



ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION IN FRANCE

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ABSTRACT

For roughly a decade, Islamic terrorism has become one of the main threats to the security of Western societies. The recent attacks aimed at various Western countries have proven that the radicalization of Islamism is now closely tied to the issue of terrorism. This recent radicalization is a common feature in Western societies which find themselves challenged by homegrown as well as international terrorism. The challenge requires countries to find a way to implement efficient counter-terrorist measures. Therefore, it seems necessary to focus on the process of radicalization in order to identify its origins and possibly prevent this phenomenon.

* The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

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Introduction:

For roughly a decade, Islamic terrorism has become one of the main threats to the security of Western societies. The recent attacks aimed at various Western countries have proven that the radicalization of Islamism is now closely tied to the issue of terrorism. This recent radicalization is a common feature in Western societies which find themselves challenged by homegrown as well as international terrorism. The challenge requires countries to find a way to implement efficient counter-terrorist measures. Therefore, it seems necessary to focus on the process of radicalization in order to identify its origins and possibly prevent this phenomenon.

Given this increasingly pressing issue, France is a particularly interesting case that requires a special analysis. On the one hand, France has recently witnessed tragic attacks perpetrated by Mohamed Merah in March 2012 which resulted in the death of seven people. Thus, these events support the idea that the issue of Islamist radicalization is more and more crucial to the security of the country. On the other hand, the unique relationship between France and Islam is rooted in a long history of exchanges, under various forms (colonization, wars, migrations) which explain its current position as the European country with the highest rate of Muslim population.

The particularities of France suggest that the rise of Islamism and its radicalization can only be understood through a reflexion on the evolution of the Muslim communities in France and their recent evolution. In order to fully acknowledge how the radicalization of Islamism in France is an acute issue, it is necessary to focus on the structure and representation of Muslim communities and the various reactions it inspired to the rest of the French population and the government. It is important to analyze the process of radicalization, which has become a threat to the national security and examine the various steps of the process. This deep examination is necessary in order to make sense of the Islamist terrorist threat today and to map out the prospects for France.

I – Overview of the Muslim community in France:

First of all, it is important to understand the Muslim community in France, before analyzing the process of radicalization that sometimes occurs among members of this minority.

– *A history of immigration: how Islam came to France.*

From the appearance of Islam to the colonies:

The current place of Islam in France can not be understood without focusing on the history of the relationship between France, and more generally Europe, with Islam. As a matter of fact, it is the result of a long historical evolution.

Judeo-Christian civilizations and the Islamic civilization have always been closely tied. Their relationship has been very ambiguous, since their opposition has been composed of 'rivalry, hostility and borrowings' as Fernand Braudel explained¹. France, as geographically located in the Mediterranean basin, was directly in contact with Islam, as early as the Middle Ages. Indeed, the expansion of Islam in its first centuries of existence directly affected France. Many Muslims came during the 7th century until Charles Martel put an end to the expansions of the Muslim troops at the Battle of Poitiers. Yet, the relationships between France and Islam continued without interruption until now.

The Napoleonian expedition in Egypt in 1798, followed in 1830 by the colonization of Algeria, marked the beginning of a new era, that of the domination of Europe over the Islamic

¹ BRAUDEL Fernand, La Méditerranée, l'espace et l'histoire, Champs Flammarion, Paris, 1985, p. 159

world. During the 19th century, France soon became the second colonial Empire and was in charge of many Muslim populations from various areas of the Middle East and Africa.

Successive waves of immigration:

While France has been in contact with Islam for centuries, the real penetration of Islam within French society only occurred with the waves of immigration of populations from Muslim countries. Indeed, Islam almost did not exist among the French population before then.

The immigration of Muslim populations started with the colonization of many Muslim countries by France. Yet, before the First World War, the presence of Muslims in the mainland of France was limited to a small number of Kabyles, who mostly worked in the mines of the North of France, from the 1880s².

The first major wave of immigration took place during the First World War³. In fact, foreign workers from the French colonies were required to come to metropolitan France in order to support the state. This support was two-fold. On the one hand, France needed the support of foreign soldiers to swell its troops. Thus, about 300,000 North Africans contributed to the national effort⁴. For example, roughly a third of the Algerian men, between 20 and 40 years-old were enrolled; approximately 172,000 men. In addition, 160,000 Black Africans were also recruited. They were referred to as the 'Senegalese skirmishers', but were actually from all the Occidental French Africa⁵. On the other hand, 144,000 foreign workers were recruited to compensate for the French workers who had left to join the front. They were mostly from North African countries: Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, a large number of them being Muslim. These important contributions resulted in the first signs of recognition by the government through political gestures towards the Muslim community. Indeed, a Muslim cemetery and a French-Muslim Hospital were built in Bobigny, in the North-East of Paris, respectively in 1934 and 1935⁶. The creation of the Grande Mosquée de Paris in 1926 is also part of these gestures in honor of the 80,000 Muslims who died during WWI⁷. However, the conditions of the Muslim populations were not as good as these prestigious symbols would suggest. Indeed, they suffered from an exclusion from the rest of the population and terrible living conditions.

During the Second World War, the French government enlisted Muslim immigrants once again in order to support the troops. 178,000 Africans and Madagascan as well as 320,000 North Africans were utilized at the beginning of the war⁸. Some 5,000 Africans also joined the French Forces of the Interior and participated in the resistance effort⁹.

After WWII, the second major wave of immigration occurred during the *Trente Glorieuses* (the Golden Age). Indeed, the incredible economic expansion of the country enabled the immigration of many foreign workers, especially during the 1960s and early 1970s. These workers

² <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/histoire-de-l-immigration/le-film>

³ Withol de Wenden Catherine, "Muslims in France", in Shadid W.A. R. and Van Koningsveld P. S. (eds), *Muslims in the Margin*, Kampen, Pharos, 1996, p 53.

⁴ Musée de l'Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris, *Dossier pédagogique: 1935 – 2005. L'hôpital Avicenne : une histoire sans frontières*, p. 4. [online]. Available at

<[http://www.aphp.fr/documents/musee/microsoft word dossier pedago web.pdf](http://www.aphp.fr/documents/musee/microsoft_word_dossier_pedago_web.pdf)> [accessed 18 June 2012][[archive](#)]

⁵ Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, *1914: l'appel à l'Empire*, [online]. Available at <<http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/histoire-de-l-immigration/des-dossiers-thematiques-sur-l-histoire-de-l-immigration/1914-l-appel-a-l-empire>>, [accessed 15 June 2012].

⁶ Musée de l'Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris, *Op. Cit.*, p. 5

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

⁸ Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, *1940: des coloniaux dans l'armée régulière et dans la Résistance*, [online]. Available at <<http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/des-dossiers-thematiques-sur-l-histoire-de-l-immigration/1940-des-coloniaux-dans-l-armee-reguliere-et-dans-la-resistance>> [accessed 16 June 2012].

⁹ *Ibidem*.

were mostly from Tunisia and Morocco but the wave of immigration of other communities grew as well. First, the wave of Black Africans became more and more important. These Africans from the French colonies were divided between Christians and Muslims. Moreover, Turkish immigration appeared at the beginning of the 1970s. The decolonization of Algeria also brought *Harkis* to France*.

*** The immigration of the Harkis¹⁰:**

The word *Harki* comes from the Arabic and means 'movement'. The name *Harki* appeared in 1955. The word was used in the 19th century to describe small confrontations. It was later used to describe the Algerian Muslim soldiers who fought along with the French army during the Algerian war of independence, from 1954 to 1962. More than 60,000 *Harkis* were employed after 1958, and their missions varied a lot depending on the need of the French authorities. They did not have a military status and were employed only for short-term or monthly contracts.

At the end of the war, some of the *Harkis* were repatriated to mainland of France (from which Algeria was not part anymore). Other Algerian Muslims were also repatriated (such as the Mokhazenis). Nowadays, the term *Harki* designates all the French repatriated Muslims. Thus, the *Harkis*, coming mostly from the region of Kabilya, were allowed to keep a French citizenship.

Most of the *Harkis* were not welcomed by the French government, despite its promise to do so. In 1965, the official statistics claimed that there were about 66,000 repatriated *Harkis*, to which should be added the clandestine *Harkis* who succeeded to come to France. They were mostly welcomed in camps (Larzac, Bias, Rivesaltes, Saint-Maurice-l'Ardoise, etc.)

In 1974, the politics of immigration, initiated by the new French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, completely changed. Because of the crisis, the economic situation did not favor the labor market anymore and the rate of unemployment grew dramatically. Therefore, the borders were closed to new immigrants and the flow of foreign workers stopped¹¹. Nevertheless, it did not stop immigration entirely, but rather changed its composition. Indeed, immigration became a matter of family reunification. This shift had profound implications that are still visible today.

Islam was only considered through the lens of immigration. In fact, the state did not consider that Islam was an issue worth taking into account since the immigration that brought it to France was perceived as a temporary phenomenon. It was assumed that these workers would not extend their stay and would go back to their country of origin¹². With the arrival of families, that idea was no longer accurate. With the reunification of families, Islam started to penetrate the public life. The expression of Islam up to this point had been very quiet, but it became more and more visible: within schools, suburbs, family housing, etc. This visibility became all the more active with the law of October 1981 which allowed the freedom of association and thus, enabled Muslims to constitute associations.

The settlement of Muslim immigrants in the long term took the government by surprise and created important issues, which were due to the lack of adaptation of both sides. Indeed, the state was not ready to welcome properly these new populations whose religion and culture was different from the usual French tradition. The arriving communities were not ready to settle in France either

¹⁰ Rollat Alain, 'Les Harkis: Sept questions sur un abandon', *Le Monde- Dossiers et Documents*, Octobre 1992. and 'Les Harkis: quarante ans d'oubli', *Le Monde*, June 9th 2001.

Conseil Economique et Social, *La situation sociale des enfants de Harkis*, by Chabi Hafida, n°2, NOR : C.E.S. X0700102V, January 22nd 2007, available at <<http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics/074000114/0000.pdf>> [accessed 14 July 2012].

¹¹ Gastaut Yvan « Français et immigrés à l'épreuve de la crise (1973-1995) », *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 4/2004 (n° 84), p. 107-118. [online]. Available at <www.cairn.info/revue-vingtieme-siecle-revue-d-histoire-2004-4-page-107.htm> [accessed 18 June 2012].

¹² Olivier Roy, interviewed by Samir Amghar, 'L'Islam de France', *Confluences Méditerranée* 2/2006 (N°57), p. 49-55.

and lacked a structural organization to represent them. In fact, they were also expecting to go back to their country of origin and therefore, they did not fight for a proper recognition of their existence. As a result, the integration of these populations became very chaotic.

This issue became even more pressing as the expression of Islam changed. The sons of immigrants, called the 'immigrants of 2nd or 3rd generation' had a new relationship with Islam. So far, Islam was tied with the country of origin of the immigrants, who kept their religion in the private sphere. Yet, their children are not tied to their origins since they were born in France, and for most of them, had never returned to the countries of their parents. Therefore, an Islam of France appeared, that is an Islam deeply rooted in French history, culture and society. Nowadays, Islam is not tied to the cultural background of the country of origin anymore. Adhesion to Islam has become a more purely religious matter for the younger generations¹³.

– *Statistics on the Muslim community*

These successive waves of immigration and the settlement of various Muslim communities in France explain why Islam is now considered the second religion of France. However, it remains difficult to assess the real number of Muslim in France. First of all, France refuses to have any governmental or official statistics on religions¹⁴. Indeed, the law of January 6th 1978 forbids the collection of personal information which may endanger the rights and liberties of some individuals¹⁵. Thus, according to its article 8, it is forbidden to gather information 'that reveal, directly or indirectly, the racial or ethnic origins, political, philosophical or religious belongings [...]'¹⁶.

This legal restriction makes it difficult to assess the number of Muslims living in France.

Surveys can only try and estimate this number, but the results often vary from one study to the other. Furthermore, most of the estimations are inferred from the number of immigrants coming from countries where Islam is the predominant religion and thus, lack precision and certainty.

For example, the French historian Alain Boyer conducted his own study on Islam in France in 1998. He estimated that there were 4,155 millions of Muslims in France. His data was based on the countries of origin of the immigrants and the political

Muslims from North Africa	2 900 000
- Including: Algerians	1 550 000
Morocco	1 000 000
Tunisia	350 000
Arab Muslims from the Middle East	100 000
Non-Arab Muslims:	
From the Middle East (including Turkey)	315 000
From Sub-Saharan Africa	250 000
French Converts:	40 000
Asylum seekers and illegals:	350 000
Asians	100 000
Other	100 000
Total	4 155 000

Tableau 1: Alain Boyer, *l'Islam en France*, PUF – *Politique d'aujourd'hui*, Paris, 1998.

¹³ *Ibidem*. www.cairn.info/revue-confluences-mediterranee-2006-2-page-49.htm

¹⁴ Thomas Vampouille, 'Le nombre de Musulmans', *Le Figaro*, April 5th 2011. [online]. Available at <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2011/04/05/01016-20110405ARTFIG00599-france-comment-est-evalue-le-nombre-de-musulmans.php>> [accessed 10 June 2012]

¹⁵ INSEE, *Guide du secret statistique*, October 18th 2010. [online]. Available at <<http://www.insee.fr/fr/insee-statistique-publique/statistique-publique/guide-secret-18-10-2010.pdf>> [accessed 3 July 2010]

¹⁶ Law n° 78-17 of January 6th 1978 relative à l'informatique, aux fichiers et aux libertés, Journal Officiel de la République Française of January 7th 1978, available at <<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006068624&dateTexte=20120708>> [accessed 18 July 2012]

refugees, as well as an estimation of the number of converts and illegal immigrants¹⁷. In addition, he did not take into consideration the different degrees of religious commitment.

Even if these estimations have not been recently updated, they illustrate the common estimations of the Muslim population in France. Indeed, the various declarations of the French government show that no clear number exists. For example, Claude Guéant declared on April 4th 2011, while he was *Ministre de l'Intérieur, de l'Outre-mer, des Collectivités Territoriales et de l'Immigration*, that there were « 5 to 10 million » of Muslims in France¹⁸ but later claimed that there were 4 million of Muslims among which 800,000 practicing Muslims in January 2012¹⁹.

Furthermore, the United States Department of State issued a report on International Religious Freedom in 2008. In this report, the number of Muslims in France was estimated to be between 5 to 6 million, comprising up to 8 to 10 percent of the population²⁰.

In October 2010, the National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED) and the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) made public the result of the 'Trajectories and Origins' survey that they conducted jointly. This survey estimated that there are 2.1 million 'declared Muslims' between 18 and 60 years-old²¹. These results contradicted many previous declarations which claimed that there were some 5 to 6 millions of Muslims in France. Even if that number does not take into account a large portion of the population, the studies still suggest that the previous estimations overrated the importance of the Muslim population in France.

Yet, the discrepancy of these results is not crucial as there is no definite number. The definition of a Muslim represents a challenge in itself. Some consider that being Muslim consists of the daily practice of Islam while others regard it as "Muslim culture" or a feeling of belonging. No matter what number is taken into consideration, it cannot be denied that the Muslim community plays a crucial role in French society. Regardless of the statistics, none of these numbers translate the various realities of the Muslims of France.

– *An unequal geographical repartition*

The absence of official statistics also prevents any exact number on the geographical repartition of the Muslim population. Indeed, the presence of Muslims in France is not homogenous at all. This can be analyzed through the repartition of mosques and other prayer rooms for Muslims on the French territory which suggest the presence a larger Muslim community.

The website 'Trouve ta Mosquée' (find your mosque) created a list of all the mosques and prayer rooms in France²². The index shows that the Muslim community is much more present in specific areas. First of all, Muslims are more present in the main cities and their suburbs, especially Paris, but also Lille and Roubaix, Lyon, Marseille, Strasbourg, and Bordeaux. Furthermore, it appears that more Muslims live in the North and East of France. As Illustration 1 shows, there is a clear divide between West and East when looking at the concentration of Muslims in France.

¹⁷ Alain Boyer, *l'Islam en France*, PUF, Politique d'aujourd'hui, Paris, 1998, 384 p.

¹⁸ Claude Guéant, Speech at the place Beauvau, April 4th 2011, quoted in Mohamed Touati, 'Et maintenant, voilà Guéant qui drague les musulmans!', *Courrier International*, April 1st 2012. Available at <http://www.courrierinternational.com/article/2012/01/04/et-maintenant-voila-gueant-qui-drague-les-musulmans> [accessed 22 June 2012]

¹⁹ Claude Guéant, interviewed by Stéphanie Le Bars, 'L'islam ne doit pas être un sujet d'empoignade', *Le Monde*, January 2nd 2012.

²⁰ US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism - France*, 30 April 2008. [online]. Available at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2008/108446.htm> [accessed 25 June 2012].

²¹ INSEE, INED, *Trajectories and Origins: Survey on Population Diversity in France*, co-ordinated by Chris Beauchemin, Christelle Hamelle and Patrick Simon, October 2010, p. 124.

²² <http://www.trouvetamosquee.fr/category/mosquees-de-france/>

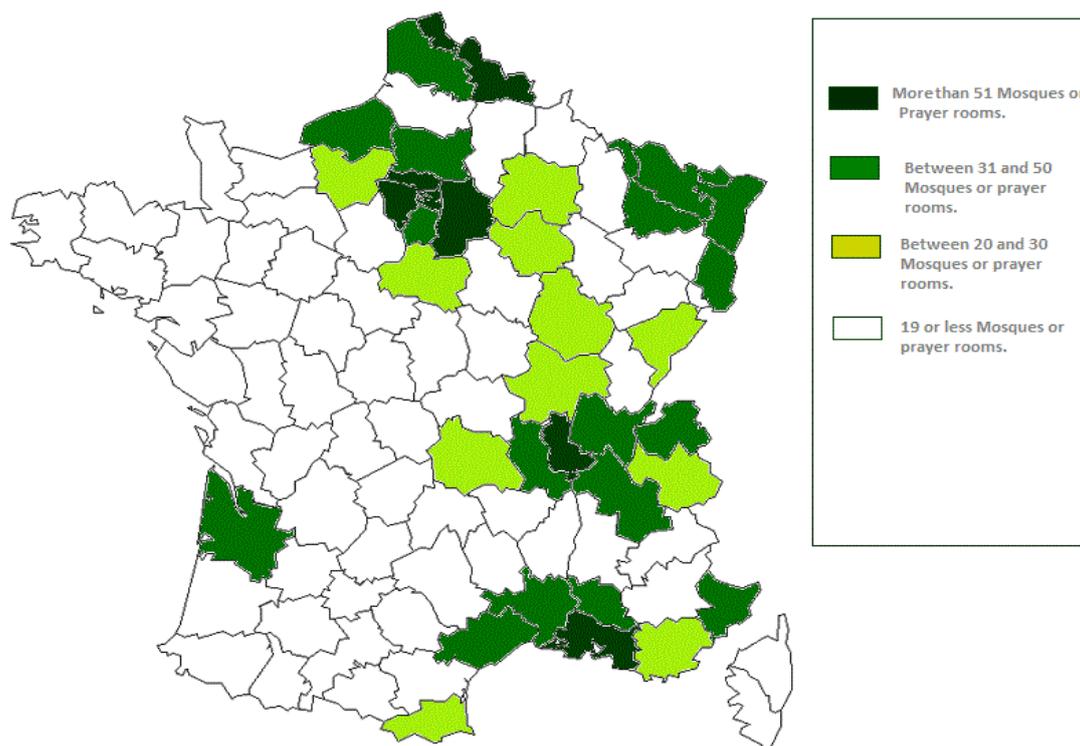


Illustration 1: Map of the repartition of mosques and prayer rooms in France, data taken from the listings on the website 'Trouve ta Mosquée' – visited on June 11th

– French Overseas Departments and Regions (DROM).

