



GLOBAL MUSLIM DIASPORA

Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Member States



FRANCE

Country Report Series



ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES



GLOBAL MUSLIM DIASPORA:
MUSLIM COMMUNITIES AND MINORITIES IN NON-OIC COUNTRIES



COUNTRY REPORT SERIES

FRANCE



Organization of Islamic Cooperation
**The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and
Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)**



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Acronyms

CFCM: French Council of the Muslim Faith

CMF: Collective of Muslims of France

EEC: European Economic Community

EU: European Union

FNMF: National Federation of French Muslims

IFOP: Institut Français d'opinion Publique

INSEE: National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OIC: Organization of Islamic Cooperation

UOIF: Union of Islamic Organizations in France

Foreword

SESRIC has launched the Global Muslim Diaspora (GMD) Project - a comprehensive research effort that looks to analyse the challenges, attitudes, experiences and perceptions on a range of issues related to Muslim communities and minorities living in non-OIC countries. The main objective of the project is to provide a range of useful comparative statistics and insights, which can help identify issues, initiate cooperation forums and shape future policy.

Islam is not only present in all continents as a religion but also as a cultural value. Beginning with the *Hijrah* of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Muslim migrants have laid the foundations for the spread of Islamic values, ideas and practices in the regions where they have settled, thus contributing to the cultural richness and economic development of these regions.

Today, whenever we raise the point concerning Muslims communities and minorities living in non-OIC countries, we have in mind a context in which Islam is present through more recent migrations. However, we should also keep in mind that many of these countries have been the homeland of Muslims for centuries.

Despite the recent growth of literature on Muslims living in non-OIC countries, knowledge regarding this subject remains limited and fragmented. The GMD project intends to fill in this gap by engaging more closely with the representatives of Muslim communities and minorities in different countries.

In the context of the GMD project, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the report on France, which affords the political elites, policy makers, analysts and general public the opportunity to understand how Muslims in France view the most pressing issues they face today. The report on France is based on two basic pillars: desk research and fieldwork – conducted by travelling to Paris. A survey filled in by respondents and a workshop with representatives of Muslim communities and minorities and in-depth interviews with Muslim and non-Muslim public opinion leaders are the main components of the fieldwork study, the results of which are integrated throughout the report.

I would like to encourage the readers of this report to have a look at the GMD general report titled “Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Countries: Diagnostics, Concepts, Scope and Methodology”, which *inter alia* provides description of the methodology and research activities applied when preparing the report on France.

The development of this report has involved the dedication, skills and efforts of many individuals, to whom I would like to thank.

Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya
Director General
SESRIC

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Ambassador Musa Kulaklıkaya, Director General of SESRIC, provided pivotal leadership during the preparation of the report. Several SESRIC members also contributed to the finalization of the report, including Dr. Kenan Bağcı, Acting Director of Economic and Social Research Department, and Dr. Erhan Türbedar, Researcher, who coordinated the report on behalf of SESRIC. Kaan Namli, Researcher, edited the report and Fatma Nur Zengin, Events and Communications Specialist, facilitated the fieldworks.

SESRIC gratefully acknowledges local field workers and the institutions representing Muslim communities and minorities in France for their cooperation and extraordinary support, without which this project would not have been possible.

Executive Summary

This report aims to address a gap in the literature concerning the global Muslim diasporic community by providing a comprehensive outlook on the topic of Muslims in France. The data and information presented in this study were collected via a survey conducted in Paris (in September-October 2017), a number of in-depth interviews, roundtable meetings (on 19-23 September 2017), a workshop held in Paris (on 23 September 2017) and a detailed investigation of secondary sources. The survey (from now on the GMD FR Survey) was conducted with the participation of 175 Muslim individuals (61% Female, 39% Male respondents) and twenty social activists, academics, students, and the community representatives that attended the workshop. In addition, a total of six Muslims and non-Muslims contributed to the project through in-depth interviews.

France has the largest Muslim minority in Europe (6.5%-8% of its population). More than 30% of this population is second generation, which statistically makes Islam the second most adhered to religion in France. One particular feature of French Muslims is their national and ethnic diversity. Within the Muslim community of France, there are various practices and interpretations of Islam. Hence, there is no unitary French Muslim identity. There is still much debate in France regarding the extent to which Muslims can assimilate into traditional French values. Most studies on French Muslims focus on issues regarding religious attainments and symbols, and the policies of the French government towards them. Few scholars have elaborated upon Muslims' interactions with each other or with the French elites.

France was the first country that experienced serious issues in integrating Islam into its national culture and social model. The most notable example came to the attention of the international fora in 2004 when "conspicuous signs of religious identity" were officially forbidden in public spaces. This prohibited Muslim women in France from wearing the *hijab* and represented the most visible difficulty in reconciling Islam with the French *laïcité*.

The treatment of Muslims, *laïcité* and universalism operate in a dichotomist way. On the one hand, French republican universalism holds all French citizens to be equal and does not distinguish between them on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, and faith. *Laïcité*, on the other hand, which originally aimed to formally separate church and state and to reduce the power of the Catholic Church and exclude religion from the public sphere, has been mobilized as an active argument against the public expression of religio-cultural differences.

There are three main elements of Islam in France. First, the Muslim community, like in many other non-Muslim majority countries, is fragmented both at the national and local levels. This makes it difficult to define a French Muslim. These national and ethnic divisions have also affected the institutionalization of French Muslims. Therefore, French Muslims do not have an effective representative power. Since their most comprehensive representative bodies were established under the auspices of the French state, it is very difficult for second and the third generation Muslims to take critical roles in separate representative bodies.

The French government has been trying to effectively assimilate Islam into French culture and create an *Islam de France* by cooperating with moderates. Yet, these attempts have proven less successful than had been hoped due to the actions of ethno-nationalists. Only French state-supported individuals are permitted to participate in the political and cultural administration of Muslim communities. The uninterrupted foreign influence of some governments (e.g. Algerian, Moroccan, and Turkish) makes it extremely difficult for the representative bodies to canvass the expectations of other ethnicities. Secondly, although Muslims cover a large segment of French voters, they are not well organized at mobilizing themselves to develop Muslim-oriented voting patterns. In other words, there is no singular Muslim vote in French national and local politics. Thirdly, Muslims fail to connect with French domestic and foreign policy matters outside of issues that directly influence them on a communal level or their faith. They either are concerned with their significance in the socio-economic fabric of society or with very narrow topics, such as the *hijab*. This leads to an insignificant level of influence in national politics for the Muslim community.

Education, employment and housing are the three significant areas of French domestic politics, in which Muslims face discrimination the most. Children of first or second generation French Muslims are informally discouraged from pursuing higher education, which curbs their employment prospects greatly. In employment, regardless of gender, French Muslims have been facing different types of discrimination, including illegal surveillance at the workplace. Constant troubles with French law enforcement agencies marginalize the Muslim youth and keep them in the *banlieues*.

Although, French Muslims are ethnically and nationally diverse, they have a significant commonality: lived experiences. These cover the bitterness of exclusion and discrimination together with endless efforts to integrate. These experiences form the bases of a slowly emerging “French Muslim” rhetoric and identity.

1 Introduction: Context and Background

As one of the oldest nation-states of Western Europe, France has several peculiarities, which are historical, linguistic, ethnological, and institutional. This chapter discusses the French context, both regarding these peculiarities and regarding elements of the French Muslim communities. More precisely, the first part gives a brief account of the major historical and political phases of France as a country and the second section provides a concise historical, political, ethnological, cultural, and institutional depiction of Muslim experiences in France.

1.1 France: A Brief History

Written records on the history of France ¹ date back to the Iron Age. Throughout the first millennium the Greeks, the Carthaginians, and the Romans ruled parts of today's France (referred to as Gaul). Following the Gallic Wars (58-51 BC), Gaul was gradually integrated into the Roman Empire. Under Roman rule, Gaul was subject to several Germanic Franks' raids. Clovis I, the Frankish King, unified Gaul in the late 5th century.

Frankish dominance in Gaul reached its apex under Charlemagne, whose empire established the basis for the medieval Kingdom of France. French victory against England at the end of the Hundred Years' War increased the French monarchy's power and influence in Europe. From the late Middle Ages until 1789, during the *Ancien Régime*, France became a centralized absolute monarchy. In the later centuries, France went through the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. In the late 18th century, with the French Revolution, the French monarchy and institutions were overthrown. Until Napoleon Bonaparte declared the French Empire, with himself as emperor, the country was governed as a Republic.

After France's defeat at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the country went through several regime changes: monarchy, the Second Republic, the Second Empire and in 1870 the Third Republic. The Third Republic was belligerent in the First World War, and fought alongside the United Kingdom, Russia, Italy, Japan and the United States against the Central Powers. In the Second World War, Nazi

¹ For some specifics of the history of France see: P. F. State, *Brief History of France*, New York: Facts on File, 2010; E. Le Roy Ladurie, *The Ancien Régime: A History of France 1610–1774*, Paris: Hachette, 1991; D. Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998; N. Shusterman, *The French Revolution. Faith, Desire, and Politics*, London: Routledge, 2014; M. Broers, *Napoleon*, New York: Pegasus Books, 2015; R. Tombs, *France 1814–1914*, Longman History of France Series, 2014; R. Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996; E. Greenhalgh, *Victory through coalition: Britain and France during the First World War*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005; C. W. Nettelbeck, *War and identity: the French and the Second World War: an anthology of texts*, London: Methuen Educational, 1987; F. C. Roe, *Modern France; an introduction to French civilization*, London: Longmans, 1961; A. Menon, *France, NATO and the limits of independence, 1981-97: the politics of ambivalence*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000; M. R. Gueldry, *France and European integration: toward a transnational polity?*, Westport: Praeger, 2001.

Germany conquered France in 1940. Under the coordination of Charles de Gaulle's *France Libre* movement and the allied invasion of France, the country was liberated and the Fourth Republic was established in 1944.

Throughout the 1950s, France was involved in long wars in its colonies in Algeria and Indochina, which ended in political defeat and economic distress. At the end of the 1950s, de Gaulle established the Fifth Republic. With the help of the five-year economic development plan of Jean Monnet and the American Marshall Plan, the French economy began to recover. Under de Gaulle's administration, France once again became a formidable actor in European and global politics. During the Cold War, France was an active and determining member of The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Economic Community (EEC). In the post-Cold War period, France continued its strong links with the European Union (EU) and NATO. Since 1999, France has been an important member of the Eurozone and in 2010 France slowly shifted from left leaning to central rightist political tendencies.

In addition to its historical significance, France, culturally and politically, has been one of the most important nations in the Western World, with former colonies in nearly every part of the globe. France links Northern and Southern Europe economically, linguistically, and geographically. The country is bordered on the northeast by Belgium and Luxembourg, on the east by Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, on the South by the Mediterranean Sea, Spain, and Andorra, on the west by the Bay of Biscay, and on the northwest by the English Channel.

Image 1. Map of France

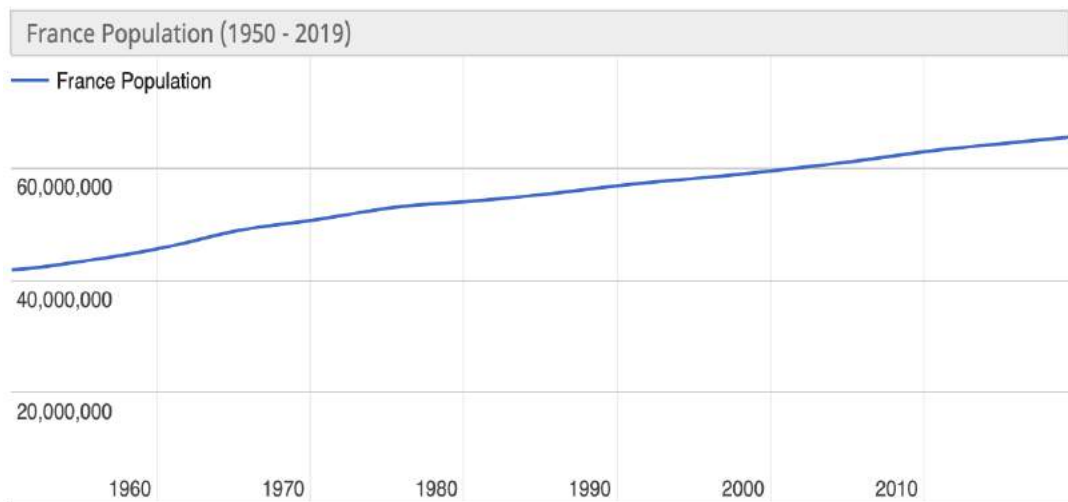


Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2011

Although the French state has a strong centralist tendency, there is also a robust emphasis on individualism in French society. The French state and society have been driven by the impulse to civilize the world. For this reason, French culture significantly influenced the disciplines of anthropology, philosophy, and sociology together with art. The French state, throughout the Cold War and the post-Cold War period, usually had an individualistic/independent posture. It was the leading member of the EU. From 1966 to 1995, France detached itself from the military structure of NATO. It is one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Although there is a strong emphasis of belonging to a single nation in French nationalism, French people hardly comprise a unified ethnic group. Since the end of 15th century, there have been generations of migrants from Central Asia, the Nordic lands and the Middle East and Africa. Historically, the major component of French population was composed of Gaul's spread from the Central Europe in 500BCE-500CE. Later, Germanic people and Vikings came and settled in France. In the 19th and 20th centuries, France was the primary recipient of foreign migration from Europe. In 2008, the French National Institute of Statistics (INSEE) estimated that 11.8 million foreign-born immigrants and their direct descendants lived in France. They represent 19% of the country's population. About 5.5 million are of European origin and 4 million of Maghrebi origin.² Worldometers' estimation of the French population in 2019 is 65,480,710 with a yearly increase of 0.38% (Figure-1).³

Figure 1. France Population (1950-2019)

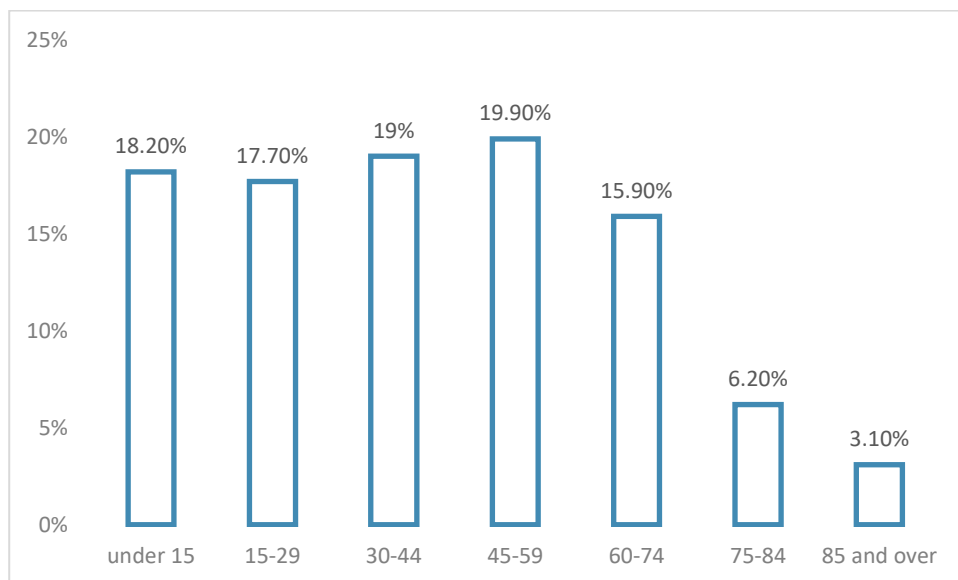


Source: Worldometers (www.worldometers.info)

Like many western European countries, the French population is aging. In the early 2000s, more than 1/5 of French citizens were at least 60 years old (Figure-2).

² "Être né en France d'un parent immigré", <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1283065>, (1.3.2019).

³ "France Population", <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/france-population/>, (1.3.2019).

Figure 2. Age breakdown of French population in 2016

Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016

In terms of gender, the French population shows another peculiarity: Women outnumber men. This has also had an economic impact; women started to increase their share in the French labor market since the 2000s.

An 1872 Law prohibited state authorities from collecting data on individuals' ethnicity or religious beliefs. A 1978 law emphasizing the prohibition of the collection of personal data revealing an individual's race, ethnicity, or political, philosophical, or religious opinions reaffirmed the 1872 law. Therefore, French demographics can be difficult to determine. The most well-known ethnic groups are Celtic and Latin along with Teutonic, Slavic, North African, Indochinese, and Basque minorities.

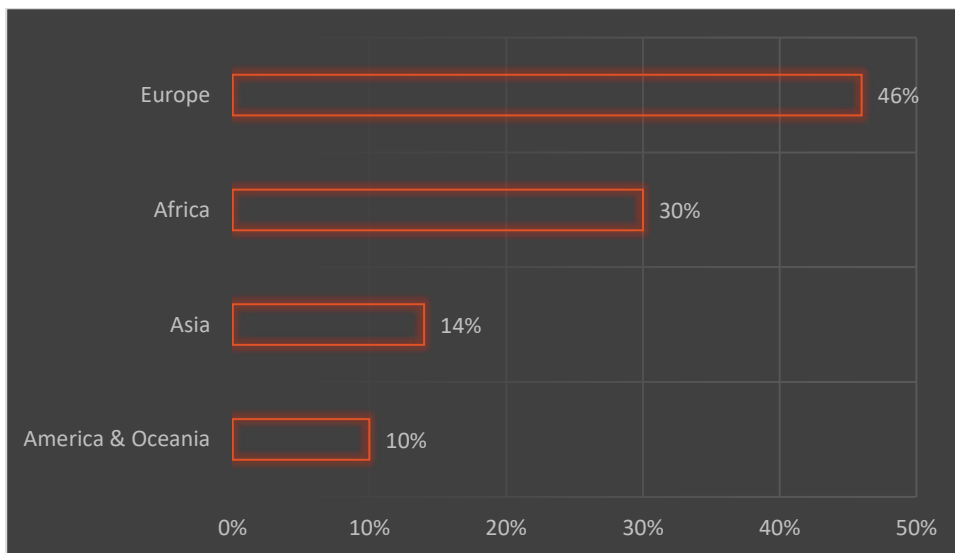
According to figures published by the INSEE at the beginning of 2013, France had 5.8 million immigrants, amounting to 8.8% of the total population. Between 2004 and 2013, the rate of increase in migration to France was 8%. This increase was the result of a general rise in European immigration over the last decade. According to INSEE, since 2004, 200,000 immigrants have entered France every year. One in two immigrants in France was born in Europe and one in three in Africa. Between 2009 and 2012, the number of Europeans entering France increased significantly (+ 12% per year on average), while the number of African immigrants increased only slightly (+ 1% per year on average).⁴

The immigrant population concentration shows a significant difference from the non-immigrant population. 'Eight out of ten immigrants lived in major urban centers, compared with six non-

⁴ "Qui sont les nouveaux immigrés qui vivent en France ?", December 2, 2014, <https://www.sudouest.fr/2014/11/28/qui-sont-les-nouveaux-immigres-qui-vivent-en-france-1751452-705.php>, (1.3.2019).

immigrants in ten. Specifically, 38% of immigrants (2.2 million people) lived in the urban Paris where 17% of non-immigrants (10.2 million people) also reside. However, immigrants are less prominent in areas that are sparsely populated. The distribution of the immigrant population over the French territory was the result of several waves of immigration, particularly towards Southwest France and urban and industrialized areas in the 1960s; however, this varies according to the country of birth. There have also been marginal changes made to the geographic concentration of immigrant populations.⁵ Sudouest's survey in 2014 showed that, due to big waves of migration in the last decades, the number of migrants from Africa and Asia are almost getting ahead of migrants from Europe (Figure-3). In the coming decades, the possible continuation of this change has a potential to alter the European-outlook and fabric of France.

Figure 3. Distribution of Migrants in France in 2014 -by continent of birth



Source : <https://www.sudouest.fr/2014/11/28/>

Private surveys and polls estimate the religious distribution in France. According to Indexmundi, the distribution is Christian (overwhelmingly Roman Catholic) 63-66%, Muslim 7-9%, Buddhist 0.5-0.75%, Jewish 0.5-0.75%, other 0.5-1.0% and none 23-28%.⁶

Although there are several regional dialects, French is the national language of France. In the east and the north Dutch and German, in the South of France Latin influences the dialects. The main dialects are Provençal, Breton, Alsatian, Corsican, Catalan, Basque, Flemish, Occitan, and Picard. The

⁵ "The geographical location of immigrants – A high concentration in the Paris urban area", INSEE PREMIÈRE, No. 1591, 19 April 2016.

⁶ "France Demographics Profile 2018", https://www.indexmundi.com/france/demographics_profile.html, (1.3.2019). According to Pew Research Centre Muslims constitute 8.8% of the French population. "Europe's Growing Muslim Population", 29 November 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/29/europes-growing-muslim-population/>, (1.3.2019).

repression of regional dialects in education in the interest of national unity during the Third Republic was dispensed with recently. Accordingly, Occitan, Corsican, and Catalan have been re-introduced in universities. With the increased migration from the Middle East, Arabic was also introduced into the education system.

From the mid-1940s to the mid-1970s, referred to as the *trente glorieuses*, the French economy experienced a serious boom. The period between 1960 and 1973 was particularly significant, during which the French GDP rose by an average of 6% each year. The boom slowed down in the 1970s due to the oil crises. In the 1980s the French economy picked up pace again. Yet, in the 2000s, economic distress in the EU, and especially the Eurozone crises, slowed down the French growth rate.

