

Jihadi Salafism in France:
Is France a Hospitable Environment for the Pro-violence Salafi Movement?

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Abstract

This thesis explores the various reasons that the pro-violence, Salafi movement in France might be growing or declining in France. The goal of the thesis is to examine the contributing factors that could be causing the rise or fall of the movement and then decide whether or not France has an environment in which such a movement can thrive. The thesis is divided into two parts, one exploring the contributors to growth and then other exploring the contributors to decline. In Part I, it analyzes three factors—*socioeconomic status, the failure of French integration, and the failure of political Islam*— which may be giving pro-violence Salafis the ability to grow. In Part II, the thesis exams the reasons why it could be failing, which includes *French anti-terrorism policies, French Muslim disapproval of pro-violence groups, and other competing Salafi factions*. It explores these possibilities by using a combination scholarly articles, news sources, and empirical data from various publications by various organizations and government documents. The thesis concludes that France, although a supportive environment for non-violent Salafi factions, is not a hospitable environment for pro-violence Salafi groups and is not experiencing growth.

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION.....	4
II. PART I: Why Might Pro-Violence Groups Be Growing?.....	12
i. CHAPTER I: Socioeconomic Status.....	12
ii. CHAPTER II: Failure of French Integration.....	30
iii. CHAPTER III: Failure of Political Islam.....	38
III. PART II: Why Might Pro-Violence Groups Be Declining?.....	43
i. CHAPTER IV: French Anti-terrorism Policies.....	43
ii. CHAPTER V: Competing Salafi Factions.....	52
iii. CHAPTER VI: French Muslim Disapproval of Pro-violence Salafi Group.....	55
IV. CONCLUSION.....	60
V. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	64

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of the Salafi movement in Europe has been seen across several European nations, but France is a particularly interesting case. The movement's surfacing was strongest in France, which is owed to the nation's colonial past with North African nations like Algeria and the formation of Salafi organizations like the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria in the 1980s. Having this historical and colonial relationship with North African nations, Salafi ideologies have been able to move across the Mediterranean much easier and penetrate the French borders.¹

In France today, there is evidence that the Salafi movement is growing.² However, it is a divided movement with different factions with conflicting interpretations of Salafism. Some are peaceful, while other support and partake in violent activities. Of course, one particular faction has received more global media attention over the past few decades—the pro-violent jihadi Salafis. The destructive acts and terrorist tendencies of groups like al-Qaeda have placed them under the spotlight of the international community, and the fear that these groups are growing is found worldwide. France, of course, is not exempt from these fears, and it has a large presence of Muslims in comparison to other European nations.³ The questions concerning these groups are, “Are they growing or declining in France?” and “Is France a hospitable environment for the Jihadi Salafi movement?”

I will answer these questions by exploring the possible factors that could affect the growth—or suffocation—of pro-violence groups in France and examine if France has an

¹ Stemann, Juan Jose Escobar. “Middle East Salafism's influence and the radicalization of Muslim communities in Europe.” *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*. Volume 10, No. 3. September 2006.

² Boukhars, Anouar. “Islam, Jihadism, and Depoliticization in France and Germany.” *International Political Science Review* 30.3 (297): 297+. SAGE. Web. 19 Oct. 2009. Pp. 300.

³ “Muslims in Europe: Country Guide.” *BBC NEWS*. BBC. Web. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4385768.stm>>.

environment that supports such groups. Before discussing these factors, I will give a general background history on the Muslim presence in France, explaining how France came to have such a large number of Muslims. In addition to history, I will give a general explanation of what Salafism is and its various factions. Then, I will begin to discuss the arguments for why the pro-violence groups may be experiencing success in France.

The arguments for why the pro-violence movement could be growing include *poor socio-economic conditions, the failure of political Islam, and the failure of French integration*. In explaining the socio-economic conditions, I will draw on not only sources that describe the conditions of French Muslims, but also those that describe the extent to which socio-economic conditions can lead to pro-violence radicalization and interest in pro-violence jihadi Salafi groups. To discuss the failure of political Islam, I will present some shortcomings of the political Islamists in France, and how the French Muslim's view of them may be aiding jihadi Salafis. Lastly, I will investigate the effects of the failure of French integration, which—like socio-economic conditions—may be created conditions that foster the growth of jihadi Salafi groups through failure to sufficiently integrate French Muslims into society.

After exploring these positive influences, I will then continue by explaining reasons that pro-violence jihadi Salafi groups could be failing in France. These reasons consist of strict *anti-terrorist policies of the French state, competition among Salafi factions in France, and the tainted image and reputation of pro-violence Salafi groups*. First, I will present examples and outcomes of powerful French anti-terrorist policies and their negative effect on the growth of pro-violence Salafi groups. Furthermore, I will explain the competition among factions within the Salafi movement in France, which has created winners and losers in the Salafi movement. Finally, the violent reputation of jihadi Salafis is impossible to ignore, thus it is important to

discuss how it has affected the opinions of French Muslims and their tolerance for such violent groups. To do this, I will examine data revealing the amount of support French Muslims have for pro-violence groups and the rhetoric of non-violent Muslim leaders in France.

Once all possibilities are explored, I will conclude with the answer to the question of whether or not jihadi Salafi groups are growing in France based on the information and evidence that I have found throughout my research.

Background History

After World War II, there was a great influx of immigrants from North and West Africa—countries that were ex-colonies of France. These included Algeria, which contributed about 43% of the total immigration, Morocco, sending 28% and Tunisia with a smaller 11%.⁴ The immigrants began to cross the Mediterranean in the 1940s to help repair the war ravaged French nation and its economy. They continued to immigrate well into the 1960s, but these immigrants consisted mostly of men who worked and lived together in isolation from the French community. In 1973, however, France stopped this flow of labor immigration, and then began the process of family reunification. This marked a new era in the history of French immigration.⁵

With this wave of women and children from Africa joining their husbands and fathers, a now completed Arab, immigrant minority was created in France. These families moved into housing complexes with poor living conditions in areas outside of cities called *les banlieues*, or suburbs. After the end of economic growth in France in the 1980s, the view of French Muslims began to change. There was more anti-Maghrebian racism—Maghreb meaning North Africa. In

⁴ Caeiro, Alexandre, 'Muslim Youth in France', Paper presented at the International Conference Muslim Youth in Europe: *Typologies of religious belonging and sociocultural dynamics*, Edoardo Agnelli Centre for Comparative Religious Studies, Turin, 11 June 2004 - <http://www.cestim.it/02islam-caero-torino.pdf>, accessed 11 November 2006.

⁵ Laachir, K. (2007). France's 'ethnic' minorities and the question of exclusion. *Mediterranean Politics*, 12, 1, 101.

the 1950s and 1960s, the first generation immigrants remained mostly quiet and were rather “invisible”. However, this changed with the birth of the second generation. They face a different problem than their parents did, for they were French, yet they were still perceived as immigrants by the French. Since they were and are still viewed this way, they have been socially and economically excluded and discriminated against.⁶

Salafism in France

Before discussing the Salafi movement in France, one must first understand what exactly Salafism is. The word *salifi* means “to proceed” and is derived from *al Salaf al salih*—the title of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad who are known as the fathers of the Islamic faith. Because these companions had a direct relationship with the Prophet and learned about the religion directly from him, Salafis believe that they truly understood Islam and their interpretation is true. Salafis today believe that Islam has become impure and only true version of Islam as interpreted by the *al Salaf al salih* should be followed. In addition, the Salafi movement strives to remove impurities from today’s altered Islam that have emerged as a result of centuries of practice. To the Salafis any change, or “innovation”, to Islam, such as political involvement or yielding to human desires⁷, is seen as a deformation and must be abolished. To battle these changes, Salafi scholars study the *Hadith*, or the quotes of the Prophet, literally in order to ensure that they are able to recognize all impurities and remove them to create a true, pure Islam.⁸

⁶ Ibid. 101.

⁷ Boukhars, Anouar. "Islam, Jihadism, and Depoliticization in France and Germany." *International Political Science Review* 30.3 (297): 297+. SAGE. Web. 19 Oct. 2009. Pp. 301.

⁸ Stemmann, Juan Jose Escobar. “Middle East Salafism’s influence and the radicalization of Muslim communities in Europe.” *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*. Volume 10, No. 3. September 2006.

