

The Immigrant and the Nation: Left-Right Identity Politics in France and Spain

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Abstract

The problem of integration of immigrants in the nation is based on different understandings of who can be part of it. These different perceptions are based on societal divides over the nature of the nation. My core argument is that debates over immigrants reflect debates over national identities. By using qualitative content analysis of right-wing versus left-wing media coverage of events that are of particular significance to Muslim immigrants and the native population in two very different countries, France and Spain, I demonstrate that the debates over immigrants are driven by competing left- versus right-wing conceptions of national identity. In other words, each country contains competing discourses over the nation—including the left-wing civic (liberal, universalistic, inclusive) nation and the more right-wing ethnic (conservative, particularistic, exclusive) nation, which informs different approaches toward immigrants and immigration policy in each country.

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List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
PS	Socialist Party
PSOE	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
PP	People's Party
UMP	Union for a Popular Movemen

Introduction

The Muslim population in the European Union has continuously increased in the past few decades as a result of great immigration flows. At the same time, an increased level of Islamophobia and intolerance of Islam throughout its Member States is apparent¹, who in response are faced with a lack of efficient integrating policies. Integration, as defined by the EU, is a two-way process in which both the immigrant and native population are obligated to participate in². It implies that immigrants should consider being part of the society, and natives should be comfortable with having an ethnically diverse community, i.e. both groups should feel part of the same nation. Yet, the findings of the project “*Muslims in Europe*” of the Open Society Institute clearly indicate that a high percentage of Muslims who reside in Europe have the feeling that they are neither accepted nor perceived as such by the native population³.

France and Spain are among the countries who are faced with an increased number of Muslims, coming mostly from the Maghreb region, and who have been actively involved in adopting laws and policies of integration in the past decade. Yet, an increased level of xenophobia, discrimination and racist attacks is noticed in both countries⁴ since the terrorist attacks in USA, Spain and UK, which additionally fueled negative images of this group. The lack of integration of Muslim immigrants in the society is evidenced by many events that occurred after these attacks, indicating profound ambivalence concerning the place of immigrants in society. These include the riots in France in 2005, the debates over banning religious signs and wearing in public spaces, difficulties in obtaining license for building

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-12090328> (last access 22.04.2011)

² Council of the European Union, Press Release, 19.11.2004, p.19, available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/82745.pdf (last access 22.04.2011)

³ Open Society Institute, “Muslims in Europe, A Report on 11 cities”, 2010, p. 75

⁴ European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, “Migrants’ Experiences of Racism And Xenophobia in 12 EU Member States”, Pilot Study, 2006 available at <http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Migrants-Experiences-web.pdf> (last access 19.04.2011)

religious places in Spain, burning of mosques etc. Meanwhile, public officials and citizen believe that because of their religion, it is difficult for Muslims to integrate in a modern liberal democratic society⁵.

As a result, Muslim immigrants are profoundly marginalized in most European countries and left out of the nations' "circle". National identity determines membership in the nation and consequently who belongs to the nation and who does not. The nature of national identity informs the extent to which immigrants are excluded from the national community. Hence, the problem of integration of immigrants in the nation is based on different understandings of who can be part of it. The central research question derives from this problem, focusing on what drives debates over immigration, whether these debates vary across nation-states, and whether there is in fact a link between national identity and attitudes toward immigrants. In other words, I ask whether the debates over immigration varied between France and Spain over the last decade, and what explains the nature of the internal debates that were waged over the role of immigrants in society.

My core argument is that debates over immigrants reflect debates over national identities, carried out by the mainstream left and right wing political parties in each country. This in turn reinforces attitudes toward immigrants and shapes state immigration policy according to the level of inclusiveness/exclusiveness of the nation. By looking at newspapers, which are aligned with particular political ideologies in each country, my argument contributes to the existing literature, as it reflects a critical link between debates over the national identity and debates over the role of immigrants within each country. Finally, the importance of this research is that I show that these debates line up with left-right conflicts over the nature of the nation in both countries.

⁵ Martinez Fernan and Roberto Duval "Hostility towards immigration in Spain", 2009, p. 5 available at <http://www.cide.edu/publicaciones/status/dts/DTEI%20182.pdf> (last access 08.04.2011)

Literature review

A significant literature has already pointed to the fact that immigrants, no matter who they are, are likely to be resisted by the native population because of the economic and/or cultural threats that they represent to the host country. The theories that account for anti-immigrant antipathies can be divided into two broad approaches, interest-based and symbolic politics.⁶ Both theories emphasize the concept of “threat” of the other group believing that it affects the likelihood that one’s own group will suffer in the competition for material resources or cultural distinctiveness.⁷

The interest-based theory emphasizes the struggle for scarce resources and its opposition to immigration. Esses, Jackson and Armstrong develop an instrumental model of group conflict arguing that “... this perceived competition leads to attempts to remove the sources of competition, using a variety of strategies”⁸. It involves a zero-sum belief: belief that the more the other group gains, the less is available for one’s own group⁹. Immigrants, who usually migrate into the host country because of economic reasons, affect the native population’s perceptions. Leading them to believe that there are not enough jobs and therefore access to them should be limited based on one’s status in the state. These factors are most likely to take effect when the country faces economic problems, at which times people tend to intensify their prejudices towards immigrants; low-skilled workers who are economically insecure and are competing directly with immigrants are the most likely to have negative images of immigrants.

However, many data point to the fact that immigrants actually boost countries’ economic development. Moreover, the ageing population in Europe is characterized by a

⁶ Sides John and Jack Citrin, “European Opinion about Immigration: The role of the identities, interests and information”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 37, 2007 p. 478

⁷ Ibid, p. 481

⁸ Esses M. Victoria, Lynne M. Jackson, Tamara L. Armstrong, “Intergroup competition and attitudes towards immigrants and immigration: An instrumental model of group conflict”, *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 54, No.4, 1998, p. 702

⁹ Ibid, p. 704

longer life and low birth rates among EU citizens, representing a clear fact that the EU and its growing economy will be in need of immigrants. This will affect the working age population in EU, which is expected to decrease by 52 million by 2050.¹⁰ It would certainly not be rational for EU Member States to pursue closed-border or highly restrictive immigration policies, having in mind that its economic ambitions are to enhance their status in an exceedingly competitive global market¹¹. More importantly, EU Member States started implementing immigration policies that favor high-skilled immigrants (the so called “Blue Card”)¹², which means that high skilled native workers are also economically threatened by new flows of labor. However, recent data has shown that the low-skilled natives are still more likely to oppose immigrants than high-skilled natives, and that differences in attitudes cannot be explained by the differential exposure to economic competition¹³.

A second strand of scholarship focuses on symbolic politics, which emphasizes the importance of morals, values and beliefs of the native population and their protection from any outsider groups. Any group which is perceived as culturally different would generate perceptions of threats against this homogeneity, as well as the native population’s cultural distinctiveness and the way of life. Concerns over group identity intensify due to perceptual distinctiveness, salience and entativity¹⁴. Muslim immigrants stand out by virtue of darker skin colors (immigrants from the Maghreb region), of dress (headscarves or caps), of lack of fluency in speaking the host country’s language (or speaking it with a certain accent). With regard to salience, immigration issues are important topics covered in election programs and media news, especially in the last decade due to the terroristic attacks and the global financial

¹⁰ Eurostat statistics, “Pocketbook on Euro-Mediterranean statistics”, 2010 edition, p. 25

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm (last access 11.05.2011)

¹² <http://www.europeanunionbluecard.com/> (last access 11.05.2011)

¹³ Sniderman Paul M., L. Hagendoorn and M. Prior, “Predisposing Factors and Situational Triggers: Exclusionary Reactions to Immigrant Minorities”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, 2004, p. 36

¹⁴ Ibid

crisis in 2008. In terms of entativity¹⁵, as Sniderman et al. mention, immigrants have strong family and group loyalties, unifying beliefs and distinctive practices.¹⁶ According to the symbolic politics theory, anti-immigrant attitudes will be more prevalent when the group is culturally highly distinct from the culture of the native population. In this sense, any salient cultural differences between the natives and immigrants will generate perceptions of threat to its native population's national identity, which will translate into hostility toward these immigrants¹⁷.

Notwithstanding the “threat” perceptions, another important factor that determines public attitudes towards immigrants is the contact that individuals have with immigrants in their daily lives. When defining contact, McLaren suggests that it should be based on intimacy, such as friendship, in order to figure out how everyday conversations affect prejudices. The theory holds that the more contact people have with immigrants, the more it leads to reducing prejudices towards these groups.¹⁸ However, most of the immigrants in the EU live under conditions of economic insecurity, in ghettos and isolated from the society. This significantly reduces the chances of establishing contacts with natives from various parts of the cities. On the other hand, mass media and the information disclosed to the public usually contain negative images and intensify stereotypes about Muslims, which create predispositions toward rejecting them as a group. Moreover, media prefer to allude to the “threats” that immigrants present and tackle issues that are of national importance, rather than promote tolerance and mutual understandings. Likewise, Sides and Citrin conclude that anti-

¹⁵ Entativity, as defined in the same article, refers to perceived internal cohesiveness of a group.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Sides John and Jack Citrin, “European Opinion about Immigration: The role of the identities, interests and information”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 37, 2007 p. 480

¹⁸ McLaren Lauren M. “Anti-immigrant Prejudice in Europe: Contact, Threat Perception and Preferences for the exclusion of Migrants”, *Social Forces*, Vol.81, Issue 3, 2003, p. 913

immigrant sentiments are more likely in environments where the numbers of immigrants are exaggerated by the media¹⁹, creating a picture of invasion of foreign population.

In order to explain negative attitudes towards immigrants, both theories focus on factors that vary at the individual level. Such factors include the economic conditions and psychological predispositions of each individual: their level of education, sector of employment, level of income, place of residence and political ideology. An important question in relation to these theories is whether the threat of scarce resources and competition between in-group and out-group will terminate once the immigrants are perceived as part of in-group? If yes, then what determines the perception of who is an insider and who is an outsider? What shifts the boundaries of national identity?

This thesis argues that community-level perceptions of national identity have an essential impact on the community's perception of immigrants. Therefore, explaining attitudes toward immigrants requires not only reflecting upon individual factors but also considering debates over national identity at the societal level, and how these debates inform over immigrants and immigration policies. I argue that symbolic politics matters critically for anti-immigrant sentiment, yet these are not determined by individual-level characteristics alone, but also by shared understandings of the national identity. I suggest that these debates are conducted within each society along left and right ideological lines. This division is due to the fact that the former represents ideologies based on liberal and universalistic approaches, whereas the latter stands for conservative and particularistic understanding of the nation. These differential views of the nation inform the left versus right approach toward immigration policies, thus reflecting a more or less inclusive approach toward integrating immigrants into society. Finally, I show that the debates over immigrants carried out in the

¹⁹ Sides John and Jack Citrin, p. 480

public sphere are a function of public debates over national identity, which reinforces the dominant view of immigrants and shapes immigration policy.

Research Design

Using the method of agreement, I analyze two EU Member States, France and Spain, in order to demonstrate that the left and right wing debate over immigrants, and simultaneously over national identity, is very similar despite significant cross-country political and economic differences. These differences are mainly based on the time of arrival of immigrants, the political systems, their attitudes towards minorities, the number of Muslim immigrants, and the citizenship laws.