In France, almost everyone is covered by the social security system. Since 1988, there has been an additional social security scheme, which enables people with no income or very little income to be able to benefit from government subsidies.

French culture finds its origins in the Celtic and Germanic tribes, and in Greco-Roman civilization, which developed during the Middle Ages in the monasteries and universities. This expanded further during the Enlightenment, particularly in science, mathematics, art, literature, philosophy, and medicine. With the 1960s, immigrants, especially those from North Africa, influenced French culture in terms of cuisine, music, dance, painting, and literature. With the 1980s, second and third generation North Africans (*les beurs*) developed their particular style in cinema, comics, and radio. Moreover, Asian and sub-Saharan immigrants influenced French art, literature, and music.

1.2 Islam in France

Today's France has roughly five million Muslim inhabitants, about half of whom hold French citizenship. It is a rough estimate since the French state prohibits enquiries into the religious disposition of its inhabitants. France is predominantly Catholic but now has more Muslims than Protestants and Jews. Islam is the country's second most practiced religion. French Muslims are diverse.⁷ The Muslim population of France traces its origins to more than 120 different countries.⁸ 'Over 80% originate from North Africa; others are from Turkey, and more recently have been coming from Africa, Eastern Europe (Bosnia, Albania), and Asia'.⁹

⁷ O. Roy, "Naissance d'un Islam européen", *Esprit*, 1, 1998, 10–35.

⁸ S. Tebbakh, *Identités politiques des Français d'origine maghrébine*, Thèse de doctorat en science politique, Grenoble: IEP, 2004; P. Simon, P. & V. Tiberj, *Sécularisation ou regain religieux? La religiosité des immigrés et de leurs descendants*, Paris: INED, 2013.

⁹ A.-L. Zwilling, "A century of mosques in France: building religious pluralism", *International Review of Sociology*, 25:2, 2015, 333.

According to the French National Assembly's records, there are more than 2400 places of worship for Muslims.¹⁰ The oldest mosques of the French Muslims date back to the 16th century. The mosque of Tsingoni¹¹ was built in 1538. As for Europe, the oldest mosque is the *Grande Mosquée de Paris*, which was inaugurated by the President Gaston Doumergue on 15 July 1926.¹²

Image 2: Grande Mosquée de Paris –Friday Prayer at the Paris mosque



Source: GMD Fieldwork, Paris, 2017

Around the year 889 A.D., a small force of “Saracens” landed and established a base-camp or small settlement at the northern end of the small inlet on the French Mediterranean coast, today known as St. Tropez. Here, the Saracens established *Fraxinetum*, which later attracted further waves of Saracens from Spain.¹³ Until 930 A.D., Saracens faced very little response from local leaders. During these years, they attacked *Asti* and *Acqui* in the East; the monasteries at *Novalesse* and *Oulx; Embrun, Vienne, and Valence* in the West and *Aix-en-Provence* and *Marseille* in the South.¹⁴ In the following

¹⁰ «Pour les musulmans, les mosquées et lieux de culte étaient en 2012 au nombre de 2 449, dont 272 à Mayotte et 46 dans les autres départements et collectivités d’outre-mer», Assemblée Nationale, Réponse à la question écrite n° 12995 de M. Eric Ciotti, publiée au JO le 23/04/2013, 4524.

¹¹ Tsingoni is a commune in the French overseas department of Mayotte, in the Indian Ocean.

¹² For the details of the mosques in France see: A.-L. Zwilling, “A century of mosques in France: building religious pluralism”, *International Review of Sociology*, 25:2, 2015, 333-340.

¹³ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*; translated by F. A. Wright, London: Routledge, 1930, 33-34.

¹⁴ R. Poupardin, *Le Royaume de Bourgogne*, Paris : Librairie Honore Champion, 1907, 86-87.

decade, Saracens moved into the north of Alps into the *Rhone Valley*.¹⁵ In 954 A.D., they occupied *Grenoble*.¹⁶ After 972 A.D., Saracen's power declined and in 975 A.D. *Franxinetum* was taken. Its Muslim population was driven off, some were forcibly converted to Christianity, some were executed, and some were sold into slavery.¹⁷ In the early 11th century, there were new attacks of Muslims into Southern France.¹⁸

From 1543-1544, the Ottoman admiral Hayreddin Barbarossa used Toulon as a naval base. After the Christian population evacuated the town, the Ottomans converted Toulon Cathedral into a mosque.¹⁹ 'With imperial expansion, France became a "protector" or colonizer of many territories with majority Muslim populations, such as Egypt (1798), Algeria (1830), West Africa (1880), Tunisia (1881), Morocco (1912), Syria and Lebanon (1920)'.²⁰

Up to the 20th century, there are three key periods in French-Islam relations: the above-mentioned 8th and 9th centuries, when the Franks defeated Muslim armies in France and Spain; the era of the Crusades;²¹ and the 19th century, Napoléon's expedition into Egypt.²²

Returning to the 20th century²³, North African immigration remained modest until the Second World War. With the French economic boom, the industry required more and more labor. Accordingly, during the 1960s around one million guest workers arrived in France. Following the 1973 oil crisis, an end to immigration through the "zero immigration" laws were enforced but due to high birth rates, illegal entrants, and the reunion of immigrant families, the French Muslim population continued to rise. In the 1980s, the extreme right-wing movement' the National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen discriminated against Muslims by, playing on the stereotypes of Arabs as being "lazy" and "untrustworthy". With this rhetoric, the National Front attempted to limit foreign residents' acquisition of French citizenship.

There was a peculiar relationship between the first generation Muslims and French official circles. It can be 'best defined as the former's general avoidance of confrontation and the latter's desire to stay away from any publicity regarding troublesome problems that arose'.²⁴ The National Front's policies received reactions from Muslim workers, who staged strikes by praying at factory car parks. Yet, the

¹⁵ R. Poupardin, *Le Royaume de Bourgogne*, Paris : Librairie Honore Champion, 1907, 91.

¹⁶ R. Poupardin, *Le Royaume de Bourgogne*, Paris : Librairie Honore Champion, 1907, 91-93.

¹⁷ G. de Rey, *Les Invasions des Sarrasins en Provence*, Marseille : Typographic Marius Olive, 1878, 192-93.

¹⁸ M. W. Wenner, "The Arab/Muslim Presence in Medieval Central Europe", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 12, 1980, 75.

¹⁹ For details see: C. I.-Verhaaren, "Barbarossa and his army who came to succor all of us: Ottoman and French views of their joint campaign of 1543-1544", *French Historical Studies*, 30:3, 2007.

²⁰ J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006, 16.

²¹ For the medieval periods see: D. W. Weiss & L. Mahoney (eds.), *France and the Holy Land: Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004; S. Faroqi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World around It*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2004.

²² For details see: W. E. Watson, *Tricolor and Crescent: France and the Islamic World*, Westport, CT: Praeger 2003.

²³ For the details of the 20th century France-Islam relations see: P. le Pautremat, *La politique musulmane de la France au XXe siècle: De l'Hexagone aux terres d'Islam; Espoirs, réussites, échecs*, Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003.

²⁴ M. Belbah, "Global and Local Dimensions of Islam in France", *South African Historical Journal*, 61:1, 2009, 58.

major conflict between Muslims and the French state was over the issue of the *hijab* (headscarf).²⁵ Muslims became a security issue in the mid-1990s when the Algerian Armed Islamic Group planted bombs in the Paris metro. The main suspect was a French-raised jihadist. In following years, the increase in the anti-Semitic incidents raised French state's threat perceptions against Muslims.

Another reason for securitizing French Muslims was the lack of or ineffectiveness of their institutional representation. The French government believes the ineffectiveness of Muslim institutional representation to be a significant problem, and even a danger. Not all Muslims are seen as threats but the French Ministry of Interior believes that between '50,000-100,000' Muslims 'are influenced by fundamentalist doctrines'.²⁶

Regardless of these domestic threat perceptions, French Muslims' status 'is at once much healthier' than 'most recent commentary lets on'. The integration of Muslims in France, which is discussed below, has had a 'unique combination of history, philosophy, and contemporary concerns, which together have produced a stop-and-start immigration policy and a wariness about Islam'.²⁷

There is also a French exception when it comes to Muslims' large-scale immigration. The above-mentioned Muslim immigration took over a century and a half. Children of this Muslim population now constitute almost a quarter of the population. Although there is a high level of egalitarianism and universal democratic values, the centralist notion of the government has overshadowed these values. French society became homogenous and homogenizing. 'The French model distrusts ethnic or religious characteristics as divisive. In the name of egalitarianism, French law prohibits even identifying citizens on the basis of national origin, race, or religion; the last census to record religious affiliation was taken in 1872'.²⁸

A significant term for Islam in France has been "consular Islam". The term particularly emphasized Algerian, Moroccan, and Turkish first-generation migrants. These communities' religiosity was established and administered by their country of origin due to their strong links with their home countries. Their home countries both gave finances and ensured control over these communities. A good example is Moroccan Islam, which is predominant among practicing Muslims (more than 40% of imams and the majority of managers of places of worship are Moroccan).²⁹

The Muslim Brotherhood has been trying to fill in the administrative and to an extent the representative deficit of consular Islam since the 1980s. Mainly resulting from the exile of Tunisian,

²⁵ For a relatively recent and concise discussion on the hijab issue see: R. Abilmouna, "Reconciling the hijāb within laïcité France", *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, 13:2-3, 2011, 117-132; M. Adrian, "France, the Veil and Religious Freedom", *Religion, State & Society*, 37:4, 2009, 345-374; S. M. Croucher, "French-Muslims and the Hijab: An Analysis of Identity and the Islamic Veil in France", *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 37:3, 2008, 199-213; E. R. Thomas, "Keeping Identity at a distance: Explaining France's new legal restrictions on the Islamic headscarf", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29:2, 2006, 237-259; S. M. Croucher, "Looking Beyond The Hijab: An Analysis Of Muslim Adaptation To French Culture", PhD Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 2006.

²⁶ M. Viorst, "The Muslims of France", *Foreign Affairs*, 75:5, 1996, 95.

²⁷ S. Giry, "France and Its Muslims", *Foreign Affairs*, 85:5, 2006, 88.

²⁸ S. Giry, "France and Its Muslims", *Foreign Affairs*, 85:5, 2006, 88.

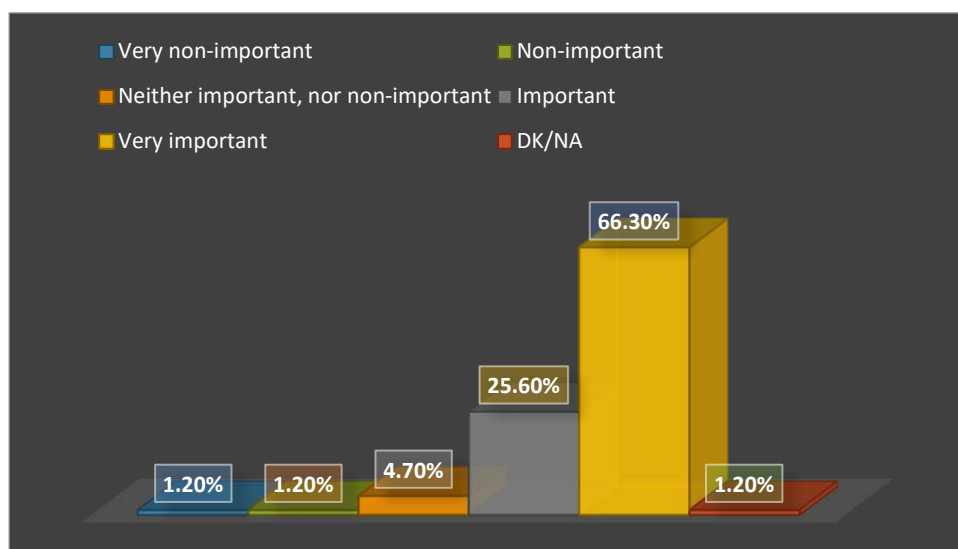
²⁹ L. Fournier, L'islam en France, Juillet 2010 https://www.scienceshumaines.com/l-islam-en-france_fr_25716.html, (10.3.2019).

Syrian, and Egyptian Islamists, this movement is embodied within the Union of Islamic Organizations in France (UOIF), and with groups close to Swiss Islamologist Tariq Ramadan.

According to the results of the Institut Français d'opinion Publique (Ifop)³⁰ survey published in 2009, collectiveness appears to dominate French Muslim identity. In other words, collective or shared actions are more important than religion or individual religious practice in the definition of French Muslim identity. The declared rate of attendance at places of worship for Friday prayers have doubled in fifteen years: 12% in 1994 to 23% in 2007. Similarly, congregation for fasting in Ramadan has the highest percentage: 70% of respondents between 2001 and 2009 claim to fast and join Ramadan gatherings (60% in 1994). Moreover, this percentage is much the same for young and old. The practice of individual prayer has been stable since the 1990s, and strongly divides the generations: 28% of young people say they pray daily compared to 64% of over 55s.³¹ Similarly, “believers” and “practicing believers” are fewer in number than in 2001, while those who simply define themselves as “of Muslim origin” are more so (16% in 2001, 25% in 2007).³²

In 2017, the respondents of the GMD FR Survey support the findings of Ifop survey (2009), highlighting the rise in Islamic practices of French Muslims. Accordingly, the highest percentage (91.9%) of the respondents see Islamic practice and rituals as important and only 3.6% of them see these practices as unimportant (Figure-4). In such a secular society like France, which does not emphasize multiculturalism, such a high percentage of the respondents’ attribution to the importance of Islamic practice and rituals illustrate the strength of their affiliation with Islam.

Figure 4. Importance of Islamic Practice and Rituals



Source: GMD FR Survey, 2017

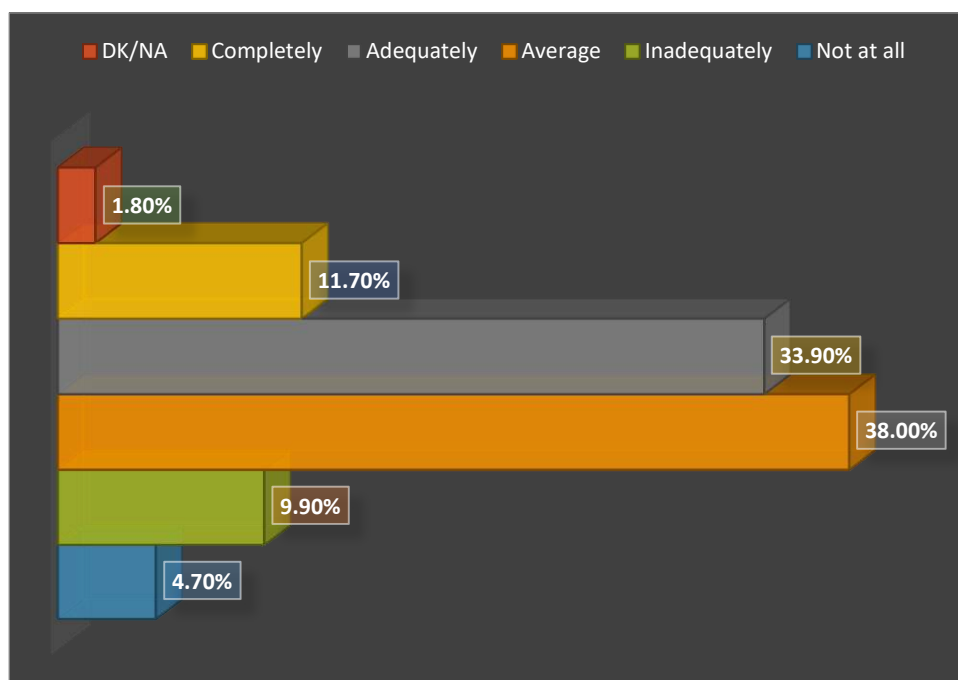
³⁰ <https://www.ifop.com/en/>, (10.3.2019)

³¹ L. Fournier, L'islam en France, Juillet 2010 https://www.scienceshumaines.com/l-islam-en-france_fr_25716.html, (10.3.2019).

³² F. Frégosi & A. Boubekeur, “L’Exercice du culte musulman en France. Lieux de prière et d’inhumation”, *La Documentation Française*, 2006.

When it comes to fulfilling religious requirements, we have a different percentage. Almost half of them (45.6%) fulfill their religious requirements either adequately or completely (Figure 5). The percentage goes down almost half when compared to the percentage of the attribution to Islamic values. In other words, being a Muslims, being affiliated with Islamic values, accepting their importance and practicing Islam daily is not the same for the respondents. Moreover, since it is very secular, the mainstream French society does not necessarily facilitate the practice of Islam in daily life.

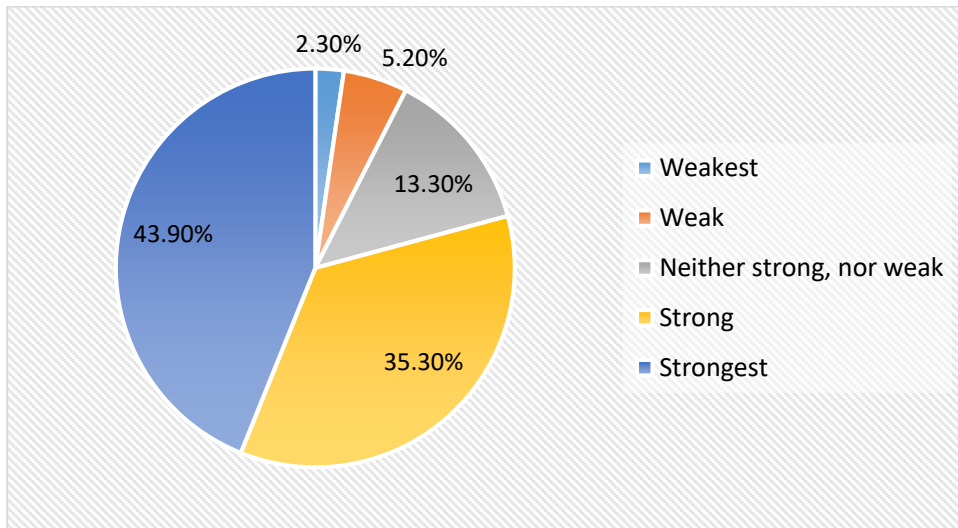
Figure 5. Fulfilling Religious Requirements.



Source: To what extent do you believe you fulfil the religious requirements of being a Muslim? GMD FR Survey, 2017

Individual religious attachment or strong belonging to Islam (79.2%) has become much greater than the sense of not belonging and being indifferent (20.8 %) (Figure 6). Again similar to the (Figure 4) percentage of the sense of belonging to Islam, which does not require daily practices is quite high. A great percentage of French Muslims are full-fledged believers but not full-time practitioners of Islam.

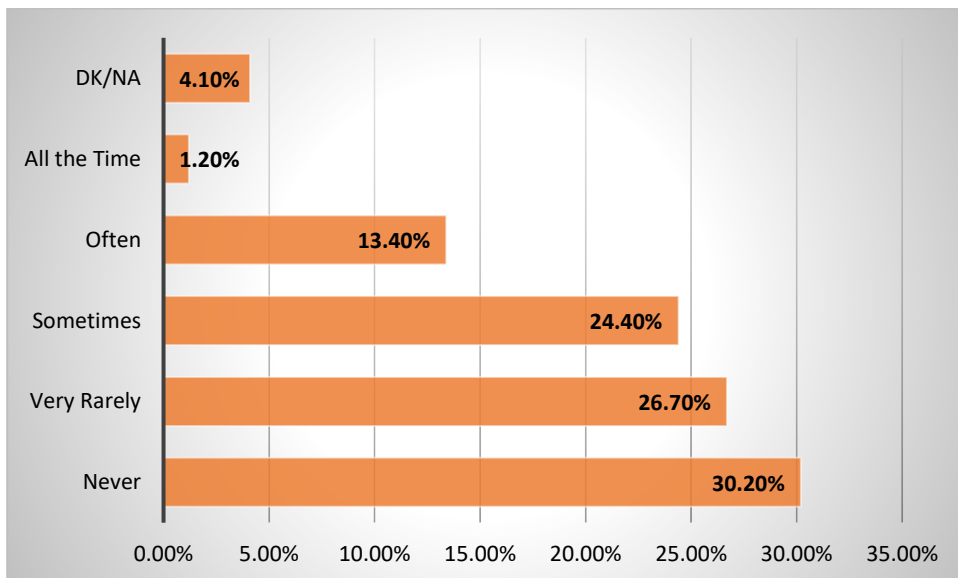
Figure 6. Sense of Belonging to Islam



Source: How would you describe your sense of belonging to Islam?, GMD FR Survey, 2017.

Yet, the rise in practicing Islam did not increase the frequency for mosque attendance. Only 14% of the respondents attend mosque regularly (Figure-7). The above-stated argument about the Islamic practice of French Muslims is validated once again, although indirectly. Attending the mosque daily and for every *rakat* does not comfortably fit into daily stream of secular French society for a full-time working Muslim. This only indirectly supports the argument since the respondents could perform salaah at home.