This report focus on the mainland of France despite the presence of Muslims in some of its overseas territories, described as follow:

- ⤴ The Reunion Island has a population of nearly 50,000 Muslims out of 700,000. Most of them are Sunnis from the Gujarat (India), but also from Mayotte (Comoros). A small group of Shi'a also settled in the island after 1972 when they had to flee Madagascar because of the political situation. The Muslim community has a strong influence on the economy of the island, despite their limited number. They enjoy their own private cemeteries in Saint Denis since 1915 and run a madrasa which is supervised by the State. The mosque of Nur al-Islam, built in 1905 in Saint Denis, is the oldest mosque of France. All the imams there are French citizens.
- ⤴ The population of Mayotte, in the Comoros archipelago is 135,000. 95% of them are Sunni Muslims. They are also influenced by local animist creeds. In addition, a small Gujarati Indian minority is Shi'a. As a unique case in France, Mayotte is ruled by French penal law and, for personal status and real estate, by Islamic law, under the supervision of cadis (judges) who are appointed by the French administrative authority.
- ⤴ In the Antilles, there are between 500 to 3,000 Muslims in Martinique and about 1,000 Muslims in Guadeloupe. They constitute a very small minority. Islam was brought at the end of the 1970s by immigrants from Africa. The influence of Islam was due to the strong ties between Africa and these islands²³.

If a national repartition of the Muslim population can be established, it does not illustrate the diversity of the various Muslim communities. In fact, the repartition of these communities follows a quite unique model. In France, the communities tend to gather depending on their origins. Wherever they are from, immigrants seem to live with other fellow immigrants.

It is interesting to examine how the different communities of Muslim live together and how they are organized.

²³ Liliane kuczinski, 'L'Islam en martinique: entre universalisme et élaboration d'une mémoire antillaise', *Symposium: expériences et mémoires: partager en français la diversité du monde*, Bucarest, September 2006. [online]. Available at <http://www.islamicpopulation.com/pdf/Martinique_Islam_French.pdf> [accessed 04 June 2012]

– *The great diversity of a heterogenous community*

A community overwhelmingly Sunni:

The Muslim community in France is mostly Sunni. Most of these Sunni arrived in France after they migrated from North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Turkey, Pakistan, the Balkans, and the Middle East. This diversity is the result of past waves of immigration as well as more recent trends²⁴. Furthermore, children of immigrants who were born in France automatically acquire the French citizenship as soon as they turn 18, as the French law recognizes the '*droit du sol*' or *jus soli*²⁵. Thus, many children of immigrants are French. Most of them have the same religion as their parents. For the reasons explained earlier, it is difficult to know their exact number.

Most of the Muslims living in France come from North Africa. From the beginning of the 20th century, up to the 1960s, most of them were from Algeria. The decolonization of Algeria sharply reduced these migrations. Yet, the number of immigrants from Morocco and Tunisia greatly increased. The North African immigrants still represent an important part of the population. A census by the INSEE established that, in 2008, immigrants from Algeria represented 13.4% of the total of immigrants, that is 713,334 people, while Moroccans represented 12.2%, that is 653,826 people, and Tunisians were 4.4% of the immigrants, or 234,669 immigrants²⁶. Of course, these immigrants are not all Muslims, but it is reasonable to assume that most of them are, given the proportion of Muslim in the population of these countries²⁷.

A large number of Muslim immigrants are Africans. Their presence in France started as early as the beginning of the 20th century with the presence of Sudanese and Senegalese infantrymen. Yet, their number really grew after the Second World War. Most of them came from Senegal, Mali and Mauritania.

The arrival of a Turkish community in France only dates back to the 1970s. Their community is concentrated in specific areas, such as Île de France, Alsace-Lorraine, Rhône-Alpes, and Franche-Comté. Indeed, roughly a third of the immigrants from Turkey live in Alsace-Lorraine-Franche-Comté. The great majority of these immigrants are also Muslims, in spite of some minorities: Christians, Assyrians-Chaldeans, or secular Turks. The community is very young as 68% of them were between 18 and 25 year-old in 2010²⁸.

Pakistani immigrants arrived to France at the end of the 1970s despite the shift of the government's immigration policies. The Pakistani community settled in the surroundings of Paris, and especially in the 10th district of Paris. In addition, they settled in cities such as Garges, Sarcelle, Bobigny, Evry, Orly, Champigny, and Dreux.

Other immigrants come from Iran, the Balkans, Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries. Most of the Iranians immigrants are located in Paris, especially in the 15th district, as well as Créteil and Nice. The Lebanese community immigrated to major cities, such as Paris, Marseille, and Nice.

While the great majority of Sunnis in France are from migrations, there are also some French citizens who decided to convert to Islam. Conversion to Islam can take many forms. In the past, most of the conversions were the result of a research of spirituality and were mostly undertaken by intellectuals and the upper class. However, this model has evolved. It seems that today, most of the converts are from the *banlieues*, since most of the native Frenchmen who decide

²⁴ INSEE, INED, *Trajectories and Origins*, p. 11.

²⁵ Law n°98-170 du 16 mars 1998 relative à la nationalité, also known as Law Guigou.
INSEE, INED, *Trajectories and Origins*, p. 117.

²⁶ INSEE, 'Répartition des immigrés par pays de naissance', in *tableau de l'économie française*, census 2008. [online]. Available at <http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?regid=&ref_idimmigrespaysnais> [accessed 22 July 2012].

²⁷ INSEE, INED, *Trajectories and Origins*, p. 124-125.

²⁸ INSEE, INED, *Trajectories and Origins*, p. 15.

to convert to Islam grew up in predominantly Muslim neighborhoods. Thus, conversion is a way to socialize with and increase their bond to the community²⁹. Their number is difficult to establish, but they roughly represent a few tens of thousand each year³⁰.

A small French Shi'a community

Very few Muslims in France are Shi'a. They only represent a few hundreds of thousands. The French Shi'a community came mostly from the Indian subcontinent through Madagascar. They are only a few thousand, and live mostly in Paris and other main cities such as Lyon, Grenoble, Strasbourg, Nantes, Aix-en-Provence, and Rouen. Most of them were involved in trading activities in Madagascar³¹. This Shi'a community itself is divided among the different trend of Shi'ism³².

Some of the French Shi'a are Nizarites; they came to France after the Second World War and in the 1960s from Madagascar. They are concentrated in Paris and its *banlieues*, especially Argenteuil and Bagnole. In 1997, this community counted about 2,000 members³³.

Other Shi'a are Bohras. They come from India and represented about a thousand people in France in 1997³⁴. The community appeared in the 1960s and its original members were students from Madagascar for the most part.

These two previous communities are Seveners. In fact, they believed there were only Seven Imams, Muhammad, Ismail's son, was the final Imam. They differ from Twelvers. Even if both accept the same initial Imams, Twelvers are the followers of Twelfth Imam who, they believe has not died and is hiding until he comes back as the Mahdi.

Finally, the Khodjas constitute the last Shi'a community in France and are Twelvers. The community was composed, in 2006, of roughly 1,500 members, mostly from Paris and its *banlieues*, especially Bagneux and Courneuve³⁵. They came to France at the end of the 1960s and were also a community of students at the beginning which expanded into families³⁶. The community used to be mostly involved in trade, until the 1980s. Nowadays, their ability to enjoy a higher education has enabled the members of this community to access various employments³⁷. About 90% of the members of this community have followed higher educations and have become engineers, doctors, pharmacists, and company officers³⁸.

In addition, other Shi'a communities came to France. They mostly come from Turkey, Iran, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan.

- *Different degrees of religious practice and various elements of identification to Islam.*

The practice of Islam varies greatly among the different communities, but also within communities, among families, and between individuals. A poll realized by the IFOP for the newspapers *Le Monde* and *La Vie* in 2001 revealed that, of the Muslims interviewed, 36% of them considered themselves 'believing and practicing Muslims', 42% 'believing Muslims', while 22%

²⁹ Claire Chartier, 'La France des convertis', in *L'Express*, January 26th 2006.

³⁰ Pierre Schmidt, 'Les nouveaux convertis de l'Islam', in *La Croix*, August 24th 2006. [online]. Available at <<http://www.la-croix.com/Religion/S-informer/Actualite/Les-nouveaux-convertis-de-l-islam- NG -2006-08-24-516065>>. [accessed 24 June 2012]

³¹ Pierre Lachaier, 'Les Khojas duodécimains de Madagascar', in *Hommes & migrations*, n°1268-1269, July-Octobre 2007, p. 139.

³² Jean-François Legrain, 'Aspects de la Présence Musulmane en France', in *Cahiers de la pastorale des migrants*, n° 27, 1986. p. 9

³³ Pierre Lachaier, *Op. Cit.*, p. 139

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 139

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 139

³⁶ Jean-François Legrain, *Op. Cit.*, p. 10.

³⁷ Michel Boivin, 'Transmission religieuse: hymnes sacrés ismaéliens en français', in *Hommes & Migrations*, n° 1268-1269, July- Octobre 2007.

³⁸ Pierre Lachaier, *Op. Cit.*, p. 140

declared they were solely of 'Muslim origins' or even that they had another religion³⁹. However these figures should be analyzed carefully as they do not show the differences among these categories. In addition, the self-identification can relate to various realities between each Muslims. In fact, religion is a very personal matter which depends on the each Muslim's personal experiences and relation with the society.

First of all, it is interesting to note that the practice of Islam varies between different generations. Thus, the practice of Islam of 2nd and 3rd generations of immigrants differs from the practice of their parents. It also does not relate to the same reality. Several studies of the INED and the INSEE, in the 1980s and early 1990s, have argued that the new generations of Muslim tended to abandon the religion of their parents⁴⁰.

Nowadays, an important number of Muslims relate to Islam as an almost solely cultural element of their individual identity. Muslims share habits, values, and traditions which do not necessarily translate into the practice of Islam⁴¹. Therefore, some apparently religious practices are followed in a purely traditional way, out of habits more than conviction, for example, the celebration of Aïd, of Ramadan's nights, weddings, circumcision, or the fast during the month of Ramadan, the prohibition of alcohol and pork. This practice of Islam is very secular and relates to an individualist society⁴².

However, in the past twenty years, it seems that this trend has been reverse. Indeed, young Muslims tend to identify more to Islam than their parents did⁴³. This new support and affirmation for Islam takes various forms and is the result of different processes of identification with their religion and the society in which they evolve.

Another trend among young Muslims consists in practicing Islam openly, along with demanding the recognition of their belonging to the French society. This practice of Islam defers from the practice of the parents, as it is not related to culture, but rather a willingness to find one's origins through religion. Thus, these young Muslims tend to identify more to the *Umma* (the community of Muslims) rather than to the country of origin of their parents.

The research of a 'real Islam' leads some individual to prefer a strict observance of Islam. While the number of Muslims who choose this path is still limited, it is also the result of isolation and marginalization due to unemployment, segregation, drugs, or delinquency. These individuals find in Islam a sense of belonging and community that French society and French institutions have failed to provide⁴⁴.

It is striking to see that in some urban areas, the religious affirmation is used as a means to claim a difference. Thus, in the French *banlieues*, the practice of Islam can be associated with a political demand, and be part of the expression of a rejection of French society. Yet, all the young Muslims of the *banlieues* do not relate to this trend.

Among the 3rd generation of Muslims, young Muslims now relate to Islam as 'consumers'. Indeed, they do not embrace Islam completely as their parents or grand-parents used to, but rather choose among the multiplicity of rules and principles which are worth following. They try and find an ethic of life, through Islam and through this process of selection. Thus, their religious observance is based on the personal meaning that Islam represents for each individual and varies a lot among

³⁹ Claude Dargent, *Les musulmans déclarés en France: affirmation religieuse, subordination sociale et progressisme politiques*, n°34, CEVIPOF-Sciences Po, February 2003, p. 11. [online]. Available at <http://www.cevipof.com/fichier/p_publication/publication_pdf_cahierducevipof34.pdf> [accessed 22 July 2012]

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

⁴¹ Alice Charbonneau-Bloomfield, *L'Islam en France: de l'image au vécu*, (Diss., Institut Européen des Hautes Études Internationales), Nice, May 2002, p. 62.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p.

⁴³ Claude Dargent, *Op. Cit.*, p. 19.

⁴⁴ Jocelyne Cesari, 'Islam in France: the Shaping of a religious minority', in Yvonne Haddad-Yazbek (ed.) *Muslims in the West, from Sojourners to Citizens*, 2002, Oxford University Press, pp. 36-51. [retrieved online]. Available at <<http://www.libertysecurity.org/article234.html>> [accessed 1 June 2012]

the community⁴⁵.

II – The failed integration of the Muslim communities in France

The presence of Islam in France required a number of adaptations from the State and the population in order to enable a complete integration of the new Muslim communities. Yet, the conflicts between Islam and French tradition have led to the failure of the Muslim communities of immigrants and their children.

– *Islam in a culture of laïcité: an unimaginable pair?*

The 1905 Law of Separation of State and Churches:

Laïcité, or secularism, is a peculiar concept that only exists in France. This unique relationship between church and state dates back to December 9th 1905, when the Law of Separation of State and Churches was passed. At the time, the role and position of the Church in the French Republic had raised violent debates among the French community. The left coalition was then in power and wanted to weaken the influence of Catholicism. Some anti-clerical members, such as Maurice Allard, were in favor of a complete dismantling of the Church. However, a more moderate stand was adopted, led by the socialist Aristide Briand. Thus, the Law of 1905 abolished the Concordat of 1801 which had regulated the relationship between the State and the Church until then.

The law is based on the principle of neutrality. The State guarantees the religious freedom and the equality of all cults. The law claims that 'The Republic neither recognizes, nor salaries, nor subsidizes any religion' (article 2). Practically speaking, the law aims at relegating religion to the private sphere.

The Law of 1905 is the founding law of *laïcité* which has become a symbol dear to the French Republic. Indeed, the Constitution of 1958 reemphasizes the crucial character of *laïcité* since it claims in its very first article that 'France is an indivisible, secular (*laïc*), democratic, and social Republic'. If secularism is a common fundamental value of the Western world, its interpretations and practices diverge from one country to another, given the variety of national contexts. In France, *laïcité* has become a symbol of modernity, progress and enlightenment.

The tradition of *laïcité* challenged by greater visibility of the newly established Islam:

The presence of Muslims among the French society has put into question the Law of 1905. Indeed, some people claim that, despite its stance in favor of neutrality, the law favors some religions over others. Indeed, only Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism were recognized in 1905. Thus, these traditional French religions benefit from their old implementation within the society. Indeed, most of their religious facilities existed before 1905 whereas the newly established religions must bear the financing of their facilities on their own.

The difficulty to deal with the presence of Muslims in French society is mostly due to the fact that Islam has never been involved in the history of the relationship between Churches and the State⁴⁶. Thus, France has now to establish new relationships, not only between Churches and State but between all religions and State. The traditional boundary which has been accepted by the

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁶ Riva Kastoryano, 'Religion and Incorporation: Islam in France and Germany', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 38, n° 3, Conceptual and Methodological Developments in the Study of International Migration, Fall 2004, p. 1235

population and has shaped a common national character is seen as an obstacle for the Muslims who demand recognition. Both Islam and the French State consider each other with fear. On the one hand, Islam is often perceived as a threat against the French identity and the fundamental values of the State, among which the culture of *laïcité*. On the other hand, Muslims fear that all these characteristics inherent to the French state will prevent them from integration within the society. Islam brings new challenges to the secular state. The institutions may have to adapt or to be rebuilt in order to integrate Muslims to the political community⁴⁷.

The new visibility of Islam has challenged *laïcité*. Indeed, in 1989 a controversy on the Islamic veil emerged. The 'Islamic headscarf affair', as it is now referred to, emerged when three young Muslim girls who wore the veil into their public schools refused to take it off despite the demand of the principal. This controversial religious display put the relationship between Islam and *laïcité* under scrutiny. This affair was all the more crucial as it occurred at a time when Muslims had more and more demands: they built mosques, opened halal shops, claimed land for Muslim sections in cemeteries. These claims were seen as an indicator of the growing observance of these Muslims. In fact these demands were the result of the willingness of Muslims to participate in French society in which they had established permanent residency⁴⁸. Indeed, before the 1970s, the religious sphere was clearly associated for the immigrants to their country of origin while the public sphere which was composed of work and social relations was strictly secular. However, the arrival of entire families changed this logic as Islam entered the public sphere as well. In 1989, the affair ended with the decision of the Council of State which argues that:

" In teaching establishments, the wearing by students of symbols by which they intend to manifest their religious affiliation is not by itself incompatible with the principle of laïcité, as it constitutes the free exercise of freedom of expression and of manifestation of religious creeds, but that this freedom should not allow students to sport signs of religious affiliation that, due to their nature, or the conditions in which they are worn individually or collectively, or due to their ostentatious and provocative character, would constitute an act of pressure, provocation, proselytism or propaganda [...]"

(decision of the Conseil d'Etat, November 27th 1989)

Yet the statement did not put an end to the debate which remained very sensitive. The headscarf affair of 1989 has remained at the core of the question of compatibility between *laïcité* and Islam. It showed to the French government the necessity to favor the assimilation of Muslims to the rest of the society. Yet, this assimilation could only exist in accordance to the principle of *laïcité*.

In the name of *laïcité*:

One of the challenge of the French state has been to protect *laïcité*, since wearing the veil to school is often seen as 'an attack on the neutrality of public schools'⁴⁹, while the situation also necessitates a solution which would allow a just integration of these young Muslim girls into the French educational system, and more generally of Muslims into the French society. The 'Stasi Commission'⁵⁰ was created by the former French President Jacques Chirac in 2003. The Commission issued a report after collecting as many opinions as possible on the idea of *laïcité* and

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 1235-1236

⁴⁸ Jocelyne Cesari, *Op. Cit.*

⁴⁹ Andrea Walton, 'Migration sans Assimilation: Muslim Immigration in France', in *New Horizons Online*, April 2007, p. 5

⁵⁰ The Commission was led by Bernard Stasi, the Mediator of the French Republic between 1998 and 2004.

potential ways to respond to the new issues that challenge it.

Therefore, on March 15th 2004, the French Parliament voted in favor of banning conspicuous religious symbols from public schools⁵¹. The ban, which followed the recommendations of the Stasi Commission, won by a landslide, 494 votes in favor and 39 against in the National Assembly. This law aimed at protecting the students and ensuring an equal education. In fact, the law did not only affect Muslim, it also affected other religious communities as large crosses, *kippot*, and Sikh turbans were also banned. However, it was also believed to target especially the *hijab* (headscarf), worn by some Muslim women. Thus, most of the Muslims perceived it as an unjust and aggressive gesture directed against them. In fact, the law did not only focus on schools but also wanted the principle of 'neutrality' to apply to all public utilities.