France has been a host to immigrants for a very long time (especially in the 1950s and 1960s). Because of this, it has adopted and changed its immigration policies many times. Spain, on the other hand, being a country of large emigration flows, has a very short immigration history, which started after its accession to the EU in 1986. Regarding the political systems, France is a semi-presidential, centralized republic, whereas Spain is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy and quasi-federation giving a lot of autonomy to its regions. Simultaneously, this reflects a different approach towards minorities. Namely, France, based on its notions of equality and strict secularity, has a long tradition of an assimilationist, republican approach towards immigrants, believing that they should strive to accept French values²⁰. Moreover, French law prohibits identification of the population according to religious, ethnic or racial indicators, avoiding any explicit recognition and positive discrimination of minorities. Yet, it is estimated that the Muslim population varies

²⁰ Furlong C. Abbey “Cultural Integration in the European Union: A Comparative Analysis of the Immigration policies of France and Spain”, *Transnational Law and Contemporary Problems*, Vol. 19, Spring 2010, p. 683

from 3.5 to 5 million, i.e. comprising approximately less than 8 percent of the total population²¹.

On the other hand, the Muslim population in Spain represents only 2.5 percent of the total population²². Yet, despite Spain's division in autonomous regions, its recognized minorities and the possibilities of different identities (national, regional, local), it treats Muslim immigrants with significant reluctance to allow them to integrate into society. The low level of acceptance is clearly indicated in the difficulty of obtaining licenses for building mosques, and this has been characterized as one of the biggest problems Muslims face in Spain²³.

Finally, with regard to citizenship laws, France has more favorable conditions for naturalization and permits immigrants to apply for citizenship after five years of continuous residence in the country²⁴. Spain, on the other hand, differentiates between "Spanish nationality by origin" (*nacionalidad española de origen*) that is, a "natural-born Spaniard"—and the "Spanish nationality not by origin" (*nacionalidad española no de origen* in Spanish) and asks for ten years of continuous residence²⁵.

In order to test the premise that attitudes toward immigrants are at least partly determined by the public debate over national identity, I am going to use qualitative content analysis on events that involved Muslims in both countries and have been covered in the mainstream newspapers. This will enable me to ascertain the socially constructed image of immigrants and assess the connection between this and the dominant conceptions of the nation in both countries. Additionally, qualitative content analysis is useful for exploring the

²¹ Amiraux Valerie, "From Empire to Republic, the French Muslim dilemma" in *"Muslims in 21st Century Europe"* edited by Triandafyllidou Anna, Routledge, 2010, p. 138

²² Zapata – Barrero Ricardo, "Muslims in Spain: Blurring past and present Moors", in *"Muslims in 21st Century Europe"* edited by Triandafyllidou Anna, Routledge, 2010, p. 182

²³ Ibid, p. 185

²⁴ Civil Code, available at http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/html/codes_traduits/code_civil_textA.htm (last access 13.05.2011)

²⁵ Civil Code, original title: Código Civil, available at http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Privado/cc.11t1.html (last access 13.05.2011)

meanings underlying physical messages as well as the inferences drawn from them in the data²⁶.

The time period I am going to focus on is events that occurred in the last decade, after the 9/11 attacks in the USA. The reason for this period is the fact that these events precipitated an intense discussion over the role of Muslim immigrants in society in most countries and clearly reflected their positions on cultural diversity and religious and ethnic tolerance.

I test my claims using the procedure for collecting data: firstly I establish the attitudes of the mainstream political parties towards immigrants as well as their conceptualization of the national identity. I am doing this by looking at electoral programs of the mainstream parties in the last decade, i.e. France's mainstream right *Union for a Popular Movement*/Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) and the mainstream left *Socialist Party*/Parti Socialiste (PS); and Spain's mainstream right *People's Party*/Partido Popular (PP) and mainstream left *Spanish Socialist Workers' Party*/Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE). The reason why I am including only mainstream political parties in my analysis is to deconstruct the images of immigrants, nationhood and belonging held by the mainstream right and the mainstream left. In so doing, I capture the dominant views of the nation and nationhood in the public discourse as well as mainstream debates over immigrant issues in each country in order to determine whether there is a link between the two.

The second step is pinpoint particular events in the coverage I am going to look at. In order to gain a fair representation of these events in both the mainstream right and left, I analyzed events that were of mutual interests to both Muslim immigrants and native population across the political spectrum. These are policies and debates that have a high impact on Muslims and invoke national issues such as religion, culture, national security and

²⁶ Zhang Yan and Barbara M. Wildemuth, "Qualitative Analysis of Content" p. 2, available at http://www.ils.unc.edu/~yanz/Content_analysis.pdf (last access 12.05.2011)

governmental decisions in general. In this way, I provide an image of what integration for Muslim immigrants and native population means, as well as how debates over the national identity proceeded in each country and what connection, if any, existed between this and mainstream debates over immigration in each country. Or, to put it simply, I sought evidence of such a link in coverage of events that tackle issues such as national identity and imply the question: what does it mean to belong to the French/Spanish nation. All the analyzed events have been covered in the media for more than two months. They are the following:

- France: the debate over the headscarf ban in 2004; the riots in 2005; and the debate initiated by Sarkozy about French national identity in 2009.
- Spain: the train bombings in Madrid in 2004; the self-censorship in the traditional festival *Moros y Cristianos* in 2006; and the debate over banning the burqa in 2010.

In order to generate a clear picture of the debate over national identity I am going to use the mainstream newspapers as a proxy due to the fact that in both countries they are politically aligned with the mainstream right and left ideologies about nation and belonging. I analyzed news reports and editorials on these events from daily newspapers in France (the left-center *Le Monde* and the right-center *Figaro*²⁷) and in Spain (the right-center *El Mundo* and the left-center *El Pais*²⁸), which were chosen according to the papers' daily circulations and their political affiliations.

The reason for analyzing newspapers is that the discourses reflected therein facilitate the formation of images about the surrounding world and help the construction of categories for self-identification. They form the network of social life by establishing meanings and as such play a crucial role in producing, maintaining and representing ideas, values and beliefs about the nation²⁹.

²⁷ Hallin Daniel and Paolo Mancini, “*Comparing Media Systems, Three models of media and politics*”, Cambridge University Press, p.98

²⁸ Ibid, p. 104

²⁹ Zaller R. John, “*The Nature and Origin of Mass Opinion*”, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 306

Moreover, the discursive constructions of the French and Spanish newspapers are similar to each other. Both countries host the Mediterranean/Polarized pluralist model, a model defined by Hallin and Mancini. According to them, it is characterized by an elite-oriented press, where political parallelism³⁰ is very high, instrumentalization of the media by political parties for political purposes is common and journalism is not so strongly differentiated from political activism³¹. Furthermore, the model ascribes a strong alignment of newspapers with political parties, efforts of journalists to pay more attention to their own opinion and interpretation of stories and interventions in the political world³². This clearly indicates that the attitudes defined by political parties will easily be transferred to the public in an ideological manner.

All the selected articles are analyzed in their original language and translated to the best of my knowledge. Using the two main keywords *Muslims* and *Immigration*³³, I filtered the articles related to the events mentioned above during a specified time period (Appendix I). In order to find the articles related to the specific events I used additional keywords: for the French events (in the same order as above): veil, riots, national identity; for the Spanish events (in the same order): 11M, Moors and Christians, Burqa³⁴.

The unit of analysis for the selected articles is paragraphs. Each paragraph has been placed in the following two categories: heterogeneous understanding of the nation and homogeneous understanding of the nation. This process uses inductive reasoning, by which themes and categories emerge from the data through constant comparisons³⁵. I am using the directed content analysis, defined by Hsieh and Shannon as an approach to qualitative content

³⁰ Political parallelism as defined by the authors refers to the media content – the extent to which different media reflect different political orientations in their news and reporting. Hallin Daniel and Paolo Mancini, “*Comparing Media Systems, Three models of media and politics*”, Cambridge University Press p. 28

³¹ Ibid, p. 73

³² Ibid, p. 113

³³ French: musulman, immigration; Spanish: musulmanes, inmigración

³⁴ French: voile/foulard, émeutes, identité nationale; Spanish: 11M, Moros y Cristianos, burka

³⁵ Zhang Yan and Barbara M. Wildemuth, “*Qualitative Analysis of Content*” p. 2, available at http://www.ils.unc.edu/~yanz/Content_analysis.pdf (last access 12.05.2011)

analysis based on the fact that the keywords for data selection have been developed before and during the data analysis³⁶.

The category “heterogeneous nation” emphasizes all the positive examples and objective perceptions related to Muslims. It embraces the recognition that different ethnicities and religions form part of the nation. Moreover, it presents the image of an inclusive nation based on the idea that Muslim immigrants, once “adopting the rules” can become full members of the nation. Hence, the borders of the nation are flexible and Muslim immigrants are one of us.

The category “homogeneous nation” emphasizes subjective interpretations and generalizations of facts regarding Muslim immigrants and Islam, presenting them in a negative manner. It indicates support for a unitary culture of the native population, which leaves out that of the Muslim immigrants. In addition, it generates the “othering” process, in which Muslims are portrayed as outsiders or invaders. It focuses on the exclusive idea of the nation, thus the borders of the nation are fixed, and the rules for becoming part of the nation are based on blood-ties.

The following examples help to differentiate these categories and give transferability³⁷ to further research. Heterogeneity would include paragraphs where immigrants are referred to as French/Spanish Muslims, whereas cultural homogeneity refers to paragraphs where the same group is called Muslim immigrants and there is no inclusive linkage made between them and the French/Spanish nation. Additionally, claiming that Islamic terrorists have possibilities to easily settle down in an EU Member State because of illegal immigration would be a homogenous understanding of the nation. It generalizes arguments and interferes that all illegal immigrants are a danger to the nation. On the contrary, acknowledging the need of the

³⁶ Hsieh Hsiu-Fang and Sarah E. Shannon, “Three approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis”, *Qualitative health research*, November 2005, p. 1281-1283

³⁷ Transferability means the extent to which the working hypotheses can be applied to another context, Zhang Yan, p. 6

illegal immigrants and claiming that among them there might be asylum seekers mild the image of immigrants as invaders and bases the nation on solidarity and understanding.

I have intentionally divided the categories into binary opposites, because in this way I can test whether variable portrayal of immigrant issues corresponds to varied views of the nation, which in turn corresponds to the dominant left and right-wing perspectives on religion, culture and national security.

The possible limitation, while analyzing the data, is based on the fact that qualitative content analysis is a quite subjective method that allows constructing issues according to interpretive methods. This also means that the patterns of meaning might be interpreted differently by other scholars. Nevertheless, the categories' definitions and examples of what constitute them, given above, try to contribute as much as possible to the credibility and reliability of the findings.

Chapter division

The following chapter will give a detailed analysis of my argument by making the link between the mainstream left-right ideological divide, dominant debates over the nation and who belongs to the nation, and consequently the place of immigrants in the different national conceptions. Chapters Two and Three will outline the results of a detailed analysis of the cases, France and Spain respectively, based on an analysis of the aforementioned news reports using the categories mentioned above. Finally, a conclusion and answer to the set of research questions will be given.