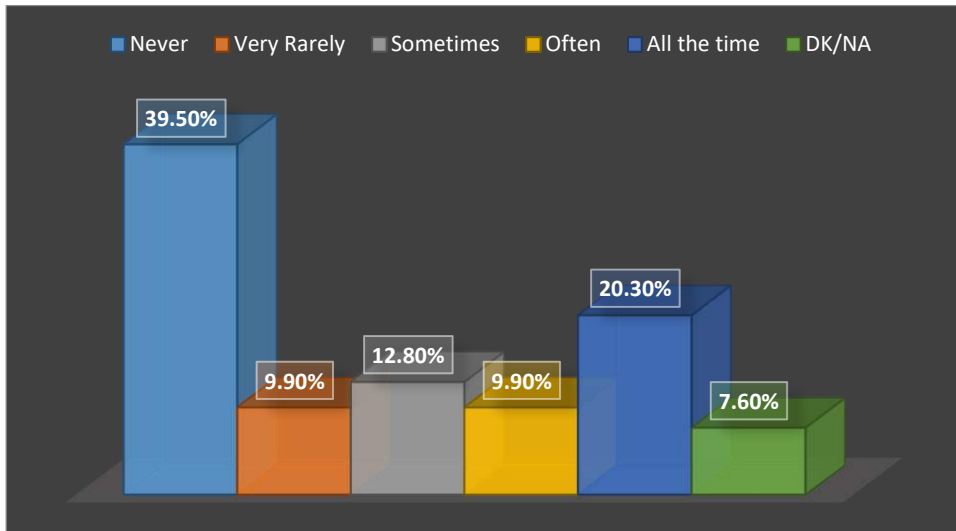
Figure 7. Frequency of Attending the Mosque



Source: How often do you attend the mosque? GMD FR Survey, 2017

GMD FR Survey confirmed the community feeling stated in the above-stated Ifop survey. Seemingly, the respondents' bolstered feeling of belonging to Islam had a more concrete influence on attending Friday prayers. The ratio compared to attending mosque on other weekdays increases when it comes to Friday prayer (43%) (Figure-8). Since the Friday prayer has such a high religio-cultural value, it is expected that the respondents' percentage would be that high. More importantly, French society also admitted its importance and facilitated the attendance.

Figure 8. Friday prayer attendance



Source: How often do you attend Friday Prayer? GMD FR Survey, 2017

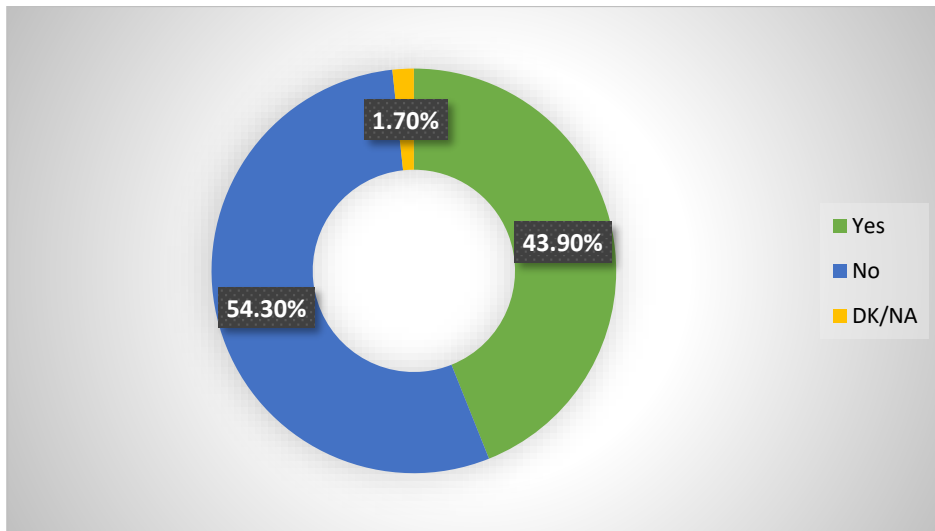
Another significant feature of French Muslims is the increase in mixed marriages. The mixed marriage of women (outlawed by Muslim orthodoxy) has clearly become common practice. 56% of “practicing Muslim women”, 86% of “non-practicing Muslim women” accept mixed marriage. According to political scientist Franck Fregosi, these modes of belief are distributed as follows: “the visible Islam of pious and devout believers”, based on the sustained observance of obligations and interdicts (36%), “the subjective Islam of non-practicing believers “which recognize themselves in values without display of practices (42%),” a minimalist Islam of people of Muslim origin “, therefore reactionary or identity (16%).³³.

Although Islam is the second most practiced religion in France, the French government has not slowed down its efforts to construct and monitor a French form of Islam, or *Islam de France*. In 2003, the French state established the French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM) in order to serve as an official interlocutor with the state for Islamic practices. Some Muslim groups accepted Islam de France; the Collective of French Muslims was one of them. The Collective identified itself as “French of Muslim Faith” (*Français de Confession Musulmane*), which aimed to balance commitment to their faith and French identity.

³³ F. Frégosi & A. Boubekeur, “L’Exercice du culte musulman en France. Lieux de prière et d’inhumation”, *La Documentation française*, 2006.

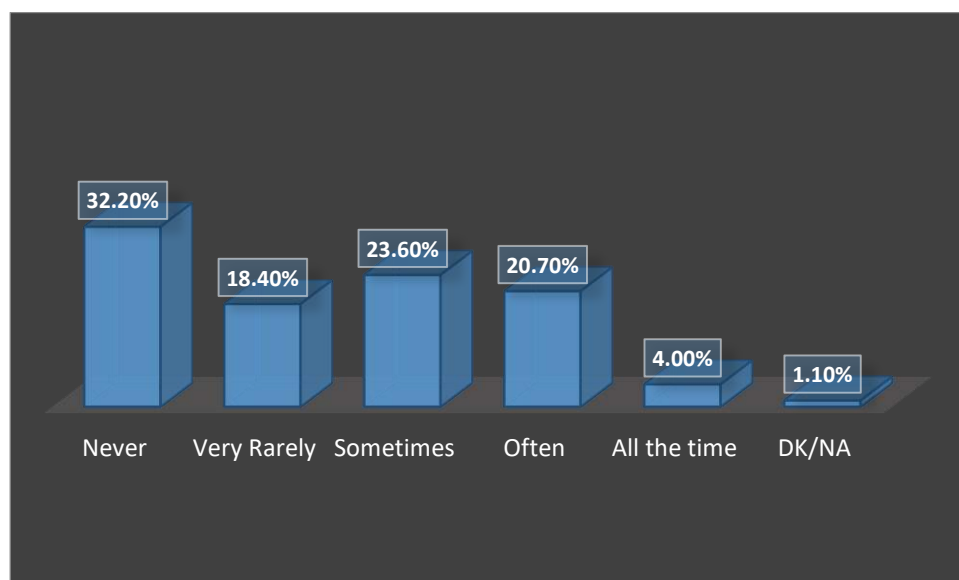
These top-down institutionalization efforts have not proved to be particularly effective. Especially within the CFCM, the Algerian, Moroccan, Tunisian, and Turkish governments wished to have their views taken into consideration. The French state still intermingles with these countries' consulates and affiliated NGOs. There is also a clear division between national lines of the federations comprising the Council. Within this institutional ecosystem, smaller NGOs under the leadership of second and third generation French Muslims do not receive recognition from the French state as legitimate interlocutors. Therefore, as the GMD FR Survey shows, Muslims are unsure how effective they can be as a member of a Muslim NGO. This creates another division within French Muslims, which the survey shows that more than half of them (54.30%) are members of a Muslim NGO and a bit less (43.90%) are not (Figure-9). This half and a half division clearly indicates the puzzled perception of French Muslims towards their own NGOs. On the other hand, being a member of a Muslim NGO does not necessarily mean that they are actively participating in the organization's work.

Figure 9. Muslim NGO membership



Source: Are you a member of any Muslim NGO, GMD FR Survey, 2017

The difference of being an active or a “just” member becomes clear when the respondents are asked about their attendance to NGO events. Even if more than half of the respondents are NGO members, only a quarter of them regularly attend those events (Figure-10). It can be inferred that only the half of the NGO members are particularly active. In other words, Muslim NGOs in France have the “numbers” regarding members but not the required level of support from them. Presumably, being an active member of a Muslim NGO would mean that Muslim members are more visibly pro-Islamic, which the mainstream French society is not necessarily very comfortable with.

Figure 10. Muslim NGO events attendance

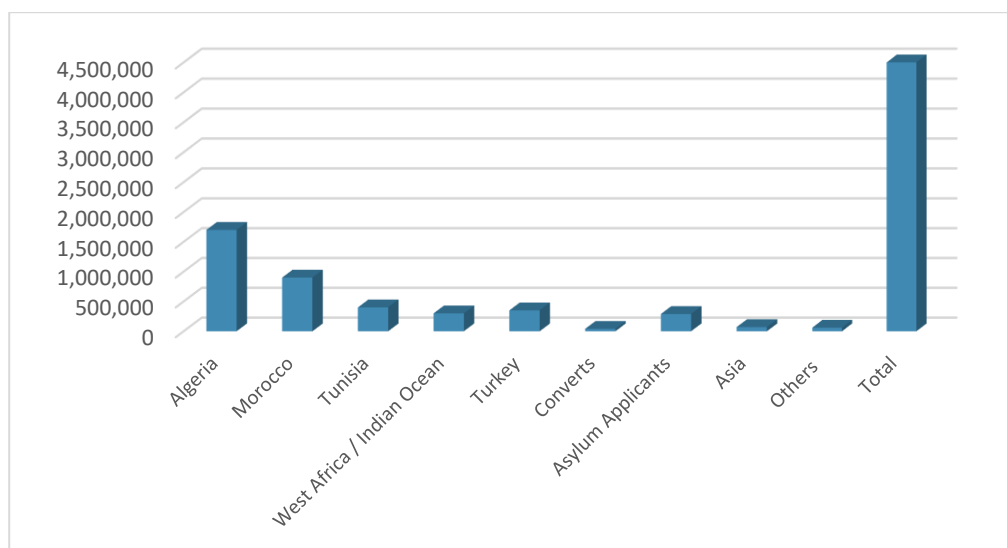
Source: How often do you attend Muslim NGO activities? GMD FR Survey, 2017

Like in many other non-Muslim majority countries, French Muslims are diverse, coming from 120 different countries. French Muslims' history traces back to the 9th century AD and increased in population through the waves of immigration. They are not short of places of worship but are not fully welcomed by the French mainstream population and the French state. Since the mid-1990s, French Muslims are being securitized by the French official mindset. The French state also has been trying to re-formulize Islam to be more compatible with the mainstream French values. On the other hand, some big French Muslim communities (Algerian, Moroccan, and Turkish) are being "administered" by their states-of-origin. Regarding their attribution to Islam, more than half of French Muslims are closely affiliated with Islamic values, although not that many with its practices. They are also inclined to be Muslim NGO members but not very actively.

2 Demographic Profile

France has the largest Muslim population in Europe. Since ethno-religious statistics have been forbidden by French law since 1872³⁴ the best estimation of Muslims in France is approximately 5 million, or about 8% of the total population.³⁵ This population can be divided into four major groups: 1.5 million Algerians, 1 million Moroccans, more than 400,000 Tunisians, nearly 340,000 Sub-Saharan Africans, and 313,000 Turks.³⁶ Out of the 5 million Muslims in France, about 3 million are French citizens.³⁷ Immigrants still make up the majority of the Moroccan (77% of immigrants) and Tunisian populations (71%). The proportion is even higher for Sub-Saharan Africans (88%).³⁸ The approximate number of converts is 40,000.³⁹ One of the most comprehensive surveys carried out by PUF in 1998 proves this distribution, especially regarding the numbers of Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians (Figure-11).

Figure 11. Muslim Population in France, by origin



Source : Alain Boyer, *L'islam en France*, Paris : PUF, 1998.

³⁴ Censuses on race and ethnicity was deemed unconstitutional (M. A. Schain, *The Politics of Immigration in France, Britain, and the United States*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Though the last census on religious questions was taken in 1872 and the law forbids keeping track of any ethnic statistics, some derogations of the law allow for some estimates J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006, 17-18).

³⁵ J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press 2006; B. Godard & Sylvie Taussig, *Les musulmans en France*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2007.

³⁶ B. Godard & S. Taussig, *Les musulmans en France*, Paris : Robert Laffont, 2007.

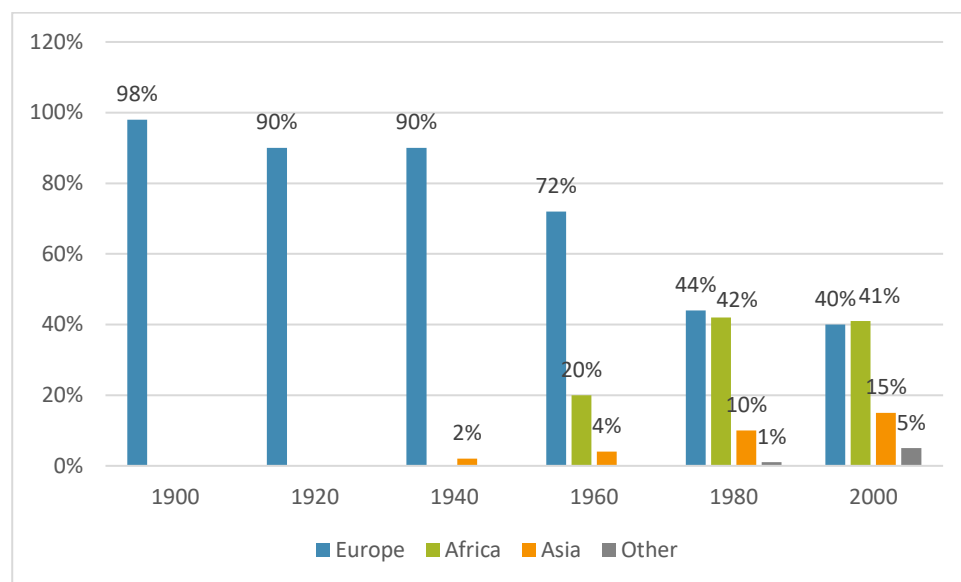
³⁷ J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press 2006, 24

³⁸ B. Godard & S. Taussig, *Les musulmans en France*, Paris : Robert Laffont, 2007.

³⁹ B. Godard & S. Taussig, *Les musulmans en France*, Paris : Robert Laffont, 2007.

The number of Muslims in France particularly increased after the 1960s. Until then, Europeans were the major component of foreigners in metropolitan France. Throughout the decades, their portion in French society recessed. Especially with the 2000s, they began to share their portion in the French society with Muslims, a significant portion of whom were particularly from Africa (Figure-12).

Figure 12. Foreigners of Various Origins Living in Metropolitan France



Source : Mouna Viprey, "L'insertion des jeunes d'origine étrangère", Paris : Conseil économique et social, July 2002, p. 122.

These numbers would change depending on the criteria chosen to define a "Muslim". One criterion is estimation based on a "Muslim background" without considering religious practice. If the estimation takes the "attendance to the mosque" as the main criterion, then the number of Muslims falls to 220,000.⁴⁰ Another important estimation is preeminence of identities. Over 40% of French Muslims identify as French first while 46% see themselves as Muslims first.⁴¹ Since there is no "single picture" of Muslims and due to legal restrictions, any research enquiry about the demography of French Muslims needs to apply a three-fold typology: "popular and calm Islam", the Islam of the first migrants, secular Islam, more of a cultural reference than religious, the process of re-Islamicization, especially amongst the youth.⁴²

Another important feature of the Muslim demography in France is the fertility rate. Family pressures in Muslim families encourage more children, and most Muslims in France have extended families,

⁴⁰ French Ministry of Interior used this criterion, which showed that only 5% of the 5 million Muslims in France (attended the survey) goes to mosque. (B. Godard & S. Taussig, *Les musulmans en France*, Paris : Robert Laffont, 2007).

⁴¹ J.T. Allen, "The French-Muslim Connection. Is France Doing a Better Job of Integration than Its Critics?", Pew Research, 17 August 2006.

⁴² J. Cesari, « L'Islam en Europe : l'incorporation d'une religion », *Cahiers d'études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranien*, 33, 2002 ; F. Fregosi, *Penser l'Islam dans la laïcité*, Paris : Fayard, 2008.

which is also an indirect factor in high rates of fertility. Culturally, grandparents take or share the responsibility of the child's upbringing, which indirectly encourages the youngsters to have more children.⁴³

Another reason for the increase of the Muslim population in France is the continuation of immigration. There are three legal methods of immigration into France: family reunification and marriage, skilled labor immigration, and political asylum. Throughout the 1990s, the numbers in the first two categories' remained much the same: 100,000-120,000 per year. In 2002-2003, net legal immigration rose to 173,000 and illegal migration to France consisted of a considerable number. In France, there is an estimated 60,000 *sans papiers* living in the country, most of whom are from China and Southeast Asia.⁴⁴ In other words, the Asian immigration, which is very well known in Asian literature and which is also mostly illegal, has been hitting France.

Like in other western EU countries, religion-focused statistics have been legally forbidden. This creates a specific difficulty to give precise information on French Muslims' demographics. This is additionally more complicated when it comes to who should be accepted as a Muslim, when counting. What are clear from the non-official surveys are the largest ethnicities, which are heavily North Africans from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Turks also constitute a significant number. French Muslims numbers are rising. A main reason for this increase is France's economic boom, and the following socio-economic benefits the EU provides. It is also because of French Muslims' fertility rate. The continuously increasing immigration from the Southeast Asia and China is adding to their numbers.

⁴³ M. M. Khan, "Islam in Secular France", *Journal of European Studies*, 28:1, 2012, 198.

⁴⁴ J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006, 26

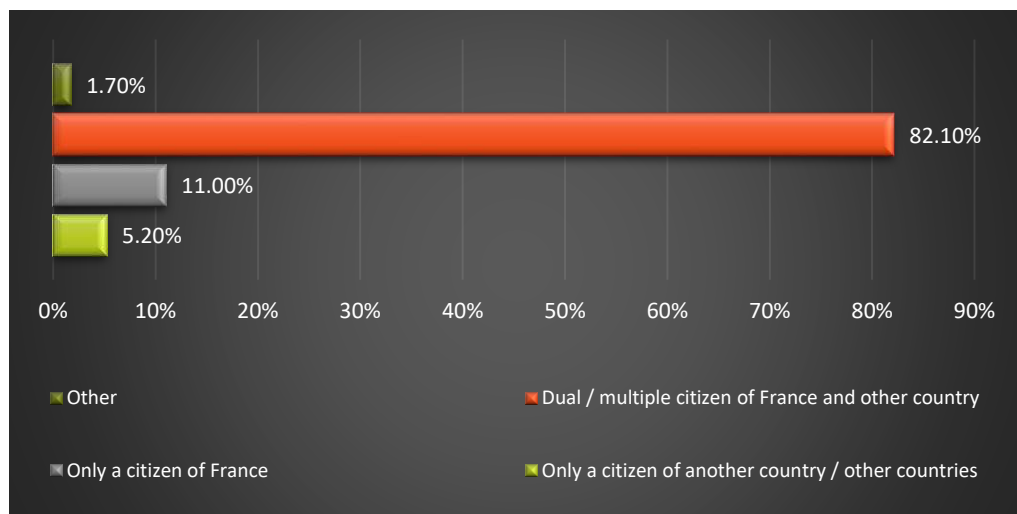
3 Views on Migration and Integration

The migration and integration of French Muslims are weightily related to the politico-legal stance of the French state to its Muslim communities. Therefore, this section first discusses the French state's outlook towards Muslims, and then it examines the issues these policies formed for both French Muslims and their institutions. In the final part of the chapter, the concept of diaspora and the general attitude towards its employment with French Muslims are investigated.

Due to the growing number of Muslims, the French government has decided to follow a policy of legitimizing its Islamic community, rather than ignoring them. The government 'provides Muslim chaplains and serves rations in accord with Islamic dietary law'. In the business sphere, industries 'offer Muslim employees time and facilities for prayer'. Around '30,000 of France's Muslims go on pilgrimage to Mecca each year.⁴⁵ In this legitimization process, the French state tries to reduce the foreign political and financial influence of North African and Middle Eastern governments on their own communities.⁴⁶

This legitimization has also allowed French immigrants to obtain French citizenship in addition to their original nationalities. This is supported by the findings of the GMD FR Survey. 82.1% of the respondents hold French citizenship in addition to a citizenship from their country of origin. Only 11% are without dual nationality (Figure-13).

Figure 13. Citizenship status



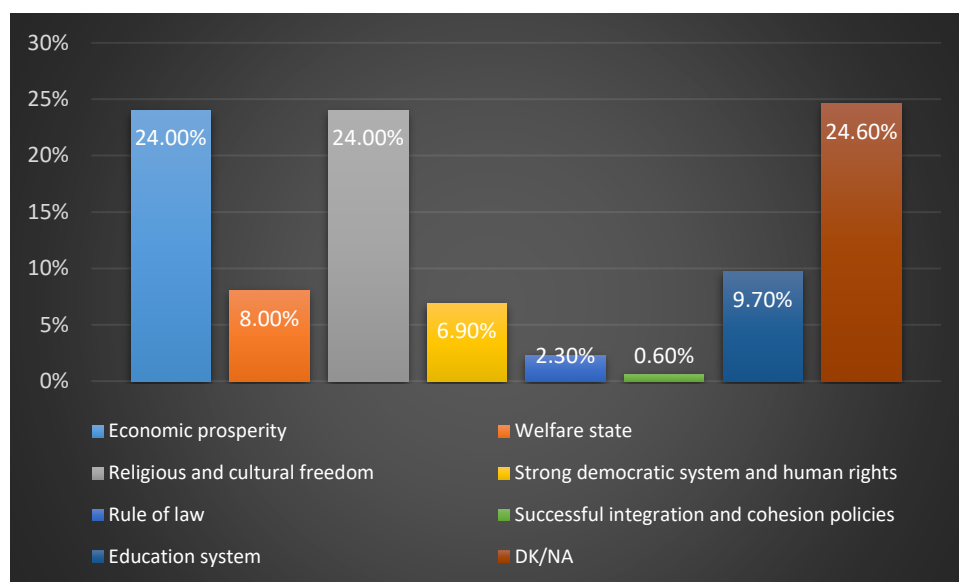
Source: What is your citizenship Status? GMD FR Survey, 2017

⁴⁵ M. Viorst, "The Muslims of France", *Foreign Affairs*, 75:5, 1996, 80.