A more recent law passed by the French government was also part of these debates on the integration of Islam in a secular country. On April 11th 2011, France became the first country to ever ban the *burqa* and the *niqab*. The face-covering Muslim veil was accused of endangering the values of *laïcité* of the French Republic. Thus, women who do not accept the law are likely to receive fines.

The recent laws passed by the French government reflect these attempts to assimilate Islam to the culture of *laïcité* and make sense of the presence of this newly visible religion in the society. However, they raised several criticisms from religious leaders and politicians as well as the Muslim communities which feel targeted in the name of *laïcité*. Indeed, France pursues excessively restrictive policies towards the Muslim communities which participate in an anti-Muslim climate and infringe on personal freedoms. The issue of the coexistence of *laïcité* and Islam shows a deeper, even existential, crisis of integration in the French State.

– ***Integrating the Muslim communities within French society: a long and complex process.***

The question of the challenges of Islam for the *laïcité* of the French state is part of a wider issue. Indeed, the presence of Islam and the demands of Muslims to be recognized as part of the French society have raised questions of their integration into French society.

Limited opportunities in terms of education and employment: persistence of economic discrepancies

Most of the Muslim immigrants were from the working class. The first waves of immigrants lacked educational specialization. Thus, they could only access the lowest jobs in the hierarchy. For example, they could work in cleaning, maintenance, guarding, etc. Nowadays, immigrants still seem to be less educated than the rest of the population. Thus, only 17% of the mainstream population has no qualification or a low qualification⁵². Among the immigrants, this proportion reaches 39%. In fact, this proportion varies a lot among the different communities of immigrants: it reaches 65% among the immigrants of Sub-Saharan Africa, 60% among Turkish immigrants, 45% among Moroccan or Tunisian immigrants, or 43% among Algerian immigrants⁵³. The table in the Annex n°1 (p. 57) shows these discrepancies with more detail. The different levels of education also vary depending on the time of the migration or the reason of the migration.

The second and third generations of immigrants grew in similar conditions. Thus, they had to work their way up from low social status to higher ones. The survey carried on by the INSEE and the INED show that the discrepancy of the level of education between the children of immigrants and the rest of the population is less important than between the immigrants and the rest of the

⁵¹ That is, schools run by the government.

⁵² Low qualification refers to a diploma such as BEP or BEPC.

⁵³ INSEE, INED, *Trajectoires et Origines*, p. 40.

population⁵⁴. However, children of immigrants remain less educated than the mainstream population. The table in Annex 2 (p. 58) also shows that the access to education varies, depending on the origins of their parents. It is true that immigrants and second or third generation immigrants are more and more likely to have access to a higher education than their parents. However, this opportunity does not necessarily translate into an equal access to job opportunities.

The access to the job market is more difficult for immigrants and their descendants than it is for the mainstream population. All else being equal, they are more likely to suffer from unemployment⁵⁵. In addition, discrepancies between the average hourly wages of the mainstream population and immigrants are also important⁵⁶.

As a consequence, immigrants and their descendants have fewer expectations of social promotion. Their access to education and qualified employment is more difficult than for the mainstream population. These discrepancies can create various feelings among the descendants of immigrants: mainly, disappointment, lack of trust in the institution, and anger. In addition, the social policies of the French authorities have increased the isolation of these minorities by involuntary relegating them to geographical enclaves in which their position on the fringes of society is undeniable.

Social exclusion in the *banlieues*:

Just as the economical situation of the Muslim communities remained inferior to that of the rest of the French society, their spatial integration is also a blatant failure. Indeed, most of these communities live in *banlieues*, that is, the suburbs. However, the French term does not refer to the same reality that describes the American suburbs. The spatial segregation is so important that nowadays, Islam and *banlieues* are too often considered together.

This segregation is directly related to the history of the Muslim immigrants and public policies of the states. The post-war period brought many evolutions to the *banlieues*, making way for the *banlieues* as they are known today. During the golden age of the *Trente Glorieuses*, from 1945 to the mid-1970s, France experienced an important economic growth. This period was also accompanied by a demographic expansion, concentrated in the cities. It demanded a rapid response by the State in order to house both immigrants and French workers who flocked to the cities. Between 1958 and 1973, 195 urban zones, gathering more than 2 millions housings, were built. These housings were often designated as '*grands ensembles*'. These industrial housings were predominantly Habitation à Loyer Modéré (HLM) – i.e. Council housing. These social housings began as a solution. It was viewed as a way to obtain modern conveniences and a real social progress. The economic crisis of the 1970s sharply transformed this idea. The housings that used to be synonymous of integration became associated with the fall into poverty, destitution, and social immobility. Social housing appeared more and more as a forced housing for those who could not afford living elsewhere.

As a matter of a fact, most of the immigration of Muslims over the 20th century was composed of massive unqualified immigration. Thus, many foreigners who immigrated to France in order to find a job were often relegated to the *banlieues* as they had to stay in an urban environment for the purpose of their work but could not afford other housings. Because of their economical difficulties, they could not leave the *banlieues*.

Thus, the term *banlieue* does not only refer to a spatial dimension. It also holds a socially biased dimension. When referring to the *banlieues*, one does not think only about its geographic nature but mostly about its social and cultural dimension. In fact, at the beginning of the 1990s, the rate of unemployment in the *banlieues* was about three times as much as the national average. The

⁵⁴ INSEE, INED, *Trajectoires et Origines*, p. 39.

⁵⁵ INSEE, INED, *Trajectoires et Origines*, pp. 53-59

⁵⁶ INSEE, INED, *Trajectoires et Origines*, p. 71.

economical issues, above all the dramatic rise of unemployment, made the *banlieues* places of spatial and social exclusion. On the one hand, the *banlieues* are places of destitution and poverty. On the other hand, the ethnic origins of its inhabitants move the *banlieues* at the heart of the issue of religious and racial discrimination. As a matter of fact, the current conditions and characteristics of the *banlieues* are the result of the repressive policies that created a gap between the *banlieues* and the rest of France. The discrepancy between the ideal of the French Republic and the reality of life in the *banlieues* for the children of immigrants has created a feeling of rejection for many second or third generation immigrants.

In addition, the policies of the French government contributed and keep on contributing to the development of the representations of the *banlieues*, either for those who inhabit it or those who do not, but have a particular representation of the *banlieues*. As Olivier Roy emphasized, *banlieues* and Islam are closely tied. Yet, these ties are over estimated as they are always considered as an indivisible issue, which leads to wrong assimilation and confusion⁵⁷. The example of the riots of 2005 is telling. A lot of analysts claimed that these riots were led by young Muslims of the *banlieues*. If it is true that many young Muslim participated in these riots, they did not constitute the entire group and the riots were not led by an expression of Islam and no Islamic symbols were put forward. Indeed, the riots of 2005 were rather led by the willingness to denounce the strong spatial segregation, discrimination and racism they consistently suffer from⁵⁸.

– ***The compatibility of Islam and Frenchness in question.***

The conjunction of poverty, ethnicity, and Islam has negative consequences as the three are often mixed and assimilated to one another. The correlation of Islam and social issues may lead to the conclusion that the former is responsible for the latter. These confusions have led to discrimination and a difficulty for Muslims to relate to the rest of the French society despite their willingness to do so.

Discrimination, racism and Islamophobia:

The issue of discriminations towards Muslims is a crucial issue that has huge repercussions on their integration within the rest of the French society. It is interesting to note that this discrimination is not directly targeting Muslim communities. In fact, the victims of discrimination are Arabs, Blacks, Turks, or even inhabitants of the *banlieues*, when considered as a particular social group⁵⁹.

The survey led by the INED and INSEE has showed that discrimination is directly related to the skin color. Therefore, 'visible minorities' are more subjected to this discrimination, as the following table shows.

⁵⁷ Olivier Roy, 'Intifada des banlieues ou émeutes de jeunes déclassés', in *Esprit*, n°12, December 2005.

⁵⁸ Olivier Roy, 'Intifada des banlieues ou émeutes de jeunes déclassés', in *Esprit*, n°12, December 2005. / *Ibidem*

⁵⁹ Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaïsse, in *Intégrer l'Islam. La France et ses musulmans, enjeux et réussites*, Odile Jacob, Paris, 2007, p. 3.

Table 2: Indicators of Rejection and 'othering' by Ethnoracial Groups.

For example, children whose parents are both immigrants are more discriminated than children who only have one immigrant parent⁶⁰. It is interesting to see that minorities do not feel discriminated for the same reasons: Sub-Saharan Africans and people from the overseas territories complain of discrimination due to their skin color while North Africans and South East Asian immigrants claim that they suffer from discrimination due to their origins⁶¹.

Yet this distinction does not change much to the fact that Muslims end up being the victim of these discrimination since the populations who are the first victims of discrimination (ie. Africans and Maghrebians) are, for the majority, Muslim. In fact, the report shows that immigrants and children of immigrants feel discriminated because of their religion only when they are from a region in which Islam is the predominant religion; and children of immigrants feel more affected by these religious discrimination⁶².

In addition, the discrimination has become more and more oriented towards Muslims rather than immigrants, as Islamophobia is an increasing issue facing the Muslim communities. This fear and hate towards Islam has been increasing with the internal and external evolutions of the past decades. Internally, the growing visibility of the Muslim community and their demands for recognition which occurred at a time of a rise of Islamism in foreign countries has favored increasing discrimination aimed at Muslims, not because of their origin, but especially because of their religion. Women are the first victims of Islamophobia (84.73% of the cases of Islamophobia in 2011). What is interesting is that the majority of the acts of Islamophobia, precisely 53% of the acts in 2011 were perpetrated by public institution⁶³.

The Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France (Group against Islamophobia in France) published a report which shows that acts of Islamophobia have been dramatically increasing for the past few years, as the following graph shows.

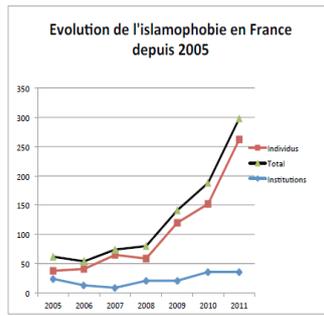
⁶⁰ INSEE, INED, *Trajectories and Origins*, p. 131

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 132

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 133

⁶³ Collectif contre l'Islamophobie en France, *Rapport sur l'Islamophobie en France 2012*, April 11th 2012, p. 14.

Illustration 3: Evolution of Islamophobia in France since 2005



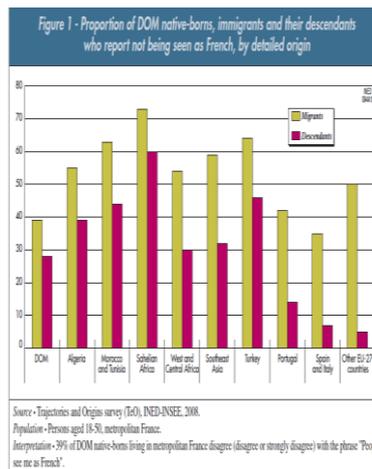
Source: Group Against Islamophobia in France, *Report on Islamophobia in 2011*, April 11th 2012, p.11

Identity and Frenchness:

This discrimination along with the growing Islamophobia encourages the rejection of Muslims from the French society, no matter what citizenship they may be. Indeed, many immigrants and children of immigrants believe that they are not considered as 'French'.

As the following illustration shows, from the Trajectories and Origins survey, many immigrants and children of immigrants disagree with the statement 'I am considered as French'. This tendency is particularly strong among people from Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and Turkey.

Illustration 4:



Thus, the identity of immigrants and their children is often questioned. In fact, the expression 'immigrants of second or third generation' itself illustrates this difficulty for children of immigrants to participate into the French society as it suggests that they are not fully acknowledged as French citizens and are persistently treated differently from other French citizens. The expression reminds of the ambiguous status of these children of immigrants, who, for most of them, have acquired the French citizenship and have been living in France their whole life.

As a matter of fact, it is often believed that the French national identity is threatened by the existence of minority groups as if the feeling of belonging to another identity would prevent the commitment to French identity. Indeed, the idea of 'dual belonging' and of 'plural allegiances' which has been accepted in many multiculturalists' societies, such as the USA, is still criticized in France⁶⁴. Dual belonging is believed to threaten the cohesion of the French society. However, the question of identity is not only a matter of personal belief but also depends on external perceptions. In fact, French identity is considered as an essential part of the French nation. Therefore, it is believed that immigrants must adopt the French identity as their primary identity. The culture of assimilation requires that immigrants and children of immigrants must transform and adapt to the French identity which must remain 'unaffected and untainted'⁶⁵.

Therefore, Muslim communities, which come mostly from immigration, feel rejected because of their origins. In addition, their religion is also seen as suspicious in the international context of the emergence of Islam as a transnational political force⁶⁶. This suspicion is due to the question of assimilation. Indeed, the question of compatibility between Western values, and more precisely French values, and Islam has been raised by many people. Islam has often been considered as an incompatible religion that threatens the society. Centuries of opposition and colonization have participated in this belief. The idea that Western values and Islamic values can not go along is a recurring argument, as testifies Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilization*⁶⁷ which supports the idea of an inevitable confrontation between an Islamic civilization and a Western civilization.

In France, this question has been at the center of the political attention for several years. In 2009, the former President Nicolas Sarkozy launched a nation-wide debate on 'national identity'. This debate consisted in a series of meetings in a lot of cities in order to discuss the question of the French national identity in the 21st century. The debate was not as successful as the government hoped since many racist blunders occurs which heightened the tensions between 'native' French people and French from the immigration and Muslims. In April 2011, the presidential right-wing party, UMP (Union for a Popular Movement) launched another debate entitled 'convention on Islam and *Laïcité*'. This convention was highly criticized as it especially targeted Muslims and suggested that the Muslim community is the only un-adapted community to the fundamental value of *laïcité* and more generally to the French Republic.

The integration of Muslim communities obviously failed according to the French citizens themselves. Indeed, a survey carried out in December 2010 by the French Institute of Public Opinion (IFOP) showed that 68% of the French population believes that Muslims are 'not well integrated into society'. The reasons given in order to explain this lack of integration were first, a 'refusal' of the Muslims (for 61% of the French population) and second the 'excessive cultural

⁶⁴ Patrick Simon, *French National Identity and Integration: Who belongs to the National Community?*, May 2012, p. 3

⁶⁵ Areva Paronjana, Viviana Pădurean, Xue Liang and Natalie Sidloski, 'A Nation's Anxiety: Muslim Immigrants in France', Aalborg University, Denmark, January 12th 2012 by EC. [Online]. Available at <http://encompassingcrescent.com/2012/01/a-nations-anxiety-muslim-immigrants-in-france-by-areva-paronjana-viviana-padurean-xue-liang-and-natalie-sidloski-2/> [accessed 1 July 2012]

⁶⁶ Riva Kastoryano, *Op. Cit.*, p. 1235

⁶⁷ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996.

differences' (for 40% of French people)⁶⁸. This survey clearly shows how Islam has progressively been associated with a threat to the French identity.

Therefore, all these economical, spatial, and cultural discrimination have showed that the integration of Muslim communities into French society has failed on many levels. This failure of integration is made obvious by the confrontation of these Muslim communities with the French identity from which they feel rejected. As the integration is still limited, some Muslim are more likely to give up and reject the rest of the society and find refuge with their religion, up to the point of extremism.

III – Organization, Structure, and Representation of the Muslim communities.

First of all, Islam does not have a clear hierarchical structure, contrary to other religions in France. This difference comes from the defiance of an organization that could prevent a direct relationship between the Muslim and Allah and ruin the transcendental character of their relationship⁶⁹. Therefore, its community is fragmented. The members of the religious administration are likely to be removed at any time and do not own the exclusivity of the interpretation of the Qur'an. Yet, in spite of this particular character, Islam is not without any kind of structural organization. However, the power of these structures depends on their familial, ethnic, or clan-like implantation as well as their proximity to the political power and their willingness to extend their influence.

The rise of Islamism in France is first noticeable through the importance and influence of radical organizations which constitute in the representation of Islam. Even if most of the Muslims living in France are moderate, it is striking to note that their official expression is much less prominent than the expression of more militant groups, such as the Tabligh or the Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF)⁷⁰. In fact, all the organizations that currently claim to represent the Muslims of France have two characteristics. On the one hand, they only represent a very minor part of the Muslim community. On the other hand, they are under the influence of foreign countries⁷¹. These tendencies require a more thorough analysis of each of these various organizations which aspire to the monopoly of the representation of Islam in France without actually representing the Muslim community⁷².

– *The French Council of the Muslim Faith (Conseil Français du Culte Musulman):*

Promoting 'French Islam'

Progressively, the French government became aware that the presence of Muslims in France, which had become more and more visible, required an institutionalization. Several projects have

⁶⁸ Survey conducted by the *Institut français d'opinion publique* (IFOP) for Le Monde between December 7th and 9th 2010, using a sample of 809 people representative of the French population aged 18 and over. Quoted in Stephanie Le Bars, 'Integration of Islam Perceived as Failure in France and Germany', *LeMonde.fr*, January 5, 2011.

⁶⁹ Jean-François Legrain, *Op. Cit.*, p. 12.

⁷⁰ Jean-Yves Camus, Islam in France, in International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, October 5th 2004. [online]. Available at <<http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/tabid/66/Articlsid/543/currentpage/18/Default.aspx>> [accessed 6 June 2012].

⁷¹ Saïd Branine, 'Les difficultés d'une institution de l'Islam en France doivent être surmontées progressivement', may 26th 2000. [online]. Available at <<http://oumma.com/Les-difficultes-d-une-institution>> [accessed 11 June 2012].

⁷² Lamchichi Abderrahim, 'Musulmans de France, politique de reconnaissance et éthique de responsabilité', in *Confluences Méditerranée*, February 2006, n°57, pp. 32-33.

⁷³ Kristin Archick et al., *Muslims in Europe: Promoting Integration and Countering Extremism*, Congressional Research Service, September 7th 2011, p. 12

A questionable institutionalization which favors radical organizations

Despite the agreement on the necessity to have such an institution to represent the Muslim community, the CFCM is still criticized by numerous associations. In fact, the standard of surface area as a way to evaluate the importance of each organization in the CFCM excludes a lot of organizations. Indeed, it almost prevents any representation of women and favors greatly the great organizations that benefit from foreign influence.

Indeed, the method chosen for the election is based on the area of the prayer hall or mosque each organization commands. Each 1,000 square meters of prayer space in the mosque receives 10 delegates. This favors the organizations that control a lot of mosques and have more economical capabilities, that is, the organizations which receive foreign support. In fact, a lot of communities are not represented because their prayer halls are not declared, as well as the majority of Muslims which are not practicing and therefore cannot be part of the CFCM. Moreover, the divisions between the different organizations weaken even more the legitimacy of the CFCM.

The first two elections of 2003 and 2005 were already decided as Dalil Boubakeur, the Rector of the Great Mosque of Paris was ensured to be the president of the CFCM, no matter which support the Great Mosque of Paris received⁷⁶. This decision reflected the willingness of the French government to put forward the most moderate voices of Islam. However, two organizations, the L'Union des organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF) and the Rassemblement des Musulmans de France (RMF), progressively acquired more and more power in the CFCM and opposed this automatic nomination. Thus, the Great Mosque of Paris decided to boycott the elections of June 2008 and criticized its election procedure. Mohammed Moussaoui, from the RMF, became the new president of the CFCM in the elections of 2008. In 2011, the new elections were also boycotted by the UOIF which joined the GMP to criticize the electoral procedure.

