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## Countering the Hate Speech: An Analysis of Muslim Countries Response to Macron's Speech Against Muslims After the *Charlie Hebdo* Incident

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### Abstract

After the *Charlie Hebdo* incident and the brutal murder of a teacher, the French president Emmanuel Macron addressed against Muslims which made him a target of anger in the Muslim world. In response, the representatives of the Muslim majority nations issued statements to condemn his speech. This study is an attempt to analyze the discourse produced by the leaders of the Islamic countries in response to the French president's speech regarding the *Charlie Hebdo* incident analyzing the sentiments of Muslims globally. To examine this discourse, the research engaged with Critical Discourse Studies as its framework, with a focus upon Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model as well as NVivo for linguistic inquiry. The study incorporated responses collected from October to November 2020 from the leaders of Islamic countries and examined through macro and micro analysis by incorporating the clash of civilization and orientalism theories. The study concluded that the French President's speech generalized the Muslims around the world and tagged them with the attackers as if the whole Muslim community was responsible for it. It further apprehended that a quick narrative can counter Islamophobia just as Muslim leaders responded to Macron's hate speech to address Muslims' sentiments around the world.

**Keywords:** media, islamophobia, France, Charlie Hebdo, Islam, Muslims, sentiments.

### 1. Introduction

The term Islamophobia refers to the organized fear, prejudice, hatred, and discrimination against the religion of Islam or the people adhering to this faith. This hatred, fear, and discriminatory behavior has increased manifold in the last two decades, due to several reasons, especially after 9/11 attacks, and terrorist attacks in Europe, the portrayal of Muslims and radical Islam by the Western Media. The phenomenon is occurring mostly in countries where Muslims are in minority. The term is very frequently used in academic, political and media discourses and has become a hot topic in debates pertaining to the Media, Racism, Politics, Cultural, Social and Anthropological Studies.

Hate, prejudice and othering originate from an uprooted mistrust of Muslims and their religion Islam and violence, and racism is legitimized because the religion is viewed as a source of terror in the Christian Identity of the West. The collective unconscious of the West has always remained biased towards Islam due to historical reasons; religious conflicts and scientific, holistic analysis of Islam are often obstructed by such prejudices. Therefore, Muslims and Islam are always portrayed as extremists, fundamentalists and terrorists due to political reasons and motives (De Vitray-Meyerovitch, Mortazavi, 2004). Immigrations and influx of refugees from the Muslim countries in Europe have drawn concerns among the dominant societies and cultures of the

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Western nations. The events of 9/11, the recession of 2007, the London bombings, *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and violent acts associated to the faith of terrorists and the emergence of right-wing populist leaders in the West have further deteriorated the already weak bond between the Orient and the West. This study is an attempt to analyze the relationship of French Muslims with the state, the response of the Muslim majority nations and their sentiments after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and steps taken by the French government, the rhetoric and discourse developed by the French government, especially the President Macron and how some of the policies of the state, in the name of laicizing or secularism and marginalization and maligning of Muslims.

President Emmanuel Macron anti-Islamic statements were condemned across Muslim world in which he blamed the Islam and Muslim for an individual's act. After his anti-Islamic statement, the following Muslim countries produced discourse which are as under Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Libya, Egypt and Yemen. Macron statement was condemned across Muslim world among Muslim leaders. Turkish president Recep Tayyab Erdogan took the lead in condemning Macrons anti-Islamic statement.

The main objective of this study was to find out the how Muslims respond to the targeting of Muslims and Islam and analyse their sentiments after the hate speech and maligning of Islam by the French President Emmanuel Macron and investigate the contextual and written texts from the responses from the leaders of the Muslim majority states. More specifically, this study critically examines the sentiments of Muslim countries in response to Macron's remarks.

The study would also help in understanding of the deepening gulf between Muslims and the European world, and help in understanding of the problem of hate towards Muslims, how Muslims cope with and respond to this hatred, and react in certain scenarios when both their identity and faith become a target of hate crimes. The study is also important because it has chalked out various strategies and recommendations to the Muslim leadership, academics, intellectuals, and journalists for dealing with Islamophobia in the West.

## 2. Materials and methods

The research has used qualitative analysis approach for this study. The aim of this study was to collect Muslim leaders' response to Macron's speeches. President macron had given several speeches targeting Islam and Muslims in France. The researcher put speech and responses of Muslim leaders to the NVivo 12 Plus software for further processing. The NVivo 12 Plus software generated various graphs of both the texts entered to it and captions were added to the graphs to explain the results.

Discourses produced by different Muslim countries were subjected to the strategy of Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) and logical conclusions were drawn. Under the umbrella of qualitative research that can be multiple sources of texts and discourse material, therefore the current study data was compiled from statements and responses from Muslim countries leaders.

In terms of macro analysis, the researcher looked at the data on the binary self-other, which was a discursive strategy that was used to legitimize the self and delegitimize the other, emphasize positive things about 'us,' emphasize negative things about 'them,' de-emphasize negative things about 'us,' and de-emphasize positive things about 'them,'.

In term of micro analysis, the researcher used the 24 different rhetoric strategy which including: Actor's description; Burden; Categorization; Comparison; Consensus; Counterfactual; Disclaimer; Euphemism; Evidentiality; Argumentation; Illustration/example; Generalization; Hyperbole; Implication; Irony; Lexicalization; Metaphor; National self-glorification; Number game; Polarization (us-them); Populism; Presupposition; Vagueness; Victimization (Van Dijk, 2006).

The study examines the response of Emmanuel Macron's address at *Les Mureaux* on October 2, 2020 by the Muslim leaders around the world within a span of two months, from October 2020 to November 2020 in which the French issue was in limelight and in the media. The data was collected from international media platforms *BBC*, *CNN*, *Aljazeera*, etc.

14 statements of different Islamic leaders from Muslim majority countries were taken as sample for this study. The research selected Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq, Palestine, Libya, Jordan etc. because in these countries Muslims are in majority and usually, they represent Muslims on all international fronts. They also lead the various organizations of the Islamic world such as OIC, UN, CE, Organization for security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) etc.

### 3. Discussion

In today's world hate crimes against Muslims in the West are almost a daily occurrence. These incidents and hate crimes have increased manifold during the last two decades. This hatred against Muslims is well-known phenomenon and is evident in both West and the East where Muslims are in minority. This is the territory of Islamophobia. Islamophobia is a highly disciplined procedure. It is not only the responsibility of Muslims to learn the genuine meaning of Islamophobia and its ramifications in today's world; but also, the responsibility of non-Muslims to study the true meaning of Islamophobia. Rather, it is a matter that Muslim groups and Muslim leaders, particularly those active in *dawah* or preaching and political activities and academic discourses (Wasay, 2018).

