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EUROPEAN
ISLAMOPHOBIA
REPORT

2015

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ (Eds)

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INTRODUCTION

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ

In June 2014, the website for reporting hate crimes to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) went public. In 2014, only five states officially reported on hate crimes against Muslims, whereas civil society reported in 21 countries. Still, for the majority of the 57 member countries of the OSCE, there is no official information available. Furthermore, if one were to assess the quality of these state reports, it becomes apparent that the collected data does not always rely on a comprehensive systematic collection.

Since Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism has become a growing threat in European societies, we – the editors – felt an urgent need to address this problem. In fact, there are still people denying the very existence of racism against Muslims. Many state and civil society institutions have done priceless work to prove and establish the opposite: from the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) to the countless civil society organisations throughout Europe. Yet, institutions like the FRA publish only irregular reports on a restricted number of countries while most civil society organisations tackle racism in general and only few focus on Islamophobia in specific - this is the urgent gap our report wishes to fill.

The *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) is an annual report, which is presented for the first time this year. It currently comprises 25 national reports regarding each state and the tendencies of Islamophobia in each respective country. The current report features the work of 37 extraordinary scholars. In the years to come we will attempt to cover even more countries. This report aims to enable policymakers as well as the public to discuss the issue of Islamophobia with the help of qualitative data. At the same time, several of its unique characteristic features make a difference to the current state of the debate on Islamophobia.

Contribution of this report

The national reports in the EIR look at significant incidents and developments in each country during the period under review. The authors look at the employment sector: has there been any discrimination in the job market based on the (assumed) Muslimness of a person? They look at education: has Islamophobic content become part of any curricula, textbooks, or any other education material? The political field in a narrow sense is also a central aspect of the EIR: has Islamophobia played any role in politics, from election campaigns to political programmes to personal statements, etc., be it on a regional or national level? Authors also take a close look at a central force where Islamophobia has spread: the media. Which media events have focused on Islam/Muslims in an Islamophobic way? The justice system is also featured in the national reports: are there any laws and regulations that are based on Islamophobic arguments or any laws restricting the rights of Muslims in their religious lifestyle? Cyberspace as a central space for spreading hate crime is also examined: which web pages and initiatives have spread Islamophobic stereotypes? In addition, central figures in the Islamophobia network are discussed: which institutions and persons have, among others, fostered Islamophobic campaigns, stirred up debates or lobbied for laws?

Since the EIR is not content with pointing a finger at the problem, the reports also look at observed civil society and political assessment and initiatives undertaken to counter Islamophobia in the aforementioned fields. This will empower politicians and NGO activists, who want to tackle the issue. Since the EIR is not a purely scholarly work, at the end of every report, authors offer policy recommendations for politics and NGOs. An executive summary at the beginning and a chronology at the end of every report give the reader an overview on the state and the development of Islamophobia in the respective countries.

Since the single reports share broadly the same structure, the EIR offers the possibility to compare Islamophobia in these countries. Despite the fact that the data in specific fields is not available in an identical way for all countries, the report still facilitates an impulse for identifying research gaps.

Studies on Islamophobia have in the past predominantly concentrated on Western Europe. This is especially the case with reports focusing on Islamophobia. The EIR is the first to cover a wide range of Eastern European countries like Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, or Latvia. This will enrich the debate on racism in general and Islamophobia in Europe in specific.

What is Islamophobia?

Although the term 'Islamophobia' has become widely recognised in the Anglo-Saxon world and has become established in academia as can be seen by the numerous conferences, journals, and research projects dedicated to it, in many European countries, there is still a great amount of opposition to the term. One can understand the opposition expressed by the public not merely as an academic debate, but, in fact, as a sign of the hegemonic power of Islamophobic prejudices. Acknowledging this situation,

at the heart of this project lies the following working definition of Islamophobia:

"When talking about Islamophobia, we mean anti-Muslim racism. As Anti-Semitism studies have shown, the etymological components of a word do not necessarily point to its complete meaning, nor to how it is used. Such is also the case with Islamophobia studies. Islamophobia has become a well-known term used in academia as much as in the public sphere. Criticism of Muslims or of the Islamic religion is not necessarily Islamophobic. Islamophobia is about a dominant group of people aiming at seizing, stabilising and widening their power by means of defining a scapegoat – real or invented – and excluding this scapegoat from the resources/rights/definition of a constructed 'we'. Islamophobia operates by constructing a static 'Muslim' identity, which is attributed in negative terms and generalised for all Muslims. At the same time, Islamophobic images are fluid and vary in different contexts as Islamophobia tells us more about the Islamophobe than it tells us about the Muslims/Islam".

Central findings

That Islamophobia works without Muslims and tells us more about the anti-Muslim racists than it tells us about Islam and Muslims, can best be seen in the eastern region of Europe. In countries like Hungary, Finland, Lithuania, or Latvia, where only a small number of Muslims live, Islamophobia functions as a successful means to mobilise people. People not only greatly overestimate the country's Muslim population but, although Muslims have not committed any violent acts in most countries in the name of Islam, they are still often deemed violent and are considered to be terrorists.

It could be observed that both attacks in Paris, which happened in 2015, became a discursive event that shaped the debates on Islam and Muslims throughout Europe. Above that, the so-called 'refugee crisis' was a central topic, which many actors linked to the issue of Muslims invading Europe. For example, the leader of the Hungarian Fidesz' parliamentary club Antal Rogán warned of a future 'United European Caliphate',[1] while former Secretary of State László L. Simon urged Hungarians to return to their Christian spirituality and make more babies in order to counter the negative cultural effects of mass migration such as the envisioned 'impending victory of Islamic parties imposing polygamy and destroying the remainder of European culture'.[2] This strong Islamophobic rhetoric is not restricted to the extreme right. In fact, the *refugee-migration-Islam-terrorism nexus* became the standard argument justifying a number of domestic and international measures. The social democrat Czech President Milos Zeman claimed the influx of refugees into Europe was masterminded by Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood as "an organised invasion" to "gradually control Europe". [3]

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1. Károly Villányi, "Azt akarjuk, hogy unokáink egy európai kalifátusban éljenek?", *Magyar Idők*, 14.11.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://magyaridok.hu/belfold/azt-akarjuk-hogy-az-unokaink-egy-europai-kalifatusban-eljenek-5035/.

2. "L. Simon: Szaporodjunk!", *Népszabadság Online*, 05.09.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, http://nol.hu/video/lsimon-a-szaporodasban-latja-a-jovot-1573295?utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201601.

3. Agence France-Presse, "Integrating Muslims into Europe is 'impossible', says Czech president", 18 January, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/18/integrating-muslims-into-europe-is-impossible-says-czech-president (accessed 8 March, 2016)

Policy Recommendations

Islamophobia poses a great risk to the democratic foundations of European constitutions and social peace as well as the coexistence of different cultures throughout Europe. Both civil society actors and states should acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and develop concrete policies to counter Islamophobia. Here we have summarised some of the important policy recommendations from the national reports.

- Islamophobia should be acknowledged as a crime and should be included in all national statistics throughout Europe.

- Hate crime legislations should be adopted in all European countries that acknowledge one's religious identity as being a basis upon which one may be targeted.