As the vote was organized, some organizations benefited from a clear advantage in terms of representation. What is surprising is that the institution which originally was supposed to promote a moderate Islam in France under the influence of the government became a promoter of the most radical trends of Islam in France. Despite their limited audience; the CFCM gave them legitimacy and favored their expansion by giving them authority over some important issues such as the issue of halal food or formation of imams.

– *Main Muslim organizations claiming to represent the Muslim communities of France .*

These main institutions are strongly implemented in the public arena in France. These Sunni organizations have benefited, or still benefit for some of them, from their role in the CFCM. It is important to see the more recent evolutions of the place of each of these important organizations in order to fully understand how radical Muslims have progressively gained a greater legitimacy and influence despite their limited audience among the Muslim communities in France.

National Federation of the Grande Mosquée of Paris⁷⁷:

The Great Mosque of Paris was inaugurated in 1926. It was build as a way to thank the 80,000 Muslim soldiers who died during the First World War. The Mosque was financed by the

⁷⁶ Tom Heneghan, 'Uncertain future for France's Muslim Council, May 5th 2008, [online]. Available at <<http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2008/05/05/uncertain-future-for-frances-muslim-council/>> [accessed 5 June 2012].

⁷⁷ <http://www.mosquee-de-paris.org/>

French government. The Mosque aspires to be the leading mosque of France⁷⁸. Since 1992, the Mosque is under the direction of the Rector Dalil Boubakeur. The Mosque represents the Algerian tendency of Muslim community of France⁷⁹, this affiliation has often given a controversial aspect to the Mosque and to Dalil Boubakeur. Indeed, Dalil Boubakeur was appointed by the Algerian government⁸⁰. The Mosque is often considered as a representative of a moderate stream of Islam and focuses more on cultural issues than on the question of shariah. Even though it is moderate, the statements of Dalil Boubakeur are sometimes controversial and criticized by the non-Muslims. Indeed, Dalil Boubakeur complained against the visit of Salman Rushdie in France in 1996⁸¹ and he criticized the cartoon of Mahomet which promoted racism⁸².

In fact, the Mosque has been recently affected by a problem of representatively. Indeed, it has suffered from a lack of support which appeared to be obvious during the elections of the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (CFCM) in April 2005. Indeed, if the position of Dalil Boubakeur as the head of the CFCM was guaranteed by the French government, the Mosque did not gain as many representatives as it hoped. It only gained 6 out of 41 seats. The influence of the Mosque became so limited Dalil Boubakeur did not obtain the presidency of the CFCM in the elections of 2008. While the GMP remains a symbolic center of French Islam, its influence has steadily decreased, thereby giving way for more radical organizations.

Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF)⁸³

The Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF) was founded in 1983. It is a branch of the UK-based organization, the Union of Islamic Organization. It started as a small group of Islamist students but it progressively grew and has now become one of the most prominent representatives of the Muslim community in France⁸⁴, even though it only represents a very small portion of the Muslim community. In 2011, the Tunisian Ahmed Jaballah became the new president of the UOIF, succeeding to Fouad Alaoui. The UOIF is a fundamentalist organization which promotes a traditional Islam as it is inspired from the Muslim Brotherhood and the thought of Hassan al-Banna. It is also especially close to Youssef al-Qaradawi⁸⁵. The UOIF has strong ties with foreign countries and Muslims. At its foundation, the UOIF was financed by Sheikh Zayed, the former president of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates. Nowadays, it depends on the Foundation Al-Makhtoum, of the Emir of Dubai, and on other sponsors from the Gulf⁸⁶.

Despite its extreme position, the UOIF is aware of the necessity to respect the values of the French Republic if it wants to continue to exist. Therefore, the group has tried to restrain any

⁷⁸ Malek Chebel, « l'histoire de la Mosquée de Paris », émission *Au cœur de l'histoire* sur Europe 1, 13 mars 2012 <http://www.europe1.fr/MediaCenter/Emissions/Au-coeur-de-l-histoire/Sons/L-INTEGRALE-l-histoire-de-la-Mosquee-de-Paris-987415/>

⁷⁹ Emmanuel Lemieux, 'Islam made in France', in *Les Grands Dossiers des Sciences Humaines*, March 2010, n°18, p. 26. ** [online]. Available at <www.cairn.info/magazine-les-grands-dossiers-des-sciences-humaines-2010-3-page-26.htm> [accessed 16 June 2012].

⁸⁰ Jean-Yves Camus, *Op. Cit.*

⁸¹ Jean François Revel, le révélateur Rushdie, in *Le Point*, March 2nd 1996. [online]. Available at <<http://www.lepoint.fr/actualites-monde/1996-03-02/le-revelateur-rushdie/924/0/102664>> [accessed 7 July 2012].

⁸² 'Boubakeur justifie le procès contre *Charlie Hebdo*', in *le Nouvel Obs*, February 2nd 2007. Available at <<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/societe/20070202.OBS0303/boubakeur-justifie-le-procescontre-charlie-hebdo.html>> [accessed 6 June 2012].

⁸³ <http://www.uoif-online.com/v3/>

⁸⁴ Fiammetta Venner, interviewed by Jacqueline Remy and Boris Thiolay, 'La face cachée de l'UOIF', in *L'Express*, May 2nd 2005. [online]. Available at <http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/religion/la-face-cachee-de-l-uoif_486103.html> [accessed 9 June 2012]

⁸⁵ Emmanuel Lemieux, *Op. Cit.*

⁸⁶ Fiammetta Venner, *Op. Cit.*

extremism or anti-Semitism⁸⁷. The group has become an important political actor, especially through its collaboration with Nicolas Sarkozy's policies towards Islam in France⁸⁸. However, the radical and political aspects of the UOIF are dangerous for France, because the UOIF maintains ambiguous statements which threaten *laïcité* and women rights⁸⁹. For example, the UOIF organizes every year great meetings of Muslims at the Bourget. The latest meeting was closely watched by the French government since the UOIF invited several controversial Muslim personalities. Thus, six of them were forbidden to enter the French territory as Sheikh Al-Masri, or Sheikh Al-Qaradawi, the Egyptian living in Qatar who has often expressed anti-Semitism and support for terrorism⁹⁰. Tariq Ramadan was also invited by the UOIF and participated in the 29th annual meeting of the Muslims of France.

In spite of the limited audience of the UOIF among the Muslim community, it enjoys a great influence. Its participation in the CFCM enabled the UOIF to acquire more and more power. As soon as 2003, the UOIF is very successful and wins the presidency of 11 of the 25 regional councils. Nowadays, it is an umbrella organization of more than 200 organizations and gathers roughly 300,000 members. For the past decade, it has been one of the most active organizations⁹¹. In addition to owning and controlling a large number of mosques, the UOIF also influences many organizations. For example, they have developed really close relationship with the following organizations and student associations:

▲ *The Comité de Bienfaisance et de Secours aux Palestiniens (CBSP)*: This group collects money for the Hamas. The UOIF supports it and claims that the money goes to Palestinian orphans of 'martyrs' involved in suicide attacks.

▲ *The Etudiants Musulmans de France*: This organization was created in 1989 by Khalid Ida Ali Ou Lahsen in Strasbourg⁹². It also promotes the Muslim brotherhood ideology among the students of almost all academies.

▲ *The Union des Jeunes Musulmans (UJM)*: was funded in Lyon in 1987. It is inspired by Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. Yamin Makri is the head of the Union and also of Tawhid, a famous Islamic bookstore of Lyon, whose reference is Tariq Ramadan. The UJM gathers more than two hundred Islamic associations of the area of Lyon⁹³. The UJM is very involved in the *banlieues*, which allows it to receive public subsidies.

▲ *Institut Européen des Sciences Humaines (IESH)*⁹⁴: The European Institute of Humanities was created in 1992 in Château-Chinon by the UOIF. The IESH was created in accordance with the objective of promotion of a French Islam compatible with the values of the Republic, supported by the CFCM and the government. It offers a training seminar for imams and theology courses for students. This idea aimed at reducing the influence of foreign countries which trained most of the French Imams.

Other organizations have been created by the UOIF in order to organize the life of French Muslims in all its aspects, such as the French League for Muslim women (*Ligue Française de la*

⁸⁷ Jean-Yves Camus, *Op. Cit.*

⁸⁸ Vincent Geisser, 'L'UOIF, la tension clientéliste d'une grande fédération Islamique', in *Confluences Méditerranée*, February 2006, n°57, pp. 83-101.

⁸⁹ Fiammetta Venner, *Op. Cit.*

⁹⁰ Bertrand Guay, 'Tensions à l'ouverture de la rencontre annuelle des Musulmans de France' in L'Express, April 6th 2012. [online]. Available at <http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/tensions-a-l-ouverture-de-la-rencontre-annuelle-des-musulmans-de-france_1102008.html> [accessed 6 July 2012]

⁹¹ Emmanuel Lemieux, *Op. Cit.*

⁹² Alexandre Del Valle, 'Islamistes de France Stratégies de conquête: du faible au fort, in *Outre-Terre*, February 2003, n°3, p. 142

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 141

⁹⁴ <http://www.iesh.org/index.php/home/historique>

Femme Musulmane - LFFM), *Imams de France*, *Halal Services* or the French Medical Association of Avicenna (*Association Médicale Avicenne de France*)⁹⁵. The Islamic Group of France (*Groupe Islamique de France- GIF*), founded in 1981 is also member of the UOIF. Thus the UOIF has gained a very important position and claims to be the representative of French Muslims. The UOIF is nevertheless close to the Muslim Brotherhood and is now training the French Imams. It also controls a lot of mosques and initiated several projects of 'grande mosquée' in France.

The UOIF is well established in some regions, especially the North. Some of its members have exerted a strong impact on the region. For example, Amar Lasfar has been involved on high position of the UOIF since the 1990s (secretary-treasurer, and now vice-president). He is the rector of the Mosque of Lille, president of the Islamic League of the North, and president of the Regional Council of the Muslim Faith since 2008. A lot of terrorists actually met in his mosque (Ali Ben Fattoum and Mohamed Drici of the GIA, Christophe Cazé, Lionel Dumont and Rachid Souimdi of the Roubaix group)⁹⁶. In 2003, Amar Lasfar also obtained the right to create a private Muslim high school, Averroès high-school, in which the professors are often radical militants. Thus, the Islamist Hassan Iquioussen is teaching a class on ethics, and Hani Ramadan also gave a special class⁹⁷.

The influence of the UOIF has been slightly decreasing in the past few years. Indeed, its willingness to be institutionalized and recognized by the French government led to a decline of its popularity. Thus, the UOIF is now closer to a middle-class Islam compared to other movements which attract the youth, especially in the *banlieues*⁹⁸.

Fédération Nationale des Musulmans de France (FNMF):

The National Federation of Muslims in France (*Fédération Nationale des Musulmans de France - FNMF*) was created in 1985. It is supported by Morocco and therefore, is opposed to the Grande Mosquée de Paris⁹⁹. Its officials claim to represent Islam in France but actually defend a traditional Islam. The FNMF was presided over by Daniel Youssouf Leclerc until 1992. He converted to Islam in 1984 under the influence of the Tabligh. In 1999, he became a permanent member of the World Muslim League, influenced by Saudi Arabia. He is known for his support of the Sharia or his collaboration with Roger Garaudy, a well-known Holocaust denier. In 1992, Mohamed Bechari became the new president, who has ties with the fiqh and several Islamic personalities, including the Qatari Abassi Madani¹⁰⁰. The FNMF has tried to expand its influence over many mosques and Muslims. It is an important group in France, even though it is not as important as the UOIF. Thus, it controls a large number of Mosques, mostly in Evry, Asnières, and Argenteuil.

Rassemblement des Musulmans de France (RMF)¹⁰¹:

In 2006, some members of the FNMF decided to split and created the Assembly of French

⁹⁵ L'UOIF est-elle réfractaire à un Islam français ?, in *Saphir News*, Omero Marongiu-Perria, April 13th 2012.[online]. Available at <http://www.saphirnews.com/L-UOIF-est-elle-refractaire-a-un-islam-francais_a14275.html> [accessed 8 July 2012].

⁹⁶ Andrew Wareing, 'Amar Lasfar, l'Islamiste du Nord', in *Riposte Laïque*, n°129, February 24th 2010. [online]. Available at <<http://ripostelaique.com/Amar-Lasfar-l-islamiste-du-Nord-3637.html>> [accessed 8 July 2012]

⁹⁷ Fiammetta Venner, Le Lycée Averroès, in *ProChoix*, n°59, October 2010, p.81 and 85 [online]. Available at <<http://www.prochoix.org/pdf/lycee.verroes.prochoix.pdf>> [accessed 9 July 2012]

⁹⁸ Clara Beyler, 'The Jihadist Threat in France', in *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol. 3, Hudson Institute, Washington, DC, United States, pp. 94-95

⁹⁹ Jean-Yves Camus, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁰⁰ L'institut Avicenne et l'inquiétant Mohamed Bechari, October 7th 2006. [online]. Available at <<http://www.islamisation.fr/archive/2007/02/06/l-institut-avicenne-et-l-inquietant-mohamed-bechari.html>> [accessed 10 July 2012].

¹⁰¹ <http://www.lermf.com/>

Muslims (*Rassemblement des Musulmans Français - RMF*). This group is very close to Morocco. Anouar Kbibech succeeded to Taoufiq Sefti, as the president of the *Rassemblement*. The influence of the RMF has rapidly increased. In 2008, the RMF became the main actor of the CFCM as it obtained almost half of the votes. Thus, Mohammed Moussaoui, the vice-president of the RMF, became the new president of the CFCM. In addition, most of the CRCM are controlled by the RMF.

Foi et Pratique - Jama'a at-Tabligh¹⁰²:

The *Tabligh* is a Muslim movement founded in 1927 in India by Muhammad Ilyas. One of the most important characteristics of the Jama'a at-Tabligh is its missionary spirit. Until the end of the 1930s, the movement remained in India. Yet, in the 1940s and 1950s, the movement expanded to various places: Europe, North Africa, East Africa, and Afghanistan¹⁰³. It appeared in France at the end of the 1960s and the association Faith and Practice (*Foi et Pratique*) was created in 1972. The *Tabligh* focus their attention on religion and do not deal with political issues. The *Tabligh* supports a traditionalist Islam and tries to convert as many people as possible. It is an Islamist movement whose preachers have expanded its influence over a lot of *banlieues*, such as Mantes-la-Jolie, La Courneuve, as well as other cities as Marseilles, Strasbourg (Neuhof), Lyon, and Lille. They want to wake the faith of the most excluded populations, especially the youth, to which they preach conversion. They mostly focus on the *banlieues* and the immigrants which they consider to be easier targets¹⁰⁴. They also infiltrated cafés, prisons, hospitals, worker centers, etc¹⁰⁵. Some of the preachers, such as Sheikh Mohamed Younès or Mohammed Keskas¹⁰⁶, are known and watched closely by the French Intelligence organizations, especially those who have been traveling to the Afghan and Pakistan region.

The *Tabligh* works mainly from the mosque Omar of the 19th district of Paris, financed by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan¹⁰⁷. Even if *Tabligh* is relatively peaceful, it remains closely watched as its fundamentalism may lead its members to try to organize Islamist actions. For example, the French terrorist Khaled Kelkal was undertaken by one of their centers in Vaulx-en-Velin¹⁰⁸. Other terrorist were connected to the *Tabligh*, such as Djamel Loiseau, Djamel Beghal, or Zacharias Moussaoui. In fact, *Tabligh* has close relations with Pakistani and Afghan terrorist networks as well as Salafi militants of London¹⁰⁹. *Tabligh* was never directly incriminated since it only focuses on rigorous religious practice, but it seems to cover the first step of radicalization of some potential Jihadists. However, the attraction of the *Tabligh* has relatively decreased, because of its apolitical nature, thereby giving way to more active radical organizations¹¹⁰. The *Tabligh* remains nevertheless an important recruiting group and its role is even more ambiguous as some of its members are later radicalized by other groups, such as Al Qa'ida¹¹¹.

¹⁰² <http://www.foietpratique.org/>

¹⁰³ Moustapha Diop, 'structuration d'un réseau: la Jamaat Tabligh (Société pour la Propagation de la Foi), in *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, Vol. 10, n°1, 1994. Available at <http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/remi_0765-0752_1994_num_10_1_1395> [accessed 07/29/2012]

¹⁰⁴ Moussa Khedimellah, 'Jeunes prédicateurs du mouvement Tabligh', in *Socio-anthropologie*, n°10, 2001. [online] Available at <<http://socio-anthropologie.revues.org/index155.html>> [accessed 11 July 2012]

¹⁰⁵ Alexandre Del Valle, *Op. Cit.*, p. 145

¹⁰⁶ Samir Amghar, 'Logiques conversionnistes et mouvements de réislamisation', in *Confluences Méditerranée*, February 2006, n°57, p. 65.

¹⁰⁷ Alexandre Del Valle, *Op. Cit.*, p. 145

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, p. 145

¹⁰⁹ Ibidem, p. 145

¹¹⁰ Samir Amghar, *Op. Cit.*, p. 65-66

¹¹¹ Clara Beyler, *Op. Cit.*, p. 95

– *Other organizations which fight for acknowledgment*

In addition to the main organizations studied earlier, there are other smaller groups which have an influence in particular areas or among particular Muslim communities. The following groups also promote radical Islam. These organizations are also Sunni.

Milli Görüs - Tendence Nationale Union Islamique en France (TNUIF)

Milli Görüs is a Turkish Islamist movement, also close to the Muslim Brotherhood. It was closely linked to the Turkish Islamist party *Faziler Partisii*, which was dismantled in 2001. Milli Görüs operates in France, especially the East, and in Germany where it is very powerful. It is officially represented by the National Tendency – Islamic Union in France (*Tendance Nationale Union Islamique en France - TNUIF*). It runs two mosques in Paris and one in Metz, and promotes the idea of 'Khilafah' as well as an extremely anti-Semitic rhetoric¹¹². It also federates over a hundred associations¹¹³.

Kaplanci:

Kaplanci is a dissident organization from Milli Görüs. It is even more radical. Kaplanci is represented through the Islamic Association of France (*Association Islamique de France -AIF*), located in Paris and supports Iran. It is led by Jamaledin 'Kaplan' Hocaoglu, the former Mufti of Adana, who admires the Iranian revolution. Kaplanci is especially influential in Lyon, in Montfermeil, Alsace, Franche-Comté, and in Paris where it controls the Muslim Institute of France¹¹⁴.

Association des Etudiants Islamiques de France (AEIF)

This association has close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. It represents the Tunisian trend and is close to the Tunisian Islamist party Ennahda which is now the first political force of Tunisia since the overthrow of Ben Ali. The association was founded in 1963. Its influence is significant in Paris, but also in Nice, Strasbourg, Toulouse, Marseille, and Nîmes¹¹⁵. The association is strongly opposed to the integration of Muslims into French society.

