

The Efforts of President Emmanuel Macron in Making *Islam de France*

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the efforts made by Emmanuel Macron to integrate French Muslims to French society. Each European government, including French, has tried to integrate Muslim population to their respective country's society. Islam is the second biggest religion in France in terms of its followers. However, many have problems adapting to French society since they believe that religious values are above Republic's ideology. In an attempt to integrate Muslim population, the government has tried to create the so-called Islam de France, but to no avail due to foreign intervention. This article focuses on efforts of Macron to integrate French Muslims to French society through the concretization of an efficient Islam de France during his presidential campaign to date. This study used historical research methodology, including source collection, verification, interpretation, and writing. The study shows that Macron has made different approaches compared to those implemented by his predecessor regarding Islam de France: adoption of anti-terrorism law to shut down the radical movement and plan to stop importing and funding Imams from Islamic countries. Despite progress in terms of an ideal Muslim, his policy was violated the Republic's value itself and criticized, even brought to the International Court of Justice.

Keywords: Conseil Français du Culte Musulman, Emmanuel Macron, La République En Marche!, French Muslim, Islam de France

1. INTRODUCTION

After World War II, France had to build their country back that had been destroyed by war. They need foreign workers outside France especially from a country with a majority of Muslims [1]. In the 1970s [2], France Islam began to exert a significant influence because of the immigrant workers of these countries. Between 1975 and 1980 the Muslim religion manifested itself in factories, on construction sites and in HLM (state-subsidized housing). Muslim associations were set up and began to open prayer rooms and Islamic schools in the factories and in the HLMs [3].

The growing Muslim population is posing a threat to the French society. Davidson and Achi state that French society considers Islam to be too fanatical in maintaining its religious dogma that the French government feels the need to control it [4]. It caused the French government to try to integrate all Muslim immigrants. It is because some of them do not support the *laïcité* system, even though France is a country that uses the *laïque* system. According to the French government site [5], *laïcité* guarantees freedom of belief. *Laïcité* shows the neutrality of the state and imposes all before the law regardless of religion or belief. The system also guarantees freedom of worship and religion but do not insist on respecting religious dogmas or regulations. The government also separates the state and religious organizations in which

the state does not finance and regulate internal religious organizations. The state also equalizes its citizens in administration and public services and does not see them based on their beliefs.

Cesari in Downing [6] state that Islam is seen as threatening by Western European, especially France, because of the Islamic terror attacks in Western Europe and the understanding that Islamic ideology is against the principle of freedom of belief so that they need to be controlled. According to Bowen [7] *Islam de France* becomes the term that has been used for government and Imam (head of religion for Muslims and is in charge of teaching Islam) to discuss Islam. In the government context, *Islam de France* is Islam, governed by the state in an area bordered by state borders and affiliated with Islamic institutions in France and Imams. They are trained by the French [7].

French government keeps attempting to make *Islam de France* and controlling the Muslims, especially in Macron's presidency. They try to control the radical discourse that has been taught by some radical Muslims. The research aims to see how Macron's *Islam de France* policy follows his campaign promises.

The research methodology for this study is historical research which consists of source collection, verification, interpretation, and writing [8]. The data were collected from the primary sources in the form of newspapers,

source-based and secondary sources, and books and journals. The article is written with a narrative methodology, combining historical facts in a series of causes and effects as a form of historical explanation. This methodology is used because it is chronological [9]. The principal data are from Macron's party official website concerning his presidential campaign activities and the newspapers reporting the latest news of his activities. The data about the French Muslim population is from Hakim El Karoui's report *A French Islam is Possible*.