⁴⁶ J. Cesari, "Le national au péril du transnational. Les groupes issus de l'immigration entre Maghreb et Europe", *Printemps*, 6, 1993, 6.

Such a high percentage of French citizenship found its reasoning in another question of the GMD FR Survey. The respondents underscored three main advantages of being a Muslim in France. These are economic prosperity, welfare state, and religious and cultural freedom. Interestingly, the percentages for the three advantages are close. This shows that the respondents enjoy both economic wellbeing and freedom of worship. In addition to these three, several other reasons were put forward by respondents as advantages of being a Muslim in France (Figure-14).

Figure 14. Important Advantages of being a Muslim in France



Source: What are the main advantages of being a Muslim in France?, GMD FR Survey, 2017.

A major disadvantage of being a Muslim in France is that the official mindset still sees most Muslims within the context of national security. In other words, many Muslims are perceived as a threat. In the words of the French Interior Minister Charles Pasqua's, 'it is not enough simply to have Islam in France. There must be a French Islam'.⁴⁷ The French non-Muslim population is still discontent about Islam's growing weight and visibility in everyday life. *Hassan* (2017) explained this:

"France is a secular country that has a bad view of Islam. The Muslim community is always singled out after the different attacks. ... We are a part of French society and we must ... prove that Islam is a religion of common sense. France needs us so we have to be an added value and not be considered as a problem in this society."

Other Muslims are also aware of this. Some of them emphasize that living in an Islamic society in France is only an ideal. What they live in France is a diluted Islam.⁴⁸ *Fadhil* (2017) stated that the non-diluted form of Islam negatively affects the daily life of Muslims. They have to pray five times a day; they need to fast for 30 days a year. He claimed that these practices make Islam three times more

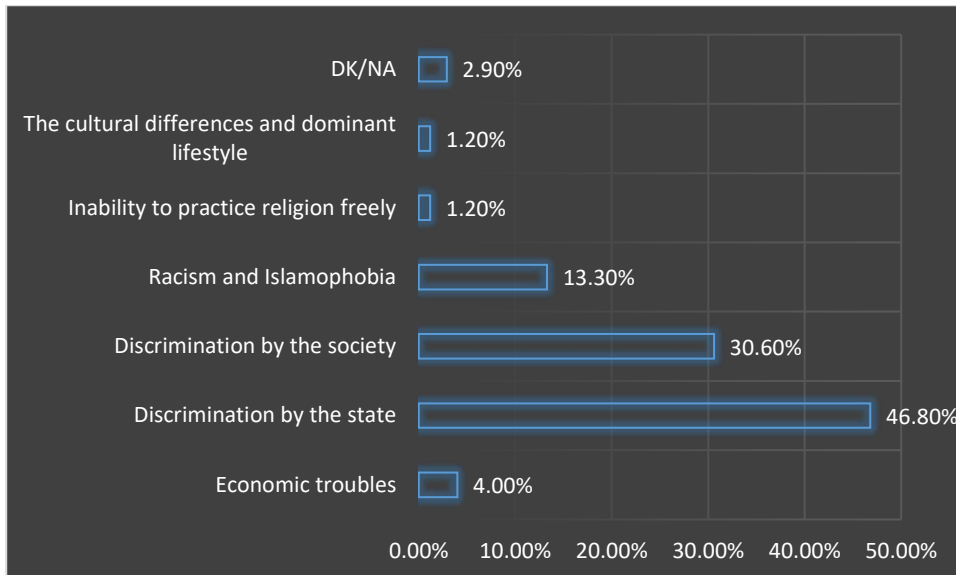
⁴⁷ M. Viorst, "The Muslims of France", *Foreign Affairs*, 75:5, 1996, 81.

⁴⁸ M. Viorst, "The Muslims of France", *Foreign Affairs*, 75:5, 1996, 81.

visible in the public realm. That is why Muslims need to curb these practices in order not to face unfavorable reactions in the workplace.

The respondents of GMD FR Survey also stated that living in France as a Muslim has never been hassle-free. Although they have been enjoying secularism in France, which has been providing a certain degree of freedom in Islamic practices, it has not eliminated an age-old concept: discrimination, exerted by both the government and the society. This is followed by two other very well-known concepts: racism and Islamophobia (Figure-15).

Figure 15. Disadvantages of being a Muslim in France.



Source: What are the main disadvantages of being a Muslim in France?, GMD FR Survey, 2017.

The fundamentalist expression of Islam is the primary obstacle for the integration of Muslim communities into the French society. Throughout the largest waves of migration from the 1960s onwards, the French government did not face serious issues when welcoming Muslims into the country. Muslims provided the labor required for economic growth. With the increase in unemployment, the French politico-economic structure had less need for the first wave of migrants' offspring. The Muslim youth were marginalized in ghettos and became a problem for the French law enforcement. This created a fertile ground for the recruitment of Islamist extremists.

One symbolic element of the clash between the French state and the Muslims is the *hijab* (headscarf). The public discussion began in 1989 when three teenage girls wearing the *hijab* were expelled from a high school in *Creil*. The discussions went on for three years at end of which the government banned the headscarf. The official mindset perceived the *hijab* as a religious rather than a cultural symbol.

According to the Interior Ministry, in 1996, 15,000 Muslim girls were wearing the *hijab*, which was seen as an assertion of Islamic fundamentalism.⁴⁹

In 2004, the French government expanded this into a law banning “conspicuous” religious symbols in French public schools. At the time of its instigation, there were discussions about the clear distinction between Anglo Saxon multiculturalism and French unilateral republicanism. President Jacques Chirac went so far as to say that France “would lose her soul” if it followed Anglo Saxon multiculturalism.⁵⁰ Six years later the government extended this ban to all face coverings, in any public domain. The French Constitutional Council legitimized this by stating, “Covering the face prevents the kind of real communication that grounds French civil life”.⁵¹

This did not stop the public campaign of moving the state from its inflexible position to a more conciliatory one. In May 2003, the CFCM, a national elected body, was established to serve as an official interlocutor with the state in the regulation of Islamic worship and public ritual practices. This did not directly mean that the French government permitted Muslims to organize themselves. CFCM was an official effort to institutionalize, monitor and adapt Islam to French values. It was a state supported initiative, as those done years before such as the “Muslim Charter”⁵² and halal certifications.⁵³

The Council is composed of three big federations: the Paris mosque, the Union of Muslim Organizations of France (UOIF) and the National Federation of French Muslims (FNMF). The Paris Mosque (the Great Mosque of Paris) is the oldest Muslim organization and strongly tied to the Algerian government. The Mosque is also known as the most moderate Islamic institution. The UOIF comprises 250 civil associations and controls almost 14% of the prayer spaces.⁵⁴ The Union is affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and has enormous potential to develop networks at the grassroots levels.⁵⁵ FNMF is heavily under the influence of Moroccan community in France. The Federation was established in 1985 and was founded by a French convert to Islam, Daniel Youssef Leclerc, to coordinate the actions of and defend approximately one hundred Muslim associations, facilitate the practice of the Muslim faith in a non-Islamic country, and free the French Muslim community from

⁴⁹ M. Viorst, “The Muslims of France”, *Foreign Affairs*, 75:5, 1996, 85-86.

⁵⁰ M. Fernando, “The Republic's “Second Religion”: Recognizing Islam in France”, *Middle East Report*, No. 235, Middle East Research & Information Project, Summer, 2005, 12.

⁵¹ J. R. Bowen, “France after Charlie Hebdo”, *Boston Review*, March/April 2015, 21.

⁵² “Musulmans De France Charte Des Valeurs Et Principes”, <http://www.uoif-online.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/CHARTE-MUSULMANS-DE-FRANCE-15.04.17.pdf>, (10.3.2019).

⁵³ For the details of halal certificates in France see: Liste des Organismes de Contrôle Halal, <http://www.wassila.fr/Liste-des-OCVH.html>, (10.3.2019); Societe Francaise De Controle De Viande Halal, <http://www.sfcvh.com>, (10.3.2019); For the details of the CFCM see: M. Fernando, “The Republic's “Second Religion”: Recognizing Islam in France”, *Middle East Report*, No. 235, Middle East Research & Information Project 2005, 12-16.

⁵⁴ J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006.

⁵⁵ M. Zeghal, “La constitution du Conseil Français du Culte Musulman: reconnaissance politique d’un Islam français?”, *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions*, 2005.

Algerian influence. It seeks a friendly relationship with French society and hopes to instill better knowledge of Islam.⁵⁶

CFCM has been most influential on issues relating to halal certifications, organization of the Hajj and the nomination of Muslim chaplains'.⁵⁷ Yet, the Council's efficiency is questionable due to ineffective coordination and the inadequacy of material resources.⁵⁸ Another issue of the Council has been the continuing influence of the foreign governments and conservative groups.⁵⁹

In 2005, Dounia Bouzar, one of the members of CFCM's 16-member executive committee resigned due to the claim that the Council was not trying to develop a discussion of what *Islam de France* would be but jockeying for national political power. Bouzar's resignation unearthed the inner fragmentations amongst different federations comprising the Council.

Following the riots in 2005, the French government tightened the grip on Muslims' mobilization and organization. The riots 'encouraged the resurgence of the unfortunate stereotypes of Muslims as fanatical and Islam as a religion with a proselytizing zeal structured by jihad, or holy war'.⁶⁰ Against this, Muslim "elites" denounced discrimination against Muslims. The "contribution of the elites" polarized the debate on misleading dichotomies, such as Islam vs. *laïcité*⁶¹ or republicanism vs. *communautarisme*. It would be wrong to claim that the attempts at integration by French Muslims have failed, since the situation is rather complex. Moreover, moderate Muslims of France generally recognize the values of French republicanism.⁶²

Discrimination against Muslims in various components of society is continuing but Muslims are not reacting against French values via defensive identity politics. Yet, it is not completely impossible in the end. There is a serious bias that French republicanism is incompatible with Islam, which has been kept alive by the rightist French "elites".

Returning to the integration efforts, the French Muslim community 'is probably the first in history to contemplate integrating into a Christian society'. Although the community's main aim has been to become French while keeping their Islamic faith, only 10-15% of French Muslims regularly practice their religious duties. Most are social worshippers, usually only celebrating major holidays. However,

⁵⁶ "Fédération Nationale des Musulmans de France", <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e649>, (11.3.2019).

⁵⁷ J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006.

⁵⁸ B. Godard & Sylvie Taussig, *Les musulmans en France*, Paris : Robert Laffont, 2007.

⁵⁹ A. Salvatore, "Making Public Space: Opportunities and Limits of Collective Action Among Muslims in Europe", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2004, 1013.

⁶⁰ R. Marchand, *France en danger d'Islam: Entre djihad et Reconquista*, Lausanne: Age d'Homme, 2003, 235.

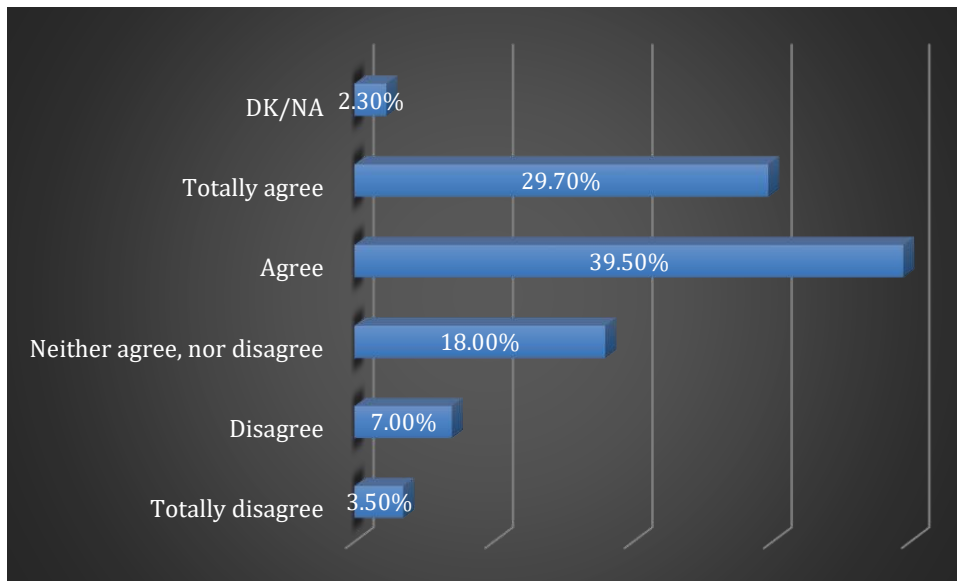
⁶¹ The issue of *laïcité* is one of the most deep rooted topics in France which is way above the academic coverage of this report. For details see about *laïcité* and freedom dichotomy see: F. Alicino, "Freedom of Expression, Laïcité and Islam in France: The Tension between Two Different (Universal) Perspectives", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 27:1, 2016, 51-75; R. Abilmouna, "Reconciling the hijab within laïcité France", *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, 13:2-3, 2011, 117-132; M. Adrian, "France, the Veil and Religious Freedom, Religion", *State & Society*, 37:4, 2009, 345-374.

⁶² S. Giry, "France and Its Muslims", *Foreign Affairs*, 85:5, 2006, 102.

the French official mindset continues to connect Islam with fundamentalism. This worries the French Muslim community and pushes them to live a distant life from mainstream French values.⁶³

Although the majority of Muslims accept that the French government has been taking necessary steps in order to facilitate Muslims integration, rising unemployment has marginalized significant portion of the Muslim community. Particularly, the National Front Party blames Muslims for being the cause of France's economic distress. French right-wingers pressure on Muslims increased significantly following the *Charlie Hebdo* attack. This pressure was not solely focused on Muslim identity but also on the practices of Islam. In other words, Muslims have been accused of economic wobbles. Particularly, their rising numbers put pressure on the French government for covering their needs, for example social security. The more funds dragging out of the French budget, the more wobbles in economy are being induced and more pressure is being exerted on the Muslims. GMD FR Survey respondents also spelled out this very fact. The exacerbating main pressure has been on their Islamic practices, which are the clearest aspects of their Muslim being. Nearly 3/4 of the respondents emphasize that practicing Islam is getting more difficult in France (Figure-16). Another related fact, 80% of the respondents claimed that the French government's practices towards Muslims have become less sympathetic in the past few years. (Figure-17).

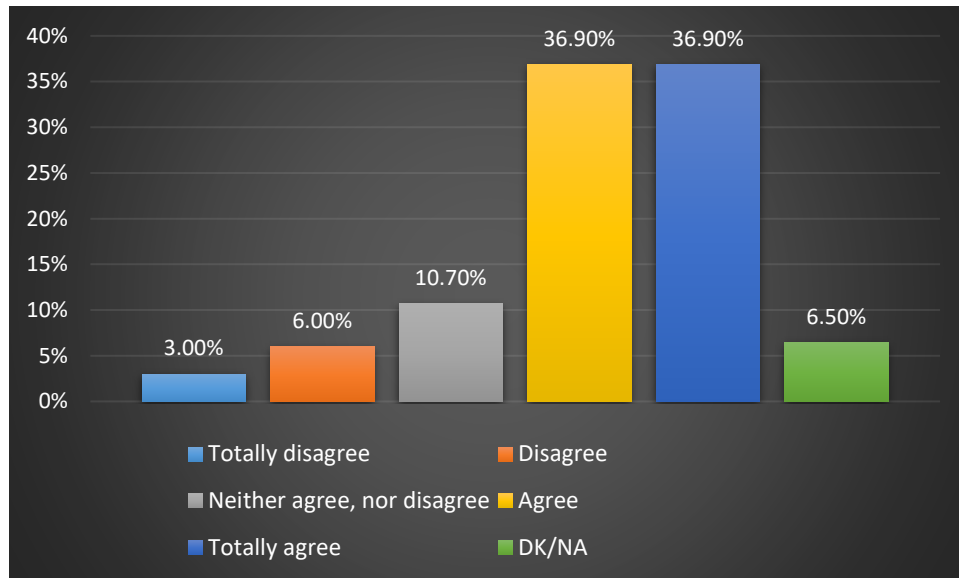
Figure 16. Difficulty of Practicing Islam



Source: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Practicing Islam in France is becoming more difficult, GMD FR Survey, 2017.

⁶³ M. Viorst, "The Muslims of France", *Foreign Affairs*, 75:5, 1996, 80.

Figure 17. Government Practices toward Muslims



Source: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? The French government's practices towards Muslims in the last ten years has become far less sympathetic, GMD FR Survey, 2017

Concerning the Muslim diaspora, an 'analytical category to capture the lived experience of the Muslim immigrants' is 'the location where the dispossession and the dislocation of the Muslim immigrants can be understood'. It is also the 'community of people who were disposed in their country of origin politically and economically and whose majority was forced to leave the homeland to search for better life elsewhere'. The Maghrebians in France fits this framework well. 'Most of the Maghrebians found themselves mainly in France as a first choice because of the availability of work and the familiarity with the language and culture as a result of the French colonial presence in the Maghreb'.

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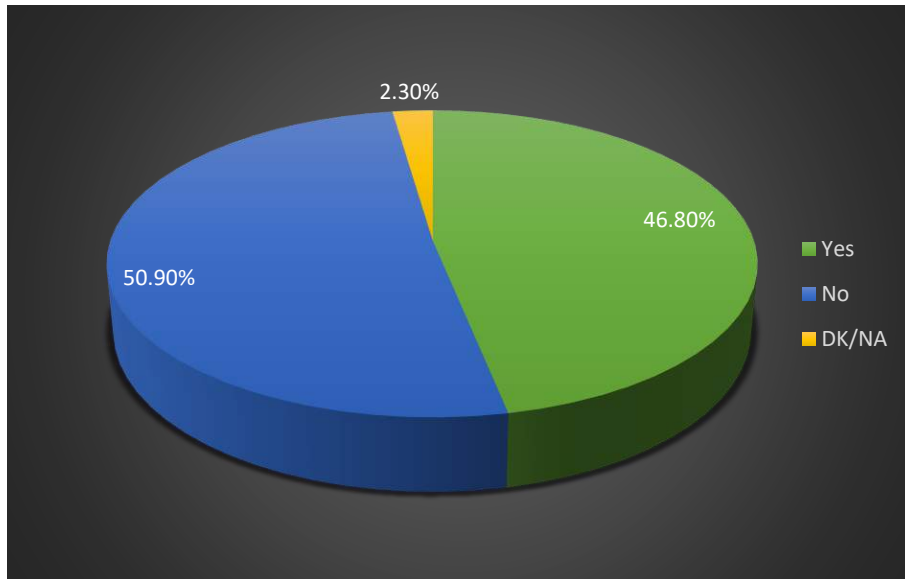
Yet, this does not mean that they are entirely detached from their original national self. On the contrary, they have developed a diasporic understanding that rests on a double space as dual citizens of France and their country of origin. In this way, the French Muslim diaspora becomes a part of the global discourse of Muslim identity, which emphasizes its cultural distinctiveness and peculiar rights. This exclusionary discourse of Muslim identity has not been well received by the dominant French culture.

The clash between the dominant French culture and Muslim "diasporic" community led to questions of the extent to which they should protect their own Muslim discourse. This is also reflected on the survey respondents. Their familiarity with the Muslim diaspora is almost fifty-fifty (Figure-18). It

⁶⁴ R. Kastoryano, "Muslim diaspora(s) in Western Europe", *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 98:1/2, 1999, 191–202; C. El Hamel, "Muslim Diaspora in Western Europe: The Islamic Headscarf (Hijab), the Media and Muslims' Integration in France", *Citizenship Studies*, 6:3, 2002, 305.

shows that the respondents' awareness of the concept has still not been well established in the minds of the Muslim community in France.

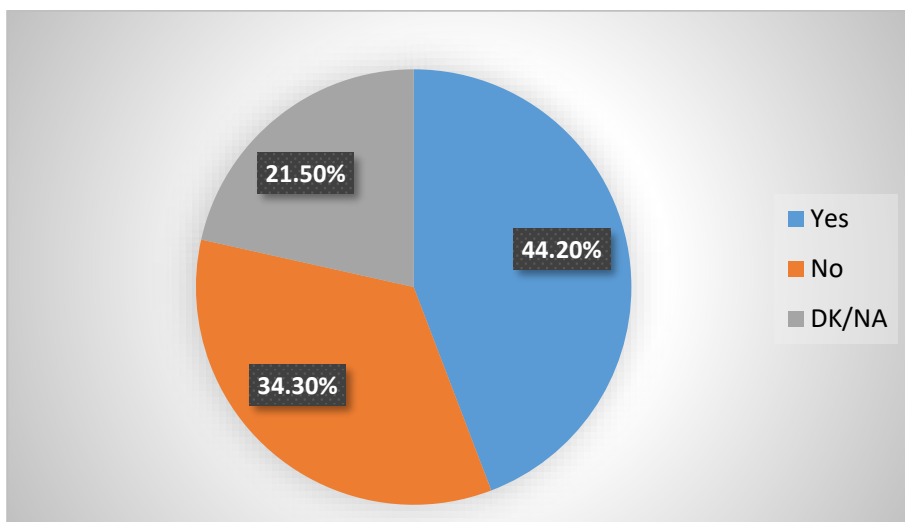
Figure 18. Familiarity with Muslim Diaspora



Source: Have you ever heard the concept of 'Muslim diaspora'?, GMD FR Survey, 2017

The weakness of the respondents' awareness became clearer when the question about the concept was asked more directly. Almost a quarter of them (21.50%) do not know about the concept and over 30% of them said no. The percentages are close in the graph above (Figure-18) when it is asked about their familiarity with the concept (Figure-19).