- In order to collect data about Islamophobic incidents, victims registers must be introduced in all European states.

- In order to help the victims of Islamophobic attacks, counseling services for victims must be established in all European states.

- Journalists, lawyers, Police (security officials) and legal authorities in all European countries should be educated by qualified personnel in regards to Islamophobia.

- Muslim civil society has to be empowered with information to combat Islamophobia, especially in the direction of the creation of a consciousness of the illegality of hate crimes.

- Educational institutions and stakeholders have to work towards creating an alternative narrative of Muslims in the respective countries which will work to dispel the widely accepted negative image of Islam.

- Civil society actors must also push for legislative change in the context of school enrolment policies so that all members of the respective societies are treated fairly when accessing education.

- Governments must draft a policy that ensures that the rights of religious minorities to manifest their faith are respected in education and the workplace; this must not be left to the preferences of individual boards of management or principals.

- Discrimination on the job market towards Muslims and especially Muslims who wear veils is a widespread phenomenon. This should be recognised and seriously addressed by better legal regulations and the creation of a relevant consciousness.

- Civil society actors must engage with media actors/outlets in terms of the publication and broadcasting of standards in order to reduce/minimise the use of racialising discourses vis-à-vis Muslims and other minority communities.

- The civil rights violations experienced by women wearing headscarves should be addressed by lawmakers and politicians.

- An independent media watchdog should be established in order to monitor media reports in real time in all respective countries.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN
SPAIN
NATIONAL REPORT 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On January 8, 2015, President Rajoy stated that he did not believe Islamophobia could be a problem in Spain. Twelve months later, however, the number of Islamophobic attacks reported has quadrupled. When looking at Islamophobia in Spain, we have to take into account, first, that this country presents a historical discrimination against the "Moor" which dates back to the al-Andalus period and stretches to the conquest of the peninsula by the Christian kingdoms, that is the 15th century; this sentiment continues to be present in today's society. On the other hand, Spain's current tense political scene has also had an impact on the Muslim population living in the country.

Regarding education, in Spain we find the existence of a "hidden curriculum" which ignores or distorts the al-Andalus historical period and the Islamic elements present in the country's history and society. In addition to this, the Cooperation Agreements signed in 1992, which grant the main needs and rights of the Muslim population, are often obviated, resulting in an underrepresentation of Islamic religion teachers throughout the country, as well as other negative consequences.

Secondly, the Spanish political situation has had a polarising effect over the population, especially in Catalonia, where the political party Partido Popular (in power since 2011) has adopted many anti-Muslim slogans. These political prejudices affect the situation of Muslim mosques and cemeteries, the presence of which in public spaces has encountered some opposition.

The media's Islamophobic references have increased considerably this year as well, mainly due to Daesh/ISIL terrorist attacks and the Syrian refugee crisis that is currently developing. With regard to these two very important topics, the first has been handled with the signing of a new antiterrorist pact, which aims at preventing religious radicalisation, but which runs the risk of contributing to the mistrust and criminalisation of Muslims. As for the Syrian refugee crisis, it has been characterised by the government's reluctance when negotiating with the EU.

Finally, it is necessary to mention the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, the Spanish North African territories, which have a Muslim population of approximately 50%. These two cities do not experience strong discrimination against the Muslim population, but are rather experiencing a lack of economic and social integration, leading to the marginalisation of a considerable part of the population.

With regard to the recommendations on how to tackle this phenomenon, we suggest that one key element to cope with any form of discrimination is knowledge, which can only come through education. This implies a more comprehensive approach, which should include the participation of specialists, as well as the participation of the Muslim population; in addition, there should be awareness-raising campaigns about Spain's Islamophobic problems, more governmental support to the Muslim communities and a better training of governmental institutions in order to

facilitate a better approach to the legal situation and protection of Muslims. This should be combined with a toughening of the legislation, in particular for aspects concerned with hate speech and hate crimes, and an introduction of punitive sanctions aimed at preventing and punishing Islamophobic acts.

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

El 8 de enero de 2015, el presidente Mariano Rajoy declaraba que no creía que la islamofobia pudiese ser un problema en España; sin embargo, doce meses más tarde, el número de ataques islamófobos denunciados se ha multiplicado por cuatro. Cuando analizamos la islamofobia en España, es necesario tener en cuenta, en primer lugar, que este país presenta una serie de prejuicios de carácter histórico contra el "moro" que se remontan al periodo de al-Ándalus y a la conquista de la península por parte de los reinos cristianos, y que continúan estando presentes en la sociedad a día de hoy. Por otro lado, el momento de tensión e inestabilidad política que atraviesa España en la actualidad también ha influido sobre la situación de la población musulmana del país.

Estos prejuicios se reflejan en el ámbito educativo en la existencia de un "currículum oculto" que ignora o distorsiona el periodo histórico de al-Ándalus y los elementos islámicos presentes en la historia y en la sociedad española. A su vez, aunque la mayoría de los derechos y necesidades de la población musulmana fueron recogidos en los Acuerdos de cooperación firmados en 1992, que incluyen, entre otras cosas, la enseñanza del Islam, su aplicación es, a menudo, ignorada.

En segundo lugar, la situación política española ha polarizado a la población, especialmente en Cataluña, donde el Partido Popular ha adoptado numerosas consignas anti-musulmanas. Esta discriminación en el ámbito político se refleja, a su vez, en la situación de las mezquitas y los cementerios musulmanes, cuya presencia en los espacios públicos encuentra bastante oposición.

En lo que respecta a los medios de comunicación, el número de referencias islamófobas en este campo ha aumentado considerablemente este año, debido, principalmente, a los ataques terroristas del ISIS y a la crisis de los refugiados sirios. La primera de estas cuestiones ha sido abordada mediante la firma de un nuevo acuerdo antiterrorista, cuyo principal objetivo es prevenir la radicalización religiosa, pero que corre el riesgo de aumentar la criminalización y desconfianza hacia la población musulmana. Por otro lado, las negociaciones para la acogida de refugiados sirios se han caracterizado por las reticencias del gobierno y por su falta de interés político.

Por último, es necesario analizar la situación de las ciudades autónomas de Ceuta y Melilla, situadas en el norte de África y que presentan, aproximadamente, un 50 % de población musulmana. Estas dos ciudades no presentan un problema de discriminación de los musulmanes, sino, más bien, un problema de

integración económica y social, que ha conducido a la marginalización de una parte considerable de la población.

Este informe concluye con una serie de recomendaciones sobre cómo se ha de tratar este fenómeno, para ello, es importante tener en cuenta que el conocimiento es el elemento clave para poner fin a cualquier tipo de discriminación y que este sólo puede asegurarse a través de la educación. Esto hace necesario una aproximación al Islam y a la diversidad religiosa más comprensiva, que debería incluir la participación de especialistas en este campo y de la propia población musulmana, así como campañas de sensibilización sobre la islamofobia, más apoyo gubernamental y una mejor formación de las instituciones del gobierno. Estas medidas deberían combinarse con un fortalecimiento de la legislación, especialmente en lo que respecta a la regulación del discurso y los crímenes de odio, y de las sanciones punitivas destinadas a la prevención y al castigo de los actos de islamofobia.