There are previous research on *Islam de France*. According to Easat-Daas [10], there is a suspicion of the label "European Islam" in the construction of *Islam de France*. The government plays a significant role in integrating their culture with Islamic culture. This was experienced by the French Muslim women who got interviewed. According to Tolan [11], the French government has always been hesitant to integrate Islam because they are limited by *laïcité* not to fund Islamic organizations to reduce foreign donations. Even in the burkini ban, two opinions say that *laïcité* prohibits religious expression. In contrast, *laïcité* is considered to protect religion and French citizens' right to express their religious beliefs in public. It is supported by Belkaïd and Schmid [12], who say the term "*Islam de France*" can exist, but this term can also refer to French secularism. This term is used to prevent the prohibition of thinking about religious issues in contemporary society. Belkaïd and Schmid [12] gave two opinions regarding the interface between religion and the state. First, the government does not interfere with Islam. Second, a stronger state gives intervention in organizing Islam and developing it in France. Belkaïd and Schmid [12] also say that to do the second option, the government must stay away from *laïcité* calls, which only prevents understanding and action. There is a connection between religious practice and respect for Republican principles to understand each other.

2. ISLAM IN FRANCE

The rise of Muslim in Europe has caused political and social conflict, notably in France. This conflict began from the threat created by riots from the lower classes, especially in 2005, followed by jihadist terror. This constructed Muslims to be a violence religion. According to Begag in Downing [6], Islam becomes a threat to French. French Muslims considered to be foreign and become an existentialist threat to western liberal countries so that they need to be controlled, regulated, and the convict will get arrest [6]. Fundamentalist Islam also causes this conflict, as their belief is opposed to *laïcité*. This issue is the French government's priority because they respect the *laïcité* that regulated in *la loi de 1905*. In his research, Parvez [4] said the French government views Islam as regressing secularism because their religious dogmas and rituals always bound Muslims, but the government has not eliminated Islam in politics because they try to control it. Therefore, the

government is trying to create what is called *Islam de France*. Mattei and Aguilar [13] said that to define French Islam means to represent French Muslims as well. According to Fernando [14], French Muslims are women and men who practice Islam as French citizens and practice French citizenship as devout Muslims. It makes religion and nationality compatible [14].

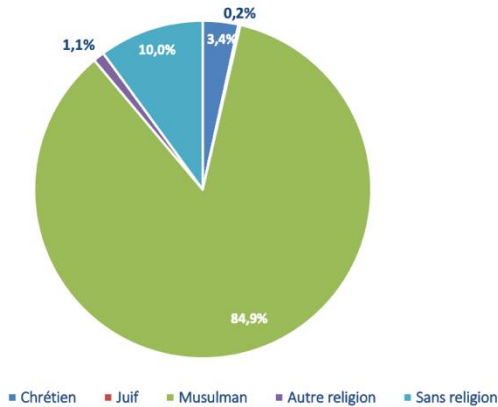
El Karoui [1] divides Muslims into six categories based on the most moderate and most authoritarian. The first category (18% of the total) are individuals who are distant from religion, are not interested in showing their belief in everyday life, and are against halal food in the school canteen. They strongly agree that a secular state allows everyone to practice their religion freely. The second category (28% of the total) has the same value as the first category, but some still show their religious symbol and consume halal food. People in this category agree that polygamy should be prohibited and that the French State laws are more important than religious laws. The third category (13% of the total) is more ambivalent. These people are against the niqab and polygamy. They are against the idea that a secular state allows people to practice their religion freely. This category is critical of the French system, at least in terms of implementation, and wish to express their belief at work.

The fourth category (12% of the total) is more accepting of secularism but critical of polygamy violations in France but at the same time punishing the niqab, which 95% of them reject. The fifth category (13% of the total) represents individuals of an authoritarian with 40% supporting the niqab and polygamy, opposing secularism, and considering religious law more important than French state law. They think religion is not just a personal matter and most of them support religious expression at work. The sixth category (15% of the total) differs from the fifth because it advocates a stricter religious practice view. Nonetheless, these people think of religion as a private matter and not a public problem. Nearly all supported the niqab, while almost 50% opposed secularism and religious expression in the workplace. Based on the sixth category, 58% of Muslims support secularism in France. Twenty-eight percent think French law is important than religious value, and 18% believe secularism allows people to have religious freedom. Muslims in France understand they are French citizens and acts for the future of France. However, Muslims who oppose secularism and think religious values are more important than French law, is a threat to French society. They support niqab even though niqab is forbidden because niqab covers all their bodies and faces. This regulation about the use of clothes that cover all bodies and faces can be found in *loi N°. 2010-1192 du 11 October 2010*. The law is applied in public spaces, namely public streets and places or designated for public services.