The world has entered a new political era called the "era of terrorism" since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the attacks in Madrid 2004, the terror attacks of London in 2005 and the terror attacks in France in early also known as the 9/11 of France (Ergul, 2015b). The Western media while reporting these tragic incidents of terrorism, painted its perpetrators as Islamist terrorists, radical Islamists, radical Muslims, Muslim terrorists, and jihadists. Similarly, the speeches of some politicians and intellectuals added more fuel to the fire, which resulted in creation of an environment of fear against Muslims in the Western world. On the other hand, the ordinary citizens in the Western countries who are unfamiliar with Islam and Muslims developed prejudice, hatred towards Islam and Muslims and some of them even indulged in acts of violence against Muslims in the West. Unfortunately, the phenomenon of Islamophobia has not remained limited to the Western world only but also spread towards Southeast Asia and Africa, leading to radicalization of people against Muslims in the rest of the world, where Muslims are in minority. The term Islamophobia was first used in a 1997 report by the Runnemed Trust. The English and French sources have confirmed that the phrase was used before 1997, however, this report is noteworthy, as it is the first time that Islamophobia has been used as a technical term (Ergul, 2015b). According to Runnymede, this report contributed to the widespread use of the term "Islamophobia." This report on religious prejudices towards Muslims and their problems had a huge impact on the international stage and in intellectual circles.

A study was carried out to look at the elements that contribute to anti-Muslim sentiment in the West. The study focused on specific forms of Islamophobic beliefs that relate violence and terrorism to Muslims, based on the idea that Islamophobic attitudes are more intricate than a mere hate of Muslims. Using data from the Pew Global Attitudes Surveys, three ideas are tested: perceived threat, social identity, and cognitive skills. For the experimental examination of individual level data in Germany, Spain, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, a series of logit estimations were used. The findings demonstrate that citizens' perceptions of a real or symbolic threat are a major source of anti-Islam sentiment in the West. While people's impressions of Muslims and their qualities vary, higher levels of education are associated with a reduction in negative attitudes of Muslims. Many Westerners regard Muslims as aggressive individuals, while others assume they are supporters of al-Qaeda. Muslims are more likely to be associated with terrorism if residents in the West feel threatened by their physical and cultural presence (Ciftci, 2012). According to these studies the misconception against Muslims is very high in the West. However, this intolerance at such a great scale is a big concern for democracy, which is defined by its essential ideals of equality, tolerance, and religious liberty (Kaya, 2015).

Islam, according to many Europeans, poses a larger threat to their values than other religious traditions. Biases of this nature aren't insignificant; they can reflect and/or affect laws, policies, and practices. Unfavorable attitudes and views may lead to religious dress prohibitions, opposition to mosque construction projects, and intolerance toward migrants from Muslim-majority countries. The term "Islamophobia" was coined in public and academic circles to describe anti-Muslim prejudice that resulted in derogatory remarks and actions directed against Muslims. The term "Islamophobia" was coined by politicians, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations, which is most strongly associated with Western liberal democracies. The term was coined to describe any anti-Muslim or anti-Islamic emotion or action that exists in society (Bleich, 2011).

The definition of Islamophobia has moved in recent years from a primarily political concept to one that is primarily used for analytical and anthropological purposes. Scholars now use it to identify the various factors that contribute to anti-Muslim or anti-Islamic sentiment. Many academics include aspects such as a country's historical relationship with religion and plurality;

Muslim population density; anti-Islamic sentiment; driving factors for those unfavorable sentiments; and anti-Islamic sentiment's prospective consequences. The notion of Islamophobia has returned in the social sciences, but this time in a more comprehensive form than before. Islamophobia, on the other hand, lacks a universally accepted or unambiguous description. Because there is no globally agreed definition of Islamophobia, it is hard to assess or compare levels of Islamophobia over time within or between countries. Over the previous 20 years, the widespread understanding of what defines Islamophobia has evolved, significantly confusing the term's meaning. This makes conducting a comparative examination of Islamophobia challenging. A comparative model in the social sciences is missing because no precise causes or definitions for this word have materialized. As a result, there is a knowledge gap in the academic community about the origins and motivations of anti-Islamic prejudice in the West, which has recently gained prominence. Due to the lack of a universally agreed definition for Islamophobia, many interpretations of the notion have emerged (Bleich, 2011). Brian Klug, an Oxford philosopher, and expert on Islamophobia, points out that Islamophobia was once classified as a type of religious bigotry. This demonstrates that bigotry against Muslims stems from their religious convictions (Klug, 2012).

The concept of Islamophobia as a sort of religious intolerance, according to researcher Fernando Bravo López, the term comes from the origins of the word, which means "fear or phobia of Islam." However, limiting Islamophobia to a fear of Islam isn't a sufficiently wide term. Islamophobia is a fear of Muslims in general, not a fear of a particular religion. It's also seen to be a sort of racial discrimination stemming from preconceived notions about Muslims (Bravo López, 2011). According to Bleich, Islamophobia is based on racial stereotyping of a minority group, which indicates the presence of discrimination against Muslims. The majority of society negative opinions toward "outsiders" stem from underlying in-group and out-group attitudes and sentiments. Some of the societal divides between Muslims and non-Muslims may be explained by these negative views of Islam. since a low percentage of Muslims occupy public office, secure professions, or attend prestigious schools. Discrimination, on the other hand, is a weaker indicator of Islamophobia than other, more visible institutional norms (Bleich, 2011). To understand anti-Muslim sentiment within a culture, it is best to look at how this minority religion group is portrayed in pop culture and the media.

