Lettinga, D. (2012). *Political debates on Islamic headscarves and civic integration abroad in France and the Netherlands: What can models explain?* Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies. 1-26.

⁹⁹ Barou, J. (2014). *Integration of immigrants in France: a historical perspective*. Identities. 21:6. 642-657.

¹⁰⁰ Nügge, L.; Van der Haar, M. (2012). Who is an immigrant and who requires integration? Categorizing in european policies. In Garcés-Mascareñas, B. & Penninx, R. *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe. Context, levels and actors*. (pp. 77-91). IMISCOE.

¹⁰¹ Lettinga, D., Saharso, S. (2012). *The political debates on the veil in France and the Netherlands: reflecting national integration models?* Comparative European Politics, Vol. 10, No. 2. 319-336.

¹⁰² Bonjour, S., Lettinga, D. (2012). *Political debates on Islamic headscarves and civic integration abroad in France and the Netherlands: What can models explain?* Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies. 1-26.

¹⁰³ Lettinga, D., Saharso, S. (2012). *The political debates on the veil in France and the Netherlands: reflecting national integration models?* Comparative European Politics, Vol. 10, No. 2. 319-336.

¹⁰⁴ Mügge, L.; Van der Haar, M. (2016). Who is an immigrant and who requires integration? Categorizing in european policies. In Garcés-Mascareñas, B. & Penninx, R. *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe. Context, levels and actors*. (pp. 77-91). IMISCOE.

Muslims and has advocated having to eliminate them because, according to the French president, prime ministers and other government officials, Islamic fundamentalism has moved from the "outside" to the "inside" (Koolen 2021, p.37);¹⁰⁵ who use this discourse as an excuse to control the population.

5.2.1.2. The socioeconomic integration of Muslims in France

Regarding the socioeconomic integration of Muslims, what have to be measured is their access to work, healthcare, housing and education as well as their social networks in regard to the host society. Before starting with this, it must be mentioned that Muslims are viewed as second class citizens and their discrimination is “already prevalent in every sector, from housing to employment and interactions with the police” (Francois 2020),¹⁰⁶ but at the same time, the French strategy seems to be based on the participation of the social building as a whole.

Firstly, according to the MIPEX (2020),¹⁰⁷ in 2019 French healthcare services were accessible and inclusive for all, but they did little to address new minorities’ specific needs. Moreover, French healthcare is accessible for all, and they enjoy the same legal rights as French citizens. Secondly, schools are of great importance in the country because they are seen as places where assimilation takes place and therefore are “one of the most crucial indicators for assessing the overall position” (Crul et al. 2012, p.102)¹⁰⁸ of Muslims in France and according to MIPEX (2020),¹⁰⁹ education in France was slightly unfavorable back in 2019 due to the slow respond to the opportunities and needs of new minorities and results show that educational policies are weak in France and that they are an answer to the achievement gaps from vulnerable people to pupils not feeling safe neither in their houses or schools. According to Anna Triandafyllidou (2011),¹¹⁰ the low

¹⁰⁵ Koolen, D. (2021). *To be secured or securitized? The dynamical process of political securitization against the Islamic community in France and its contestants in the aftermath of ‘terrorist attacks’ between 2015 and 2021*. Utrecht University.

¹⁰⁶ Francois, M. (2020). “France’s treatment of its Muslim citizens is the true measure of its republican values”. *Time*. <https://time.com/5918657/frances-muslim-citizens-republican-values/>

¹⁰⁷ MIPEX (2020). Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020, France. <https://www.mipex.eu/france#:~:text=France's%20temporary%20Integration%20approach%20encourage%20two%2Dway%20process%20for%20society>

¹⁰⁸ Crul, M., Schneider, J., & Lelie, F. (2012). *The European second generation compared: Does the integration context matter?* Amsterdam University Press. IMISCOE

¹⁰⁹ MIPEX (2020). Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020, France. <https://www.mipex.eu/france#:~:text=France's%20temporary%20Integration%20approach%20encourage%20two%2Dway%20process%20for%20society>

¹¹⁰ Triandafyllidou, A. (2011). *Addressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Europe. A comparative overview of 15 European countries*. European university Institute.

educational level of the children of Muslims in France is a consequence of their socioeconomic environment, which means that the profession of the parents and their socio-economic level influences on the level of socioeconomic integration of the children, but also because of the discrimination they face in schools and after finishing this, in the labor market (p.38).