Ahbachî – Association des Projets de Bienfaisance Islamique en France (APBIF)

The Society of Islamic Philanthropic Projects in France (APBIF) is an organization founded in Ethiopia, the Ahbachî spread to Lebanon in 1930 with Sheikh Ahmad al-'Ajuz, known as 'al-Ahbachî'. It appeared in France in 1991. It is influential in Paris (especially the 18th district), Stasbourg, Montpellier, Narbonne, Nice, Saint-Etienne, Saint-Dizier, Lyon, Nîmes, Rennes, and Toulouse. The Ahbachî is very controversial as it does not 'fit the conventional 'Islamist' or 'fundamentalist' mold'¹¹⁶. The organization's doctrine is Sunni but also has elements of Sufi spiritualism. The official ideology of the Ahbachî is moderate. It consistently denounces the Salafi

¹¹² Alexandre Del Valle, *Op. Cit.*, p. 143-144

¹¹³ Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaïsse, *Op. Cit.*, p. 141

¹¹⁴ Alexandre Del Valle, *Op. Cit.*, p. 144

¹¹⁵ Alexandre Del Valle, *Op. Cit.*, p. 142

¹¹⁶ Nizar hamzeh and Hrair Dekmejian, 'A sufi response to Pollitical Islamism: Al-Ahbash of Lebanon', in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, n°28, 1996, pp. 217-219. [online]. Available at <<http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/pspa/al-ahbash.html>> [accessed 24 July 2012]

and the Muslim Brotherhood, especially al-Qaradawi and al-Tantaoui, and their terror-prone ideology¹¹⁷. The Ahbachi is in favor of tolerance, pluralism and against proselytism. Many Salafi groups and websites denounce it as a sect and lead anti-Ahbachi propaganda. Yet, the group is also very close to the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, since the election of Houssam Qaraqirah at its head in 1995¹¹⁸. The Ahbachi are particularly focused on France, and participate in the movement of Islamization of members of the Sufi community as they try to find new audience among them¹¹⁹.

Grande Mosquée de Lyon

In April 2011, a document from the United States Pentagon, published by Wikileaks, accused the Mosque of Lyon of participating in the recruitment of Al-Qaeda in Europe. Indeed, the mosque of Lyon was introduced as one of the 10 mosques representing a threat¹²⁰. The mosque was allegedly involved in terrorist attacks committed by Al-Qaeda, as some of its members have been recruited, approached, or trained there. However, the rector of the mosque of Lyon, Kabel Kabtane, denied these accusations¹²¹.

Small Shi'a cells

The influence of Iran over some the French Shi'a community is quite limited. Support for the Islamic Republic of Iran was quite strong in the 1980s in Paris and its *banlieues* as well as in Lyon. For example, the 'Cultural center of the Imam, set in Belleville was very active until the bombings in 1986, in which Iran was very involved. Today, while there are no known Iranian Shi'a cells, there might be some young Muslim creating very small and secret cells in the Paris area¹²².

Fédération Chiite de France¹²³ and Centre Zahra¹²⁴

The Center Zahra was funded in 2005. It is a Shi'a association, located in the North of France, close to Dunkerque. The leader of the center is Yahia Gouasmi, who is also the President of the Shi'a Federation of France (founded in 2007) and the anti-Zionist party (created in January 2009). The center promotes anti-Zionist propaganda, locally and through its very active website. However, the official anti-Zionist propaganda hides the actual antisemitism of some, if not many, of its members. For example, some acknowledged anti-Semite are regularly welcomed by the center for lectures or symposiums, such as the humorist Dieudonné or Kémi Séba¹²⁵. On its website, it also supports the Islamic Republic of Iran. The center proselytizes and many of its members are converts. The same rhetoric is promoted by the Shi'a Federation of France. Both have ties with the

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁹ Samir Amghar, 'Les Ahbâch, ou le nouvel Islam européen', in *Politique étrangère*, Fall 2007, pp. 605-615. [online]. Available at <www.cairn.info/revue-politique-etrangere-2007-3-page-605.htm> [accessed 25 July 2012]

¹²⁰ The 9 other mosques were the mosque Al-Sunna in Montréal, Canada ; the Islamic university Abu-Bakr and the mosque Makki in Karachi, Pakistan ; the mosque Al-Khair in Sanaa and the institute Dimaj of Saada, Yemen ; the mosque of Finsbury Park and a prayer hall rented to a youth club Four Feathers, close to Baker Street, in London ; the mosque of the Islamic Cultural Institute in Milan, and the mosque Wazir-Akbar-Khan in Kaboul, Afghanistan.

¹²¹ 'Le préfet du Rhône dément que la mosquée de Lyon soit un foyer terroriste', in *Le Monde*, April 27th 2011. [online]. Available at <http://www.lemonde.fr/documents-wikileaks/article/2011/04/27/le-recteur-de-la-grande-mosquee-de-lyon-outre-par-les-documents-reveles-par-wikileaks_1513315_1446239.html> [accessed 11 July 2012].

¹²² Jean Yves Camus, *Op. Cit.*

¹²³ <http://www.federationchiitedefrance.com/>

¹²⁴ <http://www.centre-zahra.com/>

¹²⁵ Boris Thiolay, 'Les amis très particuliers du centre Zahra', in *L'Express*, February 26th 2009. [online]. Available at <http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/les-amis-tres-particuliers-du-centre-zahra_743285.html> [accessed 30 July 2012].

Islamic Republic of Iran, through the president Yahia Gouasmi, who has developed a strong network in Iran since the 1980s¹²⁶.

– *Some groups striving to defend and promote a secular and moderate Islam*

Some groups promote a secular Islam, but they remain small and do not enjoy great influence. Among these groups, there are the Coordination of Muslims of France (*Coordination des Musulmans de France*) led by Abderrahmane Dahmane. The Turkish-Islamic Union of Theological Affairs in France (DITIB) supervises the Turkish mosques and promotes a secular Islam, under the control of the Turkish embassy. The Committee of Coordination of the Turkish Muslims of France (Comité de Coordination des Musulmans Turcs de France) is also moderate.

The main organization of Pakistani expatriates, The National Union of Pakistanese in France (Union Nationale des Pakistanais en France) is also moderate when it comes to French domestic policies. A branch of the Indian movement of Ahmadiya is present in the North of Paris and Strasbourg. It advocates a peaceful Islam and is often denounced as heretic by orthodox Muslims.

Some Sufi organizations also exist. The Nimattullahi order has two centers in France, 'khaniqahs' located in Rosny sous Bois and in Tassin la Demi Lune. Yet, one of the branches of the Naqshbandiya order spreads an anti-semitic ideology through websites¹²⁷.

The French Federation of the Muslim Associations of Africa, the Comoros and the Antilles (*Fédération des Associations Islamiques d'Afrique, des Comores et des Antilles*, FFAIACA) is one of the most important secular Islam group. It is the official representative of African Muslims and seats on the CFCM. As a member of the CFCM, it is in charge of the organization of the Aïd¹²⁸. These groups tend to represent a particular community of Muslim. There are a lot of small associations which promote secularism and denounce Islamism but their influence is limited.

– *Influential voices of Islam in France:*

Some influential Muslims are important in the French Muslim scene. While most of them are moderate, such as Soheïb Benchkeih, Michel Renard, Leïla Babès or Abdelwahad Medeb, two of the most prominent voices of Islam in France do not represent that majority of moderate Muslims. Tariq and Hani Ramadan are two Swiss of Egyptian origins. They are the grand-sons of Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Hani Ramadan is the director of the Islamic Center of Geneva, the unofficial European headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood, created by Saïd Ramadan, Hani Ramadan's father. He has published several books on Islam, the Sharia, and the status of women. He has been criticized for his discriminatory ideas against women. His positions have been widely criticized, especially after an article in the newspaper *Le Monde*. Indeed, in 'The misunderstood Sharia' (*La Charia incomprise*¹²⁹) he claims that stoning is a 'punishment, but also a form of purification'. He also associates AIDS with sexual deviance (adultery, homosexuality, consumption of drugs). His radical position is listened to and followed by many young Muslims who wish to refer to a fundamental Islam, in Switzerland and in France. He regularly condemns the European support to Israel. On his website¹³⁰, he often refers to the Muslim Brotherhood, the Lebanese channel Al-Manar, controlled by the Hezbollah, and other radical Islamist sources. In fact, Hani Ramadan is allowed to travel to

¹²⁶ 'Yahia Gouasmi, ce Nordiste dans l'ombre de Dieudonné', in *DailyNord*, 09 November 2009. [online]. Available at <<http://dailynord.fr/2009/11/yahia-gouasmi-et-dieudonne/>> [accessed 30 July 2012].

¹²⁷ Jean Yves Camus, *Op. Cit.*

¹²⁸ Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaïsse, *Op. Cit.*, p. 141.

¹²⁹ Hani Ramadan, 'La charia incomprise', in *Le Monde*, September 9th 2002.

¹³⁰ <http://haniramadan.blog.tdg.ch/>,

France, and is sometimes invited by the UOIF to give conferences and preaches.

Tariq Ramadan's declarations are also radical, even though they seem more moderate than his brother's. Tariq Ramadan began to come to France in the 1990s. He is very involved in the debate on Islam in the Western world and the issue of *laïcité*. Unlike his brother, Tariq Ramadan clearly opposes stoning and anti-Semitism; he also defends *laïcité* and its compatibility with Islam. However, despite his official moderate declarations, he has been accused of fundamentalism. The ambiguity of his speech enables him to be praised by all kind of actors, from politicians and academics, to Islamist militants. Even if he claims to not agree with his brother, for example on the issue of stoning, he never clearly made a clear declaration against it. In fact, Tariq Ramadan does not take an enough clear stand which creates a lot of questioning about his real motives and opinion¹³¹. In spite of his ambiguous position, Tariq Ramadan exerts a large influence on European Muslim communities, especially in France, but also in Switzerland, Great Britain, the Netherlands, etc. European media still enable him to talk and often introduce him as a legitimate representative figure of Islam in Europe without paying attention to his ambiguous views. He has now become one of the most famous Muslim intellectual in France and has even been named the 8th top public intellectual by the British *Prospect magazine* in 2008.

Part IV – The process of radicalization and the terrorist threat

– *Theoretical considerations on the process of radicalization*

The Four steps of radicalization by the NYPD

Like many Western countries, France has been subjected to the radicalization of a part of its Muslim population. The pattern of this process of radicalization has been analyzed by the New York Police Department (NYPD). The NYPD identified four stages of radicalization which lead to Islamic terrorism. All along this process, the search for identity is crucial in the radicalization of an individual. However, if an individual enters the process of radicalization, it does not mean that he will follow it through all of its phases. Each individuals have different progression¹³². The four steps are 'unique' and have 'specific signatures'¹³³.

The first step is pre-radicalization which corresponds to the moment prior to the actual radicalization of the individual. The personal and socio-economic factors are important to identify which individuals are the *more/most* likely to follow the path of radicalization, but individuals tend to begin the process on their own¹³⁴. The NYPD considers that the environment of the community is a crucial factor¹³⁵. According to the FBI, 15 to 35-year old male Muslims, living in male-dominated societies and in Middle-class families are more vulnerable

The second stage is when an individual identifies himself with an extremist cause. His acceptance of a radicalized ideology isolates him from his former life even further. This embrace can be caused by very different elements, depending on each individual's own particular experience. A travel abroad can be a crucial element which accelerate the radicalization process.

The third stage is the indoctrination of the individual who becomes aware of his own potential as a Jihadist. The individual intensifies his belief in the Jihadi-Salafi ideology. The support of like-minded individuals is crucial to this phase.

¹³¹ Caroline Fourest, *Brother Tariq: The Doublespeak of Tariq Ramadan*, The Social Affairs Unit, 2008, 293 p.

¹³² New York Police Department (NYPD), *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, Prepared by Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt, 2007, p. 6

¹³³ *Ibidem*, p. 6

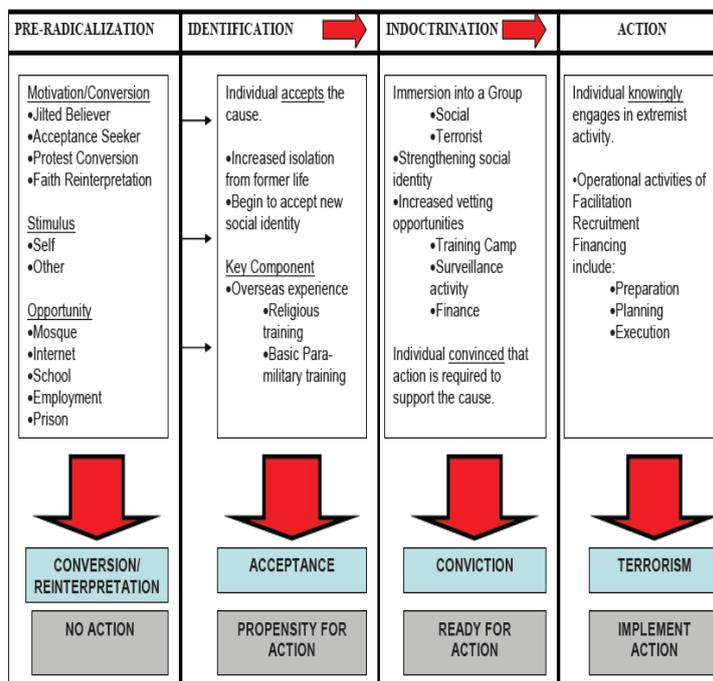
¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 9

¹³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 22

The final step in the radicalization process is to engage in action in order to support the cause. The individuals who engaged through the whole process are likely to be involved in terrorist activities. The following table presents all these steps of the process of radicalization.

Table 6: The Radicalization Process.

FBI Report: The Radicalization Process: From Conversion to Jihad, May 10th 2006, p.4
<http://cryptome.org/fbi-jihad.pdf>



'Moral Disengagement' by Albert Bandura

The psychologist Albert Bandura has studied the susceptibility of an individual to enter the process of radicalization, and he argues it highly depends on the interaction between individuals and Islamist recruiters. Indeed, chance encounters may have a decisive role in the radicalization process, as Marc Sageman argued¹³⁶. The potential of chance encounters to have an important impact on an individual is a combination of various factors. On the personal (psychological) level, the confusion with regard to an individual's own cultural and religious values increase the likelihood of a chance encounter to have a strong effect. On the social level, the closer to the group the individual is, the higher is the likelihood of this encounter to have a lasting impact on his life path.

Bandura studied the different psychological evolutions that lead to the creation of a terrorist group. He analyzed the increasing 'moral disengagement' of the individuals which lead to a greater risk of terrorist acts (or other forms of violence). Through their socialization, terrorists adopt new

¹³⁶ Marc Sageman, *Understanding terrorist Networks*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2004, 232 p.

moral 'standards that serve as guides and deterrents for conduct'¹³⁷. A terrorist allows himself to perpetrate inhumane actions because he disengages the moral standards that his actions would otherwise violate. The terrorist can break down his moral barriers through various processes of disengagement¹³⁸:

- ⤴ The terrorist can use moral justifications and portray themselves as saviors of their constituency, fighting against a greater evil.
- ⤴ The terrorist can deny his own sense of personal agency by displacing or diffusing his responsibility onto other members of his group or its leaders. Thus, terrorist can lose touch with the reality of the actual impact of their actions.
- ⤴ Terrorists can also ignore or minimize the actual sufferings of their victims.
- ⤴ The dehumanization of the victims is another technique of moral disengagement. As Islamist groups refer to their victims as 'Infidels', they deny them a sense of humanity. Terrorists can also blame their victims of being responsible for what happen to them and portray themselves as 'freedom fighters'.

– *France's vulnerability to the radicalization of some members of its Muslim communities.*

France seems to be vulnerable to the movement of radicalization of Muslims that is occurring in Western countries. Indeed, because of their failed integration, immigrants and their children are 'frustrated by a Western society that does not meet their expectations', as Olivier Roy argued¹³⁹. The assimilation practices, dear to the French society resulted in the economic, cultural, political, and religious exclusion of the Muslim communities. Thus, the alienation of these populations is likely to lead them to take refuge in their faith, even to the point of the radicalization of their faith.

Moreover, the flow of information, ideas, and people in France, and in Europe, enabled the rapid dissemination of the most extremist ideas among the Muslim communities¹⁴⁰. The flaws in the immigration laws have allowed the settlement and penetration of Islamic radicals in France. Furthermore, the influence of foreign countries and foreign radicals, or terrorist organizations, has enabled them to recruit Muslims in France.

In addition, the political involvement of Western countries in the Middle East, through the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the support to Israel, has facilitated the radicalization of more and more European Muslim. Some Muslims claim to share the cause of suffering of all Muslims. Al-Qaeda members have also called the Muslim of Europe to strike in their countries; France was among the designated countries to target¹⁴¹. Furthermore, several radical Muslims in Western countries have also tried to enroll recruits to join the Iraqi insurgency.

Finally the structural organization of Muslim communities in France has overwhelmingly favored the most radical trend of Islam. The influence of radical organizations and leaders has been steadily increasing. It gave them legitimacy and enabled them to penetrate more and more Muslim communities and to disseminate their message, or the message of foreign countries by which they

¹³⁷ Albert Bandura, 'The role of selective moral disengagement in terrorism and counterterrorism', in F. M. Moghaddam and A. J. Marsella (Eds), *Understanding Terrorism: Psychological roots, consequences and interventions*, American Psychological Association Press, Washington DC, 2004, p. 121.

¹³⁸ Albert Bandura, 'Mechanisms of moral disengagement in terrorism', in W. Reich (Ed.), *Origins of terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, theologies, states of mind*, Cambridge University press, Cambridge, 1990, p. 163.

¹³⁹ Olivier Roy, 'Islamic Terrorist Radicalisation in Europe', in Samir Amghar, Amel Boubekeur and Michael Emerson (Eds), *European Islam: Challenges for Society and Public Policy*, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, 2007, p. 55.

¹⁴⁰ CRS Report for Congress, *Islamist Extremism in Europe*, by Kristin Archick (Coordinator), RS22211, January 6th 2006, p. 2.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 3

are controlled or influenced.

All these elements make France more vulnerable to the radicalization and increase the risks for its Muslim communities.

– *Specific recruitment grounds:*

Typology of the 'recruitment grounds'

Islamist militants are looking for vulnerable people who are likely to follow the process of radicalization. These recruiters' actions often focus on particular places where they expect a greater potential audience. A study carried out by King's College London for the European Commission (Directorate General Justice, Freedom and Security) identified a typology of these 'recruitment grounds'¹⁴².

In some cases, individuals are seeking the extremist views and go to 'recruitment magnets', that is locations known for their radical stance. These 'recruitment magnets' attract a number of Muslim radicals but they are not places of recruitment per se. In fact, the places of recruitment are divided into two different types which correspond to two different mechanisms. On the one hand, some places attract recruiters because they gather a large number of Muslims and therefore offer a wide audience for the recruiters. On the other hand, other locations gather an important number of vulnerable people who 'may thus be receptive to the appeal of violent extremists'¹⁴³. The following table shows that this typology and the significance of the various grounds of recruitment for radical Islamists.

Table 7: Typology of 'Recruitment Grounds'



Source: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) at King's College London for the Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security of the European Commission, *Recruitment and Mobilisation for the Islamist Militant Movement in Europe*, London, December 2007, p. 46.

The archetypes of the former locations are mosques while the archetypes of the latter are prisons. This typology seems particularly relevant for France.