Salafism has seemingly found a favorable environment in France for several reasons. In the *banlieues*, the socially excluded young Muslims are attracted to the Salafi movement because it can offer them an escape from discrimination and social exclusion. Also, Salafi imams—or Islamic leaders of mosques or Muslim communities— in mosques influence young Muslims to become followers. Islamic centers created by organizations like the Muslim World League⁹ preach the message of a strict Islam like Salfism.¹⁰ In addition to such discrimination and social exclusion, economic exclusion adds to the problems of French Muslims, which will be discussed further in Chapter 1. The product of these obstacles is the type of environment that creates a marginalized, excluded minority—an environment that could be fertile for the growth of radicalization and possible violence. Before judging whether or not there is a link between the socioeconomic status of French Muslims and Salafi groups, however, it is important to discuss the social exclusion, discrimination, and economic problems that they face.

The Salafi movement in France is not homogeneous, and it consists of three different factions: politico, predicative, and jihadist.¹¹ Each faction takes a different approach to its belief, thus causing tensions divisions among French Salafis. Some call for political awareness, while others call for followers to remove themselves from political involvement. Another faction seeks a revolution—even if through violence. As a result of these differences, each group is fighting to attract more followers, hoping to become a great influence on the French Salafi field.¹²

⁹ The Muslim World League is “a well-funded organization that the Saudi establishment uses to spread its radical interpretation of Islam throughout the world” according to Lorenzo Vidino.

Vidino, Lorenzo. “The Muslim Brotherhood's Conquest of Europe.” *Middle East Quarterly* (Winter 2005): 27.

¹⁰ Stemann, Juan Jose Escobar. “Middle East Salafism’s influence and the radicalization of Muslim communities in Europe.” *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*. Volume 10, No. 3. September 2006.

¹¹ Amghar, Samir. “Les Salafistes Français: Une Nouvelle Aristocratie Religieuse?” *Maghreb-Machrek* 183 (Printemps 2005): 15-16.

¹² In *Leading the Community of the Middle War: A Study of the Muslim Field*, Peter Frank discusses the transformation of the “Muslim field”, or the group of Muslim followers. Frank uses Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory to show that there are

The first group, called the *politicos*, has a mixture of influences from both the political Muslim Brotherhood and the purist tradition of apolitical Salafism from Saudi Arabia. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Muslim Brotherhood fled nations like Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, and Syria, fearing political persecution. They found a new home in Saudi Arabia, where they were not only accepted, but they also found fertile ground to grow a “hybrid form” of political Islam. They merged the typically non-political Saudi Salafism with the views of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has political tendencies.¹³

Though it has Muslim Brotherhood roots, the political Salafis criticize the Brotherhood, accusing them of excessively modernizing Islam.¹⁴ They feel that they must not give in to modernity, but they must observe the changing world around them. *Politicos* feel that it is important to discuss politics and criticize leaders that are not Muslims. While they are faithful to the beliefs of Salafism, they also seek influence outside of rituals and fighting deviancy in Muslim life and worship. *Politicos* recognize that protecting the purity of Islam is most important, but they also believe that political issues must be addressed as well.¹⁵

While the *politicos* somewhat fuse politics and Salafism, the predicative faction still resists allowing any trace of politics into Salafism. They oppose all forms of political participation by the Muslim population in French society, believing that it is contrary to Islam.¹⁶ The predicative group, instead, are concerned with preserving the purity of Islam as it is given by the holy texts. Predicatives feel that most of the effort of the Salafi movement should be focused

various influences on the French Muslim population, thus having a shaping influence. In the case of French Salafi's, I find that each faction is attempting to act as an authority among the French Salafi group and influence its field.

¹³ Boukhars, Anouar. "Islam, Jihadism, and Depoliticization in France and Germany." *International Political Science Review* 30.3 (297): 297+. SAGE. Web. 19 Oct. 2009. Pp. 301.

¹⁴ Amghar, Samir, Amel Boubekeur, Michael Emerson, Chris Allen, Valerie Amiraux, Tufyal Choudhury, Bernard Godard, Imane Karich, Isabelle Rigon, Olivier Roy, and Sara Silvestri. "European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society." *Centre for European Policy Studies* (2007). Print. pp 45.

¹⁵ Wiktorowicz, Q. 2006. "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29: 222.

¹⁶ Amghar, Samir 2006, "Le salafisme en Europe : la mouvance polymorphe d'une radicalisation", *Politique Etrangère*, No. 1. Pp. 72.

on promoting the Salafi creed and removing deviant practices from the religion. They feel that until Islam is pure, it will remain susceptible to corruption and injustice.¹⁷

According to Samir Amghar, predicative Salafis in European societies like France see democracy as a form of associationism that will eventually lead to heresy, for the Western parliamentary procedures are not based on sharia law. They teach an attitude of withdrawal, in which Muslims should ignore the European political process. For example, in 2003 and 2004, Muslim organizations in France organized political protests against the proposed law that would ban religious symbols at school. There were very few predicative Salafis among these protests, giving the impression that they are indifferent to political issues that will affect all French Muslims. Predicatives argue that they do not engage in political protests such as these because any negotiations with the French state are not acceptable according to Islam. They feel that Islam is above all other systems, and it forbids them from taking part in any non-Muslim political system. Predicatives do oppose political issues like integration, yet they take a non-confrontational stance.¹⁸

The third tendency of the Salafi movement materialized during the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan during the 1980s. The Salafi ideologies from Saudi Arabia were fused with radical and political ideologies of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in an environment of militancy and violence. Politicos were trained through education in universities, but jihadis were trained on the battlefield.¹⁹ From these origins came a faction of the Salafi movement that

¹⁷ Wiktorowicz, Q. 2006. "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29: 217.

¹⁸ Amghar, Samir. "European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society." *Centre for European Policy Studies* (2007). Print. pp 44-45.

¹⁹ Wiktorowicz, Q. 2006. "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29: 225-226.

married the common Salafi belief that political and social action must fit the Islamic perspective, but with an added revolutionary attitude.²⁰

Samir Amghar also explains that the violence of jihadis is divided into two categories: vertical and horizontal. Vertical consists of violence brought against the state, while horizontal describes violence towards individuals that disregard the norms and purity of Islam. The jihadists' vertical violence is aimed at contesting the legitimacy of Western governments. This can be seen through attacks in France by the GIA that were launched to push the French government to cease involvement in Algeria.²¹ This idea of vertical jihad was developed by Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was an Egyptian Al-Qaeda theorist.²² He proposed a strategy of exportation of jihad to the West in order to raise the support of undecided Muslims.²³

In France, the exportation of jihad has been slightly successful. In the early 1990s, the GIA from Algeria recruited from the *banlieues*, looking for "young thugs" who were able to raise money and build an infrastructure to attack France in support of Algeria.²⁴ During the mid-1990s, groups of jihadists were not foreign and consisted of members of the French Muslim population that felt isolated from all other cultures. They found an identity through the transnational identity of Salafi jihad.²⁵ Jihadi Salafis in France, in turn, are typically seen as the result of the failure of French integration and discrimination against French Muslims.

These three factions continue to fight for power in the French Muslim community, but the focus of this thesis is the jihadi Salafi faction in particular. In order to first address this

²⁰ Amghar, Samir. "European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society." *Centre for European Policy Studies* (2007). Print. pp 40.

²¹ Attacks in the RER of Paris in July of 1995.

²² He and Osama bin Laden followed the same strand of jihadi Salafism. See *Inside Al Qaeda :Global Network of Terror*.

²³ Amghar, Samir 2006, "Le salafisme en Europe : la mouvance polymorphe d'une radicalisation", *Politique Etrangère*, No. 1. Pp. 69.

²⁴ Crumley, Bruce. "Fighting Terrorism: Lessons from France." *TIME*. 24 Sept. 2001.

²⁵ Boukhars, Anouar. "Islam, Jihadism, and Depoliticization in France and Germany." *International Political Science Review* 30.3 (2009): 297+. SAGE. Web. 19 Oct. 2009. Pp. 301.

faction, Part I will serve as a foundation and an explanation of why this group might be growing in France. The reasons include the low socio-economic status of French Muslims, the failure of French integration, and the failure of political Islam in France. In the next three chapters, I will discuss these possible contributors and how they could affect the existence and possible growth of the pro-violence jihadi Salafi movement in France.

PART I

WHY MIGHT PRO-VIOLENCE GROUPS BE GROWING?

CHAPTER I

Socioeconomic Status: A Link to Pro-Violence Salafi Groups?

There are several factors that could be contributing to the growth of pro-violence Salafism in France. One of the greatest contributors, however, is the socio-economic status of French Muslims in France. The low socio-economic status is the result of a combination of several problems in France that affect the Muslim community. For instance, the *banlieues* in which a large number of French Muslims live have served as centers of social exclusion. In addition, they have suffered economically through employment discrimination and lower education levels. The next chapter will explore these problems and discuss their influence on the growth of the jihadi Salafi movement.