According to a Pew research center report 2019, on Muslims in France, media coverage has an impact on French perceptions about Islam. "When you meet your Muslim friends on a regular basis, you don't assume that relations with Muslims are bad," argues a 22-year-old Parisian architect. However, if all you do is watch television, you will see a lot of severe examples of Islam. Similarly, in the United States, "half or more of Muslims [surveyed] have consistently thought that U.S. media portrayal of Muslims is unfair" for the last ten years. Examining how Muslims and other minorities are depicted in media such as television, movies, cartoons, video games, literature, and music, for example, can show underlying sentiments toward Muslims in a certain country. To analyze how a country's culture and political system treats its Muslim community, all of these indicators, as well as social relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims and repressive state actions directed at Muslims, might be used. Another way to measure Islamophobia is to look at how much prejudice or distrust exists in a society, as measured by opinion surveys and other indicators. "An efficient system of government prosecution and media coverage brings Muslim American terrorism suspects to national attention," according to a recent Gallup study, "perhaps unintentionally creating the impression— perhaps unintentionally— that Muslim-American terrorism is more prevalent than it is." When the media and the government place a high focus on prosecuting Muslim terrorists, the public's perception of Islam as a threat is more likely to expand. These and other factors, as well as ones mentioned above, are used to assess the level of Islamophobia in a certain country. Nonetheless, indicators must be evaluated holistically and critically in order to genuinely realize the extent of Islamophobia in a country in order to fully understand the dynamic between Muslims and non-Muslims (Bleich, 2011).

More than 17 million Muslims dwell in 17 countries across Western Europe, with France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain having the highest Muslim populations. In all of these nations, there has been an increase in Islamophobic discourse, most notably in the Netherlands, where Geert Wilders, the Dutch MP and leader of the populist Freedom Party, has called for a complete ban on immigration from all Muslim countries. Recent governmental alterations impacting Muslim traditions have been enacted as a result of this shift in public opinion

on immigration. The Belgian parliament resolved in 2010 to make it illegal to wear niqabs (Islamic face-covering veils) in public. However, the government fell apart before the Senate could put it into law. As a result of migration and family reunification, the Muslim population in Europe has increased significantly over the previous four decades, resulting in predictable difficulties. Conflicts between dominant and minority groups in Europe are the product of a globalized civilization of confrontations, according to An Essay on the Geography of Anger, rather than a "clash of civilizations," as S. Huntington (Huntington, 1993) put it (Appadurai, 2006). In today's Europe, the battle between the local and the global is palpable.

Fear and outrage emerging from anti-Muslim fringe organizations dominated media coverage of the 9/11 events in the United States, according to sociologist Christopher Bail, rather than more moderate remarks emanating from mainstream civil society organizations. He also contends that such communications have an impact on public opinion. Rather than relying on a survey of media coverage of Muslims and Islam in Europe and the United States, our research aims to determine the true impact of media coverage on public opinion in relation to other factors including political affiliation and religious beliefs and practices. The in-group mindset of French culture has prioritized maintaining the nation's (people's) uniform alignment with the state (political apparatus). The drive to maintain a homogeneous national identity has resulted in France's current xenophobia. This has happened in two ways: first, the country's secularism prohibits public displays of faith. Second, because of France's traditionally Catholic majority, a person who practice religions other than Catholicism are typically considered outsiders. Initially, many far-right and Catholic practitioners focused on anti-Semitism in order to safeguard France's homogeneity. In recent years, however, anti-Semitism in France has been accompanied by anti-Muslim sentiment in some groups (Cazedepats, 2016). The French legislature made it illegal to wear niqabs in public. Wearing a niqab in public is punishable by a punishment of 150 euros, according to the law, which went into force in April 2011.

France has a long history of anti-religious animosity, which has been focused primarily at Muslims in the country over the last ten years or so. Anti-Muslim sentiment was visible following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, although it has since receded. There was Islamophobia in the state before to this incident. Muslims have long been seen as second-class citizens in France, even when they are native-born citizens. Muslims have fewer chances as citizens in France than Christians and have remained excluded within the country.

Thus, this study investigated and did a sentimental analysis of Muslim's response towards the Speech of Emmanuel Macron after his Speech and Muslim world painting him as an Islamophobe and would add to the already available literature on how seriously the issue of Islamophobia is being perceived among the Muslims around the world. The study further helps in understanding the various responses and sentiments of the Muslim majority countries, when Islam or Muslims become the target of political hatred, bigotry and anti-Muslim rhetoric and hate speech across Europe, specifically in France.

The epistemology or theoretical foundations of this study can be traced and linked to the discourses and paradigms presented by Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilization, Edward Said's Orientalism.

In post-Cold War geopolitical thinking, the concepts of "culture" and "cultural difference" have gained a lot of momentum, with the concept of "clash of civilizations" gaining special attraction. Samuel Huntington popularized the idea in 1993, however it was first proposed in a 1990 paper by Bernard Lewis titled "the Roots of Muslim Rage." The bipolar paradigm of the Cold War aided international relations, security, and strategic studies. The term "clash of civilizations" has been used to describe global geopolitical conflicts since the end of the Cold War. The New York Times, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*, among other 'quality media' in the United States, framed the events of September 11, 2001, in terms of Islam, civilization, and culture. Despite academics' outright rejection of the 'clash of civilizations' paradigm as unprofessional history and speculative political science, it became the standard paradigm for describing all forms of Middle Eastern crises. Economic failures, social problems, corruption, and political deadlock are all examples of events that are usually attributed to 'Islam' (Semati, 2010).

Huntington describes civilization as "similar objective components" shared by diverse cultures, such as religion, institutions, customs, history, and language. Huntington also believes that the clash of civilizations between Islamic and Western civilizations will be the main source of conflict. Huntington goes on to claim that the clash of civilizations between Islam and the West will

almost certainly continue, citing Islam's predilection for murder and bloodshed as proof. He also says that Muslims engage in violent clashes with non-Muslims, citing Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Buddhists in Burma, and Jews in Israel as instances. To put it another way, he asserts that "Islam has bloody borders" and that Islam has bleeding boarders (Green, 2015).

Huntington and Lewis use several classic Orientalist motifs in their work. For example, Huntington argues that the West is a superior and distinct civilization, and hence promotes Western colonial interests at the expense of Arab and Muslim countries. Islam, he says, is harsh and hostile by nature. The phrase that "Islam has bloody borders" is a not-so-subtle hint that Muslims are to blame for all problems in which they find themselves, including disagreements with Western nations (Huntington, 1993).

This study falls into the category of Clash of civilization presented by Huntington. The Clash of Civilizations (COC) is a thesis that says that in the post-Cold War world, people's cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict. The core assumption of this theory is that in the world different civilizations fight with each other. They have disagreements about history, prejudice, faith, and traditions. Muslims are a problem in France as well. Since each region of the world has its own culture. The French government requires Muslim women to drop their hijab, despite the fact that they are French citizens. This is also the source of blasphemy, and it is for this reason that two civilizations differ. The clash of civilizations is reflected in Macron's voice. How. Macron's speech represents a clash of civilizations in the way he humiliates Muslims. Macron's speech infuriated Muslims. In my study it has clear that Macron speech has clear factors that he could not accept Muslims and he don't want to understand how he humiliate the sentiments among Muslim countries. He doesn't want to apologize over blasphemy. The conflict in France between Muslims and the secular French government is an example of the conflict between different cultures, faiths and often take the shape of violent conflicts. The Islamophobia and the rise against Muslims in France, the blame of separation and segregation of the French Muslims citizens by President Macron and war with the radical Islam can be best described in the context of clash of cultures, identities, tradition, and way of life.