Chapter 1: National Identity and the left-right division

Each individual has a range of collective identities based on common, shared criteria, which define the group in terms of “us” and distinguish it from “them”. One of these identities is the nation. Yet, the nation is not just any collective identity—it is the identity shared by those who are tied to the state. As Brubaker notes, the state claims to be the state of the citizens, who are legally bounded to it as it derives legitimacy to protect and further their interests.³⁸ Furthermore, membership in the state community is informed by membership in a national community, which largely determines citizenship rights³⁹. The rules of national belonging set the rules for getting key documents, such as state citizenship, residence permits and visas, thus establishing criteria for rights in the state. Hence, state citizenship highly depends on the rules of national membership. Consequently, how one views the immigration policies reflects how one views the nation and who belongs to it. Therefore, it is of high importance how the relevant nation is defined and what are its criteria for membership.

1.1 The nation, national identity and citizenship

The nation as defined by Smith is: “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and common legal rights and duties for all members”⁴⁰. He identifies two models of nations, civic and ethnic. The former is defined as a political community centered on a demarcated territory emphasizing common institutions and a single code of rights; the latter focuses on the descent of the individual belonging to an organic community⁴¹. Or to put it simply, while the civic model states that individuals have to belong to some nation, but can freely choose it, the ethnic model allows no such liberty and is

³⁸ Brubaker Rogers, “Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany”, Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 21

³⁹ Ibid, p. 28

⁴⁰ Smith Anthony D. “National Identity”, Penguin Books, 1991, p. 14

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 9-11

embodied in the individuals' ancestry⁴². Nevertheless, the nation is a community that determines its membership by identifying specific characteristics. For Smith, that identity is based on the ethnic origin of the nation and the sharing features, like language and dress code, constituting the marker of the nation⁴³. Additionally, national identity could also be characterized by ethnicity, religion, common culture and traditions – presenting additional ethnic characteristics; and respect for the legal system, being born or living in the country for a very long time, adherence to the basic state ideology etc – presenting the civic characteristics of the nation.⁴⁴

Closely linked to the two models of nations, are the citizenship laws that states tend to follow, *jus sanguinis* and *jus soli*. The former is characterized by ethnic origin, which allows individuals who can prove that they are of a particular ethnic descent, no matter of place of birth, to acquire the citizenship of that state. The latter is characterized by place of birth, without considering the parents' citizenships.⁴⁵ Brubaker describes citizenship as “an abstract, formal construct” and a formal closure against non-citizens, which overlaps with “the informal closure against ethnocultural nonnationals”.⁴⁶ He argues that one way to understand the nation is to understand its citizenship laws⁴⁷. Hence, nations with preference for *jus sanguinis* would be ethnic, whereas nations preferring *jus soli* would be civic. One way or the other, citizenship implies closure, yet the degree of closure depends highly on the model the nation is build. In the same line, nations based on the ethnic model would have less favorable attitudes towards immigrants, since they constitute an exclusive identity characterized by common descent and history, whereas the other model is viewed as more liberal allowing a

⁴² Ibid, p. 10

⁴³ Ibid, p. 75

⁴⁴ Reeskens Tim and Marc Hooghe, “Beyond the civic-ethnic dichotomy: investigating the structure of citizenship concepts across thirty-three countries”, *Nations and Nationalism*, 16(4), 2010, p. 584

⁴⁵ Medrano Juan Diez and Matthias Koenig “Nationalism, Citizenship and Immigration in Social Science Research”, *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, Vol.7, No.2 2005, p. 83-84

⁴⁶ Brubaker, p. 30

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 14

greater freedom of joining the nation⁴⁸. Yet, as Schnapper notes, all states contain elements of both models of nation and citizenship laws. In the private sphere, individuals were to remain faithful to their ethnic origins and beliefs, while in the public sphere they all share the same rights and obligations and are equal citizens.⁴⁹

Yet, whether based on ethnic or civic models, both enable the process of “Othering”, since one can easily distinguish who is the other or not part of the nation. This “othering” process refers also to Muslim immigrants, which due to their religious, cultural and ethnic distinction are easily left out of the nation’s circle. According to Gellner, individuals belong to the same nation if they recognize each other as doing so, or if they share the same culture⁵⁰. Following this, people’s perception towards cultural diversity and acceptance of different ethnicities as part of the same nation should be very high, in order to accept a distinct group such as Muslims.

1.2 Constructing national identity

Using Anderson’s terminology, the nation is an imagined community. Anderson defined it as such due to the fact that “even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”⁵¹. He describes the power of print in spreading language as a tool to create a feeling of a common past and a common future⁵². Yet, nowadays when approaching the concept of language in the media we should focus on its expanded role. It means a vocabulary of images which has the power to manipulate and mobilize population for certain affairs of particular significance to the collective identity⁵³. These identities are formed on an individual

⁴⁸ Lewin-Epstein and Asaf Levanon “National Identity and Xenophobia in an ethnically divided society”, *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, Vol.7, No.2 2005, p. 91

⁴⁹ Schnapper Dominique, “Citizenship and national identity in Europe”, *Nations and Nationalism*, 8(1), 2002, p.

⁵⁰ Gellner Ernest, “*Nations and Nationalism*”, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983

⁵¹ Anderson Benedict, “*Imagined Communities*”, London: Verso, 1991, p. 6

⁵² Ibid, p.44

⁵³ Price E. Monroe, “*Television, the Public Sphere and National Identity*”, Clarendon Press Oxford, 1995, p. 53

basis as part of the subjective feeling of belonging together as a group. They promote loyalty and obligations towards the collective and facilitate the acceptance of collectively binding decisions⁵⁴. On the other hand, they exist as a matter of shared beliefs, values, language and culture, which designates in-group and out-group members, thus facilitating the demarcation of the nation's "borders"⁵⁵. Yet, when encouraging loyalty to the community, groups need explicit rules of inclusion and exclusion which means clear criteria for membership⁵⁶.

In this way, the nation engages itself in a debate to define its identity. The most prominent framers of identity will certainly be political actors and government officials, who through media appearances, political campaigning and public debates shape the criteria and shift the boundaries of what is believed to constitute the nation⁵⁷. Finally, national identities will be intensified when political actors emphasize issues relevant to the nation's character, when they highlight stereotypes of out-group members and when making a clear distinction between "us" and "them"⁵⁸.

In this sense, the mainstream right is seen as the issue owner of immigration and national identity issues, having a more conservative approach on cultural issues and is more concerned with the homogeneity and ethnic-based membership of the nation. The mainstream left due to its specific approach to socio-economic issues, is believed to favor a pro-immigrant approach and endorse a more civic-based membership in the nation⁵⁹. Hence, the bipolar opposition of left-right debate over immigration neatly reflects the civic-ethnic debate over nations. Unlike Brubaker, I argue that each national community or identity consists of both civic and ethnic elements, and each community engages in ongoing debate over whether their

⁵⁴ Bergbauer Stephanie, "Political parties and the mobilization of collective identities in European Integration", Paper prepared for presentation at the Fifth Pan-European Conference on EU politics, June 2010, p. 7, available at <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-porto/virtualpaperroom/020.pdf> (last access 29.04.2011)

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.9

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.10

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.10

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.13

⁵⁹ Alonso Sonia and Fonseca Sara Claro da, "*Immigration, Left and Right*", Center for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, December 2009, p. 1, available at (last access 03.05.2011): <http://www.march.es/ceacs/publicaciones/working/archivos/WP247-Alonso-ClarodaFonseca.pdf>

national identity is organic and ethnically given or heterogeneous and voluntaristic; these views are typically represented by the mainstream right and left political parties, respectively.

With regard to the cases, France's approach to immigration in the last decade has become more restrictive. In line with the assimilationist approach, both candidates of the mainstream parties stressed their concern with immigration during the 2007 presidential elections. The left, led by Ségolène Royal, had a more "inclusive" approach towards immigrants with greater emphasis on positive discrimination in employment and housing, extension of voting rights in local elections and condemning the implication that immigrants are a threat to the national identity. The right, led by Nicolas Sarkozy, emphasized demands for a far more restrictive and assimilationist approach attributing the failures to integrate to the immigrants themselves. Sarkozy even introduced a Ministry for Immigration, National Identity, Integration and Development Partnership after the elections in order to deal "effectively" with immigration issues⁶⁰.

Spain's mainstream left and right had a similar approach to immigration and national identity in the 2008 legislative elections. The mainstream right stressed the issue of immigration proposing restrictive policies for new arrivals. It also anticipated a contract for integration, obliging immigrants to learn the basics of Spanish culture and the language, and respect the values of Spain⁶¹ (a similar policy has been implemented in France since 2006). The left wing, which introduced very liberal immigration policies since 2004, became less welcoming of new immigrants (although this might be attributed in part to the fall-out from the global economic crisis and the considerable downturn Spain faced during this period), and

⁶⁰ Marthaler Sally, "Nicolas Sarkozy and the politics of French immigration policy", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15:3, April 2008, p. 395

⁶¹ Programa de Gobierno Partido Popular 2008, p. 220, available at <http://www.elpais.com/especial/elecciones-generales/pp.pdf> (last access 13.05.2011)

called for better control of the borders⁶². It also implemented a voluntary repatriation program, starting from 2008.⁶³

1.3 The correlation and implications

Due to the large immigration flows and the naturalization processes of France and Spain, their Muslim population is continuously increasing. Simultaneously, citizenship acquisition of the same group in these countries is also increasing⁶⁴. Yet, the events analyzed in the following chapters indicate that Muslims are hardly perceived as French or Spaniards, although they might be citizens of the countries. Therefore, citizenship alone does not reflect the feeling of belonging to the nation. Moreover, it does not help to measure the inclusiveness of the nation. The remaining question is how tolerant are these countries towards shifting the criteria for national identity, now that immigrants with different ethnic and religious background have come to live with the natives and are seeking status in the state.

Since national identity is given to be the critical factor that informs state policy toward immigrants, it is important to establish what determines this identity. Having in mind Muslims' close relationship with religion and their visibility and demands, we have to look at issues that tackle religion and tolerance of different cultures and ethnicities in order to establish the connection between the debate over national identity and attitudes toward immigrants to the state. In particular, in both France and Spain, the mainstream left should take the side in the debate over immigration as the defender of cultural diversity, whereas the mainstream right should take the position that cultural diversity weakens the nation and homogeneity strengthens it. Hence, the civic and ethnic notions of a nation should be clearly reflected in the left-right division.

⁶² Programa Electoral, PSOE 2008, available at: <http://www.elpais.com/especial/elecciones-generales/psoe.pdf> (last access 13.05.2011)

⁶³ <http://www.surinenglish.com/20090609/news/spain/more-than-immigrants-take-200906090918.html> (last access 13.05.2011)

⁶⁴ Eurostat statistics, "Pocketbook on Euro-Mediterranean statistics", 2010 edition, p. 25

However, my aim is to go beyond the fact that the left is more tolerant towards minorities than the right. In fact, I demonstrate that there is a connection between one's position on immigrants and one's position on the nature of the Spanish or French nation. This is the outcome of the different understandings of the nation, i.e. there is more than one national identity within the nation, led by the competing discourses of the mainstream left and right. Thus, I show that there are contending ethnic versus civic “conceptions” of nations, which determine the battle lines on immigration policy within each country. Finally, I argue that the mainstream left perceives the nation as voluntaristic whereas the mainstream right as blood based. The following chapters will elaborate this in detail.