Les Banlieues and Social Exclusion

When discussing French Muslims, one must mention *les banlieues*. The word *banlieue* is French for “suburb”, but these “suburbs” are not synonymous to those in the United States. Located outside of major French cities, the *banlieues* became areas of cheap housing for workers during the 1960s, and the Muslim presence in these areas grew during the 1970s after family

reunification²⁶ and today remain as *quartiers en difficulté* (areas in need) that house the newer ethnically Arab generation. They have gained a negative image, mostly owed to French media, for harboring criminals and being insecure, violent areas.²⁷

Furthermore, the *banlieues* are a reflection of spatial exclusion of first generation immigrants, as well as the younger generations. Khaled Kelkal, a French terrorist of Algerian origin and member of Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA)²⁸, described the *banlieue*, calling it "a big wall, an enormous wall." He continues by saying that:

"those who leave the banlieue to go to the city, they try to pass through, to do it inconspicuously... You go into a bar with many others... the French can go into bars with many others. But us, if we go with seven or eight of us, the guy goes crazy. For me, as soon as I leave from here (les banlieues), I'm no longer home."²⁹

This "big wall" that Kelkal mentions is a reference to the exclusion of French Muslims who are isolated and pushed to the outskirts of cities, and his experiences depict such exclusion. This isolation gives them the image of outsiders—the "others"—and a threat to society in the eyes of the French, which is a product of the lack of dialogue between the young people of the *banlieues* and French authorities. In fact, the relationship between the people of the *banlieues* and the French police has been nonexistent, and the youth see policemen as a symbol of racism and repression.³⁰

The *banlieues* are seen as hotspots for radicalization because they are areas with great concentrations of French Muslims. The terrible conditions create an unfavorable environment that has the potential to brew a radical minority. In just a few sentences Boualem Azahoum, an

²⁶ Laachir, K. (2007). France's 'ethnic' minorities and the question of exclusion. *Mediterranean Politics*, 12, 1, 101.

²⁷ Ibid 102.

²⁸ Stemmann, Juan Jose Escobar. "Middle East Salafism's influence and the radicalization of Muslim communities in Europe." *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*. Volume 10, No. 3. September 2006.

²⁹ "Moi, Khaled Kelkal." *Le Monde* 7 Oct. 1995. Print.

³⁰ Laachir, K. (2007). France's 'ethnic' minorities and the question of exclusion. *Mediterranean Politics*, 12, 1, 103.

activist from Lyon that campaigns against issues that are plaguing the *banlieues*, gives her own description:

“... extremely dilapidated housing, the chaotic urbanism (one wonders how it was allowed to happen), excessive marginalization, antiquated state schools merely churning out the future unemployed. It is also the omnipresence of an oppressive police force... It is a completely forgotten and abandoned population and, although these problems are affecting immigrants and their children, other populations are also affected.”³¹

What are the consequences of these conditions? Jocelyne Cesari notes in *When Islam and Democracy Meet* that there has been a process of self-identification as a poor, Arab Muslim.³²

This self-identification is a product of ethnic solidarity that has been strengthened by the socioeconomic conditions and segregation of French Muslims. In short, the conditions of the *banlieues* create a low socioeconomic environment that is in isolation from French society. Most people living there have shared identities—they are poor, typically of North African origin and Muslim. According to Cesari, under the present conditions of the *banlieues*, the three identities are fused into one, creating a new, dominant culture that consists of poor, North African Muslims. As a result, this “culture” is then seen as positive by some, causing them to desire to become a part of the group. Unfortunately, it typically leads to further isolation and poverty, and “ghettoization” of the *banlieues* and those that live there.³³

The *banlieues* are important to mention, because it is believed that they have acted as a breeding ground for Islamic pro-violence groups according to Karima Laachir. In *France’s*

³¹ Bouteldja, Naima. "France: voices of the banlieues." *Institute of Race Relations* 51.1: 90-99. Print.

³² Cesari, Jocelyne. *When Islam and Democracy Meet Muslims in Europe and in the United States*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Print. 23-25.

³³ Cesari, Jocelyne. *When Islam and Democracy Meet Muslims in Europe and in the United States*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Print. 23-25.

'ethnic' minorities and the question of exclusion, Laachir explains that the idea that there is a connection between terrorism and the *banlieues* surfaced in 1995, when two men, in connection with the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA), from a suburb of Lyon took part in the bombings of Parisian and Lyonnais train stations. From that point on, the media began to paint the image of terrorists roots found in these suburbs. This tarnished the reputation of the *banlieues*, and it is thought that they have become recruiting sites for terrorist networks.³⁴ In conclusion, *banlieues* have become islands of isolation where French Arabs and Muslims live excluded from French society in poor conditions and create a new identity for themselves that is seen negatively in the eyes of the French media and the French.

Economic Employment Inequalities

Research on employment inequality in France has revealed that inequality exists largely on the basis of country of origin, ethnic background, and citizenship. This inequality starts at the beginning of the working life, and while it affects all minority groups, those minority groups of North African origin are affected the most. Discrimination plays a great role in this problem, and it plagues French hiring practices. Jobseekers of North African origin find less permanent job contracts than other groups and have more difficulty in finding a stable job. In addition, these youth are usually raised by parents that have working class jobs, which makes them less likely to grow up under the influence of successful, professional parents with a great amount of social capital.³⁵

³⁴ Laachir, K. (2007). France's 'ethnic' minorities and the question of exclusion. *Mediterranean Politics*, 12, 1, 103.

³⁵ Frickey A, Murdoch J, Primon J-L, (2003) "From Higher Education to Employment: inequalities between ethnic backgrounds in France", paper presented at the 6th conference of the European Sociological Association (ESA), September, Murcia, Spain. pp 62-63

Fathers in this group are more likely to work for large industries and are often relocated, which damages their ability to network and weakens their “relationship capital”, or the ability to form relationships with other professionals through their parents’ professional relationships. The youth also appear to have a preference for academic service-sector studies, which pushes them to cut their working-class family ties. The combination of these problems leads to long-term unemployment since they have no personal contacts to find jobs, thus increasing the difficulty to obtain experience and increase social capital. They are less likely to have social capital, which lessened by unemployment, inactivity, or forced retirement.³⁶

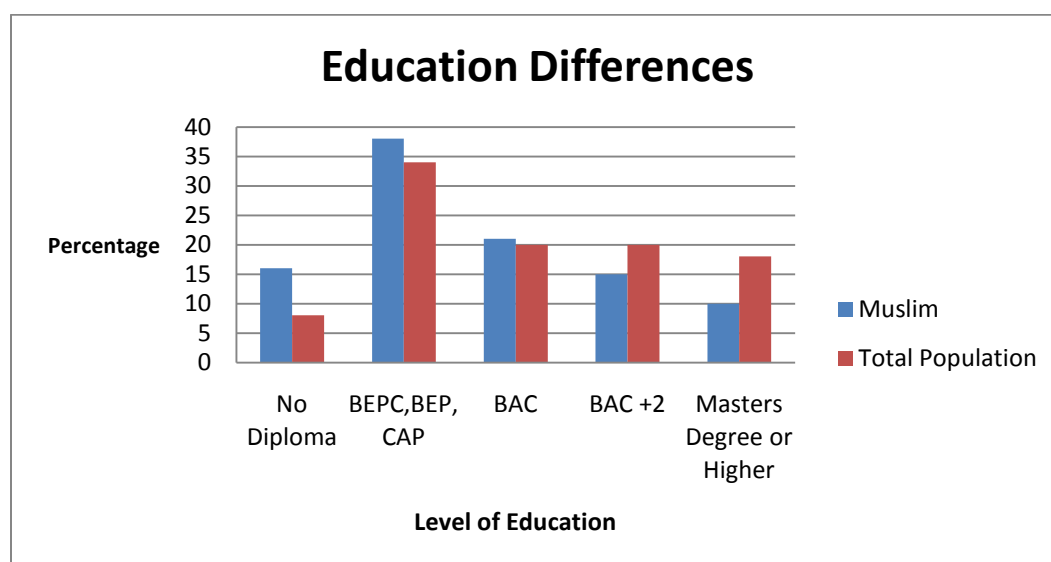


Figure 1 : Enquêtes OIP/ Conseils régionaux 1998 à 2001

Level of education also adds to these problems, and great differences in the level of education exist between Muslims and non-Muslims in France. (See Figure 1) For instance, about 8 percent of the French general population does not have any type of diploma, while 16 percent of French Muslims do not. The gap lessens in terms of the percentage that has a BEP (Brevet d’Études Professionnelles) or CAP (Certificate d’Aptitude Professionnel)—comparable to an associate or vocational degree—38 percent of the Muslim population have these degrees and the

³⁶ Ibid. pp 63

general population has only four percent less. However, upon looking at higher levels of education, French Muslims tend to have less education than the non-Muslim French. For example, 15 percent of French Muslims have their baccalaureat plus two years of supplemental education, while 20 percent of non-Muslims do. Furthermore, 18 percent of non-Muslims have a graduate degree or more, but only 10 percent of French Muslims have this level of education.³⁷ These differences reveal that French Muslims have less education, thus leading to less prestigious, lower paying jobs.