Furthermore, as said before, access to work is crucial too as employment is how new minorities make visible contributions to the society and because in the work environment, the integration is faster and easier. According to the MIPEX (2020),¹¹¹ in 2019 the labor market was halfway favorable because although new minorities have the right and have access to the labor market, they are denied legal access to more regulated professions. As a result, MIPEX shows that French policies are weak and that they undermine the access to quality training, education, and employment (ibid.). Apparently, it is the second and third generation immigrants who suffer from discrimination in the workplace and among them, new minorities' whose parents are of Maghrebin origin are the ones who suffer the greatest difficulties to access the labor market (Duprez 2009, p.756-758)¹¹² even though Muslims are considered a visible minority in France.

Regarding housing, it must be said that the French system created ghettos of immigrant minorities, mostly Muslims. Apparently, ethnic minorities across Europe live in areas that are deprived, with far fewer school resources and where there are more disciplinary issues (Schneider & Crul 2012, p.22-23)¹¹³ and in France these zones have a name: *banlieues*. It is a French term to refer to the suburbs that consist of “enormous concrete apartment blocks that characterize these areas that have their origins in post-war French economic boom of 1945 to 1975” (Moran 2017, p.321),¹¹⁴ which fast became a permanent place for those newcomers. These places consisted of marginal neighborhoods in French cities with a large concentration of immigrants from outside Europe “demographically focused on Muslims, casting suspicion on their role and place in French society” (p.318). At first, *banlieues* were supposed to be a solution to the housing crisis

¹¹¹ MIPEX (2020). Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020, France.

<https://www.mipex.eu/france#:~:text=France's%20temporary%20Integration%20approach%20encourages,two%2Dway%20process%20for%20society>

¹¹² Duprez, D. (2009). *Urban rioting as an indicator of crisis in the integration model for ethnic minority youth in France*. Journal of ethnic and migration studies, 35:5. 753-770.

¹¹³ Schneider, G., Crul, M. (2012). Comparative integration context theory: Participation and belonging in diverse European cities. In, Crul, M., Schneider, J., Lelie, F. *The European second generation compared* (pp. 19-39 & 375-405). Amsterdam university press.

¹¹⁴ Moran M. (2017). *Terrorism and the banlieues: the Charlie Hebdo attacks in context*. London: School of security studies. Published in modern and contemporary France. Vol. 25, No. 3. 315-332.

produced by the establishment of many economic migrants on French soil; yet, over time they became the place of residence of most unprivileged members of French society, who are mostly Muslim immigrants and their families. People who live in the *banlieues* have long been discriminated against in French society for both “their religious affiliation and their immigrant origins” (ibid. p.322) and even though they have lived in the country for decades, they still are represented as the negative and dangerous element of French society because the *banlieues* are “economically, socially and culturally marginal locations” (Welch & Perivolaris 2016, p.285).¹¹⁵ As a result of these distinctions, these people are labelled as the “other” in their own country, creating a difference between Muslims and the French community. In fact, according to Kaya (2002),¹¹⁶ the negative traits to these people—who are considered different—have fueled a new type of racism rooted on physical and/or cultural criteria based on a view of difference which turns “other” into a threat (p.44-45). Even though they are second and third generation of immigrants, who have been born and raised in French territory, they are still discriminated and marginalized due to their religion and poor housing conditions. The fact that new minorities live in *banlieues*, also impacts on their political integration because, they are “less likely to vote (...) because they are more likely to live in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and in dense urban areas” (Maxwell 2010, p.431).¹¹⁷

In part because of living in *banlieues*, Muslims are marginalized and discriminated as result of the lack of social integration they are facing and this marginalization leads to call them the “other”, which at a local level translates as a cultural friction that divides people into religious or ethnic lines in order to safeguard their identity (Kiras 2008, p.376).¹¹⁸ The feeling of rejection and abandonment, the lack of prosperity and marginalization has made young people belonging to these areas become easy targets of jihadists (Bautista 2017).¹¹⁹ The process of radicalization to French Muslims according to Moran (2017)¹²⁰ is very clear: they first are discriminated by their own society due to their

¹¹⁵ Welch, E.; Perivolaris, J. (2016). *The place of the republic: space, territory and identity around and after Charlie Hebdo*. French Cultural Studies. Vol, 27. 276-296.