Chapter 2: Muslim immigrants and the French national identity debate

France's relationship with the Muslim world is based on its colonial history in the region, especially with Algeria, having been a former part of the French colonial empire and Tunisia and Morocco its protectorates, leaving today an impression among the native population that immigrants from these countries come from cultures which are unable to lead themselves and inferior to the advanced French culture⁶⁵. France has the biggest Muslim population in the EU⁶⁶, which numbers increased even after the labor migration restrictions in 1974 of the (at that time) European Community, due to family reunifications, endogamy and children born of second, third and even fourth generation immigrants. Immigration as a politically important issue entered the election programs of the mainstream parties after the 1980s and was heated with the first headscarf debate in 1989. Yet, it was a quite surprising motion when the far right party Front National (FN), entered the second round of presidential elections in 2002 competing with the mainstream right's candidate Jacques Chirac. The FN leader, Le Pen was primarily concerned with criminality and immigration and gained 16.9% of the total votes⁶⁷. However, since 2002 French immigration policies has been largely driven by Nicolas Sarkozy, leader of the mainstream right UMP and president of the Republic from 2007.

In the last presidential elections in 2007, Sarkozy promised an even more restrictive approach to immigration issues, stating that he will ask from all new immigrants that they possess French language knowledge and respect the French values before their arrival⁶⁸. In contrast, what PS and its candidate Ségolène Royal proposed was tolerance, humanity and

⁶⁵ Gallis Paul et al, "Muslims in Europe: Integration Policies in Selected Countries", November 18, 2005, available at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33166.pdf> (last access 26.04.2011)

⁶⁶ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4385768.stm> (last access 25.05.2011)

⁶⁷ Mayer Nonna, "Le Pen's come back: The 2002 Presidential election", International Journal of Urban and Regional Research", 27(2), 2003, p. 456

⁶⁸ Projét Electoral, UMP 2007, p. 14, available at <http://www.elections-presidentielles-2007.org/programme/monprojet.pdf> (last access 25.05.2007)

improvement of living conditions of immigrants, centered on the question of integration. She condemned any comments that immigrants are negatively affecting the national identity, and instead insisted that they contribute to its enrichment⁶⁹. This indicates that the mainstream left perceives the French nation as a multicultural nation based on flexible borders allowing different ethnicities to enter the nation.

Sarkozy introduced two very important laws on immigration while being Minister of Interior Affairs. The first one in 2003, aimed at reducing the number of asylum seekers and deporting 25 000 illegal immigrants, justifying it as facilitation to integrate the ones already settled in France. The second one in 2006, intended to adjust immigration policies to the needs and capacities of France, with an objective to attract high-skilled labor. Despite the restrictive laws, Sarkozy's firm approach to deal with the 2005 riots contributed significantly to his victory at the 2007 Presidential elections, where he promised a fight against criminality and violence, alluding to the immigrants in France.⁷⁰

Sarkozy introduced the Ministry for Immigration, National Identity, Integration and Development Partnership soon after the elections, which was heavily criticized by the opposition as an attack and provocation to the immigrants. In April 2010, France banned the burqa from being worn in public places, and in March 2011 he went even further by stating: "If you come to France, you agree to base yourself in a single community, the national community; if you don't accept that, you don't come to France"⁷¹.

Based on the notion of equality and secularism, the French practice of integrating immigrants has been rather assimilationist aiming at one single and strong national identity. However, the following three events, analyzed in this chapter, point to the fact that

⁶⁹ Projét Electoral, PS 2007, p. 24, p.25 available at http://www.elections-presidentielles-2007.org/programme/SR_pacte_presidentiel.pdf (last access 25.05.2011)

⁷⁰ Marthaler Sally, "Nicolas Sarkozy and the politics of French immigration policy", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15:3, April 2008, p. 390-391

⁷¹ "Si vous venez en France, vous acceptez d'intégrer une communauté unique, une communauté nationale; Si vous n'acceptez pas cela, alors ne venez pas en France" <http://www.lagrandeepoque.com/LGE/Europe/Selon-Nicolas-Sarkozy-les-immigres-doivent-sadapter-a-la-France.html> (last access 25.05.2011)

assimilation did not work for Muslim immigrants since they are either not successfully integrated or highly discriminated against in society. The events are: the debate over the headscarf ban in 2004; the riots in 2005; and the debate initiated by Sarkozy about French national identity in 2009. They examine issues related to religion, national security, culture and values, which are important to understand French national identity from a leftist and rightist approach.

2.1 The headscarf ban in French public schools

France, as Joppke describes it, is the mother of all headscarf controversies⁷². He argues that the clash appears because Islam provokes the essence of republicanism, the distinction between private and public sphere, pushing religion into the public⁷³. The 1905 French law on Separation of the Churches and State requires a strict secularism and neutrality of the French State stating: “The Republic neither recognizes, nor salaries, nor subsidizes any religion”⁷⁴. The *Affaire du Foulard*⁷⁵ started in 1989, when three girls were expelled from school for wearing headscarves. The debate continued in the following years, but culminated during the second term of Jacques Chirac’s Presidency. In July 2003 he composed a Commission in order to examine how the principle of *laïcité* should be implemented in practice. On 11th December 2003 the commission sent its report to the President declaring that conspicuous displays of religion violate the secularity of the French school system⁷⁶. Hence, France on 15th March 2004 adopted a law banning any conspicuous religious symbols in

⁷² Joppke Christian, “Veil: Mirror of Identity”, Polity Press, 2009, p.27

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Article 2, “La République ne reconnaît, ne salarie ni ne subventionne aucun culte”, *Loi du 9 décembre 1905 relative à la séparation des Églises et de l’État*, available at <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/eglise-etat/sommaire.asp> (last access 21.05.2011)

⁷⁵ the headscarf affair

⁷⁶ Rapport au Président De La République, 11th December 2003, available at : <http://lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/034000725/0000.pdf> (last access 23.05.2003)

primary and secondary school⁷⁷. The effect was most noticeable on Muslim girls, since they are the most visible group in wearing these religious symbols.

In analyzing this event, I focus on the period between the Commission's report and the adoption of the law, i.e. 11th December 2003 – 15th March 2004, when the debate on whether to adopt the Commission proposal was initiated. The total number of analyzed articles is 113 (54 from *Le Monde* and 59 from *Le Figaro*). Each paragraph has been placed into categories. 42% of the analyzed paragraphs in *Le Monde* are categorized under heterogeneous and 33% under homogeneous understanding of the nation. In *Le Figaro* 22% of the analyzed paragraphs represented heterogeneous and 52% homogeneous understanding of the nation (see Appendix I).

Both mainstream parties supported the report of the Commission to ban the headscarf in the interest of French secularity. The PS declared that the results of the Commission were very similar to its own visions regarding secularity⁷⁸. The former Minister for National Education of France (a member of PS), Jack Lang, even stated that the proposed law is “a first step, yet very modest, towards full secularization of the school”.⁷⁹ In the same line, *Le Monde* specified that 53% of Muslim women supported the law⁸⁰.

Nevertheless, one month later demonstrations occurred. The demonstrators' banners contained messages such as: “*It is my choice*” and “*Neither father nor brother, we chose the veil*”⁸¹. *Le Figaro* attacked the participants in the demonstrations identifying them as anti-Western, anti-Semitic and homophobic, despite the fact that the demonstrators declared the protests *anti-Islamophobic*. Furthermore, *Le Figaro* categorized the participants as extremists

⁷⁷ <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT0000000417977&dateTexte=> (last access 23.05.2003)

⁷⁸ *Le Figaro*, 12th December 2003, p. 1,10-11 “Des réactions mitigées; LAÏCITÉ Dirigeants politiques, religieux et syndicaux”

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, “est un premier pas, encore trop modeste, vers la pleine laïcité de l'école”

⁸⁰ *Le Monde*, 17th December 2003, “53 % des musulmans contre les signes à l'école”

⁸¹ *Le Figaro*, 19th January 2004, Title : “LAÏCITE Quelque 20 000 musulmans favorables au port du voile à l'école publique ont défilé à Paris et en province”. Original : “C'est mon choix”, “Ni père, ni frère, le voile on l'a choisi.”

and attackers of the French values and believes that the women participants have been forced to demonstrate. At the same time, trying to justify the headscarf ban, *Le Figaro* conducts interviews with two high qualified women, who also participated in the demonstrations, and declared that they could not find jobs because they felt discriminated against wearing the veil.⁸²

One of the main organizers of these demonstrations appeared to be Oxford's University Professor Tariq Ramadan. Both mainstream newspapers devoted attention to him, who condemned the law and asked for greater political representation of Muslims in France, thus calling on Muslim organizations to mobilize and protest against the law. In response, *Le Figaro* represented him as a defender of the Islamic practice to stone women and a suspicious criticizer of Jewish writing, who wants to propagate Political Islam.⁸³ *Le Monde*, on the other hand, distanced Ramadan from extremists and tried to minimize the negative perceptions people might have about him by presenting a whole article about his life entitled: "*Tariq Ramadan, his life, his network, his ideology*"⁸⁴.

Unlike the mainstream right, immediately linking any opponents of the new law to extremist and fundamentalist views, the mainstream left took a more objective approach to the demonstrations and the organizers. *Le Monde* presents positive images of the participants starting with the fact that some of the women participants wore veils colored according to the French national flag. The implication was that the women, although having a different religion, feel French and share the same identity as native French women. In addition, *Le Monde* reported that the demonstrators were shouting slogans such as: "I vote in the European elections; I vote in the regional elections", something left out in the *Le Figaro* article.⁸⁵ It

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ *Le Figaro*, 20th January 2004, "LAICITE Confusion grandissante après les marches du week-end contre le projet de loi visant à interdire les signes religieux, en dépit du nombre peu élevé des manifestants"

⁸⁴ *Le Monde*, 23rd December 2003, "Tariq Ramadan, sa famille, ses réseaux, son idéologie"

⁸⁵ *Le Monde*, 20th January 2004, "Vingt mille musulmans défilent pour défendre le port du voile", Original text : "Aux européennes, je vote", "Aux régionales, je vote"

implies that these women feel part of a democratic society and possessing the right to vote underlines the importance of being equal with everyone else in the nation who has the same right.