While education differences are apparent, even with an education there are still employment differences between French Muslims and non-Muslims. In a study done by CEREQ (*Centre d'études et de recherché sur les qualifications*), students leaving school in 1992 were studied until five years after the end of their studies. This study included information about the graduate's country of birth and his or her father's. In this study, it was found that students of North African origin spend at least a month more to find a job than ethnically "French" students do. Also, about 53 percent of Muslim students with fathers born in France experienced unemployment.

These indicators of discrimination and job-search difficulty are major contributors to the suffering socioeconomic conditions of the Muslim community in France since a large part of this group has a North African origin. By experiencing direct discrimination in the hiring process and unemployment, young French Muslims feel excluded from French society. It is possible that these feelings may lead to drastic choices, such as joining radical or pro-violence groups in order to retaliate against an oppressive environment.

³⁷ Dargent, Claude. "Les musulmans déclarés en France : affirmation religieuse, subordination sociale et progressisme politiques." *Cahier du CEVIPOF* 34 (2003). pp. 23

Unemployment is a factor that is important to understand the socioeconomic status of French Muslims, and it is also imperative to recognize the differences in the types of employment that French Muslims tend to have. For example, the French Ministry of Employment reported in 2000 that there was a great difference in the unemployment rate among French citizens. The unemployment rate of the French-born was 5 percent, while naturalized citizens had an unemployment rate at 11 percent. Even higher, the Ministry found that there was a 20 percent rate of unemployment among foreigners of North African origin.³⁸ In addition to these statistics, the Institute national de la Statistique et des Études Économiques (National Institute of Economic Studies and Statistics) found in 2008 that the immigrant population of France had an unemployment rate of 13.2 percent, while non-immigrant French had only a rate of 6.8 percent. These statistics give strong evidence and assurance that there is a great difference in the unemployment rates of immigrant and non-immigrant workers in France.³⁹

Although unemployment has plagued the North African community (which is assumed to be largely Muslim), there also appears to be a relationship between unemployment and a workers involvement with Islam. In 2001, the total working population consisted of about 9 percent unemployed workers. Among workers that had a relationship with Islam, 18 percent was made up of unemployed workers. Concerning part-time employment, about 13 percent of Muslim workers held part-time jobs, which is equal to the percentage of the general population of French workers. Inequality in employment grows wider with the examination of the amount of workers in full-time positions. Of the total French population, 63 percent held full-time jobs. On the other hand, only 51 percent of the French Muslim population had full-time occupations. These

³⁸ Caeiro, Alexandre, 'Muslim Youth in France', Paper presented at the International Conference Muslim Youth in Europe: *Typologies of religious belonging and sociocultural dynamics*, Edoardo Agnelli Centre for Comparative Religious Studies, Turin, 11 June 2004 - <http://www.cestim.it/02islam-caero-torino.pdf>, accessed 11 November 2006. p. 3.

³⁹ *Nombre de chômeurs et taux de chômage des immigrés et des non-immigrés selon le sexe et l'âge*. Rep. Institute national de la statistique et des études économiques, 2008. Web. <http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?reg_id=0&ref_id=NATnon03346>.

statistics indicate that there are, in fact, differences in the type of jobs held by French Muslims and the general population.⁴⁰

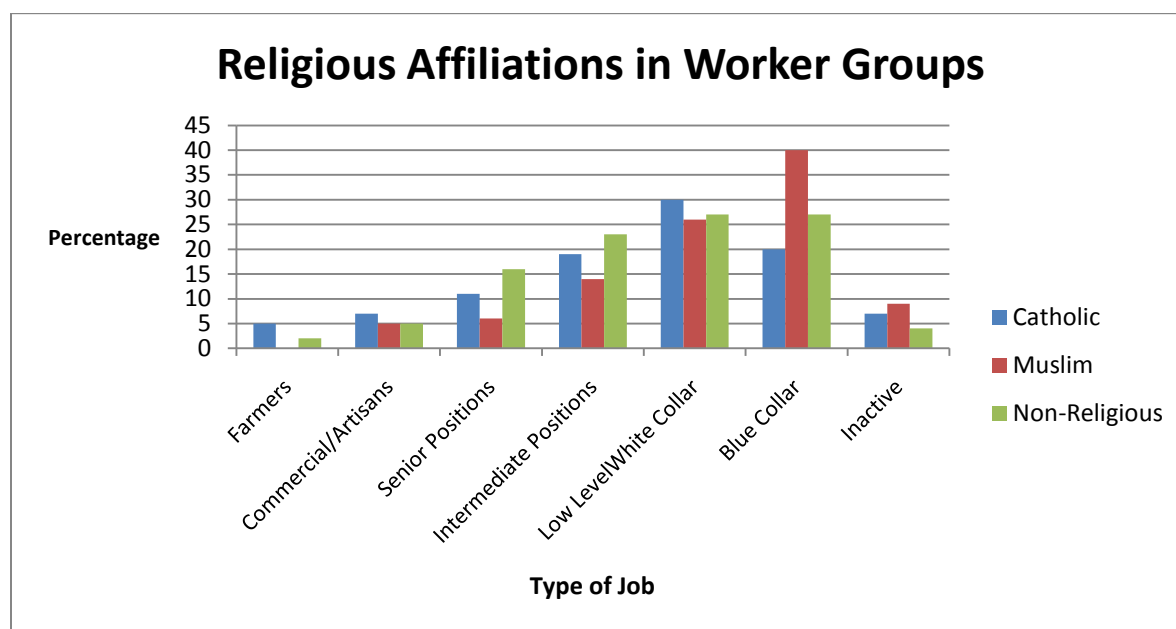


Figure 2 : Enquêtes OIP/ Conseils régionaux 1998 à 2001

Differences in job types are not only found when occupations of French Muslims are compared to the general population, but they are also seen when they are compared with other religious groups. When compared to Catholics and those without religion, there are obvious differences in the types of jobs that Muslims and these other two groups have (See Figure 2). One very noticeable difference in the occupations differences lies in the category of *les ouvriers*, French for manual or blue collar workers. In the Catholic category, only 20 percent held this type of job, and in the non-religious group 27 percent held these manual labor jobs. For French Muslims, 40 percent of workers held these types of jobs. This is significant, because it shows that a very large number of the French Muslims in the work force had these blue collar jobs,

⁴⁰ Dargent, Claude. "Les musulmans déclarés en France : affirmation religieuse, subordination sociale et progressisme politiques." *Cahier du CEVIPOF* 34 (2003). pp. 24..

which are usually much less prestigious and lower paying. In higher level jobs like senior executives, only 6 percent of French Muslims held such positions. At much higher rates than French Muslims, 11 percent of Catholic workers and 16 percent of non-religious workers have reached these positions.⁴¹

As can be seen, French Muslims are statistically at a lower economic level than other groups in France. They have a lower degree of education, while finding less full time, steady work. An overwhelming number of French Muslims hold blue collar jobs, while very few make it to the highest executive positions. This may be blamed on job discrimination and the education difference between French Muslims and non-Muslims.

These economic inequalities reinforce the poor, French Muslim identity, as well as possibly promote the risk of radicalization.⁴² While one cannot assume that socio-economic inequality leads to radicalization, pro-violence groups have the opportunity to feed off the marginalization that exists. Such groups could find more success in recruiting members that have distaste for a community that has created little policy in the past to end discrimination and economic disparities.⁴³

Perception of Discrimination and French Muslims

Beyond the situation in the *banlieues* and employment problems, French Muslims are facing an overwhelming amount of discrimination. One possible reason for this could be that the non-Muslim French feel that Islam and its followers are incompatible with the secular French state and society. Is this true? Does discrimination against Muslims exist in France? Studies by

⁴¹ Dargent, Claude. "Les musulmans déclarés en France : affirmation religieuse, subordination sociale et progressisme politiques." *Cahier du CEVIPOF* 34 (2003). pp. 25.

⁴² Bertossi, Christophe. "Les Musulmans, la France, l'Europe : contre quelques faux-semblants en matière d'intégration." *MIGRATIONS ET CITOYENNETÉ EN EUROPE* (2007). pp. 10

⁴³ Viorst, M. 1996. "The Muslims of France." *Foreign Affairs* 75: September/October, 78-96.

the Eurobarometer give evidence that discrimination on the lines of religion is widespread in France. In the Eurobarometer's surveys, it was found that the percentage of discrimination on grounds of religion or belief is second highest in France among European nations, trailing only the Netherlands. In fact, 58 percent of those surveyed believed that discrimination is widespread in their country. Participants were also asked whether or not they felt that there had been improvement of religious discrimination over the past five years, yet France still received a low ranking of 26th among 30 European countries.⁴⁴ This data shows that French citizens believe that religious discrimination does exist in France, but refers to all religions—not just Islam. In order to search further for discrimination specifically against French Muslims, ethnic discrimination can also be important to study.