This study will touch another important and popular theory of social science research i.e., Orientalism "Orientalism" is a way of looking at the world that envisions, emphasizes, misrepresents, and contorts distinctions between Arab people groups and societies and those of Europe and the United States. Said's main point is that individuals who utilize the clash of civilizations paradigm to make sense of the world, particularly the relationship between Islam and the West, are questioning their motives. In a fairly Orientalist manner, the conflict of civilizations promotes Western imperialism (Green, 2015). The critique of the colonial mentality Islamophobia is a relatively new concept with etymological roots in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. Despite the fact that suspicion and fear of Muslims, as well as the idea of Muslims as a completely other "Other," have deeper historical origins in Europe. Attempts to civilize the "Other," primarily through colonial expansion, ushered in a new era in Europe's relationship with the Orient (Bakali, 2016). The effects of colonialism on both colonizers and colonized have been studied in postcolonial ideas.

Edward Said's Orientalism (Said, 1979) is one of the basic writings on the colonization of Muslim majority countries. He explores the ideologies that gave moral explanations for and the continuity in defining Muslims as the "Other" in his book Orientalism. The work was a critique of Orientalist study, and it has influenced many contemporary anti-Muslim racism critiques. When Muslims are treated as if they do not belong with (the superior) us, but rather as the other, Islamophobia is clear. As a result, the concept of Us versus Them is included in a way that excludes Islamic affiliations and/or Muslims from the prevalent discourse, and is thus based in part on the Orientalist viewpoint.

The core concept of Orientalist theory is a creative but starkly polarized geography that separates the world into two unequal parts: the larger, "other" Orient and the smaller, "our" world, Occident or West. There are a multitude of religious, psychological, and political reasons for this, but they all originate from the view that Islam is not only a formidable foe, but also a latecomer to the West's Christian faith (Said, 1975). Direct colonialism has largely ended in our day; imperialism...remains in a general cultural sphere as well as specific political, intellectual, economic, and social acts, as it has always been," writes Said (Said, 1997: 9). He claimed that superior thinking formed the groundwork for Orientalist ideas in the 19th and 20th centuries (Bakali, 2016).

After its publication, Said's book *Orientalism* sparked intense debate and controversy. Said's failure to connect *Orientalism* concretely to colonial history and its connection to the development of capitalism, his omission of the many ways the colonized resisted colonial power, and his tendency to essentialize the West while criticizing Western essentialization of the Orient are just a few of the more common criticisms. Although researcher do not plan to go into detail about each of these criticisms, they are valid, and it would be worthwhile to debate and analyze them in a context other than his book. Regardless of Said's *Orientalism*'s flaws, his larger argument is sound, raising crucial concerns about how the West has researched Muslims and Islam and continues to do so. Despite their reservations, many anti-Islam and anti-Muslim academics credit Said with assisting them in realizing how much anti-Islam and anti-Muslim prejudice is shaped by discourse rooted in the power dynamic between Muslim-majority regions and the West. The portrayal of Muslims as essentialized "Others" in opposition to Europeans, which is founded on the premise that Europeans possess inherent civilization and cultural superiority, has its roots in *Orientalist* studies and literature (Green, 2015).

In regard to Islamophobia, extending *Orientalism* as a framework is founded on the assumption that Islam is a hostile faith. Even when they have citizenship, Muslims are viewed as foreigners who are violent and unassailable (De Vitray-Meyerovitch, Mortazavi, 2004b; Marranci, 2004). As a result, the Orient emerges as a power struggle between us, the Occident (the West), and them, the Orient (De Vitray-Meyerovitch, Mortazavi, 2004a; Ning, 1997). The concept of *Orientalism* is vital for this argument since it laid the foundation for Islamophobia. Furthermore, the links between Islamophobia and political power may be traced back to the nineteenth century's nexus between *Orientalism* and colonial authority. Drawing on this, researcher will argue that Macron creates these distinctions between us and them in the analytical section of this thesis.

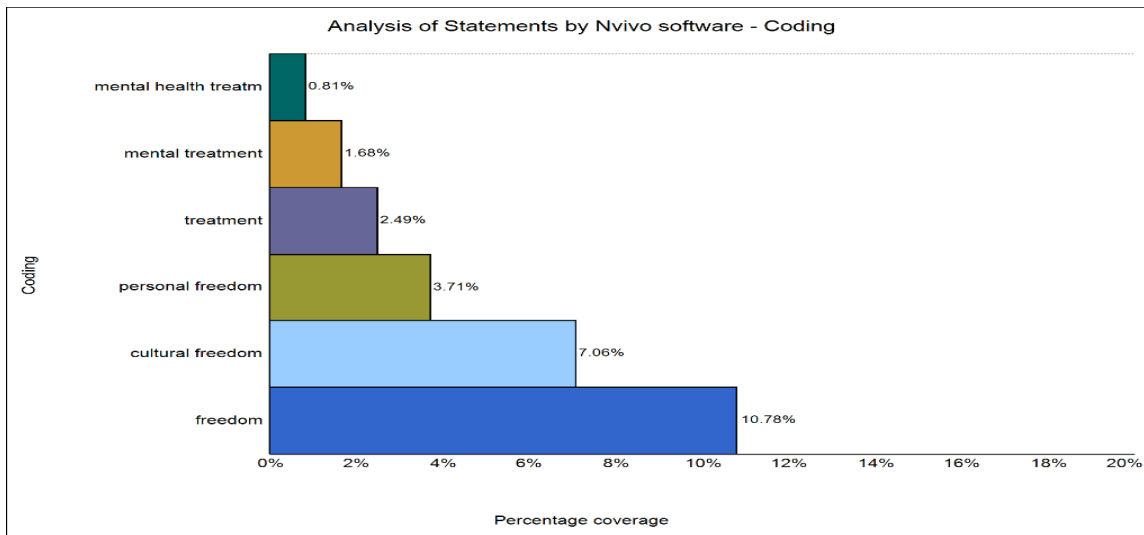
The global capitalist international system creates ideologies from a variety of actors to compete with one another for ideational supremacy. Patterns "of interacting social forces" that develop and remodel the ideas that become globally hegemonic are used to describe this contestation. The rules, ideas, and values promoted by an ideology have the capacity to persuade others to act in a certain way, and so dominate human behavior (Burchell et al., 1991). It is reasonable to assume that a globally dominant ideology would predisposition, organize, and regulate people on a global scale. This raises questions about dominant ideology's normativity within societies, as well as the injustices and oppression that result from it. Furthermore, the basic divide between East and West, according to Edward Said's popular idea of *orientalism*, serves as a beginning point for hypotheses, sagas, literature, social portrayals, and political records concerning the Orient, its relatives, customs, 'mind,' predetermination, and other themes. The major goal of this theory was to forecast the integral relationship between East and West. *Orientalism* theory's primary premise is that societies are diverse and have their unique perspectives.