A final example of this event analysis focuses on a documentary that was shot during the aforementioned debate, named “*Chez moi la France*”⁸⁶ broadcasted on France 3, a national TV. It emphasizes an everyday school experience in an average high school in Paris, illustrating an environment of intolerance and religious and racial divisions. The point of the documentary was reported differently by the two newspapers, even though they analyzed the same excerpts of the documentary. While *Le Figaro* titles the article “*War between religions in recess*” and points to the many confrontations that happened between the students⁸⁷, *Le Monde* titled their article: “*When religion makes the law at school*” and focuses on the importance of the principal of the school in keeping peace between students⁸⁸. *Le Monde* stated that the principal was a strong activist and supporter of the ban. She reasoned the ban as a tool to unify these divisions and create a multicultural environment where no religion will prevail, stating that “*Behind the religious signs... the young affirm their identity or mask their hatred*”⁸⁹. In contrast, *Le Figaro* portrayed the principal as a figure to keep the peace, since even with adoption of the law, tensions would exist as they don’t feel part of one nation. It finishes the article with: “*We would like to think of mixing of cultures and ideas, but we only encounter hate and differences*”⁹⁰. This attests to the skepticism of the mainstream right toward claims that Muslims could or wanted to become part of the French nation.

⁸⁶ France is my home

⁸⁷ Le Figaro, 27th March 2004, “Guerre de religions à la récré”

⁸⁸ Le Monde, 20th March 2004, “Quand la religion fait la loi à l'école”

⁸⁹ les signes religieux...derrière lesquels des jeunes affirment leur identité ou masquent leur détresse

⁹⁰ Alors qu'on aimerait penser à un brassage des cultures et des idées, on ne rencontre que haine et différences

2.2 The 2005 riots in France

The riots in France were a series of night attacks of burning cars and public buildings by North African immigrants. They started on 27th October 2005 in a Paris eastern suburb Clichy-sous-Bois and spread quickly throughout France (including Strasbourg, Lille, Marseille, Lyon etc), causing the President to declare a state of emergency, which was extended for three months. The riots were sparked by an incident when three Muslim teenagers (believing that they were) chased by the police, hid in a power substation. Unfortunately, two of the three boys were electrocuted and lost their lives, whereas the third boy suffered electroshock injuries. This event revived the anger and bitterness that North African immigrants felt from the discriminatory behavior of the state, due to the high unemployment rates and miserable living conditions.

The articles analyzed for this event extended through the period 27th October 2005 – 31st December 2005. The keywords used for filtering the articles were: Muslims, France, and Riots. The total number of analyzed articles is 32 (19 from *Le Figaro* and 13 from *Le Monde*). More than half of the analyzed paragraphs in *Le Monde* have been categorized under heterogeneity (55%), whereas in the same category less than one fourth (23%) of the *Le Figaro* paragraphs have been placed. On the other hand, 33% of the paragraphs in *Le Monde* and 62% in *Le Figaro* have been categorized under homogenous understanding of the nation.

The best example to illustrate differences between the left and right understanding of the nation is Sarkozy's labeling of these young immigrant groups as scum⁹¹. As a reaction, the youth took his statement as a justification to continue with their riots stating the following: "Since we are all scum, we will give this racist something to clean up..."⁹². The word scum invokes the image of something unsavory that needs to be cleaned or thrown out. Since it was

⁹¹ Racaille

⁹² Le Monde, 9th November 2005, "Une nuit avec des " émeutiers " qui ont " la rage """, Original text : "Puisqu'on est des racailles, on va lui donner de quoi nettoyer au Kärcher à ce raciste "

directed toward young immigrants, this suggests that these individuals were contaminating the French nation rather than constituting a part of it.

A few days after the riots began, Sarkozy declared that he will impose a zero tolerance policy towards the young delinquents, as named by *Le Figaro*, meaning he will engage more police forces to fight against these groups⁹³. Calling them delinquents, the mainstream right vilified these groups by suggesting that they act against the common goods of the nation. *Le Monde*, unlike *Le Figaro*, is not blaming immigrants for the riots. It quotes the ex-Prime Minister of the Socialist Government, Laurent Fabius who: “*accused [Sarkozy] for creating a terrible climate in the immigrant suburbs*”⁹⁴. The PS also stated that the riots occurred because of the failed policies of Sarkozy to integrate immigrants; thus, his zero tolerance policy was a failure⁹⁵.

Le Figaro in the article: “*Suburbs, 30 years later*”, analyzed the development of immigration policies implemented by the left and right. Despite presenting negative images of immigrants, it attacked both sides, stating that all these policies have been inefficient and created a third world within France (*les quar tiers*). It continues by saying that these kind of riots happen more or less every two years and nobody has till now taken any strong action. Finally, it recalled that the 2005 riots were conducted by the children of immigrants, both legal and illegal, declining to describe them as French people⁹⁶. In another article, *Le Figaro* called the youth rebels “*lost children of the liberal society that challenged the authority of the state*”⁹⁷. It calls for ending the riots and claims that the victims of these actions are not the rioters (gangs and delinquents), but the people living in the cities⁹⁸. This is another ethnic

⁹³ *Le Figaro*, 2nd November 2005, p.11 “Les banlieues mettent à mal la solidarité gouvernementale”

⁹⁴ *Le Monde*, 1st November 2005, “Emeutes de Clichy-sous-Bois”, Original text : Laurent Fabius a accusé le ministre de l'intérieur de “créer un climat terrible” dans les banlieues

⁹⁵ *Ibid*

⁹⁶ *Le Figaro*, 4th November 2005, “Banlieues : trente ans après”

⁹⁷ *Le Figaro*, 7th November 2005, “Les cités, c'est la France!”, Original text : “Ce sont les enfants perdus de la société libérale qui défient l'autorité de l'Etat”

⁹⁸ *Ibid*

understanding of the nation, since it might be interpreted as the victims of the riots are the real/native French, not the rioters/immigrants because they do not live in the city.

Le Monde, on the other hand, reminds the public that these people are French and that they are angry to the republic because they are not regarded as such. It states that: “*The young from the sensitive quarts feel punished because of their poverty, the color of their skin and their names. The ones who looted in the cities had in common the absence of investment opportunities and work in the French society.*”⁹⁹ The inclusiveness of the civic understanding of the nation is based in *Le Monde*’s acknowledgement of the fact that besides being ethnically different, these young Muslims feel part of the nation and natives should accept them as such. They are rioting in order to prove that they are French and do not deserve discrimination or exclusion from the French society¹⁰⁰.

Finally, the mainstream right shares the notion of an exclusive, particularistic French identity, characterized according to ethnic criteria and proven through the following example. Sarkozy’s statement made on 9th November 2005, arguing that all the involved criminals in the riots will be deported where they came from, suggests that it would rather expel all Muslim immigrants than try to integrate them, although they are already living legally on French territory. Particularly striking was his proclamation: “*When you have the honor to have a residence permit, the least you can do is that you should not be arrested while provoking urban violence*”¹⁰¹. This phrase appeared in both newspapers, but took on a very different tone. In *Le Figaro* this statement is partially written in capital letters, at the beginning of the article, alluding to the honor of living in France¹⁰². This might be interpreted

⁹⁹ *Le Monde*, 8th December 2005, “*Pour les RG, la France a connu "une révolte populaire"*”, Original text : “ les jeunes des quartiers sensibles se sentent pénalisés par leur pauvreté, la couleur de leur peau et leurs noms. Ceux qui ont saccagé les cités avaient en commun l'absence de perspectives et d'investissement par le travail dans la société française ”

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ *Le Monde*, 11th November 2005, “Nicolas Sarkozy veut expulser les étrangers impliqués dans les violences urbaines.” Original text : “Quand on a l'honneur d'avoir un titre de séjour, le moins que l'on puisse dire c'est que l'on n'a pas à se faire arrêter en train de provoquer des violences urbaines!”

¹⁰² *Le Figaro*, 10th November 2005 “*Le ministre de l'Intérieur entend expulser les étrangers fauteurs de troubles*”

as a warning to the Muslim immigrants that they should appreciate being in France, and hence abide by its laws. *Le Monde*, questioned whether this decision is a fair one and advocated a legal approach to the problem rather than discretionary decision-making by the President¹⁰³. The civic understanding of the nation is based on the fact that once living on the territory you belong to the nation, which the mainstream right opposed to since it proposed a policy of forced expulsion of the criminals.

2.3 Debate over National Identity

In October 2009, Sarkozy and his party, the UMP, announced they are going to initiate a national debate over “*What does it mean to be French*” and “*What is the impact of immigration on the national identity*”¹⁰⁴. This act was quite surprising since one would immediately interpret it as a provocation to anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiments. Moreover, this kind of initiative is more associated with the far right, rather than mainstream right party. However, the debate was announced as a three-month series of discussions by the Minister for Immigration and National Identity, Eric Besson, who additionally stated that “*We must reaffirm the values of national identity and pride in being French*”¹⁰⁵.

The articles analyzed for this event were published during the period of the debate, i.e. 1st November 2009 – 1st February 2009. The keywords used for filtering the articles were: Muslims, France, and National Identity. The total number of analyzed articles is 50 (14 from *Le Figaro* and 36 from *Le Monde*, Appendix I). In this event, the percentage of paragraphs from both newspapers belonging to the two categories is quite different. In fact, more heterogeneous messages (42%) have been found in *Le Figaro*, than in *Le Monde* (39%).

¹⁰³ *Le Monde*, 11th November 2005, “Nicolas Sarkozy veut expulser les étrangers impliqués dans les violences urbaines”

¹⁰⁴ *Le Figaro*, 27th October 2009, “Identité nationale : le débat est ouvert”, Original text: “Pour vous, qu'est-ce qu'être français aujourd'hui ?", “Quel est l'apport de l'immigration à l'identité nationale?”

¹⁰⁵ *Le Monde*, 25th October 2009, “Besson relance le débat sur l'identité nationale”, Original text : “J'ai envie de lancer un grand débat sur les valeurs de l'identité nationale, sur ce qu'est être Français aujourd'hui”

Nevertheless, this should not be surprising since the debate was initiated by the mainstream right which was constantly presenting the positive outcomes of this debate for the French nation.

The mainstream parties understood the debate differently and had quite opposing views about it. UMP positioned itself in protecting the initiated debate by stating that France needs to fight for integration and “*look for a French Islam, not an Islam in France*”¹⁰⁶. In this sense, trying to calm down the controversial debate, states that they fight for integration of Muslims, as long as this is adapted to French values. The tone of the message is rather assimilationist and negative, since it might infer that only a moderate Islam will secure them place in the nation. PS, on the other hand, criticized the debate, claiming that it would cause the following problem: “*national identity equals Christian roots, immigration equals Islam, and Islam equals denaturalization of the French identity*”¹⁰⁷. Again, PS advocates for a careful consideration of Islam in the French national identity, since it should be noted that it is a specially attached identity to the French Muslims and might provoke unwanted reactions.

The main issues discussed in the debate were the correlations between religion and secularism, such as faith and traditions, the burqa and minaret construction in France. *Le Monde* calls the debate false and states that: “*this debate became a debate about Islam*”, thus concludes that: “*instead of denouncing the social and political routes of certain phenomena, the debate focused more and more on their claimed cultural and religious routes*.”¹⁰⁸ It refers to the fact that this debate has only divided the society and reinforced certain stereotypes regarding Muslims.