Right now, Islam has become one of the biggest religions in Europe. In France, Islam is the second biggest religion after Christian. In his research, El Karoui stated that 5,6% French population who is more than 15 years

old are Muslim. The majority of French Muslims came from Maghreb. Thirty-eight percent came from Algeria, 25% from Morocco, 8% from Turkey, and 9% from Sub-Saharan countries. However, French Muslims are also from other countries.

Profil religieux des 155 enquêtés ayant au moins un parent musulman



Lien de la population générale à la religion

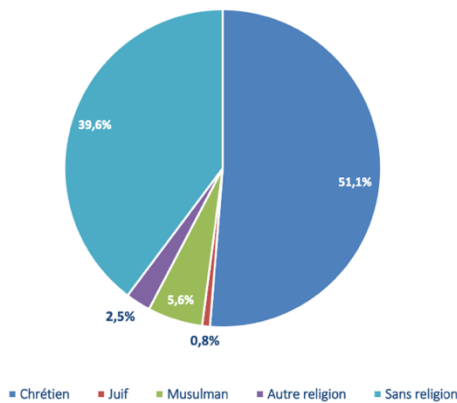


Figure 1 Diagram of the percentage of Muslims in France [1]

The diagram on the left shows the general population of believers. The diagram comes from the intergenerational transmission of religion among descendants of immigrants from Muslim countries. The dark blue color shows Christianity with a percentage of 51.1%, the light blue color does not adhere to any religion with a percentage of 39.6%, the green color shows followers of Islam with a percentage of 5.6%, the red color shows Jews with a percentage of 0.8%, and the purple color represents other religions with a percentage of 2.5%. The diagram on the right shows 155 questionnaires with at least one Muslim parent. Muslims are marked green with a percentage of 84.9%, Jews are marked red with a percentage of 0.2%, Christians are marked dark blue with a percentage of 3.4%, without religion are marked light blue with a percentage of 10.0%, and other religions are marked in color purple with a percentage of 1.1%. In terms of quantity, the two

diagrams above show Islam as the second-largest religion after Christianity, although the quantity is small.

Belkaïd and Schmid [12] say that Islam is a global religion and France is crossed by the conservatism of countries with a Muslim majority. Wherefore, there are re-Islamization in practice or conservation as a result of visiting sites that are localized outside the French border. They also say that young Muslims want to be seen by French society thus they challenge secularism principles. The study results by El Karoui [1] also show that Muslims represent 5.6% of the population over 15 years of age, and more than 10% of young people under the age of 25 are identified as Muslim. The number of young Muslims continues to increase even though they are in a minority group and dissatisfied by the religious affiliation. El Karoui [1] says those young men have low quality, unemployed, and live in suburbs. The percentage is 28% of the French Muslim populations who have authoritarian attitudes and belong to separatist groups. This separatist group is a threat to the Republic therefore the government is trying to stop them. The French Republic cannot be separated according to the constitution. The French Constitution can be found in *Article 1, Constitution du 4 Octobre 1958, La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale* (France is a Republic, indivisible, secular, democratic, and social). This constitution is the fundamental of French Republic.

During François Hollande’s presidency, there were several terror attacks in France. The attacks happened at Charlie Hebdo HQ (a French weekly satire newspaper) and Hyper Cacher supermarket in January 2015. These kind of terror attacks already happened before in France and have reached their highest point because of these two acts of terror [15]. In November, there were other attacks in Bataclan and Saint-Denis. Other attacks happened in Nice on July 14th, 2016, that killed 86 victims [15] and these terror attacks were all carried by Muslims. It worsens the French society’s view of Islam due to radical Islamic actions. French society does not see them as a peaceful religion due to their terror attack. Terrorism in France is caused by the notion of radicalism from an extreme site. Therefore, the government should have more control over the entry of these teachings. Fernando [14] says that forming a representative body will make it possible to recognize, institutionalize, and monitor *Islam de France* for the country. Through this organization, it will be easier for the government to monitor Islamic teachings. People should not despise Islam, but it is better to regulate it because radical Islam will become more visible in their existence if it is opposed.