INTRODUCTION

On January 8, 2015, one day after the Charlie Hebdo attacks, President Rajoy declared that he did not believe that Islamophobia could become a problem in Spain[1]; however, by December 2015, Amparo Sánchez Rosell, president of the Citizen Platform against Islamophobia (Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia), announced that approximately 200 complaints had been made reporting Islamophobia attacks during the year;[2] however, the elaboration of the 2015 annual report is still pending. This is in comparison to the 49 complaints registered in 2014.

In addition to providing a working definition for Islamophobia, it is necessary to introduce a wider definition that includes the Spanish historical and social specifics, particularly regarding Spain's eight centuries of Muslim sovereignty, the "Reconquista",[3] and Spain's colonial presence in Morocco, between 1912 and 1956 (with some Moroccan territories being decolonised later on). In order to do this, we must rely on the definition offered by Fernando Bravo, one of the leading Spanish experts on Islamophobia today, who defines the concept of Islamophobia not as the rejection of Islam, but as a form of discrimination based on ethno-cultural characteristics[4]. Likewise, Luz Gómez understands Islamophobia to be a product of Western secularist thought, where Islamophobia appears as a result of the Western concern about the occupation by Islam of the public sphere[5]: "this results in a hostile attitude towards Muslims in general based on the idea of Islam posing a threat to 'our' welfare and even to 'our' survival".[6]

In addition to this, we have to take into account certain singularities that originate in the so-called 'Reconquista', which generated an intellectual current that was aimed to legitimate the existence of a negative image of the Muslim people; this has led to the belief, present throughout Spanish history, that there is a constant state of confrontation with Muslim civilisation. This belief took shape with the Reconquista, with the battles against the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean, with the expul-

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1. As declared in an interview carried out on January, 8th, 2015: http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20150108/interior-insiste-no-hay-amenaza-concreta-singular-contra-espana/1081190.shtml

2. Interview held on December 16th, 2015.

3. The "Reconquista" (reconquest) refers to the period of time during which the Christian kings of Spain fought against the Muslim kingdoms for the control of the Iberian Peninsula. These wars began in the 8th century, after the Muslims arrived on the peninsula in 711, and ended in 1492 with the fall of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada.

4. Fernando Bravo López, "Qué es la islamofobia?", Documentación social, 159 (2010=: 189-207, accessed December 15, 2015, https://sites.google.com/site/teimproject/-quienes-somos/fernandobravo/trabajos-de-fernando-bravo-lopez/queeslaislamofobia p.194.

5. Fernando Bravo López, "¿Qué es la islamofobia?", Documentación social, 159 (2010=: 189-207, accessed December 15, 2015, https://sites.google.com/site/teimproject/-quienes-somos/fernandobravo/trabajos-de-fernando-bravo-lopez/queeslaislamofobia p.195.

6. Fernando Bravo López, "¿Qué es la islamofobia?", Documentación social, 159 (2010=: 189-207, accessed December 15, 2015, https://sites.google.com/site/teimproject/-quienes-somos/fernandobravo/trabajos-de-fernando-bravo-lopez/queeslaislamofobia p.193.

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sion of the Moriscoes[7] in 1609 and with the Hispano-Moroccan War (18559-196)[8] As Martín Corrales points out, in recent years this negative image has softened in form, but not in content, thus taking the more subtle shape of warnings about the dangers of crossing the Mediterranean by dinghy, of the difficult living conditions immigrants have to bear in Spain or the racist attacks they might be subject to.[9]

To sum up, Islamophobia is understood as a form of discrimination according to which the population see both Islam and the Muslim population as a distant, inferior culture, but which has, nonetheless, the chance of evolving and adapting to 'our' own norms and values, while rejecting the possibility that Muslims can introduce their own cultural features.[10]

2015 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

It is important to note, firstly, that the policies in this year towards Muslims and immigration have been shaped by two main international conflicts that have shaken the international scene, influenced by the rise of Daesh/ISIL and the Syrian civil war that has devastated Syria since 2011. The two conflicts are, of course, Daesh/ISIL terrorist attacks, with the attacks in France attracting the most attention, and the Syrian refugee crisis, the media coverage of which has certainly been inconsistent and has launched the European Union into a spiral of endless negotiations.

These problems are yet to be solved. Terrorism has led to an intensification of the conflict against Daesh/ISIL and to the creation of an international coalition to combat it; Spain has yet to decide about its participation. The Syrian refugee crisis has resulted in the establishment of a quota system, which as yet has not been effectively applied.

At a national level, this year has been characterised by political tension in Spain, due to local and presidential elections; the result of these elections have led to the end of the two-party system that characterised most of the Spanish democratic period, as well as problems with political corruption and the restriction of rights and liberties. The local and presidential elections, which took place on May 24 and December 20 respectively, (in addition to Andalusian elections, which took place on March 22, and Catalonian elections on September 27), have had a polarising effect, particularly regarding sensitive issues, such as intervention in Syria or the situation in Catalonia at a domestic level, while postponing the most important decisions to a period post- election. On the other hand, the elections have led to

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7. This term refers to the Muslims who converted to Christianity after the Reconquista and who remained in Spain.

8. Eloy Martín Corrales, "Maurofobia/islamofobia y maurofilia/islamofilia en la España del siglo XXI", Revista CIDOB d'affers internacionals, 66-67 (2004): 39-51, p.40.

9. Eloy Martín Corrales, "Maurofobia/islamofobia y maurofilia/islamofilia en la España del siglo XXI", Revista CIDOB d'affers internacionals, 66-67 (2004): 39-51, p.47.

10. Thierry Desrues and Manuel Pérez Yruela, "Percepciones y actitudes hacia el Islam y los musulmanes en España, avance de resultados (versión preliminar)", Instituto de Estudios Sociales Avanzados (2008), accessed December 18, 2015, http://ikuspegi-inmigracion.net/documentos/investigacion/es/percep_acti_islam_avancemarzo2008.pdf, p.24.

the emergence of new political parties, such as Podemos and Ciudadanos, which try to promote a political regeneration and seem more open to Spain's most sensitive political problems (such as corruption, the electoral system or the malfunction of political institutions). This emergence has radically changed the political arena, putting an end to the hegemony of Spain's traditional parties, the Partido Popular (PP) and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), while also increasing the political instability in the country and the need for coalitions.

With regard to general elections, given the recent nature of the event, it is not yet possible to tell who will form the next government, although the results have confirmed a divided and multi-party scenario in which the main parties defend opposing and incompatible red lines, most of them concerning domestic issues. These elections have been conditioned, likewise, by the many corruption cases that have struck the country, affecting mainly the PP and PSOE, and the economic crisis in which Spain continues to find itself.

In addition to this, the national scene has been conditioned by the Catalonian independence movement, currently supported by the autonomous government of Catalonia. The tensions this situation has created and the stalemate in the negotiations between the central government and the Catalonian administration have contributed to early elections on September 27, 2015, which resulted in the victory of Junts pel Sí, a coalition formed by pro-independence parties. Although this bloc intended to be understood as a query on independence for the elections, the situation remains at an impasse.

Finally, it is also worth noting the passing of a strict citizen-security law which has not only imposed restrictions on many social rights, but has also sparked protests among a large part of society; the protests are made by people who question the balance between security and personal and collective freedoms.