¹⁰⁶ Le Figaro, 4th December 2009, “Identité nationale: Fillon joue l'apaisement”, Original text : “Il faut rechercher un islam de France plutôt qu'un islam en France ”

¹⁰⁷ Le Monde, 11th December 2009, “Nicolas Sarkozy ne comprend pas La France!”, Original text : “identité nationale = racines chrétiennes ; immigration = islam ; islam = risque de " dénaturaion " pour l'identité française”

¹⁰⁸ Le Monde, 11th February 2010, “Pour le droit de culte musulman en France a l'indifférence”, Original text : plutôt que de dénoncer les racines sociales et politiques de certains phénomènes réels, le débat s'est de plus en plus focalisé sur leurs origines prétendument culturelles et religieuses

The negative images and homogeneity notions continue to be noted as people expressed their views about French national identity. Regarding the minarets in France, local UMP representatives stated that minarets will not be build in Nice, because they do not belong to the French architecture and they symbolize Islamic grounds, while France is not an Islamic country¹⁰⁹. Comments regarding the Muslim wearing of religious symbols reflect the xenophobic attitudes towards Islam, ranking from - the veil just humiliates the women and therefore they should not wear it in public; to - the burqa has no place in France¹¹⁰.

Nevertheless, the national debate finished with the following patriotic proposals: French flags will fly on schools; the 1789 declaration of the rights of man will be posted in every classroom; and a commission that will study the national identity comments¹¹¹.

2.4 French National Identity

The three analyzed events confirmed the argument that the mainstream left and mainstream right have a different approach to identifying the French nation, attributing to it elements of the civic and ethnic nation. It is important to mention that both parties advocate for one strong national identity, where all the ethnicities would be included, confirmed by the long French tradition of assimilation. Yet, the mainstream left is considering more options to include the Muslims in the nation, by calling them French Muslims and by presenting positive examples of women who wear headscarves with the French flag as well as Muslim families that feel part of the French nation and respect the French laws. The mainstream right gives no such options to the Muslim community, and by calling them anti-Western, barbarians and scum, advocating for their expulsion if they commit crimes, positions them as “the other”, who do not respect the French values and do not appreciate the generosity of the French nation. Hence, they should not be considered part of the nation. Moreover, the national

¹⁰⁹ Le Monde, 5th December 2009, “A droite, “La crispation contre l’Islam s’exprime librement”

¹¹⁰ Le Figaro, 9th December 2009, “Le nouveau message de Sarkozy a l’Islam de France”

¹¹¹ <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2009/1103/p06s04-woeu.html> (last access 25.05.2011)

identity debate proved that the French in general have difficulty accepting Muslims not only because of their wearing and religion, but also because their behavior is contrary to the French life style.

Chapter 3: Muslim immigrants and the Spanish national identity debate

Spain as a relatively new country of immigration has a special historic relationship with the Muslim world especially with Morocco. It dates back to the 8th century when it was under Muslim rule until the Spanish Inquisition in 1492. Because of this, the image of Muslims in Spain is usually characterized as a threat to its territorial integrity and sovereignty¹¹². Moreover, issues such as the terrorist attacks in 2004, which were committed by immigrants from Morocco; the self-determination of Western Sahara which was under Spanish protection and is disputed nowadays by Morocco; and the claims of Morocco over Melilla and Ceuta (Spanish territories on the borders with Morocco) are additionally fueling old historic grievances between Spaniards and Muslims¹¹³.

Despite Spain's competing discourses between the national and regional identities, the election programs of the mainstream left and mainstream right show clearly how these parties understand the nation. While the PSOE promises greater autonomy and more power to the communities in the election programs in 2004¹¹⁴ and 2008¹¹⁵, the PP makes no such guarantee. In fact, the mainstream right has a firm approach towards a more centralized state, giving as little power as possible to the autonomous regions, thus arguing for one national identity, the Spanish one; whereas the mainstream left stands for greater autonomy of the regions and a more decentralized state acknowledging different regional identities within the Spanish nation. The same can be noted when it comes to immigrants, and their freedoms and identities. PSOE advocates a more inclusive, liberal and universalistic approach to

¹¹² Rocha Inmaculada Marrero, "The implications of Spanish-Moroccan Governmental Relations for Moroccan immigrants in Spain", *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 7, 2005, p.434

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ Programa Electoral, PSOE 2004, p. 31 and p. 158, available at http://www.cadenaser.com/comunes/2004/elecciones2004/programas/psoe_programa.pdf (last access 15.05.2011)

¹¹⁵ Programa Electoral, PSOE 2008, p. 43-44, available at <http://www.elpais.com/especial/elecciones-generales/psoe.pdf> (last access 15.05.2011)

immigrants, whereas the PP stands for an exclusive and particularistic nation. For instance, in 2005 the PSOE decided to register 687,138 undocumented immigrants by granting them residence and work permits¹¹⁶.

However, PSOE's approach towards immigrants became more restrictive after 2008, as soon as the global economic crisis hit the country, promising that they would limit the entries and even propose a voluntary repatriation program for immigrants. PSOE's arguments were based on inclusion of the immigrants that are already in the country, and receiving immigrants based exclusively to the needs of the country.¹¹⁷

Nevertheless, the mainstream left and right debates over immigration reflect left-right debates over national identity, as demonstrated by the following three events that involve the Muslim community in Spain: the train bombings in Madrid in 2004; the self-censorship in the traditional festival *Moros y Cristianos* in 2006; and the debate over banning the burqa in 2010. Each event covers a specific issue related to security, cultural traditions and religion.

3.1 The 2004 train bombings in Madrid

The Madrid Train Bombings occurred on 11th March 2004, three days before Spain's legislative elections, consisting of a series of coordinated bombings against the train system in Madrid. They killed 191 people and wounded 1755¹¹⁸. The PP immediately accused the Basque terrorist group ETA for carrying out the attacks, yet further investigation proved that they were directed by Al-Qaeda and carried out by Moroccan immigrants residing in Spain¹¹⁹.

In order to determine Spain's attitudes towards Muslim immigrants after the terroristic attacks and how this reflects the national identity when it comes to national security and Islamic radicalism, I analyzed articles that contained the keywords Muslim, further filtered by

¹¹⁶ Arango Joaquín, "Regularizing Immigrants in Spain: A New Approach", 2005, available at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=331> (last access 15.05.2011)

¹¹⁷ Programa Electoral, PSOE 2008, p. 37, p. 42,

¹¹⁸ <http://estaticos.elmundo.es/documentos/2006/04/11/autol1m/01.pdf>, (last access 18.05.2011)

¹¹⁹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/oct/31/spain> (last access 18.05.2010)

immigrants and Spain and finally by 11M (the Spanish reference to these attacks) that appeared in the title or body of the articles in the two mainstream newspapers, *El Mundo* and *El Pais*, in a three month period following the attacks (14th March 2004 – 14th June 2004). The total number of analyzed articles is 75 (39 from *El Mundo* and 36 from *El Pais*). Each paragraph of the article was placed in categories (Appendix I). There is an enormous difference between the categories in both newspapers. 60% of the *El Pais* selected paragraphs have been categorized under heterogeneity compared to 11% of *El Mundo*'s paragraphs; and 25% of *El Pais*'s articles categorized under homogeneity compared to 64% of *El Mundo* for the same event and during the same time period.

In order to prevent blanket attacks against Muslims following the incident, *El Pais* devoted a few articles to presenting positive examples of immigrants in the Spanish society, calling these immigrants Spaniards. In one of them, the writer stated that there is small elite of integrated Spaniards in the society, who besides practicing Islam as a religion, are also students and business people.¹²⁰ The article continued with interviews conducted with Muslim women and students who felt fully integrated in society and regret that because of the ethnic origin of the terrorists, the whole Muslim population in Spain were forced to shoulder the blame¹²¹.

While *El Mundo* also contained paragraphs describing positive images of Muslim immigrants, these were outnumbered by the many negative images. The most notable consisted of an interview conducted with the family and neighbors of the main director of the attack, Jamal Zougam, bearing the title "*He came to Spain when he was 12, and 18 years later he became the main actor in the massacre of Madrid*".¹²² The article states that his

¹²⁰ El Pais, 28th March 2004, Sunday edition, p. 1: "*Una pequena elite de espanoles (alrededor de mil) integrada en el colectivo mas amplio de inmigrantes, estudiantes, empresarios y comerciantes que practican el islam en Espana*".

¹²¹ Ibid

¹²² El Mundo, 21st March 2004, p. 1-3: "*Llego a Espana con 12 anos y 18 despues aparece como principal implicado en la masacre de Madrid*".

mother arrived in Spain “...thanks to the new law of foreigners... in a place where she was warmly welcomed and at a time when everyone was a Spaniard, unlike today where half of the population is immigrants.”¹²³ This clearly reflects an ethnic view of the Spanish nation that is emblematic of *El Mundo* and mainstream right views of the relationship between the native population and Muslim immigrants in Spain. It leaves an impression that the country has been invaded by immigrants who do not appreciate the generosity of Spain, and will ultimately betray the host nation like the parasites that many will prove to be. In none of the articles is *El Mundo* describing immigrants as a constituent part of the Spanish nation, and goes so far as to suggest that Muslim immigrants may turn out to be dangerous fanatics¹²⁴ - a threat to the national security and therefore an enemy that will never be a loyal part of the nation. In other words, since the ethnic nation is based on common ancestry and shared history, Muslim immigrants are potential enemies who endanger the security of the Spanish people.

El Mundo repeatedly generalized about the Muslims. For example, as soon as the Spanish police got tracks and found the other involved suspects in the attacks hiding in an apartment, the same suspects committed suicides in which one of the main police inspectors was killed. A few days later, the grave of the police inspector was desecrated, and *El Mundo*, citing an anonymous source, wrote that this barbarous act was done because of Chapter 85 of the Quran, interpreting it as: “whoever provokes the believers will be sentenced to incineration”¹²⁵. Although no evidence suggested that the desecration was committed by Muslim fundamentalists, *El Mundo* placed the blame for the act at the feet of an entire religious group, indirectly stating that the religion itself provoked conflicts against non-

¹²³ Ibid, “...gracias a la reagrupación familiar contemplada por la primera Ley de Extranjería. Entonces, todos eran españoles. Hoy, casi la mitad son inmigrantes procedentes de medio mundo”

¹²⁴ Ibid, el fanatic

¹²⁵ El Mundo, 20th April 2004, p. 1, “quienes provoquen a los creyentes que tendrán la condena de la incineración”,

believers. This in return incorporates fear in peoples' mind and rejection to this group, since they are presented as the evil and danger to their existence.

Yet, it is worth mentioning that although heterogeneity issues prevail in the mainstream left, their arguments and ideas of how to integrate Muslims in the society leave an impression of a strong homogenous understanding of the nation. Namely, in an article titled "*How to fight against Al Qaeda*", *El Pais* comments on the unsuccessful policies of the mainstream right to integrate the Muslim population, stating that: "*Western countries need to address the full integration of Muslim immigrants and develop an Islam compatible with the values of democracy, human rights and equality of women*"¹²⁶. It alludes that the values they follow (Islam), are not compatible with the values of democratic society. Hence, *El Pais* appears to advocate assimilation of Muslim immigrants by stating that they should accept Western values and behave like the rest of society.

El Mundo, although arguing in the same lines, emphasizes even stronger ideas. Stating that the attacks happened: "*because of high immigration flows and lack of integration policies*"¹²⁷, it refers to the Muslim immigrants in general. In addition, in another article, published at the same day, it states that: "*now the enemy is between us*"¹²⁸, trying to create an insecure and unfriendly environment between Spaniards and Muslim immigrants.