Although the group of concern is the Muslim population in France—a religious classification of the group—these people are overwhelmingly ethnically North African or Arab. Thus it is imperative to find the existence of ethnic discrimination as well as religious. Of the French surveyed by the Eurobarometer, 79 percent felt that ethnic discrimination is prevalent in France. However, this is based on the perception of discrimination by the French, not the actual existence. Perception can be hindered or promoted by influences such as the media. To resolve this potential problem in gathering data concerning ethnic discrimination, participants were asked whether or not they had witnessed ethnic discrimination. Among the French, 15 percent had observed some sort of ethnic discrimination and was once again ranked second among European nations. Also, 39 percent of French Muslims felt that most or many Europeans are

⁴⁴ *Eurobarometer*. Rep. European Commission, Nov. 2009. Web. 28 Nov. 2009. <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_317_en.pdf>. 100-104.

hostile towards Muslims.⁴⁵ In addition, only 37 percent—23rd of the 30 European nations— felt that there was an improvement in ethnic discrimination in the past five years.⁴⁶

Although these statistics show that the general French population feels that religious and ethnic discrimination exist in France, it is important to also understand why French, ethnically Arab Muslims may be facing this problem. According to a publication by the Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme (National Advisory of Human Rights), one out of four French citizens surveyed held the belief that French Muslims are not like other French people.⁴⁷ Therefore, it can be said that there is a great amount of belief in France that French Muslims, while officially French, are not seen as truly French by their fellow citizens and remain as “outsiders”. Even more striking, in a Pew Global Attitudes survey found that 38 percent of French participants found Muslims as “unfavorable”, indicating that there is a great opposition to the French Muslim population in French society.⁴⁸

On a larger scale, the media has portrayed a clash between Muslims and the West through coverage of “global terrorism” and the invasion of Middle Eastern nations by Western forces. Further research by Pew (See Figure 3) investigated this “clash” between the East and West, finding who blamed who for the problems existing today. In France, Pew found that 61 percent of the general population felt that relationships between Muslims and Western countries were strained. Furthermore, 47 percent of the French thought that the Muslims were to blame for this, which is relatively large when compared to other European countries. About 39 percent of Germans felt it has been the fault of the Muslims, and only 25 percent of Great Britain felt this

⁴⁵ *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other*. Rep. Pew Research Center, 22 June 2006. Web. 29 Nov. 2009. <<http://pewglobal.org/datasets/>>. 19

⁴⁶ *Eurobarometer*. Rep. European Commission, Nov. 2009. Web. 28 Nov. 2009. <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_317_en.pdf>. 60-67.

⁴⁷ 2007. Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme. *La Lutte Contre le Racisme, l'Antisémitisme et la Xénophobie. Année 2007* (Paris : La Documentation Française 2008), 311.

⁴⁸ *Unfavorable Views of Jews and Muslims on the Increase in Europe*. Rep. Pew Research Center, 17 Sept. 2008. Web. 28 Nov. 2009. <<http://pewglobal.org/datasets/>>. 27.

way.⁴⁹ These findings give more evidence to the negative image that the French have of Muslims, whether it is within their own nation or from a global perspective.

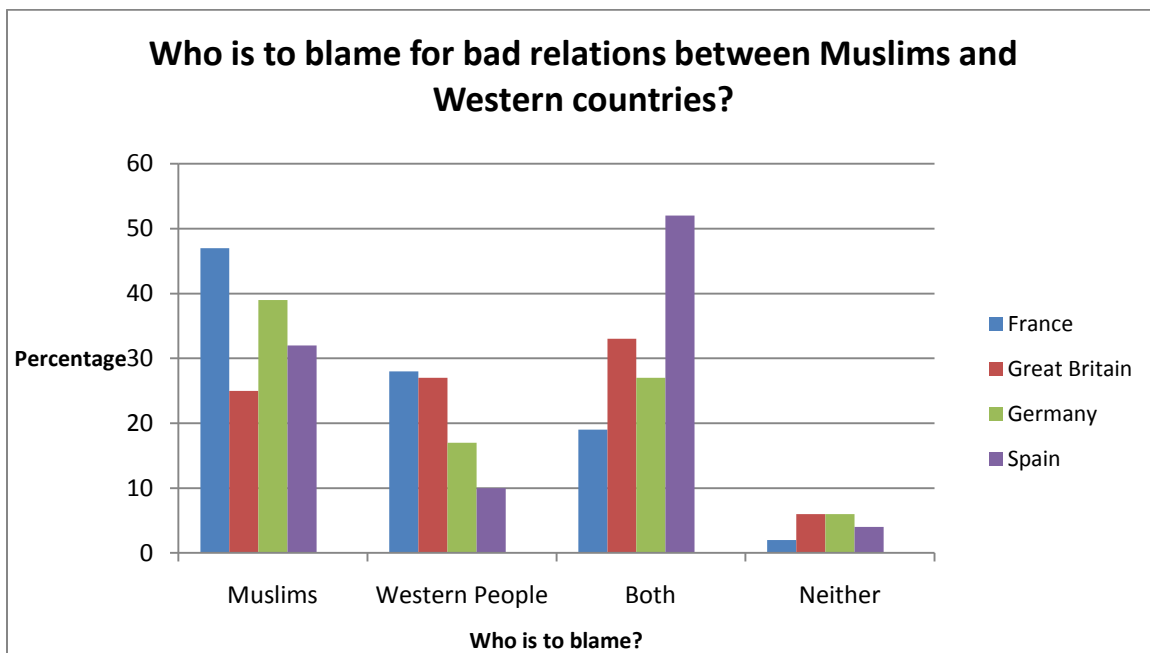


Figure 3: Pew Research Center

Beyond the negativity towards French Muslims themselves, the French have negative opinions of the mere idea of Islam and the issues surrounding it. The Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme surveyed the French population and asked questions concerning these negative opinions. Only 18 percent saw the term "Catholic Religion" negatively, and a similar percentage was found for "Protestant Religion" at 21 percent. In addition, 22 percent saw "Jewish Religion" as negative. However, when French participants were asked how they associated "Muslim Religion", 39 percent saw it as negative. This nearly doubles the percentage for the Christian terms, revealing that they do not view Islam in the same way as other religions in France. Furthermore, the same negative opinions were apparent when

⁴⁹ *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other*. Rep. Pew Research Center, 22 June 2006. Web. 29 Nov. 2009. <<http://pewglobal.org/datasets/>>. 18.

participants were asked about certain issues of Islam in France and whether or not they pose a problem for French society. The “wearing of the *hijab*”, or headscarf, ranked highest among Muslim practices that could cause problems for the French society with 77 percent believing that it would be problematic. Following were “the sacrifice of lamb” and the “prohibition of displaying the image of Mohammed”— 40 percent seeing them as problems. Even one quarter of those surveyed saw the daily prayers of Muslims as a threat.⁵⁰ These findings indicate that there is a large resistance to Islam in France and its practices, which stems from the fact that a large amount of the French see Islam as a religion that has trouble existing in today’s democratic societies. For example, the French see the headscarf as defiance of the French secular state that adheres to a strict separation of church and state, also known as *laïcité*.

According to the Grand Robert of the French Language Dictionary, *laïcité* is defined as the “political conception implying the separation of civil society and religious society. The state can exercise no religious power and the church can exercise no political power.”⁵¹ The French state declared the separation between church and state in 1905 as a response to anti-clerical militancy. It was not until 2004, however, that a new ban on religious symbols in schools was formed.⁵² It prohibits the wearing of religious symbols, like headscarves, in places like schools and the government workplaces.⁵³ *Laïcité* is an important rule of the French state and society, and the headscarf’s opposition to this rule creates the French perception that French Muslims are not compatible with French secular life.

⁵⁰ 2007. Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l’Homme. *La Lutte Contre le Racisme, l’Antisémitisme et la Xénophobie. Année 2007* (Paris : La Documentation Française 2008), 322-324.

⁵¹ “*Laïcité*.” *Le Grand Robert De La Langue Française*.

⁵² Astier, Henry. “The Deep Roots of French Secularism.” *BBC NEWS*. 1 Sept. 2004. Web.

⁵³ Wing, Adren Katherine, and Monica Nigh Smith. “Critical Race Feminism Lifts the Veil: Muslim Women, France, and the Headscarf Ban.” *U.C. Davis Law Review* 39 (2005-2006): 773.