This study is an attempt to understand *orientalism* in the context of Islamophobia in the West specifically in France. The study will also add to the available literature on *orientalism* Islamophobia and clash of civilization among different cultures of the East and West. The study will also help in highlighting the Islamophobia prevailing in the West and Muslims being on the receiving end of this hatred, racism, and hate speech. That is the outcome of us versus them. The study will also analyze the discourse developed by the mainstream media of the Western world and how politicians specially the president of France is contributing to this discourse This is why the researcher as selected all the three concepts for her theoretical work.

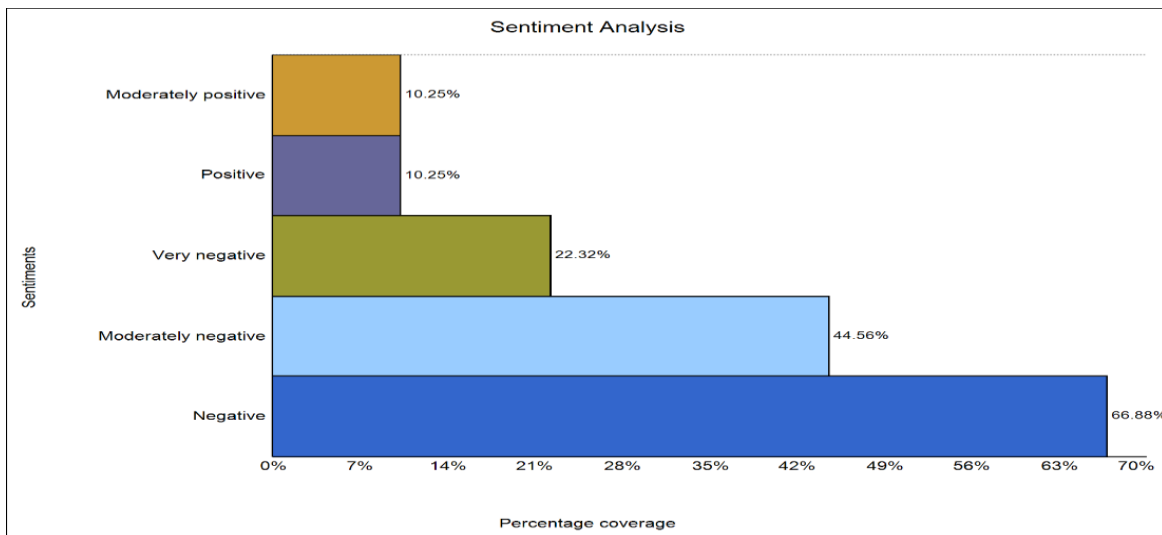
#### 4. Results

The study's sampling frame was aimed to collect the most contentious official statements of Muslim Countries about the French president's hate speech. The discourses produced by various Muslim majority countries including Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Malaysia etc. were also collected from different news websites such as *Aljazeera*, *BBC*, *Daily sabah* etc.

Figure 1 shows the analysis of statements produced by Muslim Countries by NVivo software. The Muslim leaders have used terms like mental health treatment, cultural freedom, and freedom to counter him and portray him as a retard, psycho, populist, and someone who is out of mind and needs to think before he speaks. This is a strong rebuttal of his allegations on Islam and Muslims and how freedom of speech should respect cultural diversity and others' beliefs.



**Fig. 1.** Analysis of statements produced by Muslim Countries



**Fig. 2.** Sentiment analysis of Muslim Countries

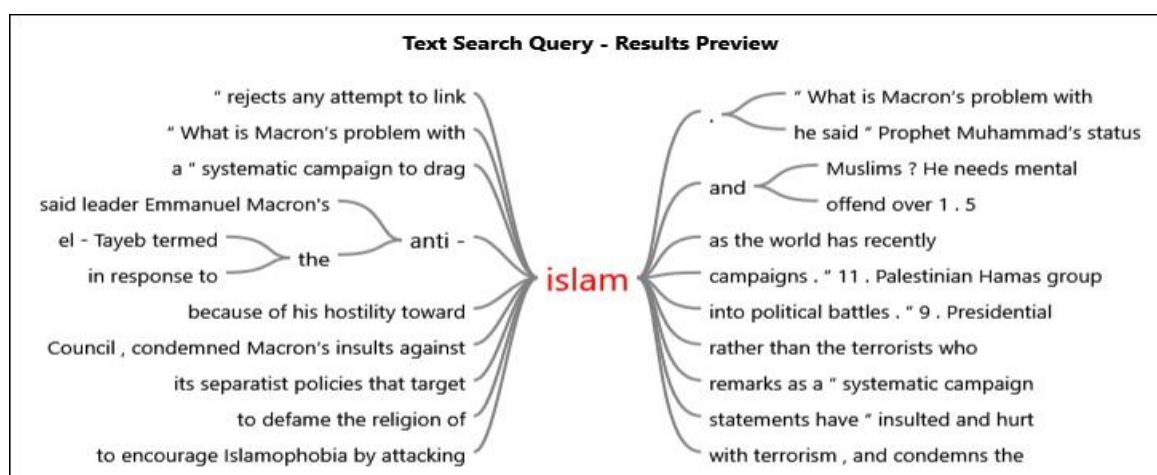
Figure 2 shows an analysis of the sentiments of the Muslims by NVivo Software. The graph shows very negative comments and the annoyance of Muslim leaders across the globe towards Macron and French government. Overall, it is clear how angry the Muslim world was after publication of blasphemous caricatures and Macron’s speech.

Figure 3 shows an analysis of the text used in the statements of Muslim leaders. Phrases like rejecting any attempt to link Islam with terrorism, what is Macron’s problem, systematic campaign to drag Islam etc. show the anger, irony, and shock of Muslim leaders towards Macron and the French government.