Regarding these events that have shaped the international scenario, as we will discuss below, the current main political parties have signed an anti-terrorist act which tackles terrorism; in turn, the refugee crisis has demonstrated the government's apathy and hesitation on the matter, with negotiations about quotas finally settling at the admittance of 14,931 refugees into Spain.

ISLAM AND THE SPANISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education plays a very important role in trying to normalise aspects that might seem alien for some parts of the population. Nonetheless, Spain fails to appropriately cover the needs in the educational realm for both Muslims and non-Muslims; this is true both in regards to the teaching of Islam to Muslim students and the contents covered in both primary schools and high schools when speaking about Islam. Text books tend to generalise specific experiences or traditions to the Islamic world as a whole,

reductionisms are common and principles and relevant events are valued in reference to Western culture and interests.[11]

First of all, we need to refer to what has been called the 'hidden curriculum', understood in this context as contents that are obviated, ignored or unknown in the school curriculum.[12] The existence of this said hidden curriculum is very significant with regard to Islam and Muslim civilisation in the Spanish education system, especially when one takes into account the importance this civilisation had in Spanish history during the eight centuries of al-Andalus. Several authors have denounced the existence of a created antagonism between the Judeo-Christian civilisation and the Islamic civilisation, as well as of the denial of the Arabic contribution to the Spanish national identity[13], pointing out the existence of an orientalist approach to Islam and Muslims in which exotic and ancient images dominate over the actual situation; as a result of this last approach, more importance is given to Islamic art and folklore than to Islamic thought, science or literature.[14] The almost inexistent references in textbooks to the presence of Muslims in today's society is also representative.[15] This creates a spiral of a lack of knowledge and misinformation which is reflected in all stages of Spanish education, as well as also proving that there is a lack of research with Islamic references at today's universities, in fields, such as medical science. The research in this last field does not correspond to the Spanish Islamic tradition.

On the other hand, with regard to Muslim students, the relationship with Islamic religion was first regulated by the Cooperation Agreements of 1992, which recognised several rights for Muslims, such as the possibility of having a halal menu or of receiving Islamic religious lessons when at least 10 students demanded it. However, this has resulted in a very slow legal development, mainly due to the transference of education competences to the autonomous regions, as well as a lack of interest on the part of some of the autonomous governments. In addition, there has been an initial lack of competence in the Islamic Commission of Spain, which could not name the teachers to teach this subject. Although

11. Gema Martín Muñoz, "Unconscious Islamophobia", Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self knowledge, Vol. 8, Issue 2, Article 4 (2010), accessed December 18, 2015, http://scholarworks.umb.edu/humanarchitecture/vol8/iss2/4/, pp.12-18.

12. Dolores Mayoral Arqué and Fidel Molina Luque and Lluis Samper Rasero. "¿Islamofobia o currículo nulo? La representación del Islam, las culturas musulmanas y los inmigrantes musulmanes en los libros de texto en Cataluña". Revista de educación, Núm. 357, enero abril (2012): 257-279, p253.

13. Gema Martín Muñoz, Begoña Valle Simón, and Mª Ángeles López Plaza, El Islam y el mundo árabe. Guía didáctica para profesores y formadores, (Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 1998).

14. Dolores Mayoral Arqué and Fidel Molina Luque and Lluis Samper Rasero. "Islamofobia o currículo nulo? La representación del Islam, las culturas musulmanas y los inmigrantes musulmanes en los libros de texto en Cataluña". Revista de educación, Núm. 357, enero abril (2012): 257-279.

15. Dolores Mayoral Arqué and Fidel Molina Luque and Lluis Samper Rasero. "Islamofobia o currículo nulo? La representación del Islam, las culturas musulmanas y los inmigrantes musulmanes en los libros de texto en Cataluña". Revista de educación, Núm. 357, enero abril (2012): 257-279.

these gaps are gradually being filled, recent reports (Islamophobia Special Report 2014, UCIDE) prove that although such problems have been recognised at an institutional level, the correct implementations have not been put into practice in most of Spain. A demographic study developed by the same institution declared that 90% of the Spanish Muslim population does not have access to religious lessons (Demographic Study of Muslim Population 2014, UCIDE). This is due to several reasons, among them being a lack of interest on the part of the educational institutions, which many times fail even to advise Muslim families that they have such an option, and the lack of means, particularly of teachers to be employed. This contrasts with the number of professionals who have specialised in this subject; according to the UCIDE, only one out of every ten specialised teachers is actually employed by a school (Demographic Study of Muslim Population, UCIDE). In addition to this, the lack of initiatives in secondary education should be mentioned; the Education Agreement only covers Islamic education at primary schools.

Currently, Spain has 47 teachers employed in Islamic religion. Although it is not possible to compare this situation to the teaching of Catholicism, due to the historic Catholic past of the country, the constitutional recognition of deeper ties with Catholicism and the Agreements signed between the Spanish State and the Holy See (whose support does, nevertheless, generate many frictions between the different Spanish political parties), we can state that the number of teachers who can teach Islam in Spain is far less than what is needed for the 2 million Muslims who live in Spain today. Furthermore, this religious option is only offered in 6 out of the 19 autonomous territories of Spain: Andalucía, País Vasco, Canarias, Aragón and the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla (Demographic Study of Muslim Population 2014, UCIDE).

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND POLITICS

First of all, when referring to politics, and with regards to the presence of radical right-wing parties which include racist and Islamophobic claims on their agendas, it is necessary to say that in Spain such parties have very low parliamentary representation; thus, this presence, although worrisome in the communities where they are the strongest, does not have an impact on the development of national or regional politics. One exception needs to be pointed out, however, and that is the case of Catalonia, where the radical right-wing party Plataforma per Catalunya (PxC) obtained 8 city councillors in the 2015 local elections; however, this is much less than the 67 city councillors obtained in 2011.

In this sense, Catalonia's politics, as a result of holding elections and the independence trend, have undergone a polarising effect, with a worrying radical-

isation of right-wing parties; the latter try to neutralise one another by turning to xenophobic measures. Such is the example of the Partido Popular (PP), which presented slogans during the political campaign such as in Barcelona: "Do not let the Raval [one of Barcelona's neighborhoods, which gathers many of the cities' immigration] become an Islamic ghetto", while in L'Hospitalet they stated: "stop the proliferation of call shops, dollar stores and kebab restaurants" and "no to the great mosque of Cornellà", and the most stunning of all, "clean Badalona" [from immigrants and insecurity] in the city of Badalona." In the latter case, Xavier García Albiol, the former mayor of Badalona, was named the PP's candidate for Catalonia's regional government for the September 2015 election - a clear message to the most conservative electorate.

The problem when regarding the elections, as pointed out by Albert Mora, professor of sociology at the University of Valencia, is that "local governments tend to support those they see as potential voters, and the majority of Muslims [due to the Spanish legislation][16] do not have the right to vote".[17]

Sadly, the rejection of the presence of Islam in public spaces is very common, and can be easily perceived when regarding topics such as mosques or Muslim cemeteries. As the Spanish Union for Islamic Communities (UCIDE) states, local governments usually put up many obstacles for obtaining licenses to build mosques and are even more reluctant to grant smallholdings for worshipping activities (Islamophobia Special Report 2014, UCIDE). Professor Albert Mora, when regarding the situation of mosques in Catalonia – although this can be extended to the whole of Spain – agrees that there is a tendency towards excluding mosques from the city centre and placing them in the outskirts of town.[18] This rejection has found great support among both political parties and the population.