In France, discrimination against French Muslims persists, and there are various answers to why it continues. Perhaps it is simply the result of racial or religious prejudice. It could spring from the fear of immigrants competing for jobs that French non-Muslims want. Whatever the answer may be, non-Muslims in France see them as “others” in a country in which the second and third generations are actually citizens.⁵⁴ Studies have shown that the French do not see Muslims as like them, and they associate negativity with Islam. They feel as if certain issues—like the headscarf—are proof that Islam cannot adapt to the secular state and society in France.

Through this information, it can be gathered that discrimination does exist in France. In particular there is a negative association with certain aspects of Islam, as well as the perception by the French that religious discrimination against Muslims is widespread. Also, it has been shown that ethnic discrimination is present, particularly against those minorities of North African or Arab descent. There is a possible connection between this discrimination and the rise of participation in the Salafi movement. As for pro-violence Salafi groups in particular, they may find that these marginalized groups are more prone to radicalization and will revolt against the state or society that they feel has pushed them to the side. While it appears that discrimination does exist, there is still the question of whether or not socioeconomic conditions provide the path to joining such groups.

Is socioeconomic status the answer?

Terrorism can be seen as the final weapon of a marginalized group, striving to fight against a state and society that has pushed them aside and into the isolation of the *banlieues*.

⁵⁴ France has citizenship laws incorporates *jus soli*, which awards citizenship to a child born in France as long as at least on parent was born in France. In this case, however, “France” includes former colonies, thus allowing second and third generations of immigrants to become citizens. Brubaker, Rogers. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1992. 81.

While socioeconomic status could be a clue as to why French Muslims would join these groups, this argument has been often used as an easy answer.

In Marc Sageman's *Understanding Terror Networks*, he gathers data concerning 172 terrorists. His data consists of information like their type of education, education level achieved, family status, and—most importantly to this research—socioeconomic status. Sageman first divides the terrorists into four groups: Central Staff (leadership of the Salafi terrorist movement), Core Arabs (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Kuwait), Southeast Asians, and Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and France).⁵⁵

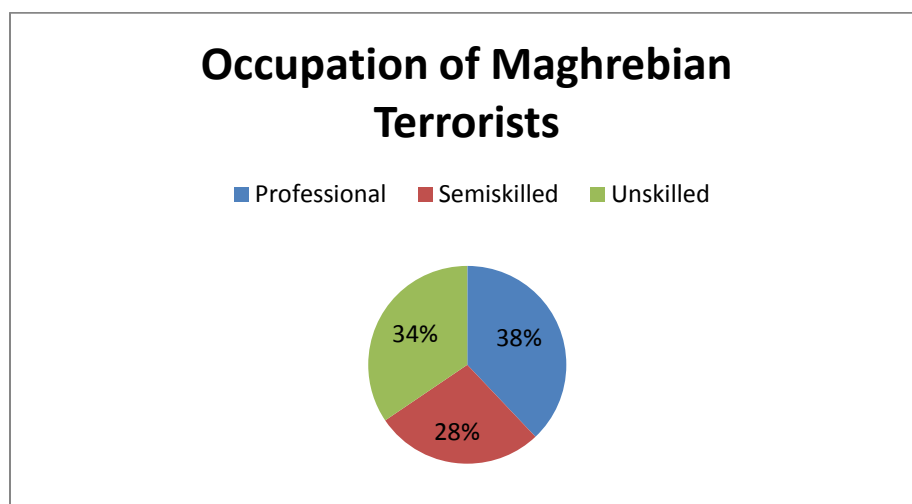


Figure 4: Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*

Sageman's data shows that out of 102 terrorists on which he gathered socioeconomic information, 84 were middle or upper class, while only 18 were lower class. Focusing on the Maghreb group, just over half came from middle class families. In terms of education, 21 out of 37 from the Maghreb had a high school education or less, but there still remained 16 others that had a college degree or above. Out of all of the groups, Sageman reports that only 38 out of 132 terrorists on which he gathered educational information had a high school education or less. In

⁵⁵ Sageman, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004. Print. pp 71.

addition, there is a popular belief that terrorists have little economic opportunity and they are without work. The data (See Figure 4) shows that overall, 101 out of 134 terrorists were either semiskilled or professionals. The Maghreb sample appears to have the most concentration of unskilled workers, with 20 out of 40 being unskilled. Those 20 unskilled terrorists, however, were involved in petty crime, not major terrorist acts.⁵⁶

This information does show that the terrorists of the Maghreb region (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and France), as well as worldwide, suffer from low socioeconomic status. On the other hand, the data shows that a large amount of them are college educated, from the middle or upper class, and do not hold unskilled occupations. From this it can be concluded that socioeconomic status cannot be the only reason that French Muslims join pro-violence Salafi groups. In fact, the Western converts and Maghreb terrorists were found to not be hardened criminals and were never involved in violent crimes.⁵⁷ While socioeconomic status is often illustrated as a supporting factor of the growth of pro-violent movements⁵⁸, Sageman's empirical data disproves it as a fundamental contributor to the radicalization of French Muslims.

One question remains: Why would educated, middle class French Muslims want to join these groups? One answer could lie in social psychology, or the manner in which the personality, attitudes, and behaviors of a group influences or is influenced by social groups, which has been examined by Richard Alba.⁵⁹ In Alba's *Bright vs. blurred boundaries: Second generation assimilation and exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States*, he compares Maghrebins and Turks in Europe to second generation Italian immigrants in America, who also had to choose between acceptance from the immigrant community or the major, non-immigrant community.

⁵⁶ Ibid. pp 73-78.

⁵⁷ Sageman, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004. Print. pp 97.

⁵⁸ Cesari, Jocelyne. *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge in Europe*. Ed. Rik Coolsaet. Burlington: Ashgate Pub Co, 2008. 98.

⁵⁹ "Social psychology." *Merriam-Webster*.

.Following Alba's ideas, French Muslims are caught between the French Muslim community and the rest of the non-Muslim community. According to the Salafis, French Muslims must decide between the two groups, which can pose a dilemma. A French Muslim may seek acceptance from the dominant, non-Muslim group that discriminates against his or her own group. By doing this, however, he or she risks being labeled as disloyal to the Muslim community. As a result, it is easier to remain loyal to the nondiscriminatory group, making integration or assimilation difficult.⁶⁰ This is a possible explanation of why educated, middle class French Muslims seek to join pro-violence Salafi groups. Although they are economically successful, they still feel the weight of their social identity that has been discriminated against. They feel that they are a part of the discriminated group, thus feeling that they are responsible for acting out against the French state and society.

Sageaman's empirical data coupled with the effects of social psychology creates the idea that although those involved with terrorism and pro-violence groups may be not all individuals of a lower socioeconomic status and actually belong to middle class, educated groups, they still feel as if they belong to the overall discriminated group and are discriminated against. Although they are relatively successful and educated, they have a stronger bond with the group with a lower socioeconomic status, not the discriminating majority. Therefore they feel involved in the struggles that the rest of the group is fighting against. As a result, they, too, can be just as inclined to join jihadi Salafi groups. As Cesari states, "it is tempting to attribute the attraction to movements like al-Qaeda and the violent rejection of the West to social and economic frustration", but "many Western mujahedeen are neither marginalized nor delinquents."⁶¹ This

⁶⁰ Alba, Richard. "Bright vs. blurred boundaries: Secondgeneration assimilation and exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28.1 (2005): 40.

⁶¹ Cesari, Jocelyne. *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge in Europe*. Ed. Rik Coolsaet. Burlington: Ashgate Pub Co, 2008. 97.

points further to the idea that while socioeconomic factors do play a role in explaining why French Muslims join pro-violence Salafi groups, there is also evidence that it is not the sole reason. Marginalization simply provides the creation of an identity and solidarity within the French Muslim minority—not the actual catalyst to join these groups. In the next two chapters, I will discuss the failure of French integration and political Islam in France, which may be contributors to the growth of jihadi Salafis in France.

Conclusion

Since the end of World War II, France and its Muslims have experienced a history of discrimination and social and economic exclusion. They have been pushed into areas like the *banlieues*, where they experience poor living conditions and have been seen as outsiders in the nation in which they were born. They suffer from employer discrimination and are statistically more likely to be unemployed and less educated than other French groups. Discrimination against them runs rampant throughout the country. However, are these reasons why French Muslims chose to join pro-violence Salafi groups? The answer is no, for even French Muslims that do not find themselves in the lowest socioeconomic level are joining these groups. The explanation is that they feel excluded from the French, non-Muslim group, therefore they remain a part of the discriminated, Muslim group. Though socioeconomic conditions may create an environment for radicalization, it is not the sole reason. In the next two chapters, I will discuss the failure of French integration and political Islam in France, which may be contributors to the growth of jihadi Salafis in France as well.