In short, analysis of the coverage of these events shows that the mainstream right tried to distance the Spanish nation from the Muslim immigrants by calling them fanatics and enemies and generalizing arguments about Islam. Thus it embraced the image of an ethnic nation because it presented the Muslims as enemies who can disturb the coherence of the Spanish nation by their mere presence. The mainstream left, on the other hand, presented

¹²⁶ El Pais, 1st April 2004, "*Como luchar contra Al Qaeda*" Original text: "los paises occidentales tienen que abordar la plena integracion de los inmigrantes musulmanes y el desarrollo en su suelo de un islam compatible con los valores de la democracia, los derechos humanos y la igualdad de la mujer"

¹²⁷ El Mundo, 4th April 2004, p.4 "De santuario a objetivo del terrorismo islamista".

¹²⁸ El Mundo, 5th April 2004, p.3 "Espana Padece La Pesadilla De Un Terrorismo Suicida", "Ajora el enemigo esta entre nosotros."

positive examples of integrated immigrants in society and tried to mitigate the negative effects of any stereotypes or xenophobic behavior that might arise because of the attacks. Hence, it referred to the civic image of the nation because it called many times the Muslim immigrants as Spanish Muslims/Spaniards. Yet, it is worth mentioning that *El Pais* in few instances called also for the moderation of Islam and demanded accommodation of Muslims to Western values.

3.2 Moros y Cristianos

The festival *Moros y Cristianos* (Moors and Christians) is an annual event that celebrates the Spanish Reconquest of Christianity over Islam. It is celebrated in over 400 localities in Spain, mostly in the communities of Andalucía, Valencia and Castilla-La Mancha. The celebration emphasizes the historic battle for territory, a fight about who has the right to Spanish soil, which ends with the Christian victory over the Moors¹²⁹. However, as Zapata – Barrero notices, the past Moors are still living in present Spain, and in fact are the ancestors of present-day Moroccan immigrants¹³⁰.

After the Danish cartoon affair of 2005, when the whole Muslim world felt insulted by the publications of cartoons of the Prophet, (which were not reprinted in Spain, unlike many other European countries), some Spanish municipalities decided to self-censor part of their festivals in order not to offend the Muslim community living among them. More specifically, in some parts of Spain the festivals would end with “blowing up” Muhammad, a dummy made of cardboards, with firecrackers, or burning him with fireworks, or even symbolically throwing him into the sea; traditions dating centuries back. This censorship, as Zapata – Barrero argues, and “the Muhammad” is an interpretation of the sensitive link between the Muslim community and Catholic Spain, culminating in the expulsion of Islam from the

¹²⁹ Zapata – Barrero Ricardo, “Muslims in Spain: Blurring past and present Moors”, in “*Muslims in 21st Century Europe*” edited by Triandafyllidou Anna, Routledge, 2010, p. 190

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 191

territory¹³¹. As soon as the self-censorship was announced a very intense debate regarding freedom of expression and preservation of cultural traditions started in Spain.

The analyzed period for this event is 1st October 2006 – 31st December 2006. By using the keywords immigrants, filtered by Muslims and *Moros y Cristianos*¹³² a total of 24 articles were analyzed (10 in *El Pais*, 14 in *El Mundo*). The mainstream left newspaper has more paragraphs containing heterogeneous messages (44%) and the mainstream right more homogeneous ones (56%). (Appendix I)

El Mundo states that because of Islam the Spanish nation is required to change their traditions¹³³, thus positioning Muslims as “the others”. *El Pais*, on the other hand, devotes an article to examining the exact reasons for this decision by talking to the mayors of Beneixama and Boicarent, the first municipalities to decide to censor parts of the annual performances. The mayor of Benexiama stated: “*It was not an essential scene and since it might have offended the feelings of some persons we decided to cut it off*”¹³⁴. The mainstream left tried to rationally explain the reasons for these changes by acknowledging that they might be necessary: “*It is about maintaining and respecting the tradition, but without hurting persons who have other beliefs.*”¹³⁵ Thus, we may conclude that the changes have been introduced due to respect for the Muslim communities in Spain. Therefore, it emphasizes the idea that the Spanish nation has flexible boundaries of its national identity as long as there is tolerance and respect, Muslims will be regarded as part of this nation.

However, the culmination of the debate started when the President of the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities, Felix Herrero, who is also an Imam in Malaga, asked for total abolishment of this festival because it goes against any democratic values of Spain.

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 192

¹³² Moors and Christians

¹³³ El Mundo, 2nd October 2006, “El Islam nos demanda cambiar a nuestras tradiciones”

¹³⁴ El Pais, 2nd October 2006, p. 28, Pueblos valencianos suprimen de las fiestas actos ofensivos a Mahoma, Original text: “El alcalde de la localidad, Antonio Valdés, reconoció ayer que “no se trataba de un acto esencial, y cómo podía herir la sensibilidad de algunas personas decidimos evitarlo”.

¹³⁵ Ibid, Se trata de mantener y respetar la tradición, pero sin herir la sensibilidad de personas que tienen otras creencias

One of the most repulsive answers to this demand came from a column in *El Mundo*, where the author, Arcadi Espada, asks whether Muslims' religious expression in public spaces is not a blasphemy against the beliefs of Spaniards¹³⁶. It continues with: "*Years of exemplary tolerance should not obscure the essential truth: our deep repulsion and our sense of offence when religion comes out of bedroom*"¹³⁷, alluding to the tolerance Spaniards have already shown to the Muslim immigrants by respecting their religious practices. Since, according to the same author, there should be no tolerance towards Muslims' requirements, it also means that they have no place in the nation.

In contrast, *El Pais* in the article "*Divisions in the Muslim ranks*"¹³⁸ presents interviews conducted with other Muslim representatives to find out whether they share the same extreme view as Felix Herrero. It affirms that there are Muslim organizations that do not support the total abolishment of the festival as well as Muslim individuals who are against any kind of censorship. *El Pais* acknowledges that there are different interpretations of the festival and its content, and consequently Spaniards should take into consideration the objective overview, without judging Muslims in any negative light.

A final remark regarding this event is the involvement of PP in the debate over the censorship. Namely, PP asked UNESCO to protect the festivals and declare them as cultural heritage. Its reasoning is that these festivals: "*do not constitute in any way the excitement of a victory or a military confrontation, but rather represent a playful tribute to the coexistence of different cultures*"¹³⁹. Since these festivals represent a common myth for the Spanish nation, the fact that PP urged its protection, whereas PSOE didn't support it, signals a clear difference

¹³⁶ *El Mundo*, 3rd October 2006, p. 2

¹³⁷ Acaso ignoran que cualquier practica religiosa en el espacio publico es una blasfemia contra nuestras creencias? Anos de ejemplar tolerancia no deben hacernos olvidar la verdad esencial: nuestra repulsión profunda, y nuestro sentimiento de ofensa, cuando la religión sale de la alcoba.

¹³⁸ *El Mundo*, 6th October 2006, p. 5, "División en las filas musulmanas"

¹³⁹ *El Pais*, 14th October 2006, p. 26; *El Mundo*, 14th October 2006, p. 25; estas celebraciones "no constituyen en modo alguno la exaltación de una victoria o de una confrontación bélica, sino que representan más bien un homenaje lúdico a la convivencia entre distintas culturas"

between the left and right in terms of the ethnic/civic understanding of the nation. Namely, the mainstream right, by condemning the self-censorship of the festivals commemorating Spanish traditions, illustrated that even if these acts are insulting to the Muslim communities, it will continue to ask protection for them, since Muslims stand outside the Spanish nation and therefore should not have a say in the celebration of these traditions. On the other hand, the mainstream left takes the Spanish nation to be a flexible, changing social organism, which is only bounded by the territory but not by any notion of blood descent. Opposing the PP's initiative might be regarded as a respectful act towards the Muslim community, signaling that they consider Muslims in Spain to be a constituent part of the nation.

3.3 The 2010 debate over banning the burqa

Following the burqa bans in Belgium and France in 2010¹⁴⁰, Spain involved itself in a debate whether to do the same. Due to its regional division, the autonomous communities in Spain have the right to control entry of personnel into municipal buildings and hence could regulate the dress code of its visitors. Many municipalities in Catalonia have banned the wearing of burqa in municipality buildings¹⁴¹, but when Barcelona, one of the largest cities in Spain, did the same on 15th of June 2010, it drew the attention of media and sparked a wider debate on the national level. The proposal for banning the burqa came from PP as a motion to the municipal councils. However, this motion was modified from its primary proposal that aimed at banning it in any public place. A few days later, PP proposed the same motion in the National Parliament (*Cortes Generales*) and the higher chamber, the Senate (*Senado*) voted in favor of it¹⁴². However, in order to take effect, the same motion had to be approved by the lower chamber, the Congress (*Congreso de los Diputados*). Nevertheless, it rejected the

¹⁴⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8652861.stm> (last access 20.05.2011)

¹⁴¹ El Mundo, 15th June 2010, p. 16, "Barcelona y Tarragona se suman a la prohibición del uso del 'burka'".

¹⁴² El Mundo, 24th June 2010, p. 13, "Veto del Senado al 'burka' y al 'niqab'".

motion one month later¹⁴³. The results are not surprising since the PP has more seats in the Senate than in the Congress¹⁴⁴, and therefore it was easy to obtain the Senate's consent to pass the first round.

Going back to the debate, I analyzed a total of 50 articles (30 in *El Pais*, 20 in *El Mundo*) in the period 15th June 2010 – 31st July 2010. The keywords used for filtering the articles are the following: immigrants and only filtered by burqa since it is obvious to which group of immigrants it refers. As expected, *El Pais* responded with more heterogeneous messages to this debate, 39%, compared to 52% of *El Mundo* homogeneous messages. (Appendix I)

The PP firmly advocated for a total ban of any clothing that obscures a clear view of a person's face, not only when entering public buildings but also on the streets. This was presumably for security reasons and because the burqa is a humiliating and degrading sign for women that hinders gender equality and consequently goes against the values of the Spanish constitution. On the other hand, PSOE had a reluctant approach towards the burqa, first accusing PP for raising this issue because of electoral benefits¹⁴⁵, and one day later stating that they supported the ban but would prefer a different approach to it¹⁴⁶. Finally, PSOE's position was that the burqa is not a problem for Spain, because there are no burqas in Spain, and banning it would create unnecessary distress on the part of a religious minority¹⁴⁷. Acknowledging that the burqa is a restriction on the liberty of women, PSOE believed that they should tackle education as a key tool to promote gender equality in order to influence peoples' decisions on how to dress and whether it is in their interests to wear the burqa or not. Moreover, it called for a dialogue with the Islamic community in order to take into account

¹⁴³ El Pais, 20th July 2010, p. 11, "El Congreso rechazará hoy que se prohíba el uso del 'burka'".

¹⁴⁴ <http://www.electionguide.org/election.php?ID=1170> (last access 20.05.2011)

¹⁴⁵ El Pais, 16th June 2010, p.32, "El veto se gestó en una televisión local".