A special case that needs to be pointed out here is the controversy surrounding the mosque/cathedral of Cordoba (one of the most important Spanish Islamic monuments, which dates back to the al-Andalus period). This controversy began in 2006 when the mosque was registered by the Church as its property, alleging its ownership since 1236. The consequence has been an increase in the presence of Catholic symbols, as reported by the civil Platform Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba[19]. This topic occupied a prominent place during the regional

16. According to the Spanish legislation, only Spanish nationals, EU nationals or several specific countries which have signed an agreement on reciprocal participation in local elections can vote in the local elections. These last countries include Norway, Ecuador, New Zealand, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Paraguay, Iceland, Bolivia, Cape Verde, the Republic of Korea y Trinidad and Tobago.

17. Enric Llopis, "Islamofobia: odio y rechazo a la mezcla cultural", Rebelión, June 25, 2015, accessed December 28, 2015, http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=200375.

18. Enric Llopis, "Islamofobia: odio y rechazo a la mezcla cultural", Rebelión, June 25, 2015, accessed December 28, 2015, http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=200375.

19. This was done through the online website "change.org": https://www.change.org/p/salvemos-la-mezquita-de-c%C3%B3rdoba-por-una-mezquita-catedral-de-todos

elections in Andalusia (March 22nd, 2015), dividing conservative and left-wing parties on the matter.

As for cemeteries, according to the government's Observatory of Religious Pluralism in Spain, there are currently 24 Muslim cemeteries in Spain. These cemeteries constitute a complex reality, and their situation varies from one place to another, depending on their historical context, the legal framework and the interest and relations between the local governments and the Muslim communities. The issue of the cemeteries and the problems they might pose, however, are very recent, as immigration in the country is a very new phenomenon and, historically, the tendency has been to repatriate the body, rather than burying it in Spain.[20] Today's numbers, however, show an imbalance between the amount of cemeteries and the Muslim population living in the country (Demographic Study of Muslim Population 2014, UCIDE); this is due in part not to a lack of will, but to a normative problem, given the legal restrictions of burying bodies directly in the earth (currently, only the autonomous community of Andalucía allows this practice). An analysis and observance of the differences present in the country would require, nevertheless, a more in-depth and detailed study.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THE MEDIA

Islamophobia in the media has been denounced as one of the most common ways to spread Islamophobia;[21] this is especially dramatic due to the important influence the media has over the population's opinion-forming process. A poll carried out by Prof. Thierry Desrues in 2008 showed that the majority of Muslims felt that the view the non-Muslim population had of them was negative, simplistic or wrong.[22] The media plays an important role when contributing to this phenomenon.

Likewise, Padilla et al. have identified a reductionist message present in the media, which contributes greatly to the transmission of a negative image of Muslims.[23] In this sense, Corral García identified a direct link between the opinions expressed

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20. Sol Tarrés and Jordi Moreras, "Topografía de la otra muerte. Los cementerios musulmanes en España (siglo XX-XXI)", in Religio in labyrintho, ed. José J. Caerols, (Escola y Mayo, Madrid, 2013): 309-321, p.314.

21. Thierry Desrues, "Percepciones del Islam y de los musulmanes en los Medios de comunicación en España", (paper presented at the conference "El diálogo intercultural: un reto para las creencias y las convicciones", European Commission, Brussels, November 11, 2008), accessed December 15, 2015, http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/30745/1/Thierry%20Desrues%20El%20dialogo%20intercultural.%20Un%20reto%20para%20las%20creencias%20y%20las%20convicciones.pdf, p.5

22. Thierry Desrues, "Percepciones del Islam y de los musulmanes en los Medios de comunicación en España", (paper presented at the conference "El diálogo intercultural: un reto para las creencias y las convicciones", European Commission, Brussels, November 11, 2008), accessed December 15, 2015, http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/30745/1/Thierry%20Desrues%20El%20dialogo%20intercultural.%20Un%20reto%20para%20las%20creencias%20y%20las%20convicciones.pdf, p.3.

23. Graciela Padilla Castillo and Pilar Sánchez González, "La importancia del tratamiento de la religión en medios de comunicación. El caso del Islam en España", Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico. Vol. 19, Núm. especial marzo (2013): 449-457, p.454.

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in digital newspapers when regarding Muslims and the opinions held by its readers; this was done by analysing the comments written by newspaper readers at the end of each article. Thus, it was concluded that the Islamophobic views defended in the newspaper generated hate speech among the readers.[24]

Desrues identified four different criticisms Muslims in Spain had against the media: the generation of value judgements without truly understanding Islam, the confusion surrounding Islam and Muslims, the identification of Islam with cultural behaviour and the fact that their faith is used as an explanation of people's acts or opinions.[25] Likewise, Desrues identified four elements that the Spanish population associates with Islam which contribute to worsen its image: the use of corporal punishment, sexism, the presence of despotic governments and terrorism and religious fanaticism.[26]

In this context, the press played a singular role in 2015 with the rise of Daesh/ISIL terrorism and the repercussions of the Charlie Hebdo attack in Europe. This has led to an increase in the use of terms such as 'jihad', 'burqa' and 'Islamist' in the media, sometimes in unnecessary contexts and with sensationalist purposes, or the use of stereotyped images such as mosques, women wearing hijab, images of prayers, etc. Among the examples, we can mention the statements issued by Mr. Fernández Díaz, Spanish Ministry of International Affairs, when talking about the possibility of Muslim immigrants supporting the independence of Catalonia; he declared that "they have been promised the heaven if they did [support it]"[27]; thus resorting to prejudicial and superficial arguments, instead of providing an in-depth analysis of the reasons such support might occur. Other examples are headlines such as "from Madrid's mosque to the ranks of jihadism,"[28] the highlight by the press of the peo-

24. Alfonso Corral García, "Islamofobia en la prensa digital? Análisis de los comentarios en "La inocencia de los musulmanes", in Periodismo y publicidad digital en España: análisis empírico, Universidad, investigación y periodismo digital. XV Congreso de Periodismo Digital de Huesca, ed. Fernando Sabés Turmo (Huesca: Asociación de la prensa de Aragón, 2014), 140-152, accessed December 18, 2015 http://decimoquinto.congresoperiodismo.com/pdf/libro2014.pdf.

25. Thierry Desrues, "Percepciones del Islam y de los musulmanes en los Medios de comunicación en España", (paper presented at the conference "El diálogo intercultural: un reto para las creencias y las convicciones", European Comission, Brussels, November 11, 2008), accessed December 15, 2015, http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/30745/1/Thierry%20Desrues%20El%20dialogo%20intercultural.%20Un%20reto%20para%20las%20creencias%20y%20las%20convicciones.pdf, p.3.

26. Thierry Desrues, "Percepciones del Islam y de los musulmanes en los Medios de comunicación en España", (paper presented at the conference "El diálogo intercultural: un reto para las creencias y las convicciones", European Comission, Brussels, November 11, 2008), accessed December 15, 2015, http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/30745/1/Thierry%20Desrues%20El%20dialogo%20intercultural.%20Un%20reto%20para%20las%20creencias%20y%20las%20convicciones.pdf, p.3.