3. THE GOVERNMENT’S EFFORTS TO INTEGRATE ISLAM THROUGH ISLAM DE FRANCE

To organize French Islam, former Interior Minister Pierre Joxe said that normalizing Islam was needed in a religious aspect in the summer of 1989. According to

him, before 1989, the state did not interfere on Islam matters in France; they offer it to Grande Mosquée de Paris (GMP) and mediators from several North African governments [13]. Joxe created Comité de réflexion sur l'Islam en France (CORIF) on 1990 as a government attempt in managing French Islam affairs. Muslim populations dealt with unemployment and discrimination thus they need protection from CORIF because the committee allowed Muslims to make their internal organization [13]. In 1993, Charles Pasqua, the Minister of Home Affairs, suspended CORIF because the agency did not have the power of law or legality. In January 1995, a representative Conseil des Musulmans de France was formed when Pasqua became Minister of Home Affairs [16]. The board did not work well because of the GMP's dominance and the close relationship with Algeria that raised suspicions about neutrality in the council [13]. After that, in 1999, Istichara was formed under the Minister of Home Affairs Jean-Pierre Chevènement [16] [17]. Istichara became the forerunner of the CFCM [11].

In 2003, Nicolas Sarkozy became Interior Minister in Jacques Chirac government and created *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman* (CFCM) as representatives of Muslims before public authorities and international bodies [18]. According to its official website, the CFCM aims to hold discussions among its members, civil society, and other religions about Islam, develop Islam, and defend Muslims' interests in France [4].

CFCM failed in carrying out its duties due to internal conflicts, notably domination by individual countries and the teaching of fundamentalism [13]. Therefore, the goal of the French government in regulating Muslims in France was not realized. El Karoui [1] said that in 2005, Morocco intervened in the election of the governing body CFCM. Algeria has also shown disinterest in the CFCM, which led to the Moroccan federation's dominance, which won the election. It shows how the CFCM leadership structure failed to represent the unity between Algeria, Morocco, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, which governs the institution. Besides, the countries in this institution use the CFCM to channel the sources from their home countries to teach fundamentalism to Muslims in France. The institute appoints its members in mosques in France with significant influences from Algeria, Morocco, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.

This failure caused the government to fail to integrate Islam; thus, radical Islam evolves. President Macron, who is currently in the office, also has a vision and mission in creating *Islam de France*. Macron's efforts can be seen from the campaign period and implementation when he becomes president.

4. EMMANUEL MACRON'S EFFORTS IN REALIZING ISLAM DE FRANCE

Emmanuel Macron is the 8th president of the fifth French Republic who was inaugurated on May 14 2017 according to the *loi constitutionnelle n ° 2000-964 du 2 Octobre 2000* [19]. Macron started his campaign from

February 2017. Among his campaign promises [20], he made promises related to Islam, the second largest religion group in France. Macron has always shown his position on the side of French Muslims. The then-president candidate wants to help Muslims in France continue structuring institutions that can represent Islam in France by making *Islam de France*; thus, French society can understand them better and accept them. Macron also wants to fight against the radicalism that depreciated Islam in the eyes of French people.

Macron wants French Muslims to integrate into French society and be better represented. Macron has two goals in his campaign. First is to ensure the neutrality of the government for religious freedom. France uses a *laïque* system that differentiates religious interests from the government. According to him, there is a misconception among French society that *laïcité* prohibits people from carrying out their religious affairs. Therefore, Macron wanted to change this meaning. Macron said that *laïcité* would be a source of freedom and eliminate differences in religion. Macron wants a society that has freedom of religion in public places. Second is to structure Islam better in counter radical discourse. Macron says that French people need to help French Muslims build institutions representing their religion and fighting radical movements that degrade Islam's value. The government will fight jihadist ideology by closing down sites that support jihadist propaganda and terminating the association. With this idea, Macron will eliminate the radical discourse among French Muslims.