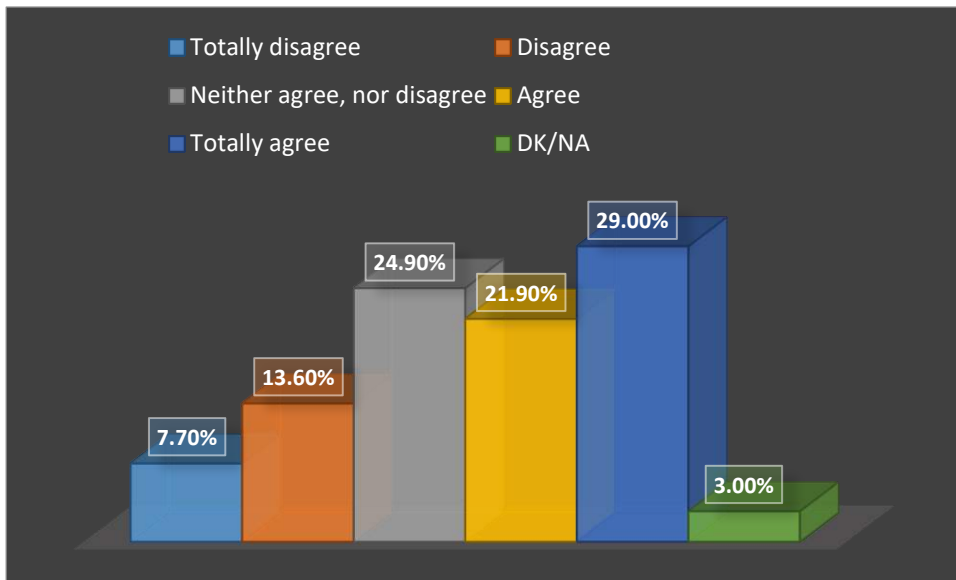
Figure 19. Muslim Diaspora in France



Source: Do you believe that there is a Muslim diaspora in France?, GMD FR Survey 2017

An important reason for the weakness of this awareness is their perception on the contradictions between the French and Muslim identities. This contradiction is a significant element of establishing and maintaining Muslim diaspora. Accordingly, the percentage for this perception is again very similar to their familiarity with Muslim diaspora. 50% of the respondents believed that a contradiction between the two does exist (Figure-20).

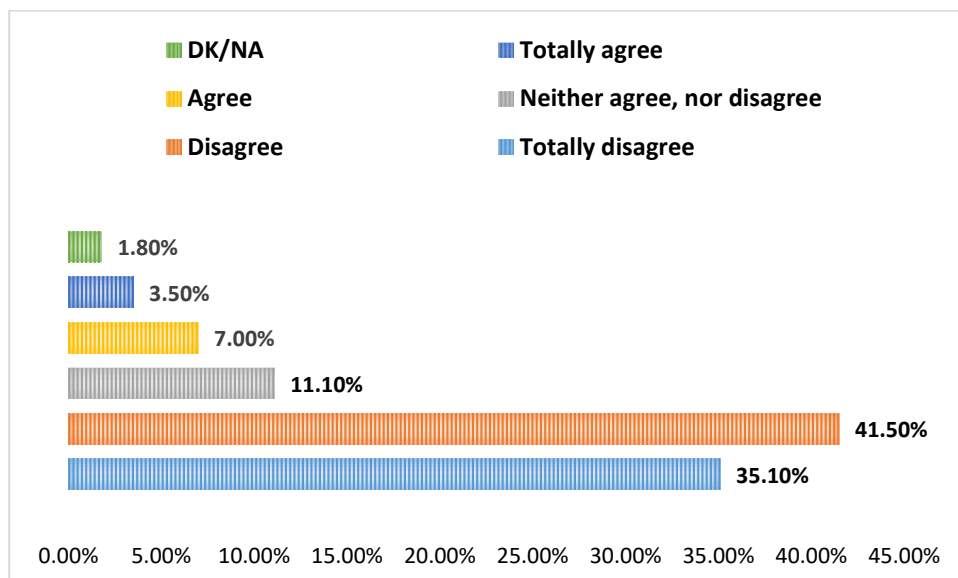
Figure 20. Contradiction between French and Muslim Identities



Source: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? There is no contradiction/disagreement between the Muslim identity and the French identity for a young Muslim, GMD FR Survey, 2017

When the respondents were asked more specifically about Muslims' integration into French society without abandoning a sense of identity with their home country or parent's country of origin, the percentages change. Their perception on the contradiction regarding Muslim and French identities was almost fifty-fifty. In other words, when they are asked within the framework of Muslim diaspora they are almost divided in the middle. When they are asked about integration, which is a more concrete term, the highest number of the respondents underlined that it is not possible for an immigrant to both successfully integrate into French culture and society, and sustain relations with their country of origin (Figure-21). This illustrates that the diversion between Muslim and non-Muslim identities is quite sharp.

Figure 21. Possibility of Integration



Source: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? It is not possible for an immigrant to both integrate into French culture and society and sustain relations with their country of origin, GMD FR Survey, 2017

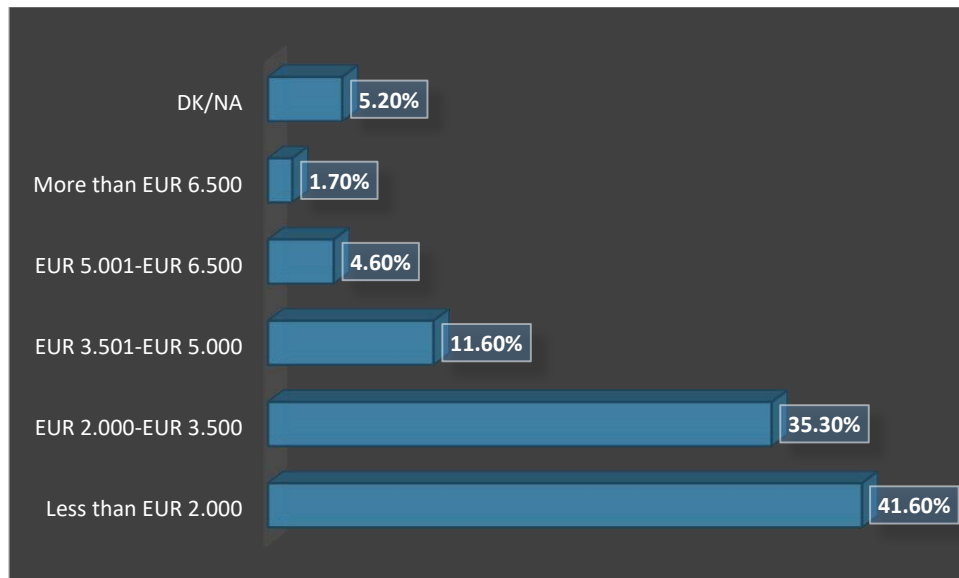
The French official mindset determined French Muslims' integration patterns to a great extent. Although the mindset is not completely embracing, it did not totally discard them either. The main attempt was to give a great deal of French Muslims French citizenship, which legally binds them to fit into a certain *modus operandi*. Secondly, French Muslims are not alienated from public funds or establishing their economic structuring. Yet, none of these advantages eliminated the discrimination they face. Even new generations of Muslim immigrants, regardless of how well they know the French culture and the language, could still be marginalized. Overt expressions of Islam are nevertheless not acceptable by the mainstream French society. Banning the *hijab* at schools is a good example of that. French Muslims' umbrella organizations try to reduce this discrimination and establish platforms to increase Muslims integration but these efforts are mostly in conformity with French official policies.

4 Perceptions on Socio-Economic Status

This section explores some of the significant elements influencing the socio-economic status of the Muslim community in France by examining secondary sources, the GMD FR Survey and primary data from the field studies undertaken in France. In addition, the changing trends in French Muslims' socio-economic status are investigated in this section. Since education presents one of the key areas that is not only open to socio-economic impacts but also influences socio-economic status through upward social mobility and the consolidation of disparities, this chapter also discusses the educational profile of Muslims in France. One very predominant emphasis of French Muslims has been that over the years, they continue to be among the most socio-economically disadvantaged population in France.⁶⁵

The household income is a particular indicator of economic status, which also determines peoples ranking in the social strata of a society. The GMD FR Survey's enquiry on household monthly income of the respondents proved the above-stated disadvantaged position of French Muslims. A notable proportion of the respondents' (41.60%) household income is less than 2,000 Euros a month. Only 1.70% of the respondents' household income is more than 6,500 Euros a month (Figure-22).

Figure 22. Household Monthly Income



Source: What is the Monthly Income Level of Your Household? GMD FR Survey, 2017

⁶⁵ R. Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

After the Second World War, large numbers of unskilled Muslim workers arrived to France to bolster France's workforce in the post-war economy. From 1946 to 1975, the French economy went through the *Trente Glorieuses* (Thirty Glorious Years) of economic boom. The aim of most Muslim migrants from Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) was to send the majority of their income "home" and return to their countries one day. Therefore, they did not demand or expect much from France and their civic life was largely passive. They were generally recruited by the French government and were provided with houses in suburbs and industrial enclaves largely isolated from mainstream French culture. This isolation was social, physical and cultural. The French government expected them to return to their countries when their work was completed.⁶⁶

Yet things did not turn out as expected for the French Government and the migrant workers. Firstly, the economic recession in the 1970s transformed migrant workers from valuable assets into hostile competitors for low-paid jobs. This put them in the crosshairs of right-wing parties. Secondly, migrant families did not go back. The migrants were either married in France or reunited with their families. The primary reason for most of them to stay in France was that the French laws required individuals to live in France to be able to receive their pensions that was earned while working.⁶⁷

The non-returned men *les hommes debouts* (the standing men) are now retired and spending their time with the other elderly immigrants chatting next to a kebab shop that serves halal meat. In this way, they create their own informal public spaces.⁶⁸ Those spaces were established in areas of public housing on the urban outskirts known as *banlieues* or *cites*. 'Approximately 6 million people live in these areas, of whom 33% are under the age of twenty (only 23% of the general population falls in that category)'. Moreover, 'these neighborhoods are marked by poverty, welfare dependence, black markets, broken families, and single mothers'.⁶⁹

The socio-economic status of French Muslims in the 1980s is generally labelled as the "Beur Generation". As mentioned above, in 1974-75, France stopped its labor migration policy and made the family reunifications of migrants more difficult.⁷⁰ First generation migrants' children saw France as their home, unlike most of their parents. More importantly, these children were educated in France, spoke fluent French, were more familiar with French history and culture, and more importantly felt French. This new generation is known as the *beurs*. In the socio-economic fabric of French society, they adhered to republican neutrality but were also sensitive to perceived racism-oriented economic inequality. Their most famous movement was in 1983 known as the Marche pour

⁶⁶ M. Feldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship: the Politics of Nationality Reform and Immigration in Contemporary France*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999; A. G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, "Race" and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*, London: Routledge, 1995; M. Maussen, "Islamic Presence and Mosque Establishment in France: Colonialism, Arrangements for Guestworkers and Citizenship", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33:6, 2007, 981-1002; J. Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France: Discourse, Public Identity, and the Politics of Citizenship*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014, 49.

⁶⁷ M. Belbah & P. Vegliai, "Pour une histoire des Marocains en France", *Hommes et Migrations*, 1242, 2003, 18-31; J. Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France: Discourse, Public Identity, and the Politics of Citizenship*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014, 49.

⁶⁸ J. Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France: Discourse, Public Identity, and the Politics of Citizenship*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014, 50.

⁶⁹ J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006, 36.

⁷⁰ J. Freedman, *Immigration and Insecurity in France*, London: Ashgate, 2004, 34.

l'Égalité et contre le Racisme (March for Equality and against Racism), or the *Marche des Beurs*. This was the first large-scale demonstration by second-generation migrants. Later on this movement developed organic links with the French Socialist Party.⁷¹ What is peculiar about the *beurs* is their rejection of integration. 'After all, they have always lived in France, they are French citizens, and they do not see why they should have to transform themselves in any way or reach out to a society that ought to naturally consider them full and equal members'.⁷²

The post-*Beur* generations express their belief in the power of liberal entrepreneurship for fighting socio-economic equality. '*Dynamique Diversité* believed that, with some convincing, businesses could become more open to diversity when hiring. *Dynamique Diversité's* Potential and Competence project aimed to do just that: persuade employers that the norms of hiring in France are unnecessarily limiting'. The representative of the *Dynamique Diversité* stated that 'diverse faces are an inevitable part of the future of France, and businesses cannot afford to ignore this'.⁷³

Amongst the socio-economic issues, the top priority of French Muslims is unemployment⁷⁴, which is very much linked to location (e.g. suburbs) of Muslims. Muslims living in the poor outer suburbs of Paris, Lyon, and Lille face unemployment several times more than the national average and see themselves permanently cut off from the mainstream society. With the increasing unemployment, Muslims are struggling to integrate economically. 30% of French citizens of Algerian and Moroccan descent have been affected by unemployment, compared with 20% of the general population. The result is clear: most Muslims are absent from high-level posts of private and public sector. A major reason according to '*Observatoire des Discriminations*, a think tank that studies discrimination in the workplace' is discrimination against Muslims. Their experiment was comparing 'two French job applicants with identical credentials, the one whose name sounded Moroccan was six times less likely to get an interview than the one whose name sounded Franco-French'. A follow-up research digs a bit deeper and found out that the reason of prejudice was national origin rather than race or skin color.⁷⁵

In other words, the wrong postal code or an Arabic sounding name pushes the candidate to the back of the line for good jobs. In the *banlieues* the Muslim workers' children after their graduation could mostly get into lower class occupations and cannot secure their jobs. They also face racism everyday particularly in their interactions with French public figures. This young population, whose numbers are rising, do not know if they are accepted in the mainstream community. Since these people are banished from the physical centres of French life, they seek recognition and acknowledgement in their own local culture,⁷⁶ which boosts ghettoization.

⁷¹ J. Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France: Discourse, Public Identity, and the Politics of Citizenship*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014, 51-52.

⁷² J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006, 30.

⁷³ J. Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France: Discourse, Public Identity, and the Politics of Citizenship*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014, 64.

⁷⁴ The Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Few Signs of Backlash from Western Europeans. Muslims in Europe: Economic Worries Top Concerns About Religious and Cultural Identity", 6 July 2006.

⁷⁵ S. Giry, "France and Its Muslims", *Foreign Affairs*, 85:5, 2006, 94.

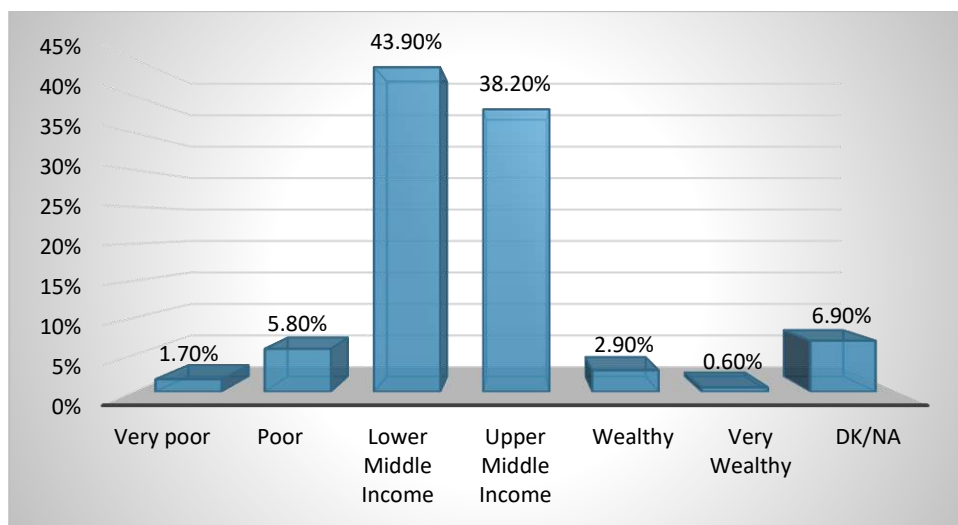
⁷⁶ J. R Bowen, "France after Charlie Hebdo", *Boston Review*, 2015, 18-20.

French elites have a different view on Muslim unemployment. Some elites (11%) believe that the reason for their unemployment has been because they are problematic citizens. 27% depict French Muslims as bad citizens who have failed to integrate.⁷⁷ For the right wing French politicians', for example Philippe de Villiers, the leader of the *Mouvement pour la France*, Muslims are seen as dangerous employees. He meant that any person with an Arabic sounding name or looks North African is not only a Muslim but also a religious extremist. They 'can so easily compromise the security of the French' in the workplace.⁷⁸

Muslims in France are not only concerned about the 'pervasiveness of discrimination in employment but also its elusiveness'. In the workspace, Islamophobia is constantly operating; particularly regarding government agents' investigation of Muslims in their place of work. Islamophobia is also an issue when it comes to the other non-Muslims' outlook' which could be even hostile. Wearing *hijab* is another issue because it is illegal in public space. Some Muslims need to take off their *hijab* or even change their names in order to find a job.⁷⁹

Yet, this dramatic picture does not cover French Muslims as a whole. According to the above-cited secondary sources, it is mostly correct to say that Muslims in France live in depressed suburbs or are unemployed and marginalized. Yet GMD FR Survey gives a different illustration. 80% of the respondents are populated around the middle class and only 7% of them are around poor and very poor level. (Figure-23).

Figure 23. Perceived Wealth



Source: How do you consider yourself with respect to your income, GMD FR Survey, 2017.

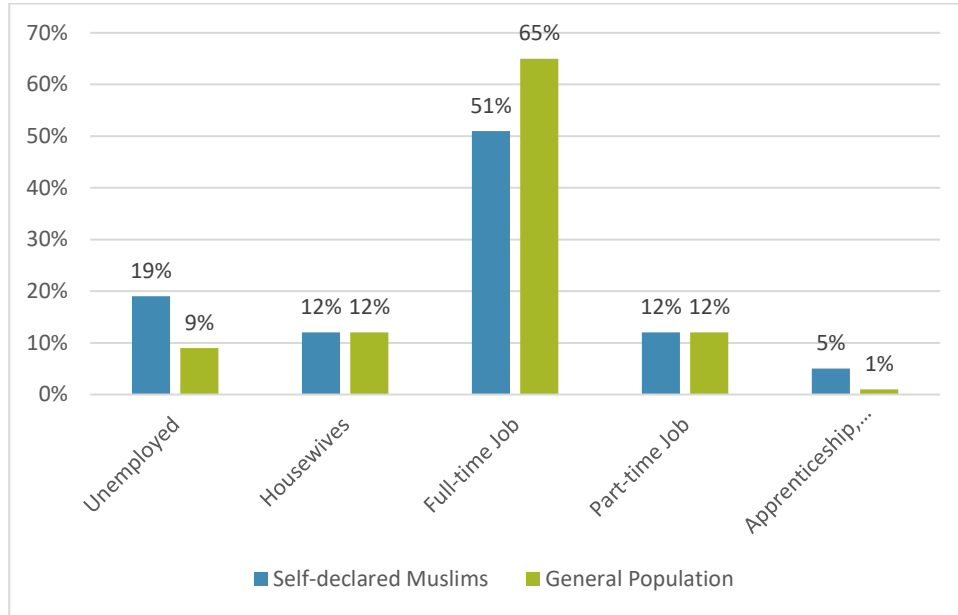
⁷⁷ J. Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France: Discourse, Public Identity, and the Politics of Citizenship*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014, 107.

⁷⁸ J. Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France: Discourse, Public Identity, and the Politics of Citizenship*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014, 111-112.

⁷⁹ J. Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France: Discourse, Public Identity, and the Politics of Citizenship*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014, 115, 117, 121.

Another important indicator of French Muslims' socio-economic position is the type of jobs they are performing. The poll carried out between 1998 and 2001, by the *Observatoire Interrégional du Politique* gives a more general comparison of General Population and Muslims' on this indicator (Figure-24). Accordingly, French Muslims' positioning in the economic strata is pretty close to the general population. This strengthens the claim that French Muslims' socio-economic status has been improving, or at least becoming even with the general French public.

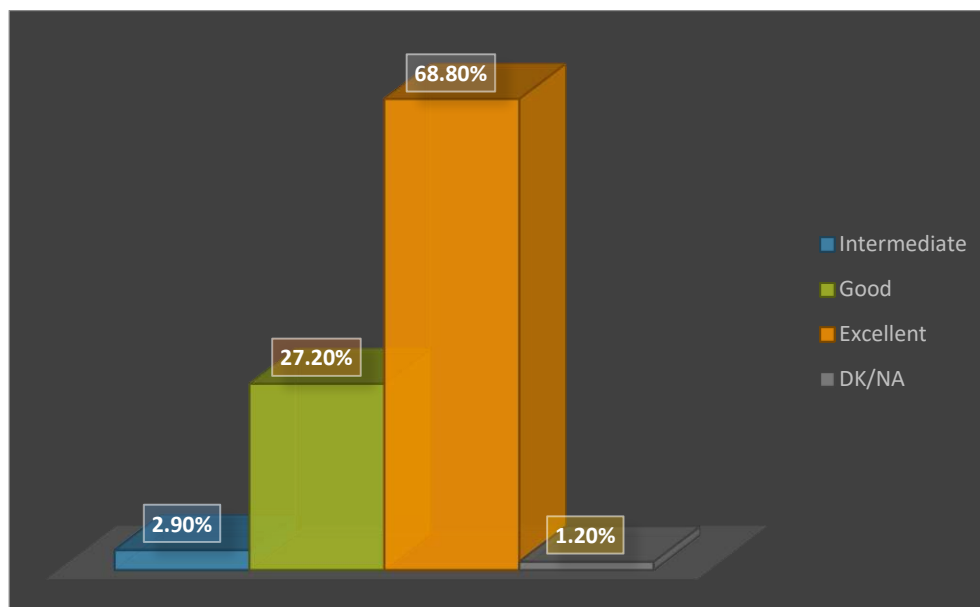
Figure 24. Percentage of Muslims and of General Population in Selected Job Categories



Source : Poll (1998–2001) by the *Observatoire Interrégional du Politique* in partnership with the Conseils Régionaux, in Claude Dargent, “Les musulmans déclarés en France : affirmation religieuse, subordination sociale, et progressisme politique”, *Cahier du CEVIPOF*, 34, 2003.