27. As declared at the radio channel *Cadena* SER: http://cadenaser.com/programa/2014/09/23/hoy_por_hoy/1411429820_850215.html

28. Newspaper La Razón: http://www.periodistadigital.com/mundo/oriente-medio/2014/12/13/la-mezquita-de-la-m-30-era-el-nido-d-elos-terroristas-yihadistas-en-madrid.shtml

ple's nationality whenever they were Arabs or Muslim,[29] or the call made by some journalists to impose the Western European model on the Muslim society living in Spain. In addition, as López Bargados and Ramírez point out, the main Islamophobic discrimination fell on Muslim women.[30] Not only were there references to the use of the hijab or the burqa, but there was also victimisation of women when talking about terrorism, with women being branded 'victims', 'seduced', 'convinced', 'sexual slaves' or 'concubines living in a harem', thus denying them any capacity for action. Examples of this can be found in daily newspapers, with headlines like "Jihadist girls want to go home 'disappointed' with ISIL",[31] "Young Western women crazy about a jihadist"[32] or statements such as "she let herself be seduced by the words and images of bearded men who promised her a life in the 'brothers' heaven".[33]

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Islamophobia and the justice system is one of the most complicated issues to tackle, as there has always been a fine line between security and human and citizen rights. This line becomes even finer when talking about Muslim rights and jihadist terrorism, especially in the current atmosphere of tensions in which we find ourselves. The judicial scene has experienced two main additions this year. First of all, the signing of an antiterrorist pact by the two main political parties (PP and PSOE) in January; eight more political parties signed after the attacks in Paris in November 13. This pact was particularly aimed at fighting jihadist terrorism (as opposed to fighting the Spanish terrorist organisation, ETA[34]). Despite including among its 8 points the goal of fighting "any kind of racism, xenophobia or discrimination", this pact takes the risk of transforming the notion of 'radicalisation' into a new label that will contribute to the identification of Muslims as the 'other', and to justify the mistrust surrounding them; this could be seen to be the case of the 'Stop radicalismos' campaign that was launched in December and described below.

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29. As reported by the digital newspaper *La Marea*: http://www.lamarea.com/2015/01/11/el-fomento-del-racismo-y-la-islamofobia-en-politica-y-prensa/. This fact is important due to the fact that – as it is reported in the newspaper article – it contradicts the deontological code of the Federation of the Press Associations of Spain, which states that the race, color, religion, social origin or sex should only mentioned when there exists a direct link between this fact and the news being discussed.

30. Alberto López Bargados and Ángeles Ramírez Fernández, "Un decálogo a contracorriente contra la islamofobia", Viento Sur, 138, February, (2015): 19-26, p.25.

31. Newspaper El Mundo: http://www.elmundo.es/internacional/2014/10/11/543917a1ca474163608b4574.html

32. Newspaper El Confidencial: http://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2014-10-15/adolescentes-occidentales-locas-por-un-yihadista_242506/

33. Newspaper El País: http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2015/10/24/actualidad/1445682710_631357.html

34. ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, in Basque) is a terrorist organisation, currently inactive, formed in 1958 with the objective of achieving the independence for the Basque country, currently an autonomous region located in the North of Spain.

The second new legal measure adopted is the approval of the Law of Citizen Security (commonly known as the gag rule), which has raised many tensions among both the opposition parties and the Spanish population. This law, although not directly oriented towards Muslims, includes a severe restriction on rights; as such, it affects the population as a whole, but might concern the minorities whose rights and freedoms have always seemed more fragile to a greater degree. In addition, it is important to point out, with regards to immigration, that the Popular parliamentary group, which currently leads the country, decided to add an amendment to the Law of Citizen Security in order to give legal coverage to the illegal, 'on the spot' deportation of immigrants to the Moroccan territory; this is to be applied to those who have entered Ceuta or Melilla illegally. This amendment was finally approved by the Congress of Deputies on March 26, 2015, although opposed by social organisations and condemned by the Council of Europe.

On an anecdotal level, but exemplifying the idea expressed above, on January 15, 2015 the Provincial Brigade of Information of Seville sent a document to its members with recommendations about how to act when facing an Arab-related threat.[35] This report recommended identifying all Arabs who were recording videos in non-touristic places, those in possession of more than 1,000 Euros in cash or those using a laptop inside a vehicle, as they are "probably cracking the Wi-Fi network to leave no traces of their IP address". Although the police headquarters invalidated the report shortly afterwards, we consider this to be a sign of how the restriction of civil liberties and the atmosphere of mistrust created can affect the Muslim community.

Finally, as a response to the increase of terrorism and the fear experienced in all European countries, the Spanish government has launched the platform 'Stop radicalismos' (Stop radicalism), which puts a telephone number, a website and an email at the disposal of all citizens; they can use these to report any person that they think is radicalising others. This application, which it is said targets all forms of radicalisation, but which has only been published in Spanish and Arabic, has found opposition in the Muslim community. As Amparo Sánchez Rossell,[36] president of the Citizen Platform against Islamophobia, points out that this instrument, which refers not to terrorism, but to the subjective reality of the term 'radical', violates the citizen's fundamental rights and generates juridical insecurity and defencelessness, as the reporter does not have to identify themselves, and thus is not held accountable for any accusations; moreover, this instrument fails to respect the presumption of innocence.

It is worth noting here the tension that exists between the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE) and the Spanish government with regard to the commission's legal structure. This commission, an amalgam of different Muslim associations, is man-

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35. http://www.elmundo.es/espana/2015/01/14/54b6af0b22601ddb6b8b4577.html

36. Conference for the International Day against Islamophobia, 13 December 2015, ACHIME, Madrid.

aged through a dual leadership, represented by two association groups: the Spanish Federation of Religious Entities (FEERI) and the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (UCIDE). This dual leadership is reflected in inner tensions both among the Muslim congregation and with the central authorities; the signing of new articles of association in 2012 were only partially recognized by the Islamic Commission of Spain and were then blocked by the Ministry of Justice. In July, 2015 this ministry decided to promote a draft Royal Decree that would unilaterally modify the structure of the CIE. Although this Royal Decree has not been finalised, it has sparked protests which accuse the government of interventionism, of trying to divide the Muslim community and of discrimination.[37]

ON THE SYRIAN REFUGEES

The Syrian refugee crisis has erupted in the political arena with strength, polarising public opinion and compromising the commitments and principles which the European countries have asserted on paper. This crisis, which has made the most of the headlines over the last months, caught the public attention after a series of tragic shipwrecks in the Mediterranean during the month of April, and particularly after the photograph of Aylan Kurdi, the 3 year-old boy found dead on the Turkish coast, spread throughout the world. However, most of the government's reactions have not met the high expectations that the population, at least in the short term, had.