There are two campaign promises regarding *Islam de France*. First is to create Fédération nationale de l'*Islam de France* which cope with the entire religious community, aims to finance the construction of mosques and the training of the Imam by providing donations and make tax. It will train Imams in France thus they can understand Republic values so Islam can integrate into the French Republic. This project is essential because Imams in France are paid by foreign countries such as Algeria, Morocco, and Turkey. According to a report by the French Senate [21], in July 2016, three countries sent Imams to France. Turkey sent 151 Imams, Algeria sent 120 Imams, and Morocco sent 30 Imams. The report states that foreign countries fund 310 Imams serving in 2,500 places of worship in France. Boukanoun [22] reported that Morocco provided a budget of 6 billion euros went to Islam in France, including the wages of 30 Imams and since 2011, Saudi Arabia has spent nearly four million euros to finance the construction of eight mosques in France and pay the salaries of around 14 Imams. These two things are examples of how Islamic countries intervened in Islam in France. These Imams are not known to teach radical discourse or not, so there is a need for Imam training by the state. The Imam's training to reduce radicalism will be completed in France with a bachelor's degree. Macron is also planning a program to dismantle the religious associations that invaded the Republic and permanently close worship places that teach radicalism.

Second is the closure of association and place of worship that invaded the Republic. According to *En Marche!* [20], Macron's government will close the association that invades the Republic with religious excuses and permanently close places of worship that have a relation or supporting terrorists. In 2015, there were many terrorism incidents in France, so Macron needed to address the problem. Macron's program wants to liberate Islam from radical discourse.

The influence of the Islamic state was huge in France. The growth of Islam caused France to concern that Islam could influence Republican values. After Macron was inaugurated as president, Macron saw that there was Arab influence in Islam in France. Macron said, "Réduire l'influence des pays arabes" (reducing the influence of Arab countries) to *le Journal de Dimanche* (French news channel) in February 2018. Gattegno and d'Allonnes [23] says that Macron wants to reorganize Islam. This policy aims to create peaceful relations between Muslims, France, and other religions so the trust in Islam will develop. Macron intends to integrate Muslims who oppose secularism because he said during a press conference on February 18, 2020 [24], that the Republic does not accept someone who thinks religious law is superior to Republican law. These people can be a threat to the French constitution. Since the first two years of Macron's relatively short administration, Macron has done one of his campaign promises, which is the creation of *La loi sur la sécurité intérieure et la lutte antiterroriste* (loi SILT).

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF MACRON'S CAMPAIGN PROMISES

During his presidency, Macron succeeded in making laws regarding the spread of radical discourse. It said earlier that there were a lot of terror attack thus this law is needed to end the radical discourse in France. The law is *La loi sur la sécurité intérieure et la lutte antiterroriste* (loi SILT), enacted on October 30th, 2017. It regulates the closure of worship places if there are written words, activities, ideas, or theories that teach terrorism or hatred and discrimination. Supervision, inspections of houses, house arrest, control of specific areas or individuals, and closure of worship places will be carried out under this law. This law will certainly help and allow the state to investigate Islamic radicals that intend to operate acts of terror and teach radicalism. In February 2019, the Minister of Interior, Christophe Castaner gave a positive assessment of this law because, according to him and the Secretary of State, Laurent Nuñez, seven mosques have been closed since the enactment of this law. Vincent [25] says 93 home visits have been created since the enactment of the law. The Interior Minister said on May 11th, 2018; investigators could stop a terrorist attack plot. Investigators figured out how terrorists are taught. Therefore, this law's implementation showed that Macron accomplish his campaign promise of closing down associations and places of worship that attacked the Republic.

Another campaign promise has not yet been fulfilled, which is the creation of the *Fédération nationale de l'Islam de France*. Macron wants no other countries to influence his policies. The association, which is under the principles of *la loi de 1905*, will help fund the renovation and construction of mosques and the Imam's training. According to Macron's campaign website, the association will receive donations and tax funds. However, Macron's plans for the federation regarding taxes violated *la loi de 1905* because the government should not have interfered in religious funding.