¹⁴⁶ El Mundo, 17th June 2010, p. 11, "El PSOE prepara una moción para limitar el uso del 'burka'".

¹⁴⁷ El Mundo, 23th June 2010, p. 14, "El PSOE pacta con CiU y ERC no prohibir el 'burka'".

their views as well¹⁴⁸. Whereas the mainstream right advocated assimilating the Muslims since their religion is not part of the national identity, the mainstream left proposed leaving the choice to individuals, even while affirming that the burqa might not be a compatible element of the Spanish national identity.

However, the most noticeable article in the coverage of this event is the one where the journalist Eugenia Rico donned a burqa and walked on the streets of Madrid “to feel” the everyday life of a Muslim woman. The title of her article “*I converted myself into an immigrant, maybe even an illegal*” published in *El Mundo*, associates that she regards all Muslims as foreigners and not part of the Spanish nation¹⁴⁹. She says that during her “research” she felt isolated from society while walking on the streets and concluded that because of this Muslims are not integrated. While representing Muslim women as oppressed and discriminated, *El Pais* wrote a rebuttal, noting that the ban of the burqa will not make Muslim women winners but rather the victims, posing the question: “*Are we more concerned with the social image or the happiness of a human being?*”¹⁵⁰ In fact, *El Pais* urged for protecting the interests of Muslim women, most of which wear the burqa because of individual choice as a matter of their identity.

Another article in *El Mundo*, “*This peace is an attack*”¹⁵¹, calls for protection of the Spanish values and lifestyle from backwardness and barbarism. It declares the burqa a humiliation not only to women but to everyone. Relatedly, the president of the regional PP in Catalonia, Sánchez-Camacho, urged the government to ban the burqa, saying “*Catalonia and Spain are of Christian Tradition*”¹⁵². These rightist views about Muslims indicate that their readiness to accept them as part of their nation is quite impossible; their religion is inherently

¹⁴⁸ Ibid

¹⁴⁹ *El Mundo*, 20th June 2010, p.11, “Me Convierto en una Inmigrante, Quizá Ilegal”

¹⁵⁰ *El Pais*, 18th June 2010, p. 26, “¿Nos preocupa más la imagen social o la suerte de un ser humano?”

¹⁵¹ *El Mundo*, 24th June 2010, p. 12, “Esa prenda es un atentado”.

¹⁵² *El Pais*, 20th June 2010, p. 3, “El PP teme que el veto al 'burka' se extienda a prendas católicas” - “Cataluña y España son de tradición cristiana”

incompatible to the Spanish values and culture and consequently to the Spanish national identity.

3.4 Spanish National Identity

The three events in Spain were chosen in order to analyze issues of interest to the national security, religion and cultural traditions which are associated with national identity. The main point was to show how the debate over immigrants in all such countries is critically informed by left-right political ideologies concerning the nation. The Spanish mainstream left champions civic notions of the nation, which leads to more positive images of the immigrants and cultural diversity, i.e. fulfils the heterogeneous understanding of the nation. Although the mainstream left, in certain articles alluded to a more assimilationist approach and advocated for moderations of the Islamic practices according to Western values: such as gender equality, respect for human rights, freedom of expression, presenting the burqa as an imprisonment and barrier to integration etc. However, this does not mean that the mainstream left does not regard the Muslims as part of the nation. It did not support PP's proposal to protect the festivals, but asked whether the festivals might be insulting to the Muslims. Finally, the mainstream left did not support the initiative to ban the burqa, arguing that the same goal might be achieved through persuasion in civic education.

The mainstream right, on the other hand, proved to have far more exclusionary policies towards Muslims, which reflect its exclusivist understandings of the nation. Although there were articles containing positive images and advocating diversity, the overriding position was one of national exclusion. This demonstrates the link between the mainstream right in both countries and an ethnic, organic, exclusionary understanding of the nation. Here, Muslims could not be part of the Spanish nation because they have different religion, culture and history and have been the enemies of Spain for centuries. Attributable to this argument is also the fact that the PP insisted to repeat that Spain has a Christian tradition. Moreover, the

mainstream right does not even consider assimilation as a possible means of gaining for membership in the nation, since this is given by blood descent.

Conclusion

National identity is not just one single identity based on its civic or ethnic elements. Nor is it a phenomenon that can be easily understood by the citizenship laws. In order to become part of the imagined community, the immigrants besides feeling part of the nation, have to be perceived as such by the natives. Therefore, one has to identify the competing discourses in the mainstream left and mainstream right over issues of particular interests to the Muslims and correlate them to the understandings of the nation. Since the mainstream right is usually the issue owner of immigration and national identity, and the mainstream left has positions that correspond to respect of ethnicities and inclusion of the immigrants in the nation, it is appropriate to expect the right to present more exclusive/ethnic notions, whereas the left more inclusive/civic notions.

This argument has been proven correct in two different countries, France and Spain. In fact, by analyzing the role of Muslim immigrants in the society, we can consider that there are two different understanding of how to integrate them and whether they are eligible to become part of the nation. The mainstream left contributed to the characters of the civic nation, namely: perceiving a person as part of the nation due to the time he has spent on the territory of the state, his loyalty and respect for the institutions, his identification with the state ideology etc. The mainstream right was proven to champion ethnic characteristics of the nation, namely: preference for immigrants of the same or similar ethnic background, same or similar religion, culture and language; otherwise, it urged for restrictive policies.

As can be noted from Appendix I, the number of paragraphs categorized under heterogeneous understanding of the nation is for each event higher in the mainstream left than in the mainstream right—in both Spain and France, despite the many differences between the countries concerning national identity, national minorities, and their economies. These data

are not surprising, taking into account the rightist approach which, as has been shown in the events, prefers restrictive policies towards immigrants and pays less attention to Muslim demands. The only event which differs from the rest is the national identity debate initiated in France. Here the mainstream right reports greater positive images of Muslim immigrants. Nevertheless, since this was a decision implemented by the mainstream right and highly criticized by the other parties, perhaps it had to somehow justify its assessment and present it as if the immigrants would benefit from it as well.

The analyzed events proved that there is a linkage between the understanding of the nation and the immigration policies in both countries. Namely, by reporting negatively and reinforcing stereotypes related to Muslim immigrants, the mainstream right sent a message that it strongly supports the idea of an ethnic nation, which is based on blood-ties and where no place can be offered to immigrants. Hence, the restrictive immigration policies and demands for less new arrivals. The mainstream left, on the other hand, argued for objective interpretations of facts related to Muslim immigrants, advocating for a civic nation, where these immigrants as long as they abide to the rules of the nation can become part of it.

In France, the left contributed to the positive images of Muslim immigrants by calling them French Muslims. It condemned the debate over national identity and stated that this provoked anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim images, and declared the riots as a demonstration of Muslim discrimination and inefficient integration policies. In the same line, the mainstream left in Spain showed support for the Muslim demands in the self-censorship of the festival *Moros y Cristianos* taking into account their feelings.

However, in the event of the headscarf ban in France the mainstream left supported the ban. This sent a clear message that it supports the assimilation of immigrants in the French nation and prefers to be firm on the core value of the Republican state – secularism. A similar approach is noticed in Spain. When it comes to religious symbols, the mainstream left in

Spain also declared it is against wearing burqas, but would like to use a different approach in eliminating it. It repeated in the two other events that the practice of Islam in Spain needs some moderation respecting also the values and principles of Spain. This might affirm the same approach as France, welcoming the integration of Muslim immigrants in the Spanish nation and respecting their identity as long as the policies of integration confirm with some assimilationist doctrine.

The mainstream right proved in both countries that its policies and reports contain Islamophobic messages, which are based on generalizations and subjective interpretation and would rather increase the fear of the public than calm down the tensions. Moreover, it helped to intensify the stereotypes people have about Muslim immigrants, such as barbarians, scum, fanatics and delinquents. It strongly supports any religious bans, based on the message - gender equality, although it is well aware that the bans might only victimize most of the women, rather than favor them. Finally it is a strong supporter of the culture of the majority and would protect it by any means, as was the initiated national identity debate in France or the PP's demand to UNESCO to protect the Moros y Cristianos festival.

The number of arriving Muslim immigrants, as well as those acquiring citizenship in the EU countries, is continuously growing. This points to the fact that the Member States have to seriously consider an efficient approach to the problem of integration, which should be directed towards cohabitation, tolerance and combating stereotypes. As was noted in this research, Member States support immigrants by presenting positive examples of them, yet prefer to assimilate them, although this has not proven effective for many countries. What should be done is a direct involvement of the Islamic communities in the process of decision making, especially at local level. An important step would be granting voting rights at local elections in order to make them feel part of the society.

In addition, in order to improve the acceptance of immigrants we ought to focus on the root of the problem, which is what the nation is and what does it represent to the citizens. In order to promote a more voluntaristic national identity Member States should focus on redefining the membership criteria and presenting more positive examples of integrated Muslims in the nation. These Muslims besides feeling part of the nation should also be accepted and considered as such by the local communities. Moreover, another useful approach would be the promotion of cultural diversity within the society, where different cultures will be endorsed as part of the nation. This can be achieved through a bottom up approach where special attention will be dedicated to the civil society sector and NGO in order to promote tolerance and diversity either through projects financed by the state or regional cooperation within the EU. Finally, by acknowledging that Muslim immigrants are French/Spanish Muslims and by creating an image of a voluntaristic nation, one can expect that conditions for cohabitation will be more likely to occur.

Appendix I Results of the analyzed categories in percentages

France

<i>Event</i>	<i>Used keywords</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Heterogeneity</i>	<i>Homogeneity</i>	<i>Irrelevant paragraphs</i>	<i>Total paragraphs</i>	<i>Total articles</i>
Headscarf ban	musulman +laicite +France	11/12/2003 – 15/03/2004	Le Monde	42.00%	33.00%	25.00%	331	54
			Le Figaro	22.00%	52.00%	26.00%	93	59
2005 riots in France	musulman +riots +France	27/10/2005 – 31/12/2005	Le Monde	55.00%	33.00%	12.00%	146	13
			Le Figaro	23.00%	62.00%	15.00%	126	19
Debate over the national identity	identité nationale +musulman +France	01/11/2009 – 01/02/2010	Le Monde	39.00%	42.00%	18.00%	399	36
			Le Figaro	42.00%	33.00%	25.00%	84	14

Spain

<i>Event</i>	<i>Used keywords</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Heterogeneity</i>	<i>Homogeneity</i>	<i>Irrelevant paragraphs</i>	<i>Total paragraphs</i>	<i>Total articles</i>
Train bombings	11 m + musulmanes	14/06/2010 – 31/07/2010	El Pais	60.00%	25.00%	15.00%	240	36
			El Mundo	11.00%	64.00%	25.00%	199	39
Moros y Cristianos	Moros y Cristianos + Espana	01/09/2006 – 31/12/2006	El Pais	44.00%	38.00%	18.00%	72	10
			El Mundo	16.00%	56.00%	19.00%	57	14
Burqua ban debate	Burka + Espana	14/03/2004 – 14/04/2004	El Pais	39.00%	24.00%	37.00%	109	30
			El Mundo	28.00%	52.00%	20.00%	79	20

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