¹⁴² International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) at King's College London for the Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security of the European Commission, *Recruitment and Mobilisation for the Islamist Militant Movement in Europe*, London, December 2007, p.33.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 33

Mosques

Mosques are an obvious choice for recruiters who wish to radicalize young Muslims. Through the control of mosques, which they turn into 'hubs of extremist activity'¹⁴⁴, they can reach and attract a large audience of Muslims. Muslims who wish to join a radical group can easily enter a circle of radical activity, as the presences of such mosques facilitate the process of 'self-recruitment'¹⁴⁵.

The example of the 'group of the 19th district' shows how a mosque can become a magnet for radical Muslims. The 'group of the 19th district' was a network of Islamist militants which sent young French Muslims to Iraq so that they could join the insurgency and carry out attacks. Its activity lasted until January 2005 when the group was dismantled by the Directorate of Territorial Surveillance (*Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire - DST*). In fact, the group was based on the Iqra mosque, in the suburb of Levallois-Perret, where they met and attracted new recruits to be sent to Iraq.

However, the significance of mosque in the process of recruitment should not be overrated. Thus, when the French government became aware of the activity of the 'group of the 19th district', it decided to close their mosque in June 2004. However, this reaction did not stop the group which simply moved to another mosque, the Adda'wa mosque. As the group continued its activities, the French authorities eventually dismantled the group in January 2005. Even though the original location of the group had been suppressed, it did not deter the group from continuing its activities since the group had acquired a reputation among radical circles.

In fact, it seems that the role of mosques in the recruitment of radical Muslim has been decreasing and is now only used by radicals as a way to establish first contacts with their potential audience. This phenomenon is due to a conjugated effort of the government to closely watch any activity, and of the people in charge of the mosques who are more paying attention to the activities taking place in their mosque and who strictly forbid any activity of Islamist militants¹⁴⁶.

Indeed, since the mid-1990s, the Renseignements Généraux, (General Intelligence Services- RG) have been in charge of the monitoring of mosques, their clerics, and their sermons. The RG collect information on all the prayer halls of France in order to determine which ones are controlled by Salafis and preach either Jihad, anti-Western, or anti-Semitic rhetoric¹⁴⁷. The identification of a radicalized mosque leads to a greater surveillance of its imam and his rhetoric. This identification is supposed to help assess which mosque may be assisting terrorist activities or recruitment. It also enables the RG to look for individuals who may be attracted to joining a terrorist network. In addition, France adopted a legislation which allows the expulsion of radical imams who promote violence. In fact, when the RG identify such an imam, he is warned by the local criminal police (*brigade criminelle*) that he may be expelled if he does not moderate his rhetoric. This process relies on the fact that most of the imams preaching in France are from abroad. Yet, some issues remain unresolved as some prayer halls are still unknown to the French authorities. Thus, some places are free from the monitoring of the RG. In addition, the surveillance of the places of worship has led the attendees to find other places to meet. Furthermore, the radicalization of some attendees of a mosque can occur unbeknownst to its imam. Furthermore, the radicalization of Islam occurs through other channels, such as the prisons, TV, the internet, etc¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 34

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 34

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 38

¹⁴⁷ Pascale Combelles Siegel, 'An Inside Look at France's Mosque Surveillance Program', in *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. V, Issue 16, August 2007. [online]. Available at <[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=4376](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=4376)> [accessed 18 July 2012].

¹⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

The prisons: an environment favorable for radicalization

The problem of radicalization has become closely tied with the issue of imprisonment. Indeed, prisons are now known as 'breeding grounds'¹⁴⁹ for radicalization. France is not immune to this phenomenon which affects many countries. Since 2004, the United States Department of State has released a 'country reports on Terrorism' in which it constantly reassesses the risk of radicalization in French prisons¹⁵⁰.

First, it is striking to see the important concentration of Muslims in French prisons. The discrepancy between the number of Muslims in France and the number of Muslim inmates is alarming. They are roughly 60% to 70% of Muslims among the inmate population in France's prisons¹⁵¹, and this number is even higher in prisons located in the *banlieues* of Paris.

Moreover, the rate of conversion to Islam occurring in the prisons is much higher than among the rest of the population. The question of conversion in prisons is even more pressing as most of these newly converted Muslims establish connections and networks while they are imprisoned which makes it even easier to be recruited by Islamist networks as they are freed¹⁵². This process of conversion and radicalization is all the more worrying as the converts are usually 'the toughest' and appear to be more 'radical', as the French anti-terrorist magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguière claims¹⁵³. In fact, roughly '17% of those who convert to Islam in prison join extremist groups after serving their time'¹⁵⁴.

Proselytism by radical Islamist activists is a very common danger of the prisons. This proselytism can take various forms and is linked to the rise of Salafism¹⁵⁵. Different kind of recruiters can exert an influence on the inmates. In fact, many imams who have access to prisoners and claim to give them religious instructions are in fact trying to radicalize and recruit the prisoners into Islamist networks¹⁵⁶. The French government has been trying to reduce the process of radicalization in prisons by appointing the Muslim chaplains who visit the prisoners and give them religious instructions. Yet, Islamists can also approach new inmates through other inmates. Muslim inmates are also very likely to act as chaplains as there is a very short supply of mainstream chaplains¹⁵⁷¹⁵⁸, due to the tradition of *laïcité* which explains the lack of religious services¹⁵⁹. Indeed, more than 600 Catholic priests can provide services for Christian inmates compared to 95 Imams

¹⁴⁹ International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), *Prisons and terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 countries*, by Peter Neumann et al., 2010, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism*, 30 April 2011. [online]. Available at <<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2010/index.htm>> [accessed 11 July 2012]

¹⁵¹ Molly Moore, 'In France, Prisons Filled with Muslims', in *The Washington Post*, April 29th 2008. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2008/04/28/ST2008042802857.html>>

¹⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 41.

¹⁵³ Elizabeth Bryant, 'Judge Profiles New Terrorist Generation', in *United Press International*, October 5th 2005 <<http://www.spacewar.com/news/terrorwar-05zzze.html>>

¹⁵⁴ NEFA Foundation, *Terrorists behind bars*, by Josh Lefkowitz, May 5th 2008, p. 10.

¹⁵⁵ Pascale Combelles Siegel, 'Radical Islam and the French Muslim Prison Population', *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. IV, Issue 15, July 27th 2006

<[http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=853&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=181&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=853&tx_ttnews[backPid]=181&no_cache=1)>

¹⁵⁶ ICSR, *Recruitment and Mobilisation...*, p. 42

¹⁵⁷ <<http://cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=05PARIS5539&q=lyon%20mosque>>

¹⁵⁸ Craig Smith, 'Islam in Jail: Europe's Neglect Breeds Angry radicals', in *New York Times*, December 8th 2004. [online]. Available at

<<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/08/international/europe/08prisons.html?pagewanted=1&r=1>> [accessed 13 July 2012].

¹⁵⁹ Eric Rupp and Christian Erickson, *Prisons, Radical Islam's new recruiting ground? Patterns of recruitment in US and comparison with the UK, France and Spain*, (paper prepared for the International Studies Association), San Diego, 2006, p. 18.

for Muslim prisoners, despite the overwhelming majority of the latter¹⁶⁰. In addition, French prisons are very vulnerable to the spread of Islamism in prisons as inmates are not divided between their crimes. Thus, regular inmates and inmates imprisoned for terrorism-related crimes are detained all together¹⁶¹. Contrary to other countries, such as the Netherlands or Turkey, the Jihadists are not isolated and coexist with the rest of the inmate population.

The case of Safé Bourada is a good example of this problem of prison radicalization. He was an Algerian citizen who participated in the bombing of the metro in Paris in 1995¹⁶². As a result, he was condemned and imprisoned. While he was imprisoned, Safé Bourada founded an Islamist group Ansar al-Fath, which planned terrorist attacks. The members he recruited were actually common criminals, who converted to Islam while in prison. His cell was composed of roughly 10 people that he indoctrinated to Salafism. Together, they planned terrorist attacks against the metro and airport of Paris as well as the headquarters of the Directory of Surveillance of the Territory (DST). He was eventually arrested in September 2005, along with other members of his network.

This example embodies the process that often occurs in French prisons since '68 of the 188 French penitentiary establishments are affected by radical Islam with 175 prisoners devoting themselves to proselytizing' as the *Renseignements Généraux* established in a study in 2006¹⁶³. The best way for the French government to counter this radicalization would be to establish deeper links between prisoners and moderate Islamic organizations which would provide adequate religious services, such as chaplaincy. They already started this process by the appointment by the CFCM of a national chaplain, Moulay el-Hassan el-Alaoui, in 2005 with the objective of preventing the spread of Islamic militancy in prisons.

The internet: a 'virtual incubator'¹⁶⁴

Another new tool for radicalization is the internet; it can be use for many purposes. Through the internet, terrorists are able to spread information and target new potential supporters¹⁶⁵. This process of recruitment can occur through official websites led by clerics or Islamist militant organizations, but it can also happen on more informal forums, administered by grassroots supporters¹⁶⁶. In addition, distributor websites enable the internet users to constantly locate the sites and forums through updated links. The internet facilitate both self-recruitment as it enables individuals to find the extremist propaganda they are seeking, and the spotting of potential recruits by Islamist extremists.

While the internet only supports recruitment and cannot be the only tool used for the recruitment of a new Jihadist. The social interaction is a necessary element of the process of recruitment, which the internet can only support.

In France, the internet gives access to vulnerable individuals to discuss Islamic doctrine. Individuals become radicalized directly through forums and indirectly through extremist propaganda¹⁶⁷. The internet is difficult to monitor and gives a new power to foreign Islamist

¹⁶⁰ Homeland Security Policy Institute (HSPI) and Critical Incident Analysis Group (CIAG), *Out of the shadows: getting ahead of prisoner radicalization*. [Online]. Available at <<http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/PrisonerRadicalization.pdf>> [Accessed 15 July 2012].

¹⁶¹ NEFA Foundation, *Op. Cit.*, p. 10

¹⁶² Eric Pelletier, Jean-Marie Pontaut, Romain Rosso, 'Les rouages d'un réseau', in *L'Express*, May 9th 2005. Available at <http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/justice/les-rouages-d-un-reseau_484451.html> [accessed 13 July 2012]

¹⁶³ Eric Rupp and Christian Erickson, *Prisons, Radical Islam's new recruiting ground? Patterns of recruitment in US and comparison with the UK, France and Spain*, paper prepared for the International Studies Association, San Diego, 2006, p. 19.

¹⁶⁴ NYPD, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁶⁵ ICSR, *Recruitment and Mobilisation...*, p. 82.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 83-84

¹⁶⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Counterterrorism Division, *The Radicalization Process: From Conversion to Jihad*, May 10th 2006, p. 7

militant organizations¹⁶⁸.

Universities: the breakthrough of Islamists.

Universities have also become a recruitment ground for Islamists in France. Through the Muslim Students of France (*Étudiants Musulmans de France -EMF*), the UOIF has penetrated the student body. Indeed, the EMF has gained several seats at the Student Social Support Service (Centre Regional des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires – CROUS). Locally, the influence of other Muslim associations has been increasing. For example, an fundamentalist association, 'avenir' (future), which is also very close to the Muslim brotherhood, has become one of the main student associations of the university Paris-XIII-Villetaneuse (Seine Saint-Denis). Lately, Islamists have operated a real breakthrough in French universities which enable recruiters to target young vulnerable Muslims very early.

The work place:

The work environment is more and more targeted by religious militants. As the former director of the RG, Yves Bertrand, stated, some categories of workers are more likely to be targeted, especially 'the most humble, like cashiers, warehousemen, drivers and delivery men'¹⁶⁹.

The strategy of the militants often follows the same pattern. First, they are engaged in religious proselytism; then, they take control of the Muslim community of the company; finally, they question the rules and organizations of the company in order to promote their Islamic values¹⁷⁰.

The pressure of the fundamentalist Muslims is obvious in some supermarkets in which a part of the employees are under the influence of radical militants. Furthermore; in these supermarkets more and more women demand to be allowed to wear the veil and some employees try to make the direction prohibit specific food for religious reasons or because of their origin (Israel, USA, etc.)¹⁷¹. More and more French companies have to deal with the radicalization of some of their employees who try to impose their values and have increasing demands related to their religion.

Islamists have also penetrated the market of halal food. Indeed, the French government, along with the CFCM, has tried to end the opacity of the financing of halal products. Halal food now represents ten percent of the consumption of meat in France¹⁷². All the frequent fraud involved in this market may be used in order to finance local Jihadist cell or even foreign terrorist groups (especially Algerian or Moroccan)¹⁷³.

– *The influence of the Salafi in France:*

Salafism is a movement of some Sunni Muslims who wish to go back to the early time of Islam, which is the time of the *Salaf Salih* (the pious precursors) who lived during the time of the Prophet. It is a sort of fundamentalism that leads to the development of an exclusive identity resistant to any other kind of allegiance. They promote a strict adherence to the Sunnah and the Shari'a law. Salafis perceive themselves as a religious elite, sole agent of the true Islam

Today, there is a favorable dynamic for the expansion of Salafism. They can recruit in various places and spread Salafism through many channels to facilitate the socialization of the

¹⁶⁸ Clara Beyler, *Op. Cit.*, p. 106

¹⁶⁹ Christophe Deloire et Christophe Dubois, *Les islamistes sont déjà là. Enquête sur une guerre secrète*, Albin Michel, 2004, p. 184

¹⁷⁰ Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement (CF2R), *Le développement de l'islam fondamentaliste en France: Aspects sécuritaires, économiques et sociaux*, by Eric Denécé, research report n°1, September 2005, p. 24

¹⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 25

¹⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 27

¹⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 28

excluded Muslim community, especially the youth of the *banlieues*. For example, the number of French website related to the Salafis keeps increasing. According to the *Renseignements Généraux* (RG), the French intelligence services, there are roughly 5 000 Salafis in France. Among them, 500 could be potentially dangerous¹⁷⁴. In addition, Salafis are consistently seeking new recruits among the Muslim communities residing in France. In 2006, the RG published a report in which it estimated that 80 mosques or places of worship were of concern. Indeed, these places of worship are actively participating in radicalization and recruitment and half of them have ties with radical Islamic networks. If the report recognizes that half of these mosques were striving to avoid radical pressure, the other half was already run by radical clerics¹⁷⁵. The three main areas of influence of the Salafis are Paris and its *banlieues*, Roubaix, and Lyon.

Nevertheless, Salafism is not a homogenous movement. Samir Amghar identified three different kind of Salafism with regards to their relations with the political sphere. He argues that a great majority of the Salafi are, what S. Amghar calls 'pietist', meaning that their Salafism is only expressed through their faith. They represent 95% of the Salafis. They are radical in the sense that they are not politically involved. They rather focus on the religious sphere and do not have any interest for the political issues. For example, they were opposed to the 9/11 attacks. However, the quietist Salafis admire Saudi Arabia as they consider it to be the most accomplished Islamic social contract nowadays. Other Salafis are 'political Salafi' who promote participation in elections and the political system. They believe that it is necessary to defend the Muslim identity in France and Europe through legal means, since violence is not legitimate in the Western world. The final group of Salafi is 'revolutionary Salafis'. Even if they represent a minute group, they represent a real threat for France's national security as they are in favor of a violent action in order to transform the State. They vehemently promote Jihad to achieve their goals¹⁷⁶.

Even if most of the Salafis are 'pietist' and do not promote the Jihad, they are nonetheless dangerous as they encourage the marginalization of the Muslim community from the rest of the society. The both reject the Western society. In addition, the separation between 'pietist' and Jihadist is thin and Jihadist often find new recruits among the young vulnerable pietist Salafi¹⁷⁷.

- ***Dangerous connections with foreign countries, or foreign radical or terrorist groups, organizations and cells.***

Influential foreign regimes on the Muslim organizations and community

Saudi Arabia:

The influence of Saudi Arabia over the Muslim community in France is quite important. It happens mostly through the formation of imams, even though the French government is trying to reduce this influence by forming imams in France. Saudi Arabia is mostly involved in financial and logistic supports to various mosques or organizations, which thus tend to promote the Wahhabi ideology of the kingdom. Saudi Arabia also has a direct influence through a French branch office of the Muslim World League, which opened in Paris in 1977. This NGO aims at spreading Wahhabi Islam and the knowledge of the Sharia. It also distributes funding to those who have projects (mosque, organizations, and associations) which correspond to the ideology of Saudi Arabia.

¹⁷⁴ Ioannis Kagioglidis, *Religious education and the Prevention of Islamic radicalization: Albania, Britain, France and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, (PhD Thesis, Naval postgraduate School, Monterey), September 2009, p. 42.

¹⁷⁵ Pascale Combelles Siegel, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁷⁶ Eric Keslassy, 'Samir Amghar, *Le salafisme d'aujourd'hui. Mouvements sectaires en Occident*', *Lectures* [Online], Les comptes rendus, 2012, mis en ligne le 02 avril 2012, consulté le 18 juin 2012. <<http://lectures.revues.org/8024>>

¹⁷⁷ Gilles Kepel, *fitna*, Gallimard, Paris, 2004, pp. 359-360.

Tunisia:

The link between Tunisia and France has always been strong due to the shared history between these two countries and the presence of an important Tunisian community in France. What is worrying is the important influence of the political party Ennahda.

Iran:

The Influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran varied a lot over time. They were quite powerful in the 1980s and participated in terrorist attacks. Their centers were dismantled and their presence remained limited until the mid-2000s. In 2007, the Shi'a Federation of France, in Grande-Synthe (close to Dunkerque) enabled Iran to benefit from another tie to the French territory.

Other threats:

Other countries are more or less connected to particular groups in France. These relations need to be more and more monitored. Indeed, the connections between terrorist cells in the North of France and Iraq have already raised a number of issues for France's security. The influence of Syria, as through the Ahabahi, could also be particularly dangerous, especially given the uncertainty of the future of the country. The connections with groups in Pakistan and India are limited but still require awareness.

International terrorist networks and connections.

Muslim Brotherhood:

As I have argued earlier, the Muslim Brotherhood is very influential in France through the various organizations, especially the UOIF. In addition, various smaller associations are indirectly controlled by members close to the Muslim Brotherhood. Their voice is also spread during meetings of Muslims in France, where preachers support their ideology.

European connections:

The exchanges within the European Union have contributed to the emergence of a European Islam. The ability to travel through European borders easily has also enabled dangerous terrorist cells to expand their activities and work within several bordering countries. Nowadays, a number of terrorist cells operating in the North of France have connections in Belgium, Luxembourg, or Germany and vice-versa. The proximity of London, which also harbors a number of radical organizations create new dangers for France. These cells take advantage of the flows within Europe to facilitate their operations¹⁷⁸.

- ***Chronology of the Islamic terrorist attacks planned, prepared or executed against French interests (1994 – 2012).***

In Annex (n°3, p. 59), a table presents the chronology of the Islamic terrorist attacks

¹⁷⁸ Moussa Khedimellah and Nikola Tietze, 'Croyances religieuses, morales et éthiques dans le processus de construction européenne – Les dynamiques européennes de l'Islam : du local au transnational', November 1st 2000. [online]. Available at <<http://www.voltairenet.org/Croyances-religieuses-morales-et#nh15>> [accessed 30 July 2012]

planned, prepared or executed against French interests between 1994 and 2012.

French interests have often been targeted by Islamist terrorists of all kind. As soon as 1995, a wave of terrorist attacks, led by the GIA, targeted France. Since 2001, France like other Western countries has been under constant threat of Islamist terrorism by Al-Qaeda, on its soil and abroad. France has been openly designated as a potential target by Al-Qaeda or Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). France's national security is also more and more vulnerable to independent homegrown terrorist whose ideology is based on Al-Qaeda but whose action is developed partially or completely independently.