*Macro Analysis of Statements of Muslim Countries*

In response to President Emmanuel Macron speech the representatives of Muslim majority countries issued statements that condemned the remarks of the French President. The statements produced by the representatives of leading Muslim state such as Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, etc and organizations of Islamic countries and political moments were analysed to understand the various narratives and discourses produced by these states between Oct 2020 and Nov2020. The researcher used the critical discourse analysis to assess the discourses produced by these statements and made the following conclusion.





**Fig. 3.** Word trees of frequently used terms in the statements of Muslim Countries

*Statement by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.*

“It is unfortunate that he has chosen to encourage Islamophobia by attacking Islam rather than the terrorists who carry out violence, be it Muslims, White Supremacists or Nazi ideologists” (Aljazeera, 2020).

In the very first statement Prime Minister Imran Khan, who is an actor according to Ideological Square Framework, says that President Macron should have attacked or blamed the individual(s) who carried the attack rather than blaming the whole Muslim community or their religion Islam. Applying “*Generalization*” strategy to the statement, according to Imran Khan, the French Prime Minister has blamed all Muslims by painting them all with the brush of terrorism, instead of isolating those who performed the violent acts. The researcher also sees “*Polarization*” in this statement, in which the Muslims are being polarized and segregated from the rest of French community. Applying the discursive strategy, the Prime Minister Imran Khan has created an “us’ vs. ‘them’ by applying negative connotations towards Macron while trying to take side of French Muslims.

*Statement by President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan*

“Macron needs “mental treatment” because of his hostility toward Islam. “What is Macron’s problem with Islam and Muslims? He needs mental health treatment” (Agencies, 2020).

In this statement the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that President Macron is out of his mind and lost his way. Recep Tayyip Erdogan is using the “*Hyperbole*” and stressing upon the fact that Macron is out of his mind and is trying to enhance the semantic meaning according to Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) by associating “out of mind’ and “mental health’ to undermine the seriousness of Macron’s statement. The actor tries to make a strong argument here that the president Macron is in dire need of mental treatment and not worthy of a response from Erdogan. Applying the “*Metaphor*” strategy of Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) to the statement, the actor has used metaphorical expression to target his opponent Macron. The researcher also sees “*Populism*” in this statement in which the actor Erdogan has termed Macron as someone who is attention seeker by making illogical statements as explained by the Van Dijk. When it comes to discursive strategies of self-other binary as proposed by Van Dijk, the researcher has clearly identified that President Erdogan is using the framework of “us” vs. “them” in his speech and has tried to associate craziness to Macron while associating sanity to himself.

*Official statement from Saudi Arabia*

“Saudi Arabia rejects any attempt to associate Islam with terrorism and condemns the insulting drawings of the Prophet,” the ministry said, amid an intensifying feud between France and some Muslim-majority countries over Paris’ support for the right to caricature the Prophet. “Intellectual and cultural freedom to be a beacon of respect, tolerance, and peace that rejects practices and acts that produce hatred, violence, and extremism and are opposed to the norms of coexistence,” a Saudi foreign ministry official told state media” (Aljazeera, 2020a).

In its official statement, the Saudi Government rejected President Macron’s attempt to link Islam with terrorism and condemned offensive cartoons aimed at ridiculing the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The actor further explains that freedom of speech should not violate the value of respect for other cultures, beliefs and religion, and that freedom does not mean to

disrespect other religions or holy personalities. According to the researcher this statement falls in the category of “*National self-glorification*”. As the actor has argued that “freedom is also a beacon of respect, tolerance and peace that rejects practices and acts which generate hatred, violence and extremism and are contrary to the values of coexistence,” When it comes to the discursive strategy of “us’ vs “them’ as explained by Van Dijk, and applied to the statement of Saudi government, the actor portrays Saudi Arabia as in-group who respects other’s cultures and beliefs in the domain of freedom of speech, while the French President as “out-group’ that doesn’t respect others beliefs and cultures and holy personalities.

*Statement by Foreign Minister of Iran Javad Zarif*

Iran’s Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said “Muslims are the primary victims of the “cult of hatred’ empowered by colonial regimes & exported by their own clients. Insulting 1.9B Muslims & their sanctities for the abhorrent crimes of such extremists is an opportunistic abuse of freedom of speech. It only fuels extremism” (Aljazeera, 2020).

In this statement the actor says Muslims are the primary victims of all sorts of hatred emboldened by colonial regimes. The sentiments of 1.5 billion Muslims and sanctities are being disrespected and ridiculed in the name of freedom of expression. According to the researcher this statement falls under the umbrella of “*Number game*” where the emotions of 1.5 billion people of Muslims are hurt. “The researcher also sees “*Victimization*” in this statement. According to Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006), it is the most widely employed political technique for the “binary us-them set of in-groups and out-groups”, and here the in group which is Muslims and are in a large number are being victimized in the name of freedom by the outer group which is French government. Furthermore, when it comes to the discursive strategies of self-other binary as proposed by Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006), the researcher sees that the actor has painted Muslims as victims of so-called freedom of speech while blaming the French President for inciting Muslims towards violence and extremism in the name of freedom of expression.

*Statement by President of Indonesia Joko Widodo*

Indonesia’s President Joko Widodo said; “Emmanuel Macron's anti-Islam statements have insulted and hurt the feelings of Muslims around the world” (Gozali, Koswaraputra, 2020).

In this statement President Joko Widodo says that the Islamophobic and anti-Islam remarks have insulted and hurt the feelings of the whole Muslim community around the world. Applying “*Implication*” “which refers to the understanding regarding what is not explicitly expressed in discourse”, the actor is blaming Macron for hurting the emotions of all Muslims around the world by targeting their religion Islam. The statement also comes under the “*Generalization*” in which the actor is generalizing the emotions of French Muslims with the Muslims around the world. Applying the discursive strategy of Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) of “us” vs “them” the actor has portrayed Muslims an (in- group) whose emotions are hurt by Macron, while declaring the French government as (outer-group) and blaming them for hurting the sentiments of Muslims in the name of freedom of expression.

*Statement by Foreign Minister of Malaysia Hishammuddin Hussein*

"We strongly condemn any inflammatory rhetoric and provocative acts that seek to defame the religion of Islam as the world has recently witnessed in the form of populist speeches and publication of blasphemous caricatures depicting the Holy Prophet Muhammad” (Aljazeera, 2020).