¹¹⁶ Kaya, B. (2002). *The changing face of Europe- population flows in the 20th century*. Council of Europe Publishing.

¹¹⁷ Maxwell, R. (2010). *Political participation in France among Non-European-Origin Migrants: segregation or integration?*. Journal of ethnic and migration studies, 36:3. 425-443.

¹¹⁸ Kiras, D. J. (2008). International Issues. In J. Baylis, S. Smith, & P. Owens, *The globalization of world politics. An introduction to international relations*. United Kingdom: Oxford Press University.

¹¹⁹ Bautista, J. (2017). “Terroristas franceses contra Francia, ¿Por qué?”. *LaMarea*. <https://www.lamarea.com/2017/03/30/francia/>

¹²⁰ Moran M. (2017). *Terrorism and the banlieues: the Charlie Hebdo attacks in context*. London: School of security studies. Published in modern and contemporary France. Vol. 25, No. 3. 315-332.

origins and identity in the *banlieues*; this makes them live among social and economic exclusions and makes them fall into a crisis of identity, which creates their identity as French citizens inaccessible and this serves as a gateway for militant Islamists to radicalize them (p.327-328). Therefore, the *banlieue* inhabitants have been rejected by the society due to their difference, which contributes to the crisis of identity and therefore creates an open space that could be advantageous for radicalism and ultimately for violent extremism (ibid. p.330). While some authors argue that economic, social, cultural, ideological, and historical conditions favor the emergence of terrorism, others argue that economic aspects are the crucial motivating factors.

5.2.1.3. The cultural integration of Muslims in France

As previously explained, the cultural integration refers to the relationship between new minorities and the population in relation to the values, customs, beliefs etc. and the adaptation and acceptance between the newcomer and the host society to the other's beliefs and values. The French assimilationist model is based on cultural assimilation from the part of new minorities, but the issue is that expressions of Islam are allowed in the private sphere but the demonstration of them in the public sphere "is suspected to jeopardize social cohesion and the values of the majority" (Robert Schuman Foundation 2017),¹²¹ which means Muslims cannot exercise their religion freely. On one research done by Heath & Scheider (2021),¹²² results show that religious practices are sometimes a form of self-identification and not of a sign of real religiosity, which is the case of Muslims. In France, the identity of individuals "is developed with French society and individuals" (Kallianteri 2021, p.44),¹²³ while Muslims find their identity in religious practices among others. The issue with France and Muslims is that *laïcité* clashes with Muslims' identity and religion because in Muslim (majority) countries the state and the

¹²¹ Robert Schuman Foundation (2017). "Models of integration in Europe". *European issues and interviews*. <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0449-models-of-integration-in-europe>

¹²² Heath, A., Schneider, S. (2021). "Dimensions of migrant integration in Western Europe". *Frontiers in Sociology. Migration and society*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2021.510987/full>

¹²³ Kallianteri, D. (2021). *The integration of immigrants: the case of Greece in comparison to France, Germany and Sweden*. Uppsala University. Master program in roads of democracy.

religion are strongly intertwined and are openly exercised (Koolen 2021, p.12),¹²⁴ and the opposite happens in French territory.

Apart from restrictive policies that have been implemented, the social and cultural exclusion of new minorities in France can also be seen in the riots that took place in 2005, where streets filled with people protested about second-generation immigrants not feeling to belong to the French society (El Karouni 2012, p.151-152)¹²⁵ due to their “continued and intense feelings of economic, social and cultural exclusions” (C. Furlong 2010, p.684).¹²⁶ These riots were related to race because the French police had allegedly killed two Franco-Arab teenagers by electrocuting them. As a response to “the conjunction of youth employment, racial discrimination in both employers’ recruitment practices and in daily employment programs” (Duprez 2009, p.765)¹²⁷ riots happened in France. However, instead of denouncing the authorities for having committed the murder of two teenagers, the then-President Sarkozy toughened his discourse against the new minorities and the discourse was focused on how to control the Muslim communities, instead of discussing the social and economic marginalization Muslims face in the suburbs and as a result, with his victory, Sarkozy indicated his persistence to assimilationist attitudes and policies (ibid. p.689-691).