Regarding education, French Muslims, for a long time, have been disadvantaged due to strict separation of religion from schooling. At the same time, the French state did not give public support for Muslim schools. More importantly, no solid public opinion or group asked for it.

Another important characteristic of French schooling is its focus on equality and the body of knowledge at schools restricts diversity. The languages and the culture of immigrants have a little place in French education system. French language has always been at the center of its education system, and students at all levels are expected to learn it. The importance of learning French is reflected by the respondents' answer to their level of fluency in GMD FR Survey. The survey highlighted that 68.80% of the respondents are fluent and 27.20% of them have good level of French (Figure-25).

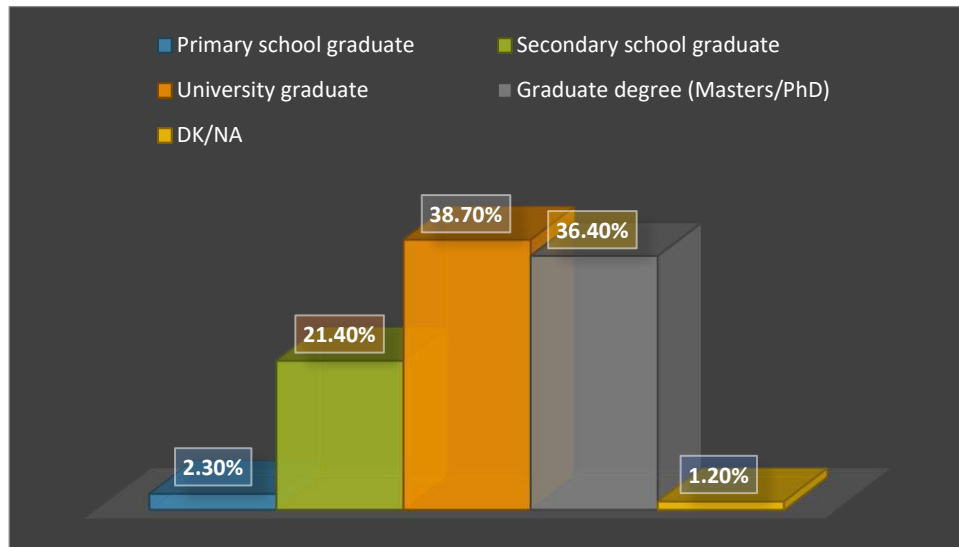
Figure 25. Level of French Fluency

Source: What is your Level of French Fluency? GMD FR Survey, 2017

As for religion, the strong *laïcité* in the French school system is the most prominent. Religious elements are excluded from the curricula of government schools, as the French government believes matters of religious conviction as something the state should not interfere with. In doing so, the French government sees that children are not indoctrinated into any form religious belief.

The success of the French education system caused an increase in the level of French Muslims' educational attainment, particularly those of the second and third generation. The GMD FR Survey shows that the majority of respondents have either an undergraduate or a graduate degree. More importantly, the difference between these two is less than 2% (Figure-26). It indicates that French Muslims' second and third generation members are becoming highly educated and with their graduate degrees more specialized. Although the survey does not provide information on the disciplines and subjects they have been studying, it can be inferred that the rise in the number of post-graduate Muslims will boost their presence in better-paid jobs and higher ranks in the French society.

Figure 26. Level of Educational Attainment



Source: How would you describe your level of educational attainment? GMD FR Survey, 2017

Although equality is a primary concern of the French education system, in the ghettos large concentrations of immigrant children suffer from a lack of quality education. ‘For example, in the *Créteil* district outside Paris, the high school graduation rate is 71.8 percent, markedly lower than the national average of 80 percent, and a declining number of students graduate with any type of honors’.⁸⁰ *Abdullah* (2017) commented on this diversification of the education level of different communities:

“The education level depends on the different communities. ... In the Franco-Turkish community, the level is good: the graduation level is low ..., [Even if] they [don’t] study a lot they are [still] doing very well. In the Maghrebin community, a large majority studies a lot but only a small minority could make great achievements.”

Hassan (2017), additionally, stated that the students of African Muslim community also suffer from a lack of educational success. It is very clear that French Muslims continue to be socio-economically disadvantaged. Especially the second generation *Beurs* rejected this situation and reacted to it via several initiatives. Since they see themselves as French, they demand the same level of socio-economic appreciation from the French state. Yet, not all *Beurs* have the same awareness. Some are suffering from unemployment and being alienated where racism has been an integral part of their life. In the business sphere, this operates in the form of Islamophobia. Alternatively, there is a significant number of French Muslims living on the middle or upper-middle class levels, which indicates that their general socio-economic condition has been improving, although slowly. A similar improvement can also be observed in the education level of second and third generation French Muslims. In short, the socio-economic picture used to be grim but is gradually brightening up.

⁸⁰ J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006, 38-39.

5 Attitudes on Visibility and Representation of Muslims

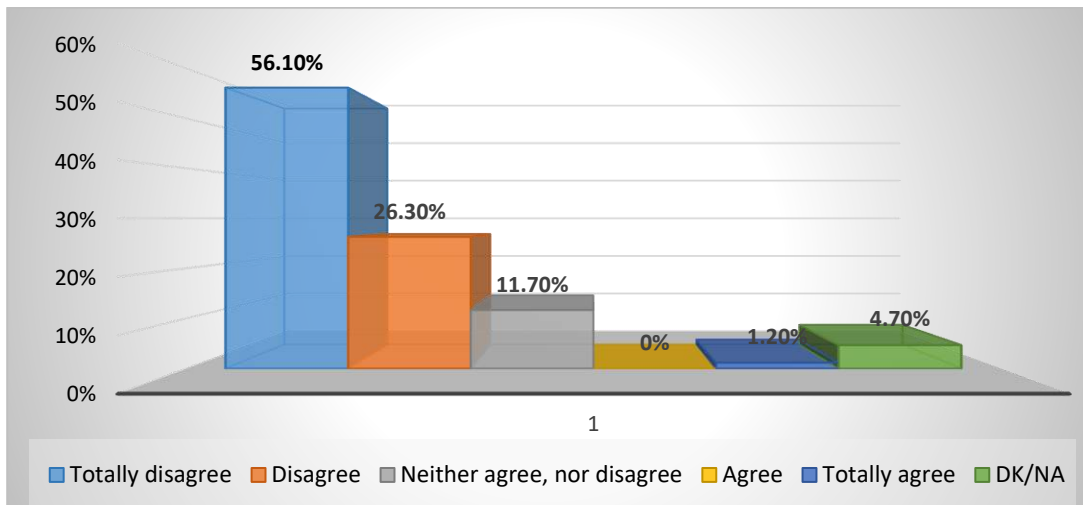
Similar to many other non-Muslim majority countries, the visibility and representation of Muslims in France are not particularly strong and effective. To understand the reasons behind this weakness, historical, social, institutional, and organizational factors of the Muslim community in France need to be taken into account.

The representation of French Muslims is fragmented, even if some studies claim that there is a uniformity in the discursive framework.⁸¹ In addition to the institutional fragmentation, there are also divisions along national and ethnic lines, particularly within first generation migrants.⁸² *Saddikh* (2017) underlined this point:

“There is the problem of unification. Indeed, we are divided and we must be unified in order to make our voices heard. ... We can say that there is not a real unification and the different communities are applying their own policies.”

Islam’s representation in France is generally organized at the local level, customarily via local mosques.⁸³ In other words, French Muslims are represented via religious structures/institutions rather than political. The GMD FR Survey proves this claim. The highest percentage of the participants (82.4%) confirmed that the national political representation of Muslims is not adequate.

Figure 27. Political Representation of Muslims



Source: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?, The Muslim community is well-represented in French politics, GMD FR Survey, 2017.

⁸¹ Y. N. Soysal, “Changing Parameters of Citizenship and Claims-Making: Organized Islam in European Public Spheres”, *Theory and Society*, 1997, 509; M. Warner & M. W. Wenner, “Religion and the Political Organization of Muslims in Europe”, *Perspectives on Politics*, 2006, 457.

⁸² J. Cesari, « L’Islam en Europe: l’incorporation d’une religion », *Cahiers d’études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranien*, 33, 2002.

J. Cesari, « L’Islam en Europe: l’incorporation d’une religion », *Cahiers d’études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranien*, 33, 2002.

In France, mosques are visible signs of the Muslim community. France has eight “cathedral mosques”, each can accommodate more than a thousand worshippers. The Grand Mosque of Paris is one them, an illustrious monument with a classic design. The mosque was originally connected to Morocco but has been funded by Algeria since 1962. Another cathedral-mosque is in Lyon, which opened in 1994. It was established by Saudi Arabia, with a mix of modern and traditional architecture. There are also smaller mosques in which several hundred Muslims can worship.⁸⁴ Yet, Muslims still stress that they need more mosques and local bureaucracy has been an obstacle. In order to overcome this, houses, stores and apartments have been converted into prayer rooms.

The French government recognizes the Paris Mosque as representative of Muslims. The primary reason is not its historical background but its liberal interpretation of Islam. Its politico-economic links with the French-supported Algerian regime also makes the mosque a suitable interlocutor. Dalil Boubaker, the Paris Mosque’s rector since 1992, is the government’s candidate for the head Muslim of France. As an official contribution in January 1995, the mosque published the Charter of the Muslim Faith in France to frame Islamic organization and practices. As the representative of a liberal interpretation of Islam, the Paris Mosque in the chapter condemned all forms of Islamic extremism and fundamentalism.

Image 3: Grande Mosquée de Paris



Source: GMD Fieldwork, Paris, 2017

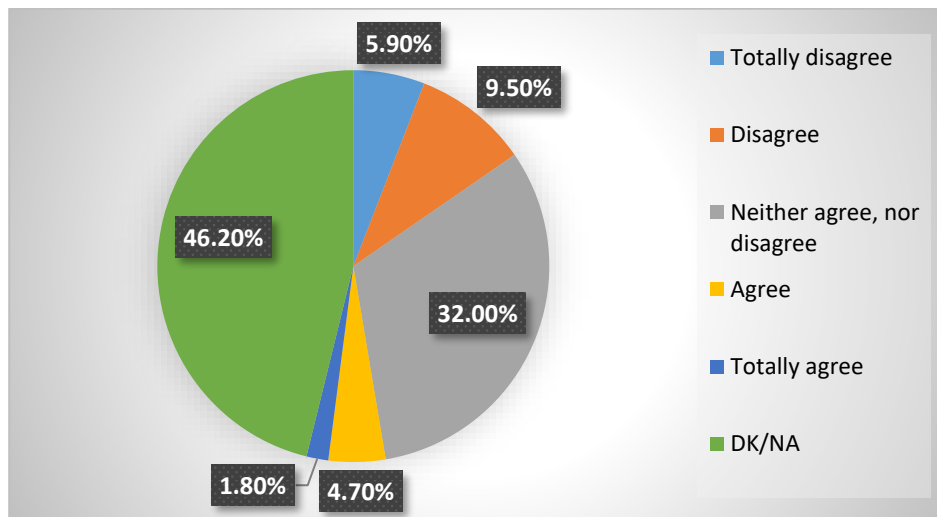
Regarding Muslim’s social representation, UOIF is an umbrella organization canvassing 200 local NGOs. Due to its emphasis on promoting Islamic orthodoxy, it is believed that it is a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Currently, it focuses on Islamic education by producing and disseminating teaching materials, organizing courses, and camps. Very active in the social field, the UOIF, has been

⁸⁴ M. Viorst, “The Muslims of France”, *Foreign Affairs*, 75:5, 1996, 80-81.

operating in France since 1983, with more than 200 associations and 60 mosques. However, its political allegiance and its entry into the CFCM have cut it off from its youngest members. The latter have sometimes rallied the entourage of Tariq Ramadan, such as the Collective of Muslims of France (CMF), created in 1993. Not very institutionalized, the CMF presents leaders socialized in France, who are legitimized by their political condemnation of the status of second area of Islam and immigrants in France. If Tariq Ramadan remains a reference for Muslim youth, he has aged (48 years), as the members of the CMF, which are struggling to find in youth today new relays to his political-religious activism. It is in this space left vacant by the failure of political Islam that the fundamentalists of Tabligh and Salafism meddle. There are also youth organizations. Two very significant of them are *Union Islamique des Étudiants de France* and *Association Islamique du Calvados*.

Islam has also been academically studied. *L'Institut Européen des Sciences Humaines* is one of the most formidable Islamic research institutes. The institute aims to teach Islam via reexamination of formal Islamic doctrines. As for international representation, most Muslims in France are unfamiliar as to the extent to which the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is effective. The GMD FR Survey respondents confirmed this. Almost half of respondents did not know about the importance of the OIC for their representation. Less than 2% of the respondents agreed with the OIC's importance.

Figure 28. The Importance of OIC Representation



Source: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? The OIC represents the rights of Muslims more effectively than governmental and non-governmental actors, GMD FR Survey, 2017

There are also a number of social movements representing Islam in France. The *Tabligh*, for example, is a sectarian, apolitical, nonviolent movement of mystical tradition. The movement has achieved great success in in France since the 1970s, especially amongst the youth via rap singers or high-level athletes. Also, the “Jehovah's Witnesses of Islam” emphasized a very strong moral conservatism

together with alienating rites. Yet their influence in Muslim society has come into greater competition with the Salafists.

Another group that can be categorized as Salafist Sheikhs, control nearly 30 places of worship out of the 2,000 in France. As an estimate, they have at least 5,000 to 10,000 followers. Unlike Salafi jihadists, which are ideologically close to al-Qaeda, Salafis Sheikhs defend an apolitical and nonviolent view of Islam. Their supporters are generally around the age of 25, and from marginalized neighborhoods.⁸⁵ Their isolated approach has been concerning the French state that this group had a desire to break with global society.⁸⁶

Another important point about French Muslims' visibility is their voting patterns. In France, there previously existed a term called the "Muslim vote". It was a securitized abstract concept for some French elites in order to disseminate fear amongst the non-Muslim population to emphasize that French Muslims would hold the French government hostage.⁸⁷ French Muslim voters total around 1.5 million, which is around 4% of the total voters.⁸⁸

Regarding their voting patterns, Muslims behave like other French people from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. In other words, French Muslims show little evidence that their religious tendencies affect their political positioning. Oliver Roy, an expert on Islam, underlines this by arguing that 'the concept of a Muslim vote makes no sense'. One important peculiarity about Muslim voting patterns in France has been that they are more interested in municipal and national elections than EU elections, and they tend to favor left wing parties. Their complaints, particularly during election times, are unemployment, social inequality, education, and the cost of living, none of which are remarkably different from the rest of the population.⁸⁹

GMD FR Survey highlights the interest of French Muslims regarding political activities. Accordingly, 57.5% of the respondents view political activities as important/very important (Figure-29). Although the question did not differentiate EU and national/municipal activities, it is highly probable that the respondents received it as the latter, which conforms to Roy's claims.

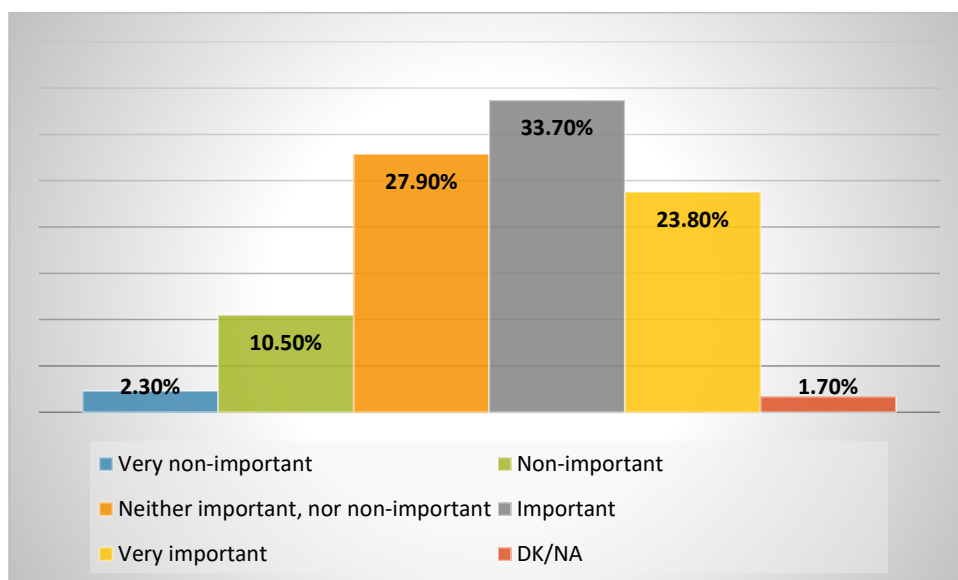
⁸⁵ S. Amghar (dir.), *Islamismes d'Occident. État des lieux et perspectives*, Lignes de repères, 2006.

⁸⁶ M.-Ali Adraoui, Être salafiste en France, in Bernard Rougier, *Qu'est-ce que le salafisme ?* Puf, 2008.

⁸⁷ J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006.

⁸⁸ J Vaisse, "La France et ses Musulmans : une politique étrange sous influence ?", *Foreign Policy : Edition Française*, 66, 2007.

⁸⁹ S. Giry, "France and Its Muslims", *Foreign Affairs*, 85:5, 2006, 96-97.

Figure 29. Importance of Political Activities

Survey: How important are political activities for Muslims? GMD FR Survey, 2017.

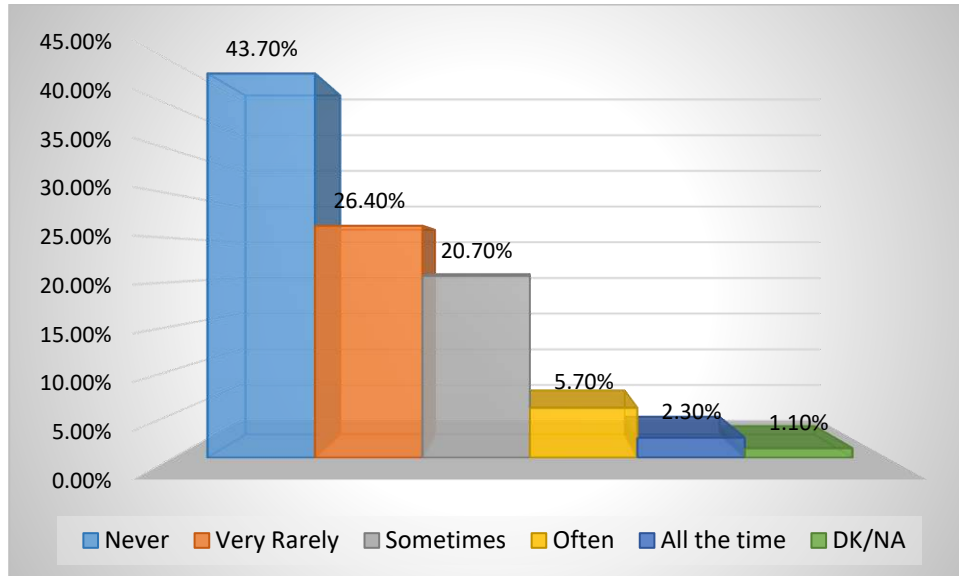
Regarding their political representation, Muslim community leaders have refused to establish an Islamic party or an influential lobby group. In much the same way, Muslims are not proactive in the French political scene. Around 23% are not even registered to vote, compared with 7% of the French population at large. A further reason for their lack of activity in French electoral politics is due to their status as foreigners. According to the Open Society Institute's survey in 2010, only 41% of Parisian Muslims were eligible to vote.⁹⁰ Following the 2017 elections 17 Muslim origin MPs entered the French parliament, prior to the election the number of Muslim MPs has not been more than five.⁹¹

The GMD FR Survey confirms the disengagement of Muslim in France. Although more than half of the respondents stated their interest in political activities, their interest does not turn into practice of attending political events. In other words, a significant percentage of respondents are interested in politics but they refrain from being active in political processes. 43.7% of the respondents never attend political events. Only 2.30% of them attend political events all the time (Figure-30).

⁹⁰ "At Home in Europe Project", Muslims in Europe, New York: Open Society Institute, 2010, 187.

⁹¹ "Record ! 17 Deputes Musulmans à l'Assemblée Nationale", 14 September 2017, <https://francaisdefrance.wordpress.com/2017/09/14/record-17-deputes-musulmans-a-lassemblee-nationale-continuons-ainsi/>, (10.3.2019).