In this statement the actor has condemned in strongest words the act of defaming the religion of Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad through blasphemous caricatures in the name of freedom of expression. According to the researcher this statement falls under the umbrella “*Lexicalization*” to depict something or somebody positively or negatively and the actor has clearly termed Macron’s speech under populism. The researcher can also see “*Populism*” and “*Polarization*” in this statement as the actor has clearly called Macron a populist leader who has defamed Muslim by his speech and created polarization by isolating the French Muslims by hurting their emotions.

Moreover, applying discursive strategy the actor says that French authorities are trying to mitigate negative things about them “Muslim” by calling them intolerant.

*Statement of Organization of Islamic Cooperation*

"The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has urged France to reconsider its separatist policies, which attack Islam and hurt the world's 1.5 billion Muslims." In a statement, the OIC has said: "We condemn the constant systematic attack on the feelings of Muslims by insulting the religious symbols represented by the person of the Prophet Muhammad" (Aljazeera, 2020).

According to the researcher this statement falls under the category of “*Evidentiality*” and “*Number Game*” where the hard facts and figures are used to support speaker’s claim or idea. In this statement the actor OIC has used the tactic of evidentiality by providing the evidence of separatist remarks of Macron and the number of Muslims which is 1.5 billion across the world and who are hurt by the caricatures of the Holy Prophet. The actor has also condemned in strongest possible words the organized attacks on Islam and the respect of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the name of freedom of expression which is “*Victimization*” strategy. When it comes to discursive strategies of self-other binary as proposed by Van Dijk, the researcher has clearly identified how OIC has blamed Macron for separatist policies of France in which Muslim are being declared as an outer group while the rest of France as in-group.

*Statement issued by Grand Imam of Egypt Sheikh Ahmad*

“In Egypt, the grand imam of al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb termed the anti-Islam remarks as a “systematic campaign to drag Islam into political battles” (Agencies, 2020).

This statement falls under the “Polarization and Populism” where Sheikh Ahmad has described the anti-Islamic remarks of French President Emmanuel Macron as an organized campaign to drag the religion of Islam into political battles. According to Sheikh Ahmad Macron is using such populist and cheap tactics for getting electoral gains and using a defamation of a holy religion and personality to increase his support among the West. The actor also sees “Victimization” in this statement in which Muslims are the victims of populist bigot. These remarks have also led to the polarization of the French Muslims as us vs them. When it comes to the discursive strategies suggested by Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006), the actor says that French President is trying to legitimize himself and de-legitimize the French Muslims, by calling it a systematic campaign of the French government to acquire political gains.

*Remarks by Presidential Council of Libya Mohammad Zayed*

“In Libya, Mohammad Zayed, a member of the Presidential Council, condemned Macron’s insulting remarks against Islam and said; “Prophet Muhammad’s status will not be affected by malicious statements or trivial drawings” (Agencies, 2020).

In this statement Mohammad Zayed, a member of Presidential Council who is an actor according to Van Dijk framework (Van Dijk, 2006), has condemned the remarks of Macron and has stated that these derogatory remarks against Islam and The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are unacceptable and this malicious statement will never ever affect Islam and its Prophet. According to the researcher this statement falls under the strategy of “National self-glorification” “which according to Van Dijk creates a positive representation of a specific country/nation through certain positive references, like history, principles, culture, and traditions”.

According to the actor, the glory and dignity of the Holy Prophet cannot be minimized by the trivial remarks of a populist leader and won’t affect the sanctity of the great leader. He has explained that any person’s greatness cannot be limited by derogatory remarks of another person and when it comes to the Holy Prophet, PBUH, there is no impact on Muslim’s respect towards the messenger of God when a person tries to defame him, because he lives in the hearts of Muslim. Whereas when it comes to the discursive strategies, the researcher can easily determine how the actor has termed President Macron as an Islamophobe who is treating Muslims as an out group by calling them terrorist and extremists and calling himself victims of Islamic terrorism.

*Statement of Yemeni Minister of Religious Affairs Ahmed Attiya*

“Yemeni Minister of Religious Affairs Ahmad Attiya calls for boycotting French products in response to the anti-Islam campaigns” (Agencies, 2020).

The Yemeni Minister of Religious Affairs Ahmad Attiya has called for the boycott of French products in reaction to anti-Islam campaign in France led by President Macron. According to the researcher this statement falls under the umbrella of CDA strategy “Counterfactuals” “which is a persuasive argumentative strategy that is being used to move of asking for empathy”. The actor has actually tried to counter the French President by targeting their products to give him a strong message that Muslims are not willing to tolerate the blasphemy of their Prophet PBUH and would respond in the form of boycott to harm their economy.

When it comes to discursive strategy which was given by Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006), the researcher found out that according to the actor the French leadership is using the framework of “us” vs “them” by portraying Muslim and Islam in a negative way and rest of the French society in a positive way and therefore Muslims are boycotting their products to settle their score with them.

*Statement by Palestinian Hamas group leader Maher al Huli*

“Maher al-Huli, a leader of the Palestinian Hamas group said; “We condemn the comments of the French president and whoever offends the Prophet Mohammed, whether through words, actions, gestures or drawings” (Agencies, 2020).

The leader of Palestinian Hamas group has condemned the comments made by President Macron against Muslims and said that any offensive remarks in any form towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are unacceptable. According to the researcher this statement in the CDA strategies falls under the “Disclaimer” where the actor is giving a disclaimer that we condemn that act of offending the prophet PBUH in any form and would not tolerate it. The researcher also sees “Authority’ in this statement whereas the Palestinian organization has used its authority to condemn Islamophobic remarks. When applying the discursive strategies, of us vs them, the Palestinian authority Hamas considers the French Muslims as us, and the French government as “them’ and has condemned “them’ which is France for hurting the emotions of “us’ which are Muslims of Palestine.

*Statement of Pro Faction of Iraq Rabaa Allah*

“Rabaa Allah, a pro-Iran faction in Iraq, said in a statement that one and a half billion people worldwide had in effect been insulted, and warned that its men were ready to respond when and where they want” (Aljazeera, 2020)

In this statement the actor Rabaa Allah, an organization in Iraq has threatened the French government of retaliation and dire consequences. According to the researcher this statement fall in the CDA under the strategy of “Evidentiality and Number Game” in which the French President has offended and hurt the feelings of 1.5 billion Muslims globally and the actor has condemned in strongest possible words and has warned them of consequences because Macron has committed a crime against a huge amount of Muslims by hurting their emotion in the name of freedom of speech. When it comes to discursive strategies of self-other binary as proposed by Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006), the researcher has clearly identified how the organization Rabaa Allah has given a veiled threat and has termed the French authorities as “them; who have hurt the emotions of “us’ that is 1.5 billion Muslims and therefore, reserves the right to retaliate.