Furthermore, it is something common among new inhabitants in new territories to feel a profound crisis of identity because they lack integration and sensitivity on the part of the host society. In fact, the presence of Muslims in Western territory posed a strong one. These people are mainly second-generation Muslims who even though they have grown up in European countries, do not feel nationals even though they have ceased to have ties with their native countries. Culture, understood as the building block of a common “language, ethnicity, history, religion and landscape” (Watson 2008, p.420)¹²⁸ plays an important role when it comes to societies and it is an element that transcends ideology, it is the main element of identity among individuals from the same society and

¹²⁴ Koolen, D. (2021). *To be secured or securitized? The dynamical process of political securitization against the Islamic community in France and its contestants in the aftermath of ‘terrorist attacks’ between 2015 and 2021*. Utrecht University.

¹²⁵ El Karouni, I. (2012). *Ethnic minorities and integration process in France and the Netherlands: an institutionalist perspective*. The American Journal of economic and sociology, Vol. 71, No. 1. 151-183.

¹²⁶ C. Furlong, A. (2010). Cultural integration in the European Union: A comparative analysis of the immigration policies of France and Spain. 681-702.

¹²⁷ Duprez, D. (2009). *Urban rioting as an indicator of crisis in the integration model for ethnic minority youth in France*. Journal of ethnic and migration studies, 35:5. 753-770.

¹²⁸ Watson, M. (2008). Global trade and global finance. In J. Baylis, S. Smith, & P. Owens, *The globalization of world politics. An introduction to international relations*. (pp.417-430). United Kingdom: Oxford Press University.

the presence of immigrants is sometimes perceived as disturbing when they exceed a certain volume of the population and become too numerous for local people. In fact, the cultural differences between the Algerian inhabitants and the French are too great for cultural assimilation to take place smoothly and this is because adaptations affect not only the language but also the way of life, value system and even beliefs. For minority groups, such as Muslims, culture is “a sense of communal self-identity that pervades almost every aspect of life, including work and economic activity” (Medda-Windischer 2015, p.4),¹²⁹ but this minorities have become an object of fear, a target of security measures etc. (Meer & Modood 2015, p.534-535)¹³⁰ and face many difficulties in accessing society due to negative stereotypes and religious marginalization on the part of the French society.

In fact, the clash of identities between French and migrants had complex consequences because the arrival of new identities challenged the symbol of the existing cultures and their interests. On the one hand, French national discourses argue that Muslims have created a homogeneous group that is not willing to integrate itself with the local population and that Islamic values are in opposition with the French ones so that it is Islam the element that keeps Muslims away from becoming fully Frenchmen (Polonska-Kimunguyi & Gillespie 2016, p.571).¹³¹ However, Muslims feel rejected by French society because they do not let them integrate and instead marginalize them. As a result, other than feeling marginalized economically because of living in the *banlieues*, they also feel socially marginalized, feel frustrated and find themselves seeking for a social support, a moral guidance, and those who have lost their national identity end up searching it in another identity pillar: religion (De Aristegui 2004, p.155-156).¹³² People who feel disoriented in new countries return to religion as a source of comfort and solace with the aim “to achieve a new or renewed sense of identity, something to give their lives greater meaning and purpose” (Haynes 2004, p.456).¹³³

Anyone can be part of any community but the offer for doing so must be real, because if it is not real, people find that meaning in other identities, like it happens with

¹²⁹ Medda-Windischer, R. (2015). *Integration of new and old minorities in Europe: Different or similar policies and indicators?* European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen Institute for Minority Rights. 1-49.

¹³⁰ Meer, N.; Modood, T. (2015). *Religious pluralism in the United States and Britain: its implications for Muslims and nationhood*. Social Compass, SAGE. 526-540.