CHAPTER II

Failure of French Integration

While socio-economic status may play a great role in the growth of the pro-violence jihadi Salafi movement, it is definitely not the only factor that requires examination. In this chapter, I will discuss the effects that the failure of French integration of Muslims has on the growth of the jihadi Salafi movement. The French government has been faced with the challenge of integrating its Muslims, and its failures in doing so—like ignoring the situation of the *banlieues* and the banning of headscarves—have caused further turmoil between the French government and the French Muslim community. These failures coupled with the existing low socioeconomic status of French Muslims have further created an environment in which jihadi Salafi groups can grow.

Riots of 2005

In 2005, two boys of Maghrebi descent died while fleeing the French police. This single event was the catalyst that started a wave of riots in Clichy-sous-Bois, a suburb outside of Paris. The shockwave of violence moved out of Clichy-sous-Bois and to other parts of the nation, igniting rioting and destruction among the French Muslim immigrant group. Once the rioting began, the world's eyes fell upon the French situation in its ghettos.⁶² Why did these events

⁶² Ossman, Susan, and Sussan Terrio. "The French Riots: Questioning Spaces of Surveillance and Sovereignty." *International Migration* 44.2 (2006): 5-21. Print. Pp 1.

cause such a large problem? It is possible that they were a breaking point for the immigrant population and its frustration with the problems that has been plaguing immigrant life in France and the failure of French integration policies.

As already described in Chapter 1, the *banlieues* are areas in which a large number of the rioting immigrant minority live. These poor suburbs, also called *les cités* by the youth that live there, acted as the source. The mostly Arab and African populations that reside here under great pressures of economic failure and social exclusion are pushed to the outside of large French cities. They have suffered from unemployment, crime, and a high number of drop outs. They fall behind in developing jobs skills to enter the workforce.⁶³ It was these areas that served as pressure points to ignite the riots of 2005

The riots serve as an excellent starting point in examining the failure of French policy towards its Muslims, mainly because the strenuous situation reveals France's failure to understand how to "deal with" their minorities. During the 1980s, France believed that it was capable of integration, which differs from assimilation in that it respects that religion, culture, and tradition of diverse citizens. At this time, government involvement in finding solutions to problems in the immigrant community increased in response to rising rates of unemployment, education problems, and violence. Zones of educational priority (ZEP) were established, and money was pumped into these areas to boost the number of teachers, ministerial sources, and experimental programs. In 1984, roughly 30 percent of individuals benefiting from ZEP were immigrant children.⁶⁴

⁶³ Laurence, Jonathan, and Justin Vaisse. *Integrating Islam Political And Religious Challenges in Contemporary France*. New York: Brookings Institution, 2006. Print. Pp 36.

⁶⁴ Schain, Martin. *Immigration Policy and the Politics of Immigration A Comparative Study (Perspectives in Comparative Politics)*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print. Pp 81-82.

The path to integration was then obstructed by the doubt that the French system could not assure equal rights and opportunities for all citizens. Those citizens with a foreign nation of origin or ethnicity saw fewer opportunities and were excluded from French society. With the election of Chirac in 2002, the flow of resources to rehabilitate and support difficult areas like the *banlieues* grew thin. They were subjected to budget cuts and rightwing government officials have slashed funding for renovating dilapidated housing. The French government reduced temporary jobs for youth, reduced local policing and replaced it with rapid-response teams, and minimized grants given to voluntary organizations that worked to improve these areas.⁶⁵

To understand this treatment, it is first important to understand the perception of Muslims by French society. In the past, there was much optimism that a “French Islam”—or an Islam that gives allegiance both to the French Republic and to Islam⁶⁶—could be created.⁶⁷ In recent years the struggle for integration has toughened. The “Muslim problem” that France has faced in the past and is facing now is often seen as just a social problem. The goal of creating a “French Islam” is seen as unreachable. The French now often pose the question: Can they fit into our society? This question alone reveals the fact that the Muslim beliefs, traditions, and values are viewed as intrinsically incompatible with those of France. As a result, Islam is treated as if it is a bizarre religion with little relation to Christianity or Judaism.⁶⁸ These perceived differences create the resistance of French society and the belief that only a clash, not compatibility, is possible. This school of thought is found clearly in *Clash of the Civilizations* by Samuel Huntington, who blatantly states that while economic development and democratic politics are

⁶⁵ Vidal, Dominique. "The fight against urban apartheid." *Le Monde Diplomatique* Dec. 2005.

⁶⁶ Bowen, John R. "Does French Islam Have Borders? Dilemmas of Domestication in a Global Religious Field." *American Anthropologist* 106.1 (2004): 44.

⁶⁷ Schain, Martin. *Immigration Policy and the Politics of Immigration A Comparative Study (Perspectives in Comparative Politics)*. Pp 84.

⁶⁸ Haddad, Vyvonne Y., ed. *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. Print. Pp 36.

possible in western countries, the “prospects in the Muslim republics are bleak.”⁶⁹ In other words, the Western, democratic way of life is not compatible with Islam. This type of thinking fuels the problem in France, reaffirming the myth that the culture and religions of the East and the West unable to coexist. This way of thinking is one of the major obstacles to Muslim integration in France and has made finding solutions quite problematic.

The Headscarf Affair: the Fruit of Laïcité

Laïcité is typically defined as “a system in which there is a separation between religion and the state.” Under this system, the government is directed by nonreligious, secular authorities. Although separation between church and state exists in other nations, laïcité is its own brand of secularism. Unlike other nations, France looks at citizenship with the view that it is not the citizens that create a nation. Instead, it is the nation that creates the citizen. In other words, a citizen does not have an identity other than the French identity. With the creation of this “French identity”, all are equal and will receive equal rights and treatment.⁷⁰ Originally, this law was passed in 1905 in order to weaken the Catholic Church and its influence, ultimately placing it on the same level as other religious groups living in France. After the law’s passing, religious life among Christians and Jews slowly moved out of the public sphere and into private.⁷¹ One of the prohibitions of laïcité is wearing an article of clothing that is considered “religious” in the public domain.

In 1989, three girls, who were Muslim and of North African origin, went to school in Creil, wearing their *hijabs*, or headscarves, over their heads. They ignored demands to remove them and were finally expelled for their actions. Although these kinds of events had already

⁶⁹ Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilizations." (1997). Print. Pp 5.

⁷⁰ Troper, Michel. "French Secularism, or Laïcité." *Cardoza Law Review* (1999-2000): 1243-1267.

⁷¹ Haddad, Vyvonne Y., ed. *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. Print. Pp 37.

occurred in the past, the “headscarf affair” sparked controversy among politicians and outraged the Muslim community. Minority rights and the process of immigrant integration were questioned. For the rest of the 1990s, young Muslim girls defied schools and authorities while French officials have adamantly protected *laïcité*. Later in 1994, over one hundred girls wearing their headscarves were barred from entering a school in protest.⁷² Eventually, the French government would win this battle when the French government passed a law in 2004 that illegalized wearing clothing that indicated a student’s religious affiliations in public schools. Though the French government claimed that it did this without targeting religious groups, but it was clear that it did target the Muslim community.⁷³

Rethinking Pluralism

In the 1980s, the Muslim “threat” was small and was not the greatest concern of French society. Today, this has changed. The Islamic presence is not sizeable enough to threaten its ideal public life, which consists of three pillars: unity, respect for religious pluralism, and the liberty of consciousness. The growing number of Muslims and its interaction with the French state and society has given the perception that this balance has been overturned by a threat to unity through religious diversity and complications in French religious plurality. As a result, the French concept of pluralism must be rethought. According to Jocelyn Cesari, pluralism must now mean a political balance between recognizing different ethnic and cultural groups and maintaining cultural and political unity in France, instead of just striving for equal opportunity for all religious and ethnic groups.⁷⁴ The tactic of ignoring race, ethnicity, and religion is no

⁷² Killian, Caitlin. "The Other Side of the Veil: North African Women in France Respond to the Headscarf Affair." *Gender and Society* 17.4 (2003). Pp 567

⁷³ Bowen, John R. *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves*. Princeton UP, 2006. Pp 1.

⁷⁴ Haddad, Vyvonne Y., ed. *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. Print. Pp 49.

longer useful, mostly because it is not actually ignored. This has led to a lack of an effort to actually solve the problem, and strategies needed to integrate French Muslims are still absent from French policy. In order to properly integrate the Muslim community in France, political and societal discussion and new policy are necessary.