Thus, France's national security is currently threatened by three types of terrorism in relation to the radicalization of Islam. First, international Islamist organizations, as Al-Qaeda and its related extremist groups remain a great threat to the national security and have successfully targeted French interests, especially AQIM. Furthermore, France's history of terrorism has shown that some homegrown cells, linked to Islamist networks are very likely to develop and target French interests, especially on the French soil. Finally, the case of Mohamed Merah has brought new challenges and threats to France and raises the issue of lone-wolf, inspired by Islamist ideology and whose actions is either completely independent or partially organized by groups.

VI – Reactions to radicalization.

– International cooperation

France's counter-terrorism policies are integrated in the international effort to fight against terrorism. Thus, France is involved in an important cooperation with foreign countries and international organizations.

Bilateral cooperation:

France has extended its bilateral cooperation with numerous countries in order to fight efficiently terrorism. This cooperation takes various forms: judicial cooperation, prevention, or deterrence. France has developed a network of bilateral agreements and exchanges between intelligence services and diplomatic relations. For example, France signed two new agreements with the United States in September 2004. These treaties updated a bilateral extradition treaty and improved overall counter-terrorism cooperation¹⁷⁹.

Cooperation with members of the EU:

An important element of France's counter-terrorism capabilities have been developed within the framework of the European Union (EU). Indeed, the EU has implemented an institutional cooperation to fight against terrorism, in which France takes an active role.

Following the 9/11 attacks, an extraordinary meeting of the European Council on September 21st 2001 led to the adoption of an Anti-terrorism Strategy Action plan. A Group of Action against Terrorism was created and met twice on July 2nd and November 17th 2003.

Moreover, the Situation Center (SITCEN) was created in 2005. It is in charge of the analysis of the threats that endanger the security of the EU. France is also actively involved in the three organizations in charge of the fight against terrorism within the EU: the Terrorism Working Group (TWG), the Commission for Territorial Cohesion (COTER), and the group in charge of establishing

¹⁷⁹ US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism*, 27 April 2005. [online]. Available at <<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/45388.htm>> [accessed 11 July 2012]

the European anti-terrorist list. The COTER is a group working on the political aspects of international terrorism while the TWG deals with the issue of security within the EU. Moreover, in 2004, France brought into force the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) which improves the speed and ease of extradition in the EU as it turns extraditions into a process solely led by the judicial system.

Multilateral cooperation:

Even before 9/11, France has always been involved in counter-terrorism with the United Nations (UN), through the UN Security Council (UNSC) Counterterrorism Committee (CTC) which guarantees the respect of the resolution 1373. It is also engaged in the UNSCR 1267 Sanctions Committee (for the Taliban and Al Qaeda). France is part to the thirteen counter-terrorism conventions of the UN. These conventions are¹⁸⁰:

- The Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft of 1963;
- The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft of 1970;
- The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of civil Aviation of 1971;
- The Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation of 1988;
- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally protected Persons, Including Diplomatic Agents of 1973;
- The International Convention Against the taking of Hostages of 1979;
- The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear material of 1980;
- The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation of 1988;
- The protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf of 1988;
- The Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection of 1991;
- The International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings of 1997;
- The International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism of 1998 (In fact, the International Convention for the Repression of the Financing of Terrorism, was initiated by France who submitted a text at the UNO in 1998);
- The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism of 2005.

France is part of the G8's Counterterrorism Action Group (CTAG) and takes part in the sharing of information on terrorism and counter-terrorism in the NATO.

In March 2007, the Minister of Justice, Pascal Clément inaugurated an international network of justice officials from 9 different countries. These countries were the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, Indonesia, Morocco, Belgium, Spain, and France¹⁸¹. The network gathers countries whose legal systems have centralized the cases related to terrorism in order to discuss the use of judicial system to counter-terrorism.

Finally, France is an original member of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and continued to participate actively. France remained a member and contributor to both the Proliferation and Container Security Initiatives.

¹⁸⁰ La France face au terrorisme - Livre blanc du Gouvernement sur la sécurité intérieure face au terrorisme, Secrétariat général de la défense nationale, La Documentation française, Octobre 2006, p. 63

¹⁸¹ US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism*, 30 April 2008. [online]. Available at <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2007/103707.htm#eta> [accessed 11 July 2012]

– *The French counter-terrorism system: a unique model of law enforcement.*

France's international involvement in the fight against terrorism has not prevented it from having a very special way to deal with the terrorist threat. It comes from its very unique historical experience. In fact, France has been experiencing Islamic terrorism for a long time¹⁸². As a consequence, France had to elaborate counter-terrorism capabilities. The effort to target international terrorism as well as homegrown terrorism is the result of a long process that occurred through different stages.

The development of a formidable body for countering terrorism

Before the 1980s, France tried to deter international terrorism from targeting its soil by adopting foreign policies that would be remote from the issues related to international terrorism. French authorities adopted a 'sanctuary doctrine'¹⁸³ which means that they granted impunity to terrorists as long as they would not attack France. Yet, France soon realized that this strategy was not working. First, it endangered its relations with countries targeted by terrorists who operated from France. Second, it did not prevent attacks from happening since it enabled terrorist groups to organize their operations and networks which could turn against France¹⁸⁴. Since the terrorist attacks kept increasing in the 1980s, reaching a peak in 1986, France had no choice but to change its policies. Thus, French authorities decided to improve their counter-terrorism capabilities, which suffered from a lack of coordination and centralization¹⁸⁵. As a consequence, both the police and the judicial system were adapted.

The legislation of 1986

A legislation of September 1986 allowed the establishment of two specialized organizations. The *Unité de Coordination de la Lutte Anti-terroriste* (UCLAT, within the Ministry of Interior) and the *Service pour Coordination de la Lutte Anti-Terroriste* (SCLAT, within the Ministry of Justice) were created to coordinate all the intelligence and police services when it came to terrorism¹⁸⁶. The new legislation also allowed longer prison terms and detention and investigation periods for terrorist crimes.

Furthermore, a group of specialized magistrates (*juges d'instruction*) within the Paris court was especially created in order to deal with the cases related to terrorism. In the French system, these magistrates combine prosecutorial and judicial powers. These investigating magistrates have expertise in specific types of terrorism¹⁸⁷: such as Islamic/international terrorism, Basque/ETA terrorism, or terrorism linked to Corsican separatist groups. Therefore, some magistrates have acquired a great knowledge of Islamic networks, such as Jean-Louis Bruguière¹⁸⁸ or Jean-François Ricard. In fact, Jean-Louis Bruguière was the head of the counter-terrorism section until January 2008, when Yves Jannier succeeded him. These reforms also enabled decisions with regards to counter-terrorism to be less politicized than before as the counter-terrorism section of the Paris

¹⁸² Marc Perelman, 'How the French Fight Terror', in *Foreign Policy*, January 19th 2006. [online]. Available at <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2006/01/18/how_the_french_fight_terror> [accessed 18 July 2012].

¹⁸³ Jeremy Shapiro and Bénédicte Suzan, 'The French Experience of Counter-terrorism', *The International Institute for Strategic Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1, (Spring 2003). p. 69

¹⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 70.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 75.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 76-77.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 77-78.

¹⁸⁸ Marc Perelman, *Op. Cit.*

prosecutor's office usually leads the French Government's terrorism investigations. Their mandate is extensive and includes terrorist acts on French soil and acts abroad that affect French citizens.

The increasing centralization and specialization of the police and the judicial system

In addition to the establishment of specialized police units and magistrates, France changed its foreign policies. In the 1980s, France improved its relations with Middle Eastern countries, such as Syria, Lebanon, and Iran. This two-fold evolution induced a significant decrease of international terrorist attacks between 1987 and 1994¹⁸⁹.

During the mid-1990s, France became a special target of several terrorist groups from Algeria. The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (SGPC) committed several terrorist attacks on the French soil, especially in 1995. The government implemented several other acts of legislation in 1995 and 1996.

Therefore, the recognition of conspiracy of terrorism as an act of terrorism itself allowed a much better prevention through open investigations and expertise¹⁹⁰. Indeed, the article 421-2-1 of the French Penal Code has constituted a keystone for the counter-terrorism policies, until today. Inserted on 22 July 1996, it introduced the qualification of 'association de malfaiteurs en vue de commettre un acte terroriste' (criminal association in preparation for a terrorist act).

Furthermore, in order to improve the communication between police forces and intelligence services, the *Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire* (Directorate of Territorial Surveillance - DST), the French domestic intelligence services, started to work directly with magistrates. This association created an efficient body of counter-terrorism¹⁹¹.

The law of January 23rd 2006 law on the fight against terrorism

Following the terrorist attacks in Madrid and in London, France decided to improve its counter-terrorism capabilities. Thus, on January 23rd 2006, France adopted new counter-terrorism legislation. Thanks to that legislation, the power of the police was extended and codified.

One of the most important, and most controversial¹⁹², were the new preemptive measures adopted. Indeed, the law reinforced the measures of prevention. First of all, it allowed preventive round-ups and extended preliminary detention for terrorism suspects from a maximum of four to up to six days. In addition, the French government was allowed to place suspects under pre-trial detention for up to four years in view of compelling evidence or when the suspect is considered to present an imminent threat. Furthermore, in conjunction with local government, the national government has continued to increase video surveillance in major cities. The new law also allowed French authorities for asset seizure, video and telephone surveillance, monitoring of public transport records, and also enabled an official access to Internet connection data¹⁹³.

In addition, the law increased the measures against any individual or entity involved in terrorism. Thus, the government became allowed to freeze the assets of the people or organizations committing or trying to commit terrorist acts. Moreover, the sentence for a convicted terrorist can be up to 30 years for leading or organizing an attack and from 10 to 20 years for assisting a terrorist organization or operation. Finally, the new legislation reinforced existing legislation that allowed the revocation of a terrorist's French nationality if the terrorist in question was naturalized in the 15

¹⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 74.

¹⁹⁰ Jeremy Shapiro and Bénédicte Suzan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 82.

¹⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 83

¹⁹² Shapiro p. 84

¹⁹³ US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism*, 30 April 2007. [online]. Available at <<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2006/82732.htm>> [accessed 11 July 2012]

preceding years and his eventual expulsion¹⁹⁴.

The White Paper on National Security Against Terrorism, March 7th 2006.

In 2006, French counter-terrorism policies took a step further with the elaboration of a White Paper on National Security Against Terrorism. This White Paper, issued on March 7th 2006, does not only deal with defense (as the previous White paper of 1972 and 1994 did) but it also examined the issues of risk management and the threats for the Nation and for Europe. The White Paper set out the government's overall policy efforts to combat terrorism. It included attack scenarios, threat analyses, and technical as well as political responses to terrorism¹⁹⁵.

The White Paper is a very clear and precise document which shows that the French authorities are aware of the current threats posed by terrorism, and especially by Jihadists. The second part of the White Paper shows that the French have not chosen to launch a 'war on terrorism' like the United States but have nonetheless developed useful tools in order to fight terrorism. It shows the various elements designed for the prevention, deterrence and neutralization of terrorist threats. Finally, the White Paper stresses the long-term actions, which also involve the population, aiming at isolating terrorists.

Recent evolutions:

In 2008, the *Direction Centrale du Renseignement Intérieur* (Central Direction of Domestic Intelligence- DCRI) was created from the fusion of the DST and the *Renseignements Généraux* (RG). The DCRI which gathers intelligence services and judicial competence has become the special arm of French counter-terrorism policies as it allows one organization to control an entire investigation.

In December 2008, the French government passed legislation that allowed the Ministry of Interior to freeze terrorist assets for six-month periods that may be successively renewed in consultation with the Ministry of Justice¹⁹⁶.

In addition, France benefits from the 'plan vigipirate'. This portmanteau word constituted of vigilance and pirate designates a national security alert system created in 1978 by the president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. Six versions of the plan have succeeded to one another. The plan is composed of different level of alert from yellow to scarlet in order to warn the population of the degree of threat of a terrorist attack. This plan constitutes a 'state of exception'. As such, it allows exceptions from the Constitution¹⁹⁷.

Elite units to execute counter-terrorist actions:

The group *Groupe d'Intervention de la Police Nationale* (GIPN) was created in 1972. Its creation followed the hostage taking of the Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games of Munich in 1972. It is in charge of the very dangerous situations which require a special training and special weapons, such as hostage-taking, acts of terrorism, etc. It is a branch of the police composed of only a couple hundred of members.

The group *Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale* (GIGN) was officially

¹⁹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹⁵ La France face au terrorisme - Livre blanc du Gouvernement sur la sécurité intérieure face au terrorisme, Secrétariat général de la défense nationale, La Documentation française, Octobre 2006, 144 p.

¹⁹⁶ US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism*, 30 April 2009. [online]. Available at <<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2008/122432.htm>> [accessed 11 July 2012]

¹⁹⁷ Gueric Poncet, 'Fichier géant: le cadeau de départ de Claude Guéant', in *Le Point*, May 10th 2012. [online]. Available at <http://www.lepoint.fr/chroniqueurs-du-point/guerric-poncet/fichier-geant-le-cadeau-de-depart-de-claude-gueant-10-05-2012-1460063_506.php> [accessed 25 July 2012].

created on March 1st 1974. This unit was created in order to deal with the new threats that had appeared: hostage-taking and terrorist raids. It is composed of a few hundreds of people still in charge of the special missions of liberation of hostages or counter-terrorism raids.

The Research, Assistance, Intervention, and Deterrence (RAID) is an elite unit of the French national police created in 1985. It is the counterpart of the GIGN. It deals with situations of hostage-taking; it is also in charge of the arrest of very dangerous criminals and counter-terrorism actions, in cooperation with the UCLAT.

The *Peloton d'Intervention de Deuxième Génération* (PI2G) is a group depending on the national Gendarmerie. It was created in 2004 in Toulouse. Its role is to support the GIGN in its interventions, but it is also allowed to intervene on its own in some cases. Another PI2G was created in 2007 in Orange while a third one is about to be operative by the end of 2012 in Dijon. Each of these units is composed of 32 men.

– **A controversial aggressiveness leading to criticism by organizations and the population**

The French methods of counter-terrorism have been criticized for their great intrusiveness. According to Human Rights Watch, the aggressiveness of these methods has endangered the rights of some people. The organizations argue that the French system allows the authorities to arrest suspects without solid proofs. The core of the issue is the notion of conspiracy of terrorism. This concept lacks juridical precisions¹⁹⁸. Thus, it has led the French authorities to arrest large networks of people on the suspicion of their participation, or willingness to participate in terrorism. This violates their rights¹⁹⁹. In addition, the conditions of their detention do not respect their individual rights either. The individuals arrested are under a lot of pressure, both physical and psychological. Human Rights Watch also criticizes the length of the period of detainment that precedes the trial. Indeed, this period can extend for a very long time, and the access to a lawyer is often difficult, if not denied, for those suspected of terrorism²⁰⁰.

These measures are even more criticized as they tend to target some communities more than others, that is, Muslim communities. Human Rights Watch denounces the inequality of treatment of some suspects more than others. Human Rights Watch claims that the French authorities sometimes abuse their powers in the name of prevention, when no threat has actually been proved²⁰¹. Some individuals who have been interrogated or detained criticized the discriminative and religiously oriented questions of the authorities²⁰². Even abroad, these flaws of the French system of counter-terrorism have been noticed. Indeed, the United States has expressed their doubts concerning the efficiency of such strong counter-terrorism measures with regard to the integration of the Muslims of France in the long-term²⁰³.

The French population has also criticized the aggressiveness of the counter-terrorism measures implemented by the government. First, these criticisms have been oriented against the discrimination of which Muslim communities are victims. In addition, two controversial cases have been the focus of most of the criticism. The latest one is the case of Adlène Hicheur who was imprisoned in October 2009. Adlène Hicheur was a French-Algerian doctor in Physics, accused of conspiring terrorism. Many of his supporters argue that he was actually the victim of discrimination

¹⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch, *La justice court-circuitee: Les lois et procédures antiterroristes en France*, 2008, p. 20. [online]. Available at <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/french/reports/2008/france0708/1.htm#_Toc201639449>.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

²⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

²⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 80.

²⁰² *Ibidem*, p. 81.

²⁰³ Piotr Smolar, 'Wikileaks: comment washington voit la lutte contre le terrorisme en France', *Le Monde*, November 29th 2010. [online]. Available at <<http://soutien.hicheur.pagesperso-orange.fr/Revue%20de%20Presse/Le%20Monde-wikileaks-terrorisme.pdf>> [accessed 3 August 2012].

because of his origins and religion²⁰⁴. He had exchanged several mails with an individual who was allegedly a member of AQIM. Many groups were formed to support Adlène Hicheur; they claimed that there was no clear evidence of the true identity of the individual with whom he exchanged mails and that he never clearly expressed his willingness to participate in any terrorist act in France or abroad. On May 4th 2012, Adlène Hicheur was condemned to four years of imprisonment, but was actually released on May 15th thanks to the reduction of penalty. Thus, his condemnation amounted to the time he spent in provisional detention.

Finally, the attacks carried by Mohamed Merah have raised new interrogations and have put under scrutiny the French counter-terrorism measures which were, until now, deemed to be efficient.

– *Mohamed Merah's terrorist attacks and the new challenges for the French authorities.*

Since the wave of terrorist attacks of 1995, France had not experienced any deadly terrorist attacks on its soil. In fact, did not count any casualty at all and its counter-terrorism policies were considered efficient. However, the situation dramatically changed in March 2012 with the terrorist attacks of Mohamed Merah.

Mohamed Merah, the 'scooter killer', committed three terrorist attacks which caused the death of seven people and injured six. On March 11th 2012, he shot Imad Ibn-Ziaten, a French Master Sergeant paratrooper of Moroccan origins in Toulouse. On March 15th, Mohamed Merah killed two soldiers and injured a third one in Montauban. The third attack took place at the Jewish school Ozar Hatorah, in Toulouse on March 19th. First, he killed Jonathan Sandler, a rabbi teaching at the school. He then killed the two rabbi's sons, aged 3 and 6. Then, he chased an 8-year-old girl and shot her in her temple. After 3 days of manhunt, Mohamed Merah was finally identified and found by the French authorities. A 32 hours siege of the special operations tactical unit of the French police, RAID, led to the death of Mohamed Merah, with a shot to his head.

Mohamed Merah was a French citizen from Algerian origins. He had been condemned to prison for numerous petty crimes and was described as a violent juvenile delinquent. He had traveled several times in Afghanistan and Pakistan and in other countries of the Middle East (Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, and Egypt). Merah had been under the surveillance of the French intelligence since 2006. In 2011, Merah was deported to France from Kandahar, where he had been arrested. Merah was Muslim but he did not go to the mosque. He claimed to have attacked the soldiers because of the French military involvement in Afghanistan, and the Jewish school in order to avenge Palestinian children.

It has been argued that Merah was actually linked to Forsane Alizza (The Brave Horsemen), a radical Salafi organization created in Nantes in August 2010 and dismantled in February 2012. The radical organization, led by Mohammed Achamlane was opposed to democratic regimes and supported the mujaheddin of all over the world. It also called for the Islamic religious law, Shari'a, in France and other countries. The first target of Forsane Alizza was the Muslim community of France, but also of Belgium. They have an active website²⁰⁵ which preached violence and hatred against the French state.