In the present case, the Spanish government has adopted several stances under different arguments, all of them, however, contrary to the acceptance of refugees or with a view to limit the numbers proposed by the European Union. Its first stance was that of opposition to the number of refugees being assigned to Spain, , the argument put forward was the large number of immigrants Spain was already supporting due to the constant arrival of illegal immigrants to the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, both located opposite the Strait of Gibraltar (SOS Racism Madrid, 2015). After the EU's September negotiations, 14,931 refugees were finally assigned to the country (in addition to the 2,740 refugees who had been assigned in May); however, only 13 have arrived at the time of writing this report. This numbers, accepted in September, should be met within the next two following years (SOS Racism Madrid, 2015).

When regarding the question of the Syrian refugees, it is hard to draw a line between the existence of Islamophobia and the mere lack of political or social interest. First of all, it is necessary to point out, as has previously been stated, the fact that Spanish culture and identity was constructed in opposition to Islam and its presence in the peninsula. This leads us to believe that because the refugees are Muslim this might result in a greater mistrust, as they are perceived as a farther "other", one that entails different

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37. Statement of the Spanish Federation of Religious Entities, September 8, 2015: http://feeri.es/manifiesto-por-un-islam-democratico-en-espana/

cultural features and is, therefore, more alien to the Spanish culture. Likewise, international tensions and the fear of terrorism have allowed the question of security to play an important role in the justification of this mistrust, and has led different governmental members to attempt to trigger a fear campaign; the possibility of terrorists entering the country alongside the refugees has been highlighted. Such is the case with the Minister of Interior Affairs, who hinted that this could, in fact, be possible,[38] especially after the Spanish Embassy in Turkey reported the break in and stealing of 1,452 blank Syrian passports in the province of Raqqa (Syria), or similar statements issued by Javier Maroto, vice-Secretary of the Popular Party for the Basque Country. Although the vice-president later discredited those statements, there is a risk of spreading this fear among the population. On the other hand, we also need to take into account the small number of refugees who have arrived in the country; this small amount merely increases the uncertainty of the situation and forces us to wait and see how events unfold.

On the other hand, following the initiative of Barcelona, several city councils created a Refuge-Cities Network which aims to take a more active stance on the issue in question through the allocation of funds and the offering of accommodation. This network has achieved a great deal of political interest and the adscription of dozens of cities and towns. In addition to this, along with governmental initiatives, many civil society associations have also decided to take action through raising awareness activities, food collection campaigns, helping refugees to settle in private homes or providing legal counselling. These groups, among which the lack of Muslim associations is notable, include the Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid, Rescate, Accem, and at an international level, Refugees Welcome, the Red Cross, ACNUR, and Save the Children.

Ceuta and Melilla, Two Singular Cases

It is also worth mentioning the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, the Spanish territories in North Africa which border on Morocco. The populations of these cities present a unique nature, as they are composed of almost 50% Muslim (43.3% in Ceuta and 50.6% in Melilla, according to the demographic data provided by the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain). Today, these two cities present two opposite realities: on the one hand, they are the main focus of jihadism or radicalisation in Spain; on the other hand, according to Muslim NGOs, these cities demonstrate high levels of integration and are evidence that the two religions can coexist.

According to a recent study by the Spanish think-tank Real Instituto Elcano[39] 75.8% of the alleged jihadist terrorists arrested in Spain between 2013 and 2015

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38. http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2015/09/08/actualidad/1441733810_992220.html

39. Fernando Reinares and Carola García Calvo, "Terroristas, redes y organizaciones: facetas de la actual movilización yihadista en España", Documentos de trabajo, 17/2015, Real Instituto Elcano, November 16, 2015, accessed December 20, 2015, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/web/rielcano_es/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/dt17-2015-reinares-garciacalvo-terroristas-redes-organizaciones-facetas-actual-movilizacion-yihadista-espana.

come from either Ceuta or Melilla. Among the reasons mentioned in this study, we find a certain coherence with the general model that terrorist groups are attractive for second-generation Muslims; in addition, these cities are close to Morocco, and, more specifically, to a region with a high number of focal points of radicalisation.

However, religious plurality is well recognized among the population of these cities, Islam is taught in schools, the construction of mosques does not find widespread opposition and there is religious assistance when needed. However, in Ceuta there are only 13 Islamic teachers for 6,757 Muslim students who are attending primary or secondary education (Demographic Study of Muslim Population 2014, UCIDE); that is, there is still a gap between needs and reality.

Nevertheless, these cities present a different problem, that of integration of different economic status social groups, due, in part, to their isolated geographical situations and to the fact that a high percentage of the population rely on public employment. This has led to two different rates of development; one, the weakest in economic terms, is particularly sensitive to religious radicalisation, as well as to public disorder.

Finally, another source of constant tension are the border fences that separate these two cities from Morocco and which aim to prevent the entrance of sub-Saharan illegal immigration. In 2014, 59.4% (7,485 people)[40] of the illegal immigration Spain received entered through these two cities. In this regard, and as one of the most controversial issues that has struck this region in the last year, it is important to mention the death of 15 immigrants when trying to cross from Morocco to Ceuta through the Spanish beach of Tarajal on February 6, 2014. In several videos recorded by the boundary line's cameras and NGOs, it is possible to see how the sub-Saharan immigrants tried to cross swimming to the Spanish beach, while the Spanish civil guard shot at them using antiriot equipment. Those who finally reached Spanish soil were then illegally returned to Moroccan territory. This case led to the trial of 16 civil guards who were, however, absolved in October 15, 2015 for lack of evidence.

Which Actors are Involved in This Conflict?

There are many small groups which actively promote Islamophobia, as well as other types of discrimination based on race, sexual preference or political opinion. Of these, it is interesting to point out those who constitute themselves as political parties; these can reach a wider range. The most important one, and the one that maintains the most Islamophobic stance, is, as we have seen, Plataforma per Catalunya, whose range of action is limited to Catalonia. This party has constructed an important part of its political program on the rejection of the Muslim population. It currently has 8 city councillors, a considerable number for a party with this reference framework. Along the same lines, the political party VOX is a party with national aspirations and

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40. Number provided by the newspaper *El Mundo*: http://www.elmundo.es/espana/2015/04/13/552bcff-3ca474139038b456f.html

was created in 2013 as an extreme-right split from the Partido Popular, although it has not achieved any parliamentary representation. Its Islamophobia was framed as a defence of Spain's Christian values. The Islamophobic stance maintained by Partido Popular in Catalonia has also been noted.

On a smaller scale, there are other radical right-wing parties, such as España 2000, Alianza Nacional or Democracia Nacional, who have also issued Islamophobic statements and promoted different activities to show and spread their hate speech, such as illegal demonstrations organized by Alianza Nacional against Islam in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks. These last parties, however, have only a few city councillors spread through diverse towns across the Spanish territory.