Figure 30. Political events attendance



Source: How often do you attend political events with the members of the Muslim community?, GMD FR Survey, 2017

There is also a geographical criterion for Muslim voters in France. Immigrant and second-generation voters are highly concentrated in Paris, Marseille, Lyon and most often in the suburbs. 60% of immigrants live in Paris and its suburbs, 35-40% live in Ile-De-France, 15-20% live around Marseille and Nice, 15% in Lyon and Grenoble, and 5-10% live in Lille.⁹²

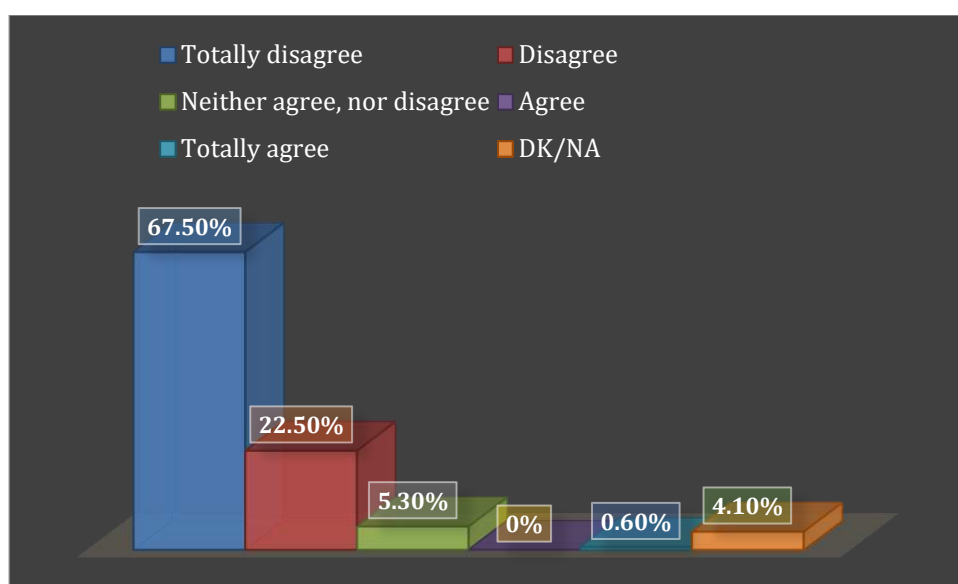
Cinema and media also provide some meaningful hints, regarding Muslims' visibility in France, particularly their marginalization or exclusion. In the mid-1980s, 'both liberal Franco-French filmmakers and second-generation Maghrebi-French filmmakers have worked to counter the invisibility, marginalization, stigmatization and exoticization of Arab/Berber peoples, others in dominant media discourses in France, and to protest against discrimination and exclusion'. Films from this era depict young Maghrebi descent males torn between their home and French culture. Religious beliefs are represented in films as being 'confined to the unthreatening, secondary roles of first-generation immigrants in the private and domestic space'. They also underline the difficulties of the French government to accommodate practicing Muslims as citizens. In the mid-2000s, more Maghrebi origin character films appeared : *Saint-Jacques-La Mecque* (Coline Serreau, 2005), *Michou d'Auber* (Thomas Gilou, 2007), *La Graine et le mulot/Couscous* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2007), *Neuilly sa mère!* (Gabriel Julien-Laferrrière, 2009) or *Tout ce qui brille/All That Glitters* (Géraldine Nakache and Hervé Mimran, 2010). These films also marginalized the representation of practicing Muslims. In 2010, some feature films emerged by both Franco-French and Maghrebi-French directors questioning

⁹² J. Laurence & J. Vaisse, *Integrating Islam*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006.

Muslim identities and the practice of Islam in contemporary France by aiming to depict the place of Muslims within the secular French Republic.⁹³

The GMD FR Survey enquired a more general outlook of Muslim's representation in the French media. The above-stated discrimination of French dominant culture on Muslims affected their media representation negatively. Accordingly, almost 90% of the respondents stated that the French Muslim community is not well represented in the French media (Figure-31). This is a common situation in many non-Muslim countries. Non-Muslim mainstream media draws more attention on tragic events mostly triggered by Muslims since it attracts more attention, in other words sells more. French media is not an exception to that.

Figure 31. Media Representation of Muslims



Source: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? The Muslim community is well-represented in the media in France, GMD FR Survey, 2017.

French Muslims' have been divided along national, ethnic, and sectarian lines, which prevent them from having a unified and an amplified voice. They do not have a strong institutional representation with a diligent awareness of their local and national problems. The most aware institutions about these problems are their ethnic/national mosques whose voice is not heard enough by policymakers. Since the French state aims to construct French Islam rather than dealing with these local and more important problems, it focuses on the agendas brought up by the Paris Mosque, which does not cross French official priorities about Muslims anyway. Since UOIF is too large, it can only speak up for top priority issues of Muslims, although not in a very troubleshooting tendency.

⁹³ C. Tarr, "Looking at Muslims: the visibility of Islam in contemporary French cinema", *Patterns of Prejudice*, 48:5, 2014, 519-520.

There are several other ethnic and sectarian movements as well but most of them are either too marginal or not that compatible with French policymaking mindset. Regarding representing themselves in national and local elections, French Muslims have not developed a strictly Muslim voting pattern. Their outlook towards national and local policies is not significantly different from non-Muslim French voters. They are not necessarily interested in political activities either. Therefore, French Muslims have not been motivated to establish an Islamic party to represent directly themselves nationally. French media and cinema do not draw a very positive illustration of Muslims either. Their disadvantaged status has been more of a topic than their developing position. In other words, more drama about Muslims takes space in French media.

6 Confidence in Relations among Muslim Communities

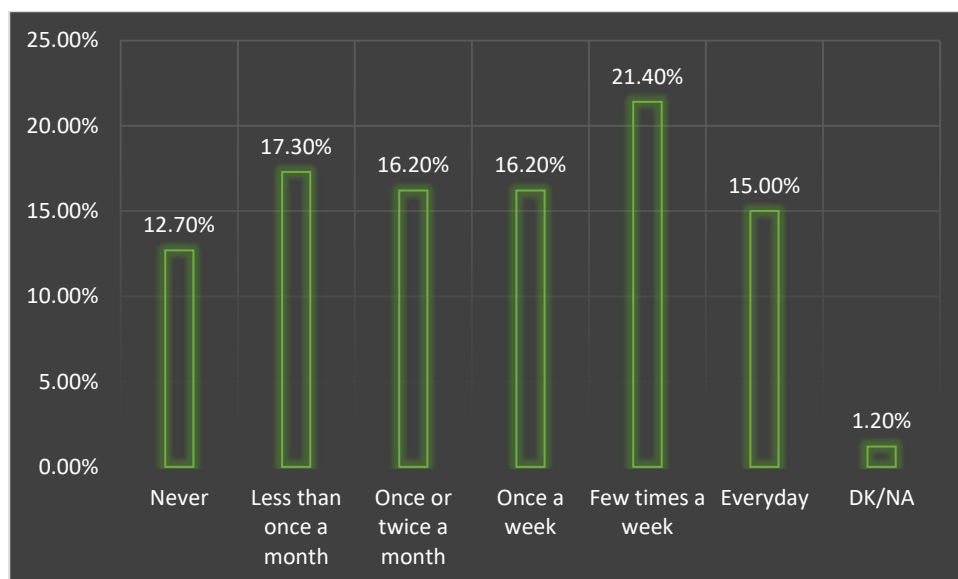
In exploring the confidence in their intra-communal relations, this section examines the intra- and inter-communal Muslim relations in France. Within this scope, the main problems and contestations that affect relations among Muslim groups in France, which divide or united them are discussed.

The primary obstacles to effective and constructive interaction among French Muslims are their cultural and social differences. They identify Islam differently based on their national origin, age, and gender along with their social background. *Abdullah* (2017) commented on this:

“Nowadays in France, religious representation is made in relation with origin. The three biggest institutions are: Franco-Maghrebin, Franco-Algerian and Franco-Turkish charities, they have found themselves in the CFCM. There is also a diversity in the way of practicing; each has their own schools and mosque. There is an intergenerational process, Muslims see each other at school or at work and they can exchange their political, economic and religious point of view. However, every community is doing it in his way, it reduces interreligious tensions but also within other religions and the French state.”

This is also reflected in the GMD FR Survey. The difference between the frequency of inter/intra Muslim community members is very little (Figure-32). In other words, it is not easy to draw a conclusion that the members of a community are socially interactive.

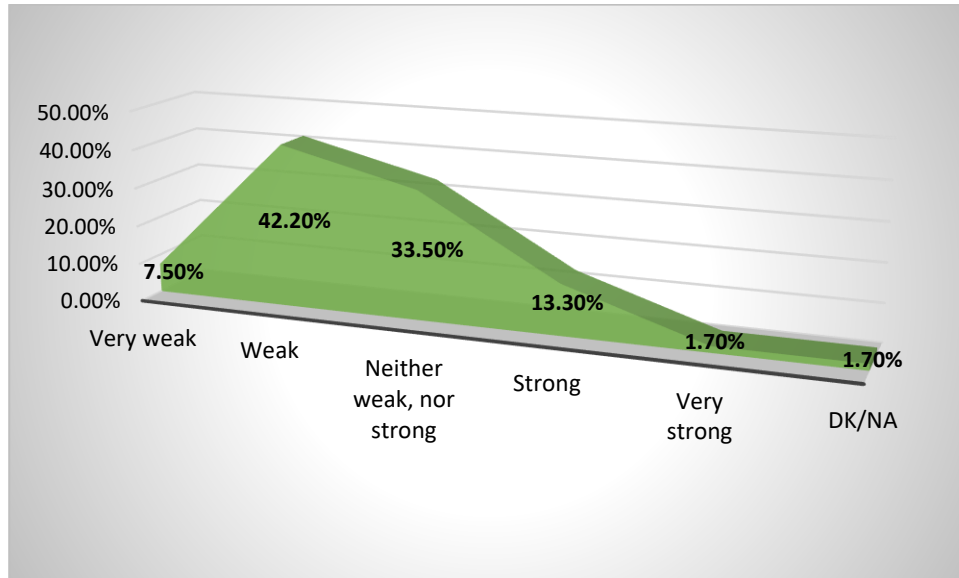
Figure 32. Interaction with Muslim Community Members



Source: How frequently do you interact with members of the Muslim community (excluding your family/relatives and co-workers), GMD FR Survey, 2017

As a more general inquiry, the respondents were asked about Muslim communities' relations with each other. The responses reveal the weakness or indifference in their interactions. The above-mentioned lack of unity is reflected in the data. Almost half of the respondents (49.7%) claimed that relations between Muslims communities are weak (Figure-33).

Figure 33. Relations between Muslim Communities



Source: In your evaluation, how strong are the relations amongst different Muslim communities, GMD FR Survey, 2017

Regarding their national origin, the first generation North African immigrants differ from other nationalities and even from their following generations. The first generation North Africans was reluctant to acquire French nationality due to the perception that such an acquisition was a betrayal to their nation's prior struggle against colonialism. For them, Islam pervades their daily life with a continuous distinction between *haram* and *halal*.⁹⁴

In a more general sense, religious identity has been closely linked to national identity for North Africans. Therefore, ethnic differences set these communities apart from each other. In other words, fragmentation along ethno-national lines has been a major obstacle in the way of unifying into a coherent minority in France.⁹⁵

There is also a generational break. This is clear amongst the first, second and particularly, third generation Muslims in France. This break is mainly a result of the transformation of Muslim identity. The French-born/educated "new Muslims" relate to Islam in remarkably modern terms, which is very different from their parents. They secularize Islam. This gap between parents and their children is more visible for North Africans than any other group.⁹⁶ Parents have for the most part, lost their

⁹⁴ J. Cesari, Islam in France: The Shaping of a Religious Minority, in Y. H.-Yazbek (ed.) *Muslims in the West, from Sojourners to Citizens*, Oxford University Press, 2002, 36-51.

⁹⁵ J. Cesari, *Etre Musulman en France, associations, militants et mosques*, Paris : Karthala, 1994.

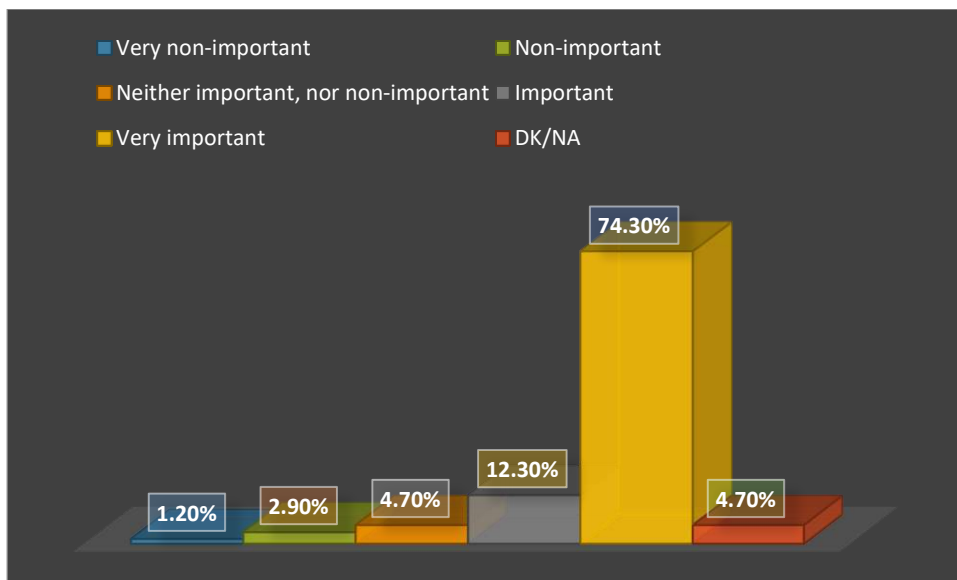
⁹⁶ H. M.-Peyre, *Crise d'identité et déviance chez les jeunes immigrés*, Paris : La Documentation Française, 1982.

battles against the dominant French educational, cultural, and social institutions, which have largely replaced the cultural values of the younger generations. The most significant “defeat” has been the abandonment of Arabic. The second generation on the other hand usually received precious little religious education within or outside the family. ‘Their Islamic involvement enables them to work in the secular domain toward social change through associations which emphasize education as a major vehicle toward religious, as well as personal growth. Hence, they open neighborhood meeting places, rather than mosques, where they provide tutoring and cultural enrichment to school-age children, encouragement toward voter-registration for disenfranchised young adults, and lectures open to all community members alike on civic matters, as well as Islamic issues’.⁹⁷

Separate from their Islamic identity, these young Muslims formed a new citizenship concept, quite different from their parents. The former disentangled from their national identities, accepted French political values while discounting the colonial past of French history. They identify themselves locally and include themselves within the communities in which they were born and raised while at the same downplaying French nationality.⁹⁸

In a conceptual sense, the French Muslim youth developed a type of a local *Ummah* solidarity. This is clearly seen in the respondents’ answers in GMD FR Survey on the importance of *Ummah* solidarity. Over 74% of the respondents stated that *Ummah* solidarity is very important (Figure-34). The attempts of French Muslim youth to cultivate an *Ummah* solidarity are seemingly fruitful.

Figure 34. Importance of Ummah Solidarity



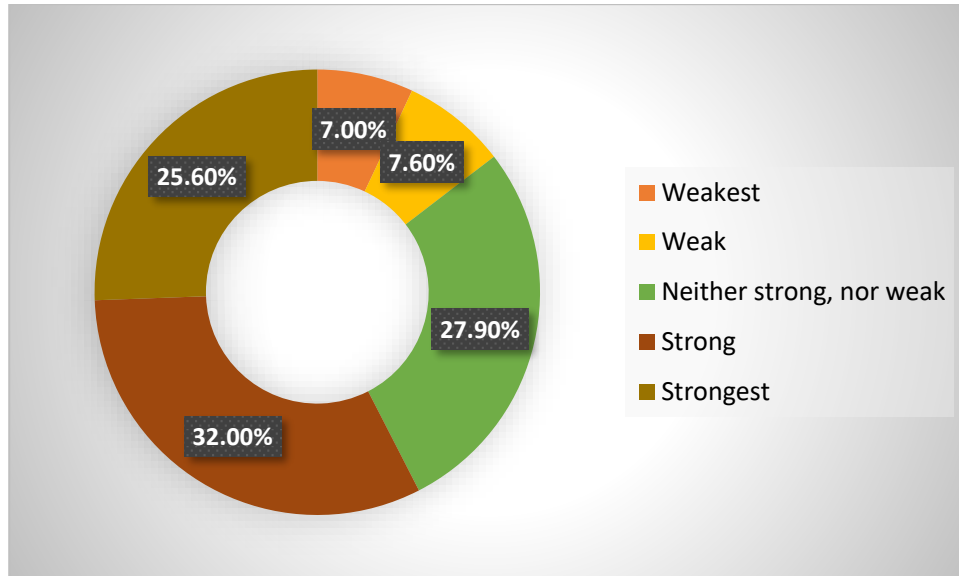
Source: How much importance does the *Ummah* solidarity have for a Muslim? GMD FR Survey, 2017

⁹⁷ J. Cesari, Islam in France: The Shaping of a Religious Minority, in Y. H.-Yazbek (ed.) *Muslims in the West, from Sojourners to Citizens*, Oxford University Press, 2002, 36-51.

⁹⁸ J. Cesari, Islam in France: The Shaping of a Religious Minority, in Y. H.-Yazbek (ed.) *Muslims in the West, from Sojourners to Citizens*, Oxford University Press, 2002, 36-51.

GMD FR Survey also specifically enquired the respondents' sense of belonging to this re-cultivation of the *Ummah*. The answers show that the sense of belonging to the *Ummah* is high, with over 50% of respondents affirming a strong sense of belonging to the *Ummah* (Figure-35).

Figure 35. Sense of belonging to Ummah



Source: How would you describe your sense of belonging to the *Ummah*?, GMD FR Survey, 2017.

Ummah paved the way for French Muslims' reactions against the assimilative tendencies of mainstream French media after the 2005 riots, which were in response to the death of two Muslim youth while they were hiding from police.⁹⁹ Many Muslims boycotted the French media and 'have instead chosen to consume as much Arabic language or Muslim-oriented media as possible. This was an attempt to maintain their ethnic and religious identity and to prevent the total assimilation of their culture'.¹⁰⁰

Another important divide, to an extent a clash, is between the *Beur* movement (reverse slang of young people in France during the 1980s) and the first and third generations. 'The *Beurs* mobilized their political protest around civic and anti-racist rights, and the right to be different, notably with their slogan "touché pas à mon pote" (hands off my pal)'.¹⁰¹ The *Beur* movement contrasts particularly

⁹⁹ H. Astier, "Tense anniversary in French suburbs", BBC News, 26, October 2006; J. Winter, "Clichy's Les Misérables", BBC News, 4 November 2005.

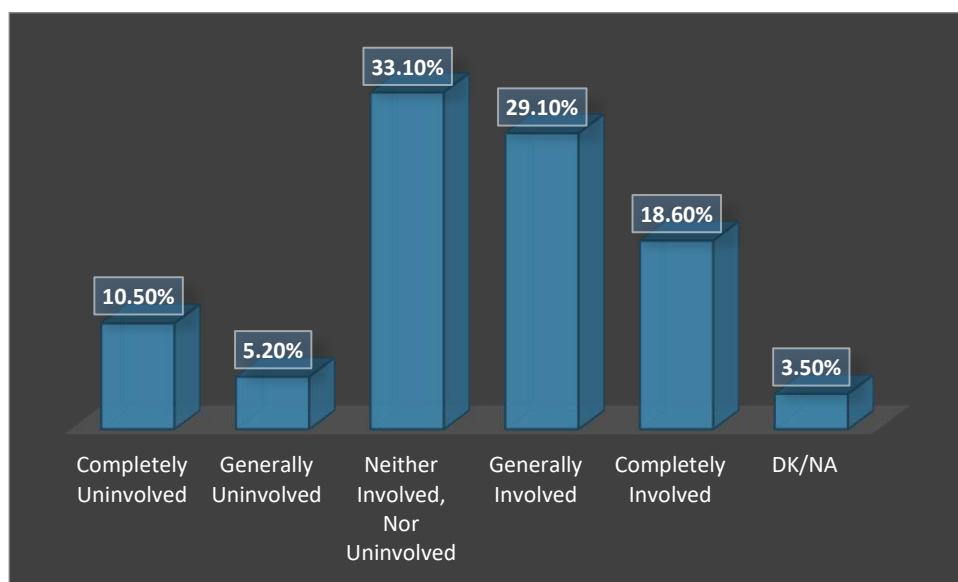
¹⁰⁰ S. M. Croucher, D. Oommen, I. Borton, S. Anarbaeva & Jacob S. Turner, "The Influence of Religiosity and Ethnic Identification on Media Use Among Muslims and Non-Muslims in France and Britain", *Mass Communication and Society*, 13:3, 2010, 315.

¹⁰¹ P. Weil, *La France et ses étrangers: l'aventure d'une politique de l'immigration*, Paris: La Documentation Française, 1991; D. Blatt, Immigrant politics in a republication nation in *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*, A. Hargreaves & M. McKinney (eds.), London: Routledge 1997, 40–55; A. Ghayet, *La saga des Beurs d'origine marocaine en France*, Casablanca: Editions EDDIF, 1997; C. Wihtol de Wenden, Les 'jeunes issus de

with the first generations in that 'Islam moved from the invisible (that is, a largely private matter transplanted from North Africa by first-generation immigrants of the post-war period) to the more visible, the *Beur* movement restricted Islam to the 'private sphere' during the 1980s.¹⁰²

Historically, nationally and generationally, the division among different French Muslim communities continues, but intra- (national and ethnic) community involvement appears to be strong based on the findings of the GMD FR Survey. The respondents' involvement in their community activities is nearly 50%. Although the percentage of indifference is still the highest (33.10%) it does not necessarily imply that indifferent, respondents refuse to attend any kind of Muslim community activity (Figure-36).