Despite his suspicious travels and connections, the French authorities were not able to prevent his first attack. In addition, his identification lasted 8 days and he was only stopped three days after his last attack. These incredible flaws have raised a wave of criticism against the French counter-terrorism policies.

The negotiations between the French authorities and Mohamed Merah constitute the last

²⁰⁴ Soren Seelow, 'Adlène Hicheur ou le procès de la tentation djihadiste', in *Le Monde*, March 31st 2012. [online]. Available at <http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2012/03/31/adlene-hicheur-ou-le-proces-de-la-tentation-djihadiste_1678545_3224.html> [accessed 30 July 2012].

²⁰⁵ <http://www.forsane-alizza.com/>

testimony of the terrorist²⁰⁶. In these exchanges, he shows a great knowledge of the French methods of counter-terrorism. He explained that he chose to find Al-Qaeda on his own, which explains for the inability of the French authorities to identify him as a immediate threat. His account could be used by potential future terrorist who may wish to find their own way to fly under the radar of the counter-terrorist magistrates.

This disastrous experience showed the necessity for the French authorities to improve their counter-terrorism policies in order to be ready to deal with any kind of profile and not only those that they had been used to up to this point. If Mohamed Merah never appeared as an immediate threat, because of his unusual habits, and the lack of ostentation signs of his radicalization, he had nevertheless left clues, which counter-terrorism authorities missed or misinterpreted. These new channels of radicalization, through discreet channels such as the internet, represent a direct threat that the authorities should target.

– ***Conclusion: Successes, failures and prospects of French counter-terrorism methods.***

The French combination of a particularly centralized system of law enforcement and a wide intelligence network is a unique approach. The French legal system is strongly codified and allows the government to have a strong power of intrusion and coercion.

Since 1995, and until the attacks of Mohamed Merah in 2012, France had not experience any attacks on its soil²⁰⁷. It would nevertheless be wrong to assume that France has not been targeted. Several cells and networks were dismantled by the French authorities and French interests have been targeted abroad. The particular history of France in relation with Muslim countries makes it a prominent target, as the frequent statements of the GSPC show²⁰⁸.

The French counter-terrorism approach comes directly from its own experiences. The comparison with other countries is difficult since the cultures, capacities and types of threat vary from one country to the other. Even if this system is aggressive, it also fits with the French tradition. For example, the degree of centralization achieved by the French intelligence services could not exist in a federal country such as the United States. In fact, the American system is much more complex and could not allow the same powers to the judicial system. In France, the investigative magistrates combine powers of prevention, deterrence and punishment.

Contrary to the United States, France did not decide to carry a 'war on terrorism' and has not militarized, nor politicized the fight against terrorism. In France, fighting terrorism has been strictly confined to a matter of law-enforcement²⁰⁹. The absence of terrorist attacks on the French soil had convinced the French authorities of the success of this unique system. However, the so far assumed efficiency of the French counter-terrorism policies has been challenged by the attacks committed by Mohamed Merah in March 2012. These attacks have revealed mistakes, mismanagement, and lack of preparation of the various counter-terrorist institutions and have put under scrutiny the French counter-terrorist measures.

The French system has nevertheless been criticized for its degree of intrusiveness. The definition of terrorism has also been expanding and now includes a preemptive dimension. The violations of civil rights which especially target some communities are likely to increase the feelings of exclusion that some people may already feel. Thus, the danger is that these strong surveillance policies could lead to a radicalization of more and more people, despite its opposite

²⁰⁶ 'Exclusif - Transcription des conversations entre Mohamed Merah et les négociateurs', in *Libération*, July 17th 2012.

²⁰⁷ Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaïsse, *Op. Cit.*, p. 4

²⁰⁸ Alain Marsaud, Rapport n°2681 relatif à la lutte contre le terrorisme et portant dispositions diverses relatives à la sécurité et aux contrôles frontaliers', Registered at the Assemblée Nationale, November 16th 2005. [online]. Available at <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/rapports/r2681.asp#P248_38658> [accessed 10 August 2012].

²⁰⁹ Gary J. Schmitt and Reuel Marc Gerecht, 'France: Europe's Counterterrorist Powerhouse', No. 3, November 1st 2007, in *AEI Online*. [online]. Available at <http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.27057/pub_detail.asp> [accessed 9 August 2012].

objective.

VII – Conclusion.

The radicalization of Islam represents a real threat for France. Studies have shown that the moderate majority of the Muslim communities lack representation, which is at the end of radical groups. The influence of radical Islamist organizations is favored by the official institutionalization and also by the connections they established with foreign countries, or European and international groups.

Radicalization has been threatening France's national security. France is targeted by both international terrorist groups and homegrown terrorists. Despite the strong counter-terrorism measures implemented by the government, the attacks of March 2012 by Mohamed Merah have shown that it is now time to implement more comprehensive policies that take into account the structure and particularities of the Muslim communities in France. If France has implemented rather aggressive and efficient counter-terrorism policies, it must now focus on the integration the Muslim communities in order to prevent the radicalization of its members, who may become a threat. French authorities must focus their attention on some particular places, which are vulnerable to radicalization, and require a special focus, such as the *banlieues*, or prisons.

This paper only analyzed the particular French situation. However, it would be useful to compare the situation in France to other western countries facing the radicalization of part of their Muslim communities. A comparison could help identify common factors endangering the security of these countries or could also lead to the identification of some efficient policies preventing the radicalization of some Muslims or terrorism. This could benefit the field of counter-terrorism, and could, in the long-run, be used to expand efficient policies to other countries. For example, it would be interesting to analyze the relative efficiency of programs of de-radicalization in prisons, which have been implemented in numerous countries and think about ways France could adapt such programs. As the threat is evolving, France must be flexible in order to prevent it and thus, must use all the resources and abilities which could be useful and efficient for this purpose.

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Annex 1:

Table 1 - Educational level of immigrants and DOM native-borns aged 18-50 who have completed their education, by country/département of birth

Country or département of birth of immigrants and DOM native-borns	No qualification	Primary/lower secondary (CEP, BEPC or equivalent)	Vocational lower secondary (CAP-BEP or equivalent)	Upper secondary (baccalauréat or equivalent)	Degree in higher education	Total	Unweighted numbers
DOM	16	10	28	16	30	100	512
Males	19	10	35	14	23	100	244
Females	14	10	21	19	36	100	268
Algeria	27	16	18	16	24	100	647
Males	25	14	18	18	25	100	316
Females	30	19	17	13	22	100	331
Morocco and Tunisia	33	12	17	13	25	100	868
Males	29	9	20	14	27	100	424
Females	37	15	14	11	22	100	444
Sahelian Africa	44	21	8	9	18	100	505
Males	32	14	10	13	30	100	224
Females	52	26	7	6	10	100	281
West and Central Africa	15	18	15	22	30	100	575
Males	9	10	16	22	42	100	224
Females	19	24	15	21	22	100	351
Southeast Asia	25	11	16	19	30	100	519
Males	24	9	17	19	31	100	261
Females	26	13	15	18	28	100	258
Turkey	34	26	15	15	9	100	704
Males	33	21	18	18	10	100	381
Females	36	32	11	12	9	100	323
Females	26	16	13	16	29	100	3,269
Mainstream population	9	8	29	19	34	100	2,820
Males	10	8	33	17	32	100	1,337
Females	9	8	25	21	37	100	1,483
All metropolitan population	12	9	27	18	33	100	16,321
Males	13	9	31	17	30	100	7,674
Females	11	9	24	20	36	100	8,647

Annex 2:

Source • Trajectories and Origins survey (TeO), INED-INSEE, 2008.

Population • Population aged 18-50 not in education at the time of the survey.

Interpretation • 9% of persons aged 18-50 in the mainstream population have no qualifications.

Table 2 - Educational track after lower secondary school of descendants of immigrants and DOM native-borns aged 18-35 by origin and sex

Département or country of birth of parents		General tracks	Technological tracks	Vocational tracks (in a lycée)	Apprenticeship*	No further schooling	Total	Unweighted numbers
DOM	Males	33	16	43	6	2	100	248
	Females	53	16	28	1	2	100	250
Algeria	Males	32	16	40	4	9	100	370
	Females	41	16	36	2	5	100	429
Morocco and Tunisia	Males	35.5	20	34	6.5	4	100	394
	Females	51	14	31	1	3	100	497
Sahelian Africa	Males	28	16	47	3	6	100	169
	Females	35	21	41	2	1	100	230
West and Central Africa	Males	40	15.5	42	2	0	100	113
	Females	53	20	24	0	3	100	128
Southeast Asia	Males	57	13.5	25	4	0	100	266
	Females	65	11	22	2	1	100	243
Turkey	Males	28	17	42	9	4	100	189
	Females	27	13	48	1	11	100	218
Portugal	Males	24	18	43	13	2	100	350
	Females	46	15	32	6	1	100	314
Spain and Italy	Males	36	21	30	10	3	100	348
	Females	49	13	31	4	3	100	353
Other EU-27 countries	Males	61	17	16	4	2	100	131
	Females	65	12	19	0	5	100	141
Other countries	Males	44	20	32	3	1	100	229
	Females	73	8	15	2	2	100	168
All descendants of immigrants	Males	36	18	35	7	4	100	2,559
	Females	50	14	31	2	3	100	2,721
Mainstream population	Males	40	14	31	12	3	100	726
	Females	46	14	31	5	3	100	739
All metropolitan population	Males	39	15	32	11	3	100	3,897
	Females	48	14	31	5	3	100	4,085

Source • Trajectories and Origins survey (TeO), INED-INSEE, 2008.

Population • Persons aged 18-35 who attended school in France. Students still attending lower secondary school are excluded.

Interpretation • Among male descendants of DOM native-borns, 33% followed a general track, 43% followed a vocational track (in a lycée) and 6% went into apprenticeship.

* In an apprentice training centre (*centre de formation en apprentissage*, CFA).

Annex 3: Chronology of the Islamic terrorist attacks planned, prepared or executed against French interests. 1994 – 2012.

Date	Location	Type of attack	Perpetrator	Casualties	Details
1994					
24/12	Houari Boumedienne Airport, Algiers.	Hijacking of the Air France flight 8969	Four GIA activists	3 fatalities 0 injured	The hijackers wanted to blow up the plane over Paris with dynamite. Yet, they were lured by the negotiators into believing that they had to stop at Marseilles to refuel the plane. When they stopped at Marseilles Airport, a French commando took over the plane. 3 Passengers were executed during negotiations with the hijackers in Algiers before the plane took off.
1995					
11/07	A Mosque, Paris.	Murder of Sheikh 'Abd al-Baqi Sahraoui and his bodyguard.	Khaled Kelkal	2 fatalities 0 injured.	Sahraoui (founder of the Islamic Salvation Front -FIS) had appeared on a “death list” issued by the GIA the day before the killing. They apparently recruited the French-Algerian terrorist Khaled Kelkal.
25/07	Saint Michel (metro station), Paris	Gas canister time-bomb.	Members of Kelkal's network.	8 fatalities 86 injured	
17/08	Arc de Triomphe, Paris.	Bombing	Kelkal's network.	0 fatalities 17 injured	
26/08	High-speed Railway, North of Lyon.	Bomb (defective)	Khaled Kelkal	0 fatalities 0 injured	
04/09	Public bathroom, South of Paris	Bomb	GIA	0 fatalities. 0 injured	The Police disarmed the bomb.
07/09	Outside a Jewish school, Lyon.	Car-bomb.	Khaled Kelkal	0 fatalities 14 injured	The bomb was set to explode when the pupils came out of the building but it exploded a bit too early. Khaled Kelkal was soon after tracked down by the police and shot on September 29 th .
06/10	Maison Blanche (metro station), Paris.	Bombing	Ali Belkacem, Boualem Bensaid, (GIA)	0 fatalities 12 injured	
17/10	Suburban train, near Paris	Bombing	Ali Belkacem (GIA)	0 fatalities 29 injured	

05/11	Outdoor Market, Lille.	Bombing (intercepted)	10 suspects from a network led by Boualem Bensaid (GIA)	0 fatalities 0 injured	The French police intercepted a plot by GIA to bomb an outdoor market in Lille. Ten suspects were arrested and several of them later tried and convicted.
1996					
March	Lille (close to the location of the meeting of the G7)	Car-bomb of explosives and compressed gas (disarmed by the police)	Roubaix Gang	0 fatalities 0 injured	The car-bomb was found three blocks from where leaders of the Group of Seven industrialized nations (G7), were to have a meeting.
1997					
1998					
26/05	Soccer World Cup, Paris.		GIA	0 fatalities 0 injured	French police rounded up more than 50 Islamists suspected of belonging to the GIA off-shoot organization, the GSPC. The operation was portrayed in the press as an effort to forestall terrorist attacks during the Soccer World Cup to be held in Paris. However, hardly any weaponry was seized during the raids, and no information has been released about concrete terror plans. Police sources indicated that the arrests were meant to disrupt general militant activism, rather than concrete terror plans.
1999					
2000					
25-26/12	Christmas Market, Notre Dame Cathedral, Strasbourg	Plot of a Bomb attack	4 Algerians of the Abu Doha network. (associated with people from Al Qaeda and the GSPC.)		German police arrested four Algerians who planned a bomb attack in Strasbourg. They were trained in Afghanistan. The terrorists made arrangements to escape to Algeria via London after the bomb attack. The plot to launch an attack in Strasbourg was the first attempt by more globally oriented <i>Jihadis</i> to execute a major attack on European soil.
2001					
9/11	World Trade Center, New York City; Pentagon, Washington DC; Pennsylvania(USA).	Suicide Attack – Hijackings.	Al Qaeda	2985 fatalities (among which, 5 Frenchmen)	
	US targets in	Plot of several	Terrorist ring		A terrorist group composed of North African,

September/October	Europe, including the US embassy in Paris and the US airbase in Belgium.	suicide bombings.	led by Djamel Beghal		French, and French-Algerian were arrested by European authorities. They were led by Djamel Beghal. This network planned and prepared bomb attacks against US targets in Europe. The cell was associated with Al Qaeda and several North African Jihadi organizations, including the GIA/GSPC. They had received training in Jallalabad, Afghanistan.
05/10	Soccer Match between Algeria and France, Stade de France, Paris.	Plot of an attack	4 militant Islamists (formerly) associated with the GIA	0 fatalities 0 injured	French authorities prevented a terrorist attack after intercepting telephone warnings. The police arrested four men. When searching the houses of the suspects police retrieved bullet-proof vests, an explosives manual, a pen gun, Al Qaeda propaganda, and, according to some reports, explosives.
22/12	Transatlantic flight from Paris to Miami.	Suicide mission - plastic explosives concealed in his shoes	'shoe bomber' Richard Colvin Reid (Associated to Al Qaida)	0 fatalities 0 injured	Passengers and crew restrained the suicide bomber. Reid justified his actions ideologically with reference to Osama bin Laden, and US support for the regimes in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, and Jordan. According to indictments, Reid trained in Afghanistan, and he received support and took orders from Al Qaeda.
2002					
04/11	Synagogue, Djerba (Tunisia).	Suicide attack.	AILLS	15 fatalities (among them, 2 Frenchmen)	
05/08	Karachi (Pakistan)	Suicide Attack.	Group close to Al Qaeda	14 fatalities (among them, 11 Frenchmen)	The attack aimed the French engineers of Direction of the Naval Construction.
07/31	Hebrew University, Jerusalem (Israel)	Attack		7 fatalities (among them, 1 Frenchman)	
10/06	French oil tanker Limburg (off Yemen)	Suicide attack	Al Qaeda	1 fatality	
10/12	Nightclub, Bali	Two suicide attacks	Jemaah Islamiyah	202 fatalities	

	(Indonesia)		(close to Al Qaeda)	(Among them, 4 Frenchmen)	
12/16-24	Russian embassy in Paris.	Plot of an attack using regular bombs, perhaps in combination with chemical or biological agents.	'Chechen Network' (associated with Al Qaeda and the GSPC)	0 fatalities 0 injured	French police arrested a group of North Africans (Algerians and French Algerians) in the <i>banlieues</i> . They had received training in the Caucasus and spent time among separatists in Chechnya. Police retrieved chemicals and electronics suitable for making bombs in the suspects' hideouts. They also confiscated an NBC protection suit, but traces of chemicals on it were absent.
2003					
02/06	Réunion (French Island)	Plot of an attack.	German-based terrorist cell led by Christian Ganczarski	0 fatalities 0 injured	The German police prevented the plan and preparation of an attack against the island of Reunion.
05/16	Casablanca (Morocco)	5 attacks.	Group inspired by Al Qaeda	41 fatalities (among them 4 Frenchmen)	Attack against Western and Jewish communities.
2004					
January	France	Plot of terrorist attacks using deadly botulism or ricin toxins.	French-Algerian militants	0 fatalities 0 injured	French police interrupted the plans. The suspects were relatives of Menad Benchellali who was arrested in connection with the conspiracy of the so-called Chechen Network.
03/11	Madrid (Spain)	10 attacks in 4 waves.	Group inspired by Al Qaeda	191 fatalities (among them, 1 Frenchman).	
2005					
04/07	Cairo (Egypt)	Suicide Attack	Group inspired by Al Qaeda	4 fatalities (among them, 2 Frenchmen)	
07/07	London (UK)	4 Suicide Attacks	Al Qaeda	56 fatalities (among them, 1 Frenchman)	

09/26	Directorate of Territorial Surveillance (DST) headquarters; Metro; Orly Airport.	Plot of terrorist attacks.	9 members of the Algerian GSPC and former GIA members.	0 fatalities 0 injured	French police arrested 9 alleged terrorists, and one of them confirmed attack plans during interrogations.
2006					
2007					
2008					
16/12	Printemps Department store, Paris.	Bombing	Afghan Revolutionary Front	0 fatalities 0 injured	A bundle of dynamite was put in the 3 rd floor restroom of the menswear department inside the Printemps department store in Paris. The group sent a letter to the police saying several bombs were planted in the department store and that they demanded that France withdraw from Afghanistan.
2009					
02/22	Under a bench, Cairo (Egypt)	Artisanal bomb		1 fatality 24 Injured	
03/16	Road to the Wajid Airport (Somalia)	Kidnapping	Al-Shabaab al-Islamiya	0 fatalities 0 Injured	The attack was aiming at four United Nations aid workers; for the World Food Program and the Development Program. One of them was French.
08/08	French Embassy, Nouakchott (Mauritania)	Suicide attack	Abu Obeida Musa al-Basri (AQIM)	1 fatality 3 Injured	This operation came in reaction to the hostility of the Crusaders, led by France, and their apostate agents against Islam and its people, AQIM said in a statement.
2010					
14/09	Eiffel Tower, Paris.	Threat of a bomb.	No claim.	0 fatalities 0 Injured	More than 2 000 people were evacuated from the site.
2011					
05/28	Marrakech (Morocco)			17 fatalities (among them, 8 Frenchmen)	
2012					
11/03	Toulouse.	shooting	Mohamed Merah	1 fatality 0 Injured	
15/03	Montauban.	shooting	Mohamed Merah	2 fatalities 1 injured	

19/03	Jewish school Otzar Hatorah, Toulouse	shooting	Mohamed Merah	4 fatalities
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