In contrast to these actors, it is worth mentioning the magnificent actions carried out both by the Citizen Platform against Islamophobia and the Movement against Intolerance (Movimiento contra la intolerancia). The Citizen Platform gathers a number of groups dedicated to this cause; the platform was created in 2011 and is specially oriented towards the fight against Islamophobia and the protection of Muslims. The platform monitors manifestations of Islamophobia in Spain, collates an annual Islamophobia report which is published both online and sent to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, as well as providing assistance to Muslims in difficult situations and making complaints against Islamophobic perpetrators. The Movement against Intolerance reports a wide range of discrimination and prejudice and works in developing awareness of projects, mobilising public opinion and assisting victims of discriminatory acts. We can also highlight the Observatorio Andalusí (Andalusian Observatory), an initiative of the Union for Islamic Communities, which monitors Islamophobia in Spain. The union also creates an annual report. In addition, the efforts carried out by the Islamic Culture Foundation are historically focused, with initiatives that appeal for the recognition of Spain and Europe's Islamic historical tradition, and more recently through the elaboration of a counter-argumentative website under the name "Twistislamophobia". Finally, there are a large number of smaller groups, mostly Muslim associations, which take part in fighting this hateful prejudice, such as Muslims for Peace, ACHIME, the Association for the Sociocultural Integration of Immigrants, the movement SAFI, or at a governmental level the Pluralism and Cohabitation Foundation.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Everyone agrees that education plays an essential role in ending this form of discrimination, and that it is only through knowledge that the walls which the local population might build between them and the Muslim population out of fear or incomprehension can be torn down. This knowledge can only be achieved through a more comprehensive approach, which should include awareness-raising campaigns by which society

can better understand Muslims and empathize with their situation, better training of governmental institutions, more governmental support for the NGO's participating in this field and measures that will facilitate living together with Muslims. In this sense, the active participation of Muslims in society (through neighbourhood and parents' associations, community activities, etc.) should help them to normalise their image, thus breaking the prejudices that surround it, and to present their needs and problems to the rest of society, allowing people to understand their context.

However, with regard to this segment of population, all these initiatives will not be enough without a radical transformation of the education system. The Spanish Muslim historical period needs to be understood as an essential part of the country's history which contributed to the value of our heritage; there needs to be a recognition of the Islamic elements that exist in the country. This should require the participation of specialists who can guide in teaching this topic and the Muslim population itself, who can offer their own perspective, as well as more governmental participation and funding.

The legislative system should also be strengthened in terms of the following aspects: a modification and toughening of Article 510 of the criminal code, which penalizes hate crimes, and an improvement of the district attorney's offices which specialize in the prosecution of hate crimes; the latter is still very new, as the first one was created in 2009. In the same way, a better record of hate and Islamophobic crime should also be implemented, due to the difficulties of really being aware of the number of crimes that happen every year and the heavy reliance this has created on civil associations.

Last, but certainly not least, an active effort has to be made to stop associating terrorism with Islam; at the present time this association is being built, especially concerning the link between the Syrian refugees and jihadist fighters. This is carried out by both the media and at a political level, with the same devastating effects. As we have seen, the media is filled with misinformation and prejudices. This has a very negative impact on the population, as the media works as an opinion generator. At the same time, the media helps to support political actions and statements. In this sense, more accuracy with the terms used should be demanded, as well as more care when establishing bold links. Therefore, one of the first measures that should be implemented is a better preparation of the professionals who deal with this topic, such as specialized workshops or the elaboration of more precise style guides in the case of journalism. Likewise, publishers and editors should be more demanding when dealing with this question. As for political opinions, politicians should rely on professional consultants and be more open to scholars and academic studies and opinions. Bold accusations and hate speech should not remain without consequences as well. In order for this to be possible, the government should be more active in putting an end to these prejudices and creating a public opinion that is more respectful and inclusive, and which could act as a firewall against Islamophobic actions and decisions.

CHRONOLOGY

7 January

- Terrorist attack against Charlie Hebdo carried out by Daesh/ISIL

8 January

- President Rajoy declares that in Spain there is no risk of Islamophobia

15 January

- Publication of a report presented by the Provincial Brigade of Information of Seville on how to react to Muslim suspects

2 February:

- Signature of the Antiterrorist Pact between the Partido Popular (PP) and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)

17 February

- Over 1,200 immigrants die in the Mediterranean Sea in one week

22 March

- Celebration of local elections in Andalusia

26 March

- Passing the Law of Citizen Security (Gag rule)

April and May

- The PP (Partido Popular) distributes Islamophobic pamphlets and alerts against the Islamisation of Catalonia on the occasion of the local elections

8 April

  The Ministry of Internal Affairs, Fernández Díaz, relates jihadism and the Catalonian Independence movement; in 2014 he had issued similar statements

24 May

- Celebration of the Spanish local elections

11 June

- Passing of a law that grants the Spanish nationality to the descendants of the Sephardic Jews expelled from the country in 1942

July

- 100 teachers from ten different countries send a statement to the Diocese of Cordoba and the Department of Culture of the Regional Government of Andalusia demanding the respect of the status of the mosque/cathedral of Cordoba

31 July

- Publication of the Royal Decree that modifies the structure of the Islamic Commission of Spain

28 August

- Ada Colau, mayoress of Barcelona, suggests the creation of a Refuge-Cities Network to accept refugees

2 September

- Aylan Kurdi, a 3 year-old Syrian immigrant, appears dead on the coast of Turkey. The phot travelled around the world, raising awareness of the Syrian refugee crisis

9 September

- Spain agrees with the European Union to accept 14,931 refugees

22 September

- A student of the University of Zaragoza is expelled from a lesson for wearing a hijab. The University initiated a disciplinary inquiry against the teacher responsible, who was forced to reaccept the student

27 September

- Celebration of local elections in Catalonia

15 October

- Acquittal of 16 civil guards being judged for the deaths of 15 immigrants on the beach of Tarajal (Ceuta) on February 6, 2014

13 November

- Terrorist attacks in Paris carried out by Daesh/ISIL, which resulted in the death of 137 people

26 November

- Nine more political parties sign the Antiterrorist Pact following the attacks of Paris on November 13

28 November

- The police announces that, so far, it has arrested 68 allegedly jihadist terrorist in the country

December

- The PP proposes a plan for the integration of the Muslim population in the city of Getafe; the city's government dismissed the proposal for its Islamophobic connotations

4 December
- Launching the "Stop radicalismos" campaign (Stop radicalisms) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs

20 December
- Celebration of the Spanish general elections

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Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism poses a growing threat to the democratic foundations of European constitutions and social peace as well as the coexistence of different cultures throughout Europe. Both civil society actors and states should acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and develop concrete policies to counter Islamophobia.

As the leading think tank in Turkey, SETA felt an urgent need to address this problem. In fact, there are still people denying the very existence of racism against Muslims. Many state and civil society institutions, from the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) to the countless civil society organisations throughout Europe, have done priceless work to prove and establish the opposite. Yet, institutions like the FRA publish only irregular reports on a restricted number of countries while most civil society organisations tackle racism in general and only few focus on Islamophobia in particular -this is the urgent gap our report wishes to fill.

The European Islamophobia Report (EIR) is an annual report, which is presented for the first time this year. It currently comprises 25 national reports regarding each state and the tendencies of Islamophobia in each respective country. The current report features the work of 37 extraordinary scholars. In the years to come we will attempt to cover even more countries. This report aims to enable policymakers as well as the public to discuss the issue of Islamophobia with the help of qualitative data. At the same time, several of its unique characteristic features make a difference to the current state of the debate on Islamophobia. Studies on Islamophobia have in the past predominantly concentrated on Western Europe. This is especially the case with reports focusing on Islamophobia. The EIR is the first to cover a wide range of Eastern European countries like Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia. This will enrich the debate on racism in general and Islamophobia in Europe in particular.

About SETA

Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C. and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brain storming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.

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