*Statement issued by Foreign Ministry of Morocco*

“Morocco’s foreign ministry also “vigorously” condemned the continued publication of the caricatures” (Aljazeera, 2020)

In this statement the Foreign Ministry has clearly condemned the act of French government in the strongest possible way. This statement comes under the strategy of “Lexicalization” in which the actor has condemned in strongest words the act of defaming the religion of Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad through blasphemous caricatures on the name of freedom of expression. Moreover, while applying discursive strategy the actor says that French authorities are trying to mitigate negative things about them “Muslim” by publishing the caricatures of the Holy Prophet PBUH.

*Statement issued by Minister of Islamic Affairs Jordan, Mohammed al-Khalayleh*

“Insulting prophets, according to Islamic Affairs Minister Mohammed al-Khalayleh, is “not a matter of personal freedom, but a criminal that invites violence.” Macron's remarks were regarded as “an affront on the (Islamic) nation and amounted to malice and ugly racism” by the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan (Aljazeera, 2020)

In this statement the Jordanian chapter of Islamic Brotherhood Movement has clearly condemned Macron’s anti-Islamic remarks and termed the publication of caricatures of the Holy Prophet as an attack on the Muslim around the world. According to the researcher these statements fall under the umbrella of “Polarization and Lexicalization” where the actor has described the anti-Islamic remarks an attack on Islam which has clearly hurt the emotions of the Muslims around the world, and they deserve the right to retaliate against France. When it comes to the discursive strategies of Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) the actor Jordanian leader says that French President has clearly tried to legitimize self (France) and de-legitimize the other (Muslims) and has associated negative things towards Islam and has encouraged violent behavior by hurting the emotions of one and half billion Muslims across the globe.

**5. Conclusion**

This research focuses on Macron's anti-Muslim and anti-Islam sentiments expressed in his historic speech in Les Meraux, outside of Paris, on October 2, 2020, to reflect his policy to combat radical Muslim separatism. Muslim leaders around the world responded to the speech at different

platforms. For instance, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan said that President Macron should have attacked or blamed that individual who carried the attack rather than blaming Muslims or Islam. Similarly, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Macron has “lost his mind” because Macron is blaming the entire Muslim community for this particular murder rather, he should have blamed the individual who carried out the violence. The Saudi government also issued a strong statement against Macron and criticized the speech of Macron under National self-glorification which is a rhetoric framework of Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006). The government rejected President Macron’s attempt to link Islam with terrorism and condemned offensive cartoons which were aimed to ridicule the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Iran’s Foreign Minister Javed Zarif used a strategy of Victimization, Number game and Evidentiality which are rhetoric strategies proposed by Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2006) to depict that Muslims are the primary victims of all sorts of hatred emboldened by colonial regimes. Despite having a huge population of 1.9 billion people Muslims holy personalities are being disrespected and ridiculed in the name of opportunistic abuse of freedom of expression. Indonesian President Joko Widodo also used a strategy of Implication.

The Malaysian foreign Minister Hishamuddin Hussein while using the strategy of Lexicalization, condemned in strongest words the act of defaming the religion of Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad through blasphemous caricatures in the name of freedom of expression. The grand imam of al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Tayeb blamed Macron for using Populism and Polarization and declared that anti-Islamic remarks was an organized campaign to drag the religion of Islam into political battles. Similarly, Libya, condemned the remarks of Macron and stated that these derogatory remarks against Islam and The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are unacceptable and this malicious campaign will never ever affect Islam and its Prophet. Yemeni Minister of Religious Affairs Ahmad Attiya used the category of Counterfactuals and called for the boycott of French products in reaction to anti-Islam campaign in France led by President Macron. Palestinian Hamas group Maher al-Huli criticized the comments made by President Macron against Muslims and said any attempt to defame Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is unacceptable. Mohammed al-Khalayleh, Jordan Islamic Affairs Minister in his remarks condemned the anti-Islamic remarks and called it an organized campaign in order to drag the religion of Islam into political battles. Finally, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation has also asked the French government to re-think its separatist policies that has offended and hurt the feelings of 1.5 billion Muslims globally.

The researcher believes that Islamophobia is linked to the concept of “*Clash of Civilizations*” presented by Huntington. The “*Clash of Civilizations*” (COC) is a theory, according to which, in the post-Cold War world, people's cultural and religious identities would be the primary source of conflict as they would have disagreements about history, prejudice, faith, and traditions. Moreover, the hate crimes against Muslims and France is a byproduct of Clash of civilization because Islam and secularism are two conflicting ideas, It is not uncommon to hear the native-born French declare, “It is not that I don’t want Muslims in the country; the problem is they don’t want to integrate”.

Furthermore, the researcher believes this study is also linked/related to another important and popular theory of mass communication research i.e., “*Orientalism*”, the core assumption of which is based on a biased approach of the West towards Islam and the Arab world. The main motive behind this theory was to predict the integral bond among East and West. The core assumption of Orientalism theory is that societies are diverse and it has their own opinions. Unfortunately, President Macron speech is an endorsement of Orientalism and that he cannot not accept Muslims nor wants to understand how he hurts the sentiments among Muslim countries.

The researchers concluded that the representatives and rulers of Muslim majority states responded to Macron’s remarks, condemned his targeting of religion Islam and called him an Islamophobe, who hates Islam and uses his anti-Islam rhetoric for political gains. The discrimination against his own minority and creating an environment of segregation and hatred towards Muslims in France, has divided the French society and made the minority Muslims vulnerable to the rest of French majority population. This study has also found that Macron has frequently made Islamophobic remarks which has added to the rise of Islamophobia in France and rest of the West. Macron has consistently targeted Muslims in various ways, showing Muslims in a negative light while promoting himself and France in a positive light.

The researcher has also found out a total agreement and similarity in the response of Muslims leaders from across the world to Macron, calling him a populist, bigot, out of mind and someone who

uses religion for his political gains and has unanimously condemned his Islamophobic remarks and called upon him to revise his strategy of targeting Muslims and respect all faiths and cultures including the religion Islam and its holy Prophet PBUH. Furthermore, the results concluded that the religion Islam, has been politicized at international platforms to trigger the sentiments of Muslim community and create a dispute which can be avoided by controlled diplomatic statements.

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