Figure 36. Community Involvement



Source: In your evaluation, how involved in the Muslim community would you consider yourself to be? GMD FR Survey, 2017

Social and cultural division and fragmentation amongst French Muslims also negatively affect their inter-community confidence. This low level of confidence hindered their interactions. A major line of fragmentation is along the national identity. Another one is the generational break, which diverges younger generations from elders. The former has been becoming more secularized and French-ized. Yet, this did not detach them from Islam. Younger generations of French Muslims see Islam within the framework of a local Ummah solidarity, which developed more of a local intra-community interaction. On the other hand, within their ethnic or even micro-ethnic communities, French Muslims interact quite intensively.

l'immigration', entre intégration culturelle et exclusion sociale, in *L'immigration et Intégration l'état des Savoirs*, P. DeWitte (ed.), Paris: Editions de la Découverte, 1999, 232–237.

¹⁰² G. Kepel, *La Banlieue d'Islam*, Paris : Hachette, 1987; R. Kastoryano, *La France, l'Allemagne et leurs immigrés: négociant l'identité*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1996.

7 Future Projections for the Muslims in France

Muslims in France are historically very deeply rooted but their visibility is not. Very few have risen in the socio-economic strata. The majority of Muslims in France holds modest jobs and is invisible in society. They live in distant suburbs and in social housing. Most of their places of worship are not noticeable. Their culture generally amounts to the memory of colonialism, tourism and gastronomy.

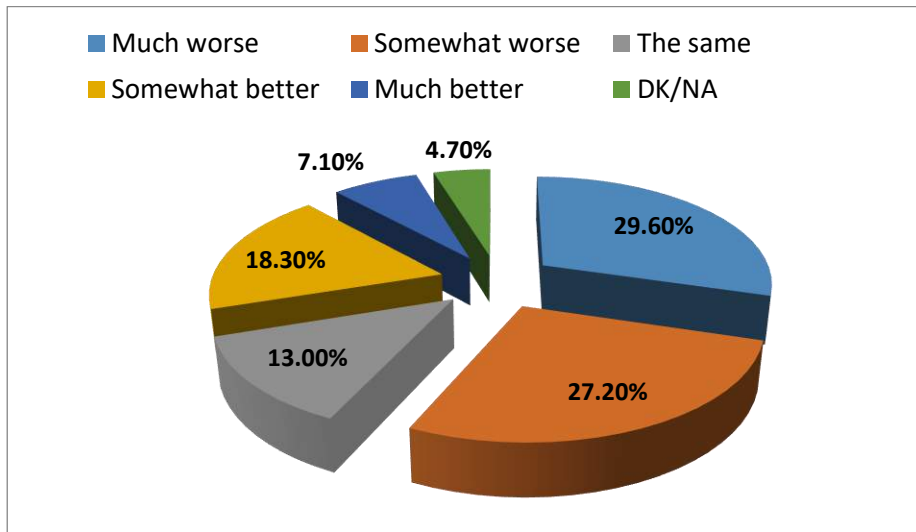
Yet, with their increased number, education attainment, and the more effective integration of the third generation, their role and weight in the French society has been changing. Even if their position in the socio-economic realm is not developing rapidly, certainly their numbers are.

French society's reaction to this increasing influence is neither open nor inclusive. Discrimination toward Muslims in employment, housing, and in education continues. Recent so-called Islamic terrorist attacks have only served to aggravate relations between mainstream society and the French Muslim community. More and more literature has been focusing on the differences between Islam and French society rather than their commonalities. The concepts of *sharia*, *halal*, *haram*, *fatwa*, *hijab*, *burqa* and *jihad*, which were very much unknown by the French public a few decades ago, have become central topics of discussion. French Muslims' are not integrated effectively into the French society, which means that these discussions are, and will continue in the coming days.

Another important issue about French Muslims is their continuing fragmentation; because they do not come from a single cultural background, it is/will be very difficult for them to construct a unified identity. Moreover, inter-cultural marriages and the continuing integration of the third and fourth generation of Muslim youth into mainstream French culture make this unification even more difficult. The French government is continuing efforts to manage and create an Islam that works with the traditional French concepts of liberty, which will be the biggest obstacle to an already unlikely transformation.

Most French Muslims are moderate and do not literally apply all the precepts of the Koran. Furthermore, most are not regular worshippers and are not very well connected to Muslim politics nationally and internationally. French Muslim communities are not very well represented and they are disentangled from politics in a way that they are not working towards reducing the discrimination they have been experiencing for a long time. This tendency, according to GMD FR Survey results, is unlikely to change. More than half of the respondents do not believe that the lives of French Muslims will be better in the near future (Figure-37).

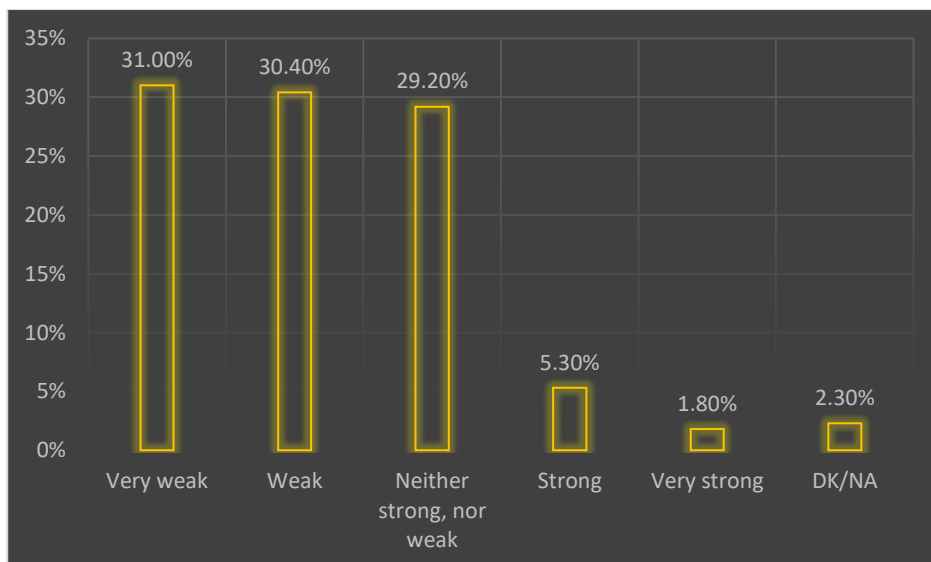
Figure 37. Future of Muslims in France



Source: How would you project the following in the coming decade? The Lives of Muslims in France, GMD FR Survey, 2017

The GMD FR Survey tried to dig deeper to understand the reasons behind this belief. For this, the survey firstly enquired whether the belief is a result of a distrust to the various components of French government. The respondents were primarily asked how much they trust the French government in general. The answers highlight their distrust. Over 60% of the respondents are pessimistic about the French government’s attitude toward Muslims (Figure-38).

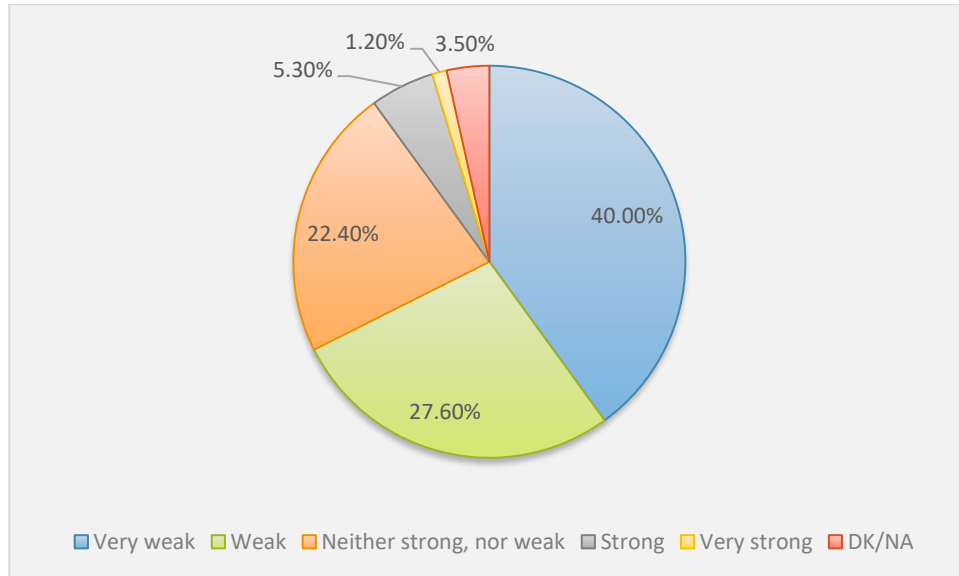
Figure 38. Trust in French Government



Source: How would you describe your level of trust in the following? The French Government, GMD FR Survey, 2017

Another question was asked regarding the public face of the French government – the police force. The respondents were specifically asked about their level of trust to the French police. 67.60% of the respondents stated that their trust of French Police was very weak/weak (Figure-39).

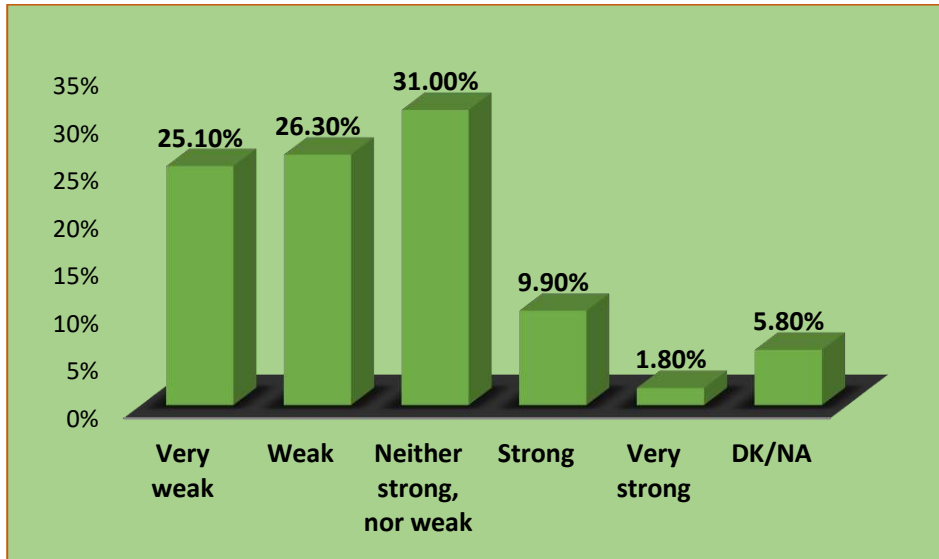
Figure 39. Trust in the French Police



Source: How would you describe your level of trust in the following? The French Police, GMD FR Survey, 2017

Thirdly, the respondents were asked about their trust toward French legal agencies. Their responses did not bring an extremely different percentage (51.4%) from their weak trust towards the police (Figure-40). These three enquiries illustrate a gap between French Muslims and the French government, the widening of which could alienate French Muslims from state agencies and, possibly, radicalize some community members. In other words, French Muslims' weak trust toward public faces of the French government has a potential to strain their relations with the French state and the ideologies it represents.

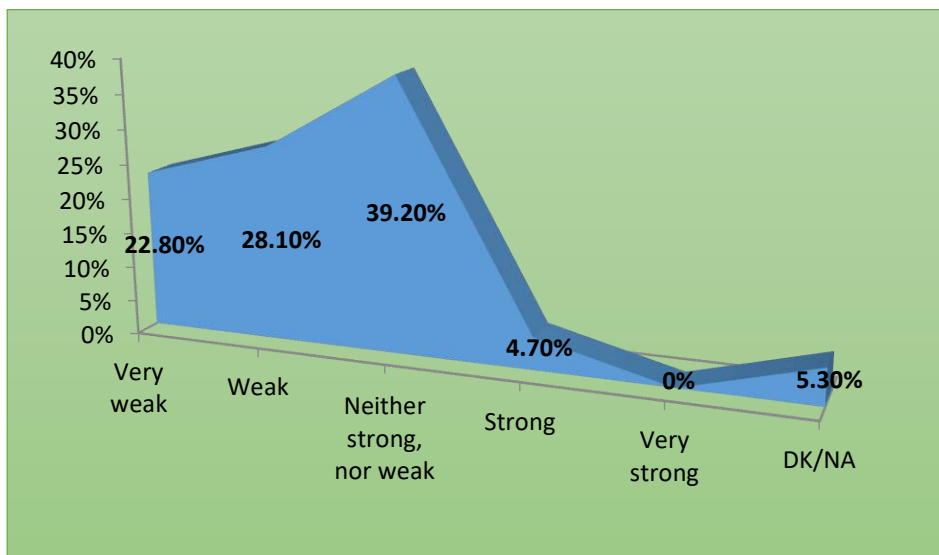
Figure 40. Trust in French Legal Agencies



Source: How would you describe your level of trust in the following? French Legal Agencies, GMD FR Survey, 2017

The GMD FR Survey also attempted to understand the respondents’ level of trust to their own people, more specifically their leaders. The results confirmed French Muslim’s lack of interest in taking part in Muslim representational institutions, a very small portion (4.7%) of respondents trust Muslim leaders.

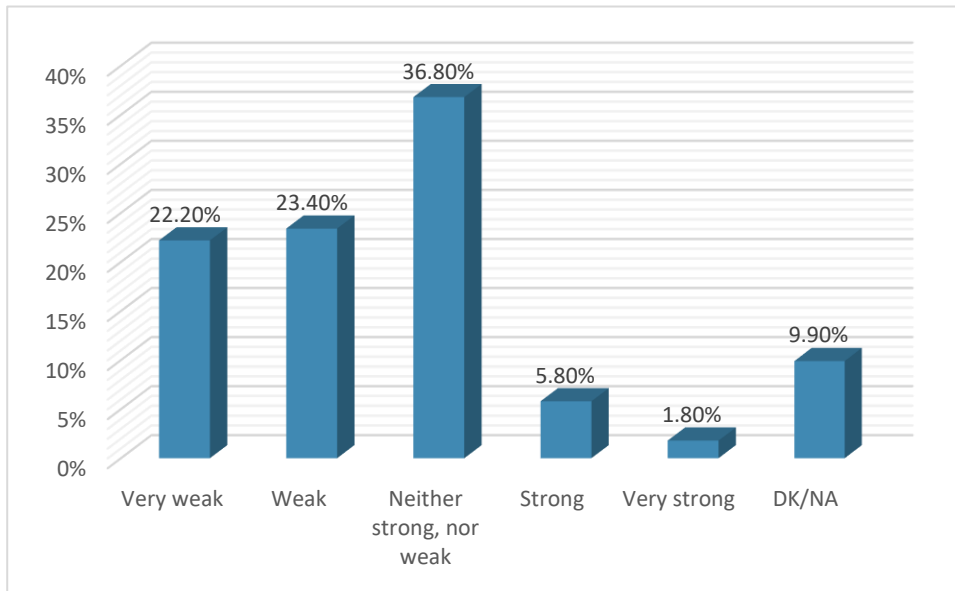
Figure 41. Trust in the Muslim Leaders in France



Source: How would you describe your level of trust in the following? The leaders of Muslim community in France, GMD FR Survey, 2017

In order to understand and specify the reasons behind the disengagement of the respondents from Muslim organizations, the GMD FR Survey enquired into their trust toward the Muslim Council of France, which is the umbrella organization and the interlocutor. The results are not significantly different from their trust to leaders. Only 7.6% of the respondents really trust the Council. These two enquiries show that the respondents are not only disengaged from the French governments but also their own public-faces.

Figure 42. Trust in the Muslim Council of France



Source: How would you describe your level of trust in the following? The Muslim Council of France, GMD FR Survey, 2017

However, these pessimistic figures do not completely overshadow French Muslims' achievements regarding establishing their "Islamic" lifestyle in France. *Abdullah* (2017) is optimistic:

"For a woman it's very difficult especially if she wears a hijab. With hijab she attracts more attention. 30 that was even more difficult to be a Muslim in France, we were like aliens. [Today the media has a big influence on French mindset]. [The French] are influenced by everything they hear in the media, [which] wants to show a bad image of Islam. ... [French Muslims' task should be] improving [their] image in media. [Muslims] ... must be friendly and [shouldn't] provoke the [rest of the society]. We have to be together with the French people and solve the problems in France, we pay taxes, we contribute to France's future at academic, intellectual level and also in Football, and we are not responsible for every [bad event]."

Fadhil (2017) expressed his optimism by stating that a new global topic will overshadow the so-called negative image of the French Muslims. In other words, Muslim-related issues are trend topics now but this will change. He also believes that during this change Muslim communities will transform, which result in the increase in their level of integration.

Bashir (2017) is also optimistic. He emphasized Muslim school projects, stating that:

“With the Muslim school projects, there is no assurance of Islamic education, because [you can] only provide a halal meal, permission to wear the veil and religious practices; it is not an educational project, but a bypass.”

Miran (2017) also underlined that there are educational policies to improve the ability of foreigners to integrate. He stated that ‘there is a republican course of integration’ which aims to provide some integration modules for people of foreign origin.

French Muslims’ historical grim sketch has been changing with new generations’ development of their capabilities, awareness, and proactivity. Although some age-old issues of not having a unified voice, or a strong institutional or political representation, not trusting French official agencies and continuing discrimination of mainstream French culture continue, several developments raise French Muslims’ future prospects. The new generations’ understanding of French society and life style deepen their integration and acceptance by the mainstream French society. On the other hand, these new generations do not detach themselves from Islamic values even if their practices are not full-fledged. In short, there is a good prospect about their future success to find a balance between mainstream French culture and Islamic values.

8 Conclusions

French Muslim population is the largest in Europe and Islam is the second most followed religion in France. Historically it goes back to the very early ages and continued to establish itself in the country throughout the Muslim migrant waves. Yet, such quantitative and historical value did not bring up a parallel weight in French socio-cultural political structure. Due to the heavy secularism in France and slowly augmenting antipathies against Muslims hindered their potential to be influential actors in the society. French Muslims are mostly apolitical and not necessarily interested in active volunteer NGO work. Their low fidelity also hindered their success to fight against discrimination and Islamophobia. Their fragmentation along various lines prevented this even more.

On the other hand, the French state has been trying to develop a French version of Islam, more compatible with the French values. Yet, better-educated and integrated younger populations with their continuing allegiance with Islamic values have a potential to not only render discrimination but also tacitly convince the French policymakers that they do not need to transform Islam in order to make it more compatible. These generations could generate an equilibrium between French mainstream and Islamic lifestyle.

Several additional concluding remarks could be withdrawn from the cases and elaborations of this study, which are subtitled below.

Continuing Marginalization: Life for French practicing Muslims is, for the most part, not easy. Mainstream French society is a tough environment for migrants who refuse to abandon their way of life. Muslims have been struggling to make this case heard. They are disappointed with the French government's lack of efforts to protect equality. They find the courts as an ineffective institution for social change. Therefore, Muslim claims that they face discrimination is largely only felt at the rhetorical level. This marginalization does not only occur in the socio-political or economic space but also in the media and film industries.

French acting Muslim Activists: Muslims tend to behave in much the same way as wider French society. They have a strong belief in the three principles of the French republic: liberty, equality, and fraternity. They engage in civic activities in that they participate in political life and base their claims on French citizenship. Their citizenship understanding and activities are largely the same as other French citizens. The *modus operandi* of this activism also occurs in voting patterns and lobbying activities.

Difficult to define: A "French Muslim" is difficult to define. None of the following headings can individually cover French Muslims as a whole: "of immigrant origin", "practicing Muslims", "cultural Muslims", or "Arabs". There is also an incorrect stereotype suggesting that all immigrants from North or sub-Saharan Africa, and Turkey are Muslim. Only 59% of French citizens that have migrated from Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa, or Turkey identify themselves as Muslims.

Requires Unification: French Muslims need to show that they are united and well organized to secure their rights. Not only the communities but also even the representative institutions are divided along national identity and ethnic lines. There are also fragmentations amongst the sects.

French Elites' Outlook: The French political elites' perception of Islam can be characterized as misrepresentational, which in the short run brings electoral gains to right-wingers. Yet, this misrepresentation neglects social injustices suffered by Muslim minorities, which in the end could deeply damage social cohesion. Misaddressing or failing to address the socio-economic inequalities and discrimination could renew riots in the *banlieues* or push the Muslim youth under the influence of Islamic extremism.

Muslim interchangeability with Immigrant: This is largely a concept used in the French National Assembly. Particularly when MPs talk about unemployment in France, they mostly refer to the Muslim immigrants, and particularly their children. This falls into the general misconception of all migrants from Africa or the Middle East as being Muslims.

Hopes for the future: Regarding economic inequality most third generation Muslims believe in liberal entrepreneurship as the most reliable element of the meritocracy. They believe that the more they become effective in the socio-economic realm the more their actions could change the public's perception on Muslims. In this sense, they remain positive that their "French being" will eventually be recognized.

Annex: The List of Participants to the Interviews

	Pseudonym	Affiliation	Gender
1	Abdullah	President of the <i>Union des Organisations Islamiques de France</i> (UOIF)	Male
2	Bashir	President of the <i>Conseil Français du Culte Musulman</i>	Male
3	Hassan	Muslim activist and author	Male
4	Saddikh	President of <i>Milli Gorus</i>	Male
5	Miran	Director of <i>Observatoire de la laïcité</i>	Male
6	Fadhil	Director of a Muslim NGO,	Male

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