¹³¹ Polonska-Kimunguyi, E.; Gillespie, M. (2016). *Terrorism discourse on French international broadcasting: France 24 and the case of Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris*.

¹³² De Aristegui, G. (2004). *El islamismo contra el islam. Las claves para entender el terrorismo yihadista*. Ediciones B. Barcelona.

¹³³ Haynes J. (2004). *Religion and International Relations: what are the issues?*. London Metropolitan University. 451-462.

few Muslim Frenchmen, who look for another identity, another offer that turns out to be the jihadism. Jihadists offer a route for a new identity to those who live in low middle and poor class, who “turn to Islam as a culture that gave them the forgotten and the hopeless self-worth” (Watson 2008, p.427)¹³⁴ where they are given an answer to the lost faith in their host country and fell with no identity, dignity or meaning of their lives. Islamic militants search for young Muslim French people who feel abandoned, rejected and forgotten or anyone who has identity and marginalization problems, including a large number of believers who settle in Europe and the West who end up abandoning themselves in the arms of Islamist movements seeking refuge and peace of mind (De Arístegui 2004, p.49).¹³⁵

6. CONCLUSIONS

Integration is a two-way, continuous, dynamic, and long-term process that involves both the host society and the new minority; meaning it is a process of mutual adaptation or adjustment. The integration process involves the adaptation of the new minority (by having rights and responsibilities in the host society) and of the receiving society (who must create such opportunities for the cultural, socioeconomic, and political integrations). As said, for a person to be fully integrated must have all three dimensions achieved, which are extremely related, but the outcome depends on the integration model used in the country.

The general theories regarding these integrations have shown that, in the first place, political integration is achieved when the new minority has the same legal rights and status; when it participates politically in the country and when it has the same opportunities and representation in the political sphere as the host society; and it must be mentioned that all this depends on the government of the state in question, since it is the one that defines who a citizen is and as it is the one who creates the policies of inclusion or exclusion. In the second place, socioeconomic integration is accomplished when the new minority has access to the market of labor, healthcare, education, and housing and

¹³⁴ Watson, M. (2008). Global trade and global finance. In J. Baylis, S. Smith, & P. Owens, *The globalization of world politics. An introduction to international relations*. (pp.417-430). United Kingdom: Oxford Press University.

¹³⁵ De Arístegui, G. (2004). *El islamismo contra el islam. Las claves para entender el terrorismo yihadista*. Ediciones B. Barcelona.

when it is not socially excluded by the host society, because being socially excluded would mean denying full access to these rights and opportunities that are essential for the everyday life. Last but, not least, the cultural integration involves the host society and the new minority respecting the perceptions and practices of the other, and here the role of self-determination plays a crucial role. Furthermore, two models of integration have been discussed in the paper: the assimilationist and the multiculturalist. On the one hand, the assimilationist, which makes new minorities adopt the language, values, norms, and signs of identity of the dominant culture (or the host society) and abandon their own. On the second hand, multiculturalism, which advocates that several cultures can live together and can co-exist in the same space, and it encompasses all differences regarding culture, ethnicity, race etc.

This paper has focused on the integration of new minorities in the European Union and specifically in France, because Europe has been a destination for many ethnic minorities in the last decades and because France is a state with a very strong integration model that I consider not feasible for the Muslim majority living there. The multi-level governance of the EU has given France the “right” to apply the assimilationist model of integration because, as mentioned several times, the state is autonomous when responding to integration challenges and each country has its policies for managing integration and even though the EU has many plans, strategies, networks etc. for helping new minorities integrate, it is the states’ responsibility to a greater extent. France has been the country analyzed on this paper and assimilationist France requires new minorities to acquire the language, values, customs etc. of the republic, making theirs disappear. So, the idea is to make new minorities completely French by acquiring French language, customs, ideals, language etc. by for example making them do exams and courses. This is reflected in the French principle of secularism (*laïcité*), one of the most notorious characteristics of France.