According to AFP [26], France will stop receiving Imams sent from countries based on agreements between the French state and countries such as Turkey or Algeria to the extent of the reception of preachers on the Ramadan will also be stopped. Chambraud [24] says the Imam's training has not been execute until now due to lack of funds but will still be implement. Imam's training consists of 75% secular subjects such as sociology, psychology, law, history, military knowledge, and 25% on theological learning. The material illustrates that Macron focused his training on Republican values so that an Islam compatible with the state can be created. This training is also expected to reduce Islamic groups who feel that their religious law is more than Republican law because this religious training will be compatible with the state. Imam candidates will receive a bachelor's diploma "études Islamique" (Islamic Studies Program) made by l'École pratique des hautes études (EPHE).

Even though Macron had good intentions to achieve *Islam de France*, it turned out that the law SILT's policy was considered a violation of human rights. According Khadhraoui [27], the criteria for targeting suspect were too broad and unclear. It is stated in *LOI n° 2017-1510 du 30 Octobre 2017 renforçant la sécurité intérieure et la lutte contre le terrorisme (Code de la sécurité intérieure act. L228-1)* that people who are suspected of and associated with terrorism will be punished. Through interviews with Amnesty International [27], a defendant was arrested under this law for committing crimes not related to terrorism. It violated the Republic's value of justice (*égalité*) because the officers were not transparent in punishing the accused. Some are suspected because they have religious attributes in their private space. It certainly violates the Republic's values, particularly liberty (*liberté*), because they cannot freely practice religion in their private space.

For now, Macron's policy reflects *Islam de France*. French Islam does not only focus on religious lessons but also on Republican values. Muslims will practice both religion and citizenship at the same time. As said before, Macron's plan to control Islam can reduce radical discourse. He also puts Republican values to Imam training to make one Islam in France because currently, Islam in France is still fragmented. However, during the execution, Macron violates the Republic's values so that it needs to be considered.

6. CONCLUSION

Before Macron had implemented the concept of *Islam de France*, the previous administrations policies have tried to implement it in French Muslim but not yet successful. Macron tried to prevent other countries from regulating Islam. Macron are also using Islam in France to create an institution that could represent them in France.

During the two and a half years of his government, Macron has done one of two campaign promises related to *Islam de France*. Macron carried out his campaign promise by enacting anti-terrorist laws and penalizes people who violate the law. Since the enactment of this law, many radicalism movements have been terminated. His government continued to exercise the law by arresting Islamic radicals who were carrying out jihad. This arrest was not based on religion but because of a criminal act. Moreover, a promise has not been fulfilled but is still in the planning, is the establishment of the *Fédération nationale de l'Islam de France*, which will manage the Imam's training and mosques' construction by means of funding them through donations and tax. The planned Imams training will reflect *Islam de France* and consists mostly of secularism teachings. It also goes with Muslims who support *laïcité* in France. This association invites French Muslims to participate, unlike the previous association, which was dominated by countries with a predominantly Muslim population.

During his presidency, in the context of integration, this plan was competent because Macron dared to reduce the influence of Islamic countries on Islamic training in France in combating radicalism. However, the government certainly cannot finance them because of the separation between religion and state. Also, the determination of taxes to fund Muslims in France is not compatible with *laïcité* because the government is involved in helping Muslims with tax money. Therefore, it is reasonable if Macron's policies have not been implemented until now.

Another thing that became a problem in his campaign promise is Macron broke Republican values of liberty and justice when questioning someone related to law SILT. This violation was even brought before the International Court of Justice. If a defendant is wrong due to other things that are not related to the law SILT, consideration is needed in punishing the accused by not using the law SILT. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Macron's plan is working because he makes a law that arresting people who committed terrorism, but the government needs to be more transparent in the arrest of the accused. In the remaining two and a half years of his presidency, the author hopes that Macron can carry out his campaign promises that have not been implemented and revise the SILT law to be more transparent in the steps to arrest persons who commit terrorism to avoid discrimination against Muslims.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Thahirah made the concept and the first draft of manuscript. Thahirah also collect the data for analysis. Djoko Marihandono suggested the methodology of the analysis. Danny Susanto and Djoko Marihandono reviewed the analysis. Djoko Marihandono supervised the findings in this article.

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