Moreover, the analysis of the level of integration in France has shown different results. Firstly, regarding political integration, Muslims are integrated to some extent. Their legal status depends on whether they pass the requirements for being a citizen but when they do, they enjoy political participation and legal rights. However, it has been explained that France has recently created restrictive policies towards Muslims using the discourse of terrorism. In fact, since attacks of 2015, the French Parliament has approved exceptional measures due to the “state of emergency”, what has led to discriminatory and

abusive raids and house arrests (Francois 2020).¹³⁶ The law in regard to veils for example, are not of freedom of believe, as they prohibit the religious expression of it and the discussion over the prohibition of the veil in France is not only related to their political status and rights but it is also associated with concerns of social cohesion. The weird thing is that, apparently, Muslims in France strongly trust in the republic's institutions and the only thing that diminishes this is discrimination (ibid.), which at the same time is something that last measures taken by the government will exacerbate. Furthermore, they have no political representation compared to the host society, so in this regard, they are not integrated at all. In sum, the state creates policies that are restrictive to them, and they do not enjoy the same political representation and therefore do not participate actively in the political sphere, so in the end they are not politically integrated at all.

Secondly, regarding socioeconomic integration, Muslims face discrimination in employment, housing, and social services more than others (Triandafyllidou 2011, p.36)¹³⁷ while they compete for jobs in marginalized and poor areas. Schools, on the other hand, are seen as places where assimilation happens, but French policies regarding inclusion in the educational sphere are weak and do not give an answer to their vulnerable situation and, in addition, France has created restrictive policies regarding Muslim women in the classroom. Regarding access to work, Muslims are granted with access to the market labor but to jobs that are not as regulated professions as the ones for the Frenchmen and they also still suffer from discrimination in this area. Moreover, Muslims live in deprived areas, marginalized neighborhoods where socializing with French people is almost impossible. As they live apart from the French society, socially there is not much contact with the French, meaning they are socially excluded and referred to as “the other”, which in fact is giving the ground for the rise of extremism and radicalization in France. In fact, second-generation of new minorities supposedly have an easier time integrating into host society, because they are part of society from the day they are born. However, they still live in *banlieues* and go to schools there. To sum up, Muslims are far from being economically and socially integrated into France because they do not enjoy the same opportunities as the locals for access to work, which in turn results in not being able to leave the *banlieues* or being able to socialize with French adults. In addition, education is

¹³⁶ Francois, M. (2020). “France’s treatment of its Muslim citizens is the true measure of its republican values”. *Time*. <https://time.com/5918657/frances-muslim-citizens-republican-values/>

¹³⁷ Triandafyllidou, A. (2011). *Addressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Europe. A comparative overview of 15 European countries*. European university Institute.

poorer in these neighborhoods, which also does not help Muslims socialize with the French, which means that they are very excluded in both areas, the economic and the social. Furthermore, I argue that the fact that some second and third generation of Muslim immigrants have drifted towards a traditionalist and fundamentalist vision of Islam (attacks in France 2015, London bombing 2005 etc.) is related to the state's inability to offer them better or more decent living conditions.

Thirdly, cultural integration is the area where Muslims are clearly more excluded because France implements positive discrimination policies towards minorities in regard to their practices and religious beliefs. As said, Muslims find their identity in religious practices and France is taking this away from them. Muslims are constructed as different in the state due to their physical features, and their religion and ethnicity (ibid.) and shows the failure of the French assimilationist model to integrating them. In theory, if all citizens are equal and are granted with the same opportunities, their high unemployment rates, the creation of the *banlieues* etc. bring to light the lack of operability of the republican system.

In short, not all integration models are effective, or rather, France is not doing it correctly because Muslims (besides having been living in French territory for a very long time) are not integrated into the French society neither socially, economically, culturally nor politically at some level because France is not allowing them to do so. I have only analyzed the French model of integration and, therefore, I cannot state categorically that the assimilationist model of integration is ineffective, because other countries may use this model but may exercise it in another way, or France may use a strong assimilationist model with Muslims but use others with other minorities. Therefore, I think it would be interesting to do further research on the topic to be able to contrast it with another country that uses the same model for Muslims, or to take another ethnic minority in France and see how France manages their integration. Even so, it is clear that France exercises a positive discrimination towards Muslims and that both France and its society do not seem to want to integrate Muslims.

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