Unfortunately, both French citizens and politicians have not yet shown that they are capable of doing this. The mentality that the French nation still reins above everything else has been an obstacle. Instead of solving the problem, it remains ignored and still a “social issue”—not integration issue. They refuse to address the problem, as if they fear that a debate would break national unity and strengthen nationalist movements like the Front National, which uses xenophobia and racism as support to create a Catholic, white nation.⁷⁵ As a result, Muslim immigrants and subsequent generations live in a state of failed integration, which could have its own repercussions that have and will give France yet another problem—radicalization.

Failed Integration: Road to Radicalization?

It is possible that the exclusionary policies like the banning of the headscarf and ignoring the problems in places like the *banlieues* could lead to the radicalization of Muslims in France. Laïcité specifically could be a major contributing factor, since it gives the impression that the French system does not respect the culture and religion of the Muslim community, making them feel challenged by the French state and its institutions. According to Joel Fetzer and Christopher Soper, *laïque* policies, or policies of laïcité, “breed a hostility among Muslims toward French culture and society, and thus propel already disaffected and ghettoized communities further from

⁷⁵ Ibid. 49.

the political mainstream and into the arms of radical Islamists.”⁷⁶ France’s inability to recognize the Muslim community and its traditions has caused a reaction to exclusion and lack of integration, which can be seen through events like the riots.⁷⁷ While it appears that the French society is rejecting French Muslims, radical groups like the Salafi reject French society.⁷⁸ With this double rejection, groups like the Salafis lead a resistance to the modernity and globalization of the French political system that has failed by not integrating them into French society, and giving them an insufficient amount of aid to escape their current social status. In addition, secular policies have pushed their interests aside, such as the ability to wear headscarves.⁷⁹

The failure of integration in France has ultimately created a group of disenfranchised individuals, who feel as if they are disconnected from French society. One of the most powerful draws to radicalism is a weak social network, or even the nonexistence of one, among French Muslims.⁸⁰ A lack of social networks leaves an individual with little options and without a real identity. Groups like the Salafi allows for young, French Muslims to have a “way out” of their oppressed situation. They form a new idea—one based on the rejection of the French political system and a strict following of Islam, and they lure the rejected by giving them an escape from their current situation. They find a place among Salafi groups, which is easier than forming social networks in French, secular society.⁸¹ Furthermore, in Marc Sageman’s *Understanding Terrorist Networks*, his findings actually show that the nonexistence of social networks is common among radical, pro-violence groups.⁸²

⁷⁶ Fetzer, Joel S., and J. Christopher Soper. *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany (Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion and Politics)*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print. Pp 155.

⁷⁷ Ibid. pp 38.

⁷⁸ Meijer, Roel, ed. *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*. New York: Columbia UP, 2009. Print. pp 371

⁷⁹ *Globalization and the Muslim World Culture, Religion, and Modernity (Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East)*. New York: Syracuse UP, 2004. Print. Pp 61.

⁸⁰ Cesari, Jocelyne. *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge in Europe*. Ed. Rik Coolsaet. Burlington: Ashgate Pub Co, 2008. Print. Pp. 102-103.

⁸¹ Meijer, Roel, ed. *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*. New York: Columbia UP, 2009. Print. pp 365.

⁸² Sageman, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks*. New York: University of Pennsylvania, 2004. Print.

Conclusion

The riots of 2005 and the “headscarf affair” have revealed the failure of the French government to properly integrate the Muslim, immigrant population into French society. With little attention paid to the terrible conditions in the *banlieues*, French Muslims remain in a socioeconomic rut, finding it difficult to escape. The policies of *laïcité* have alienated them, making them feel as if the French system does not respect their religion and culture. French politicians and citizens continue to ignore the fact that the old pluralist strategy of treating its Muslim minority is failing and that it must be fixed. Until they agree to fully open the discussion of integration and work towards solutions, the number of young, unintegrated Muslims without real social networks and identities will continue to grow. From this rejection, however, they will find an escape through groups like the Salafis. It is important to note that this rejection leads to an escape through *all* of the Salafi factions, not just the jihadi Salafis. Therefore, we will see later that the environment in which French Muslims live are also aiding predicative and politico factions as well.

CHAPTER III

The Failure of Political Islam in France

Besides the existing socioeconomic status and failed integration of French Muslims, they have been largely without a sufficient leader or representative. The next chapter will explore this absence of leadership and the attempt of political Islamists to fill this void. I will then discuss the fall of these political movements and the resulting attraction to Salafi groups by French Muslims.

Rise of Political Movements

Throughout Europe in the 1990s, a new movement began to grow. The possibility of establishing an Islamic state in their countries of origin had become seemingly impossible, and the Muslim Brotherhood⁸³ and Islamic leaders instead became representatives of European Muslims across the continent. They aspired to integrate Muslims into the European political system. Islamic leaders emphasized the use of political and social activism, bringing the European Muslim communities together to protest and create change within European states. In order to do this, however, the European Muslims would have to create an “Islamic party”, binding together at both national and local levels. They would have to discuss and conquer problems that plague European Muslim life like the expression of religion, racism, and crime in

⁸³ Founded in Egypt in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood has been a force of political Islam throughout Europe. They are often criticized by the jihadis for embracing democracy. Leikin, Robert S., and Steven Brooke. "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood." *Foreign Affairs* 107 (2007). Print.

suffering suburbs.⁸⁴ They would have to become more political and interact with European governments

The Union of Islamic Organization of Europe (UIOE), which had ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, did just that and formed a union of five hundred Muslims associations across Europe.⁸⁵ The UIOE's strategic goal was to establish an Islamic presence in Europe and foster the participation of Muslims in European society and life. Other goals included the promotion of Muslim representation in institutions and government, as well as encouraging better relationships between Muslims and authorities.⁸⁶

The French branch of the UIOE, called the *Union des Organisations Islamiques de France* (UOIF), controls nearly half of the five hundred of the Islamic associations under the UIOE. It was first created in 1983 as a militant group and had little interest in political activity in France. However, this had changed by the end of the 1980s, and the organization took a more political position. It attempted to push its way into the French political scene through a movement of protests.⁸⁷ The UOIF took part in the institutionalization of Islam in France through gaining winning a large amount of seats in the *Conseil Français du culte musulman* (French Council of the Muslim Religion).⁸⁸

Fall of Political Movements

⁸⁴ Like the French *banlieues*.

⁸⁵ Amghar, Samir, Amel Boubekeur, Michael Emerson, Chris Allen, Valerie Amiraux, Tufyal Choudhury, Bernard Godard, Imane Karich, Isabelle Rigon, Olivier Roy, and Sara Silvestri. "European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society." *Centre for European Policy Studies* (2007). Print. pp 21-22.

⁸⁶ http://www.euro-muslim.net/en_Our_mission.aspx

⁸⁷ This includes protesting the expulsion of high school students for wearing headscarves. (find a source)

⁸⁸ Amghar, Samir, Amel Boubekeur, Michael Emerson, Chris Allen, Valerie Amiraux, Tufyal Choudhury, Bernard Godard, Imane Karich, Isabelle Rigon, Olivier Roy, and Sara Silvestri. "European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society." *Centre for European Policy Studies* (2007). Print. pp 23-24.

With time, the UOIF and the political Islamic movements in France began to tumble. In November 2005, the events surrounding the riots of young, male rioters were viewed as a great failure of the UOIF by the French Muslim/ethnically Arab community. Although the riots seem religiously motivated since they were a reaction to the deaths of two Muslims, Olivier Roy explains in *Get French or Die Trying* that they are actually the result of the urban, low socio-economic culture of the *banlieues*.⁸⁹ This supports the arguments discussed earlier that a new identity has been created based on socio-economic status, ethnicity, and religion, which provided enough cohesion to fuel the riots. The UOIF tried to use the religious identity, which was not the reason for the riots, as a connection to the rioters to stop them.

However, the UOIF could not tame the rioters and difficult areas of *cités*⁹⁰, thus also failing to win more support of the authorities. Furthermore, other political Islamist groups in France attempted to control the violence, yet they, too, were not able to succeed. On the other hand, they also failed to relay help to the rioters by relaying their desires to the government. They pleased no one. These failures gave some indication of the UOIF's inability to help the Muslim/Arab community in France, which it claimed to protect and represent. With the failure of political Islamic groups, much faith was lost in political interaction and integration. French Muslims still felt underrepresented in the French political realm, and there was no longer a formidable organization to represent them. Demands from the Muslim populations still existed at the time and needed an outlet of expression. One of these outlets would increasingly become Salafism.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Roy, Olivier. "Get French or Die Trying." *New York Times* 9 Nov. 2009.

⁹⁰ Name used for troubled areas.

⁹¹ Boukhars, Anouar. "Islam, Jihadism, and Depoliticization in France and Germany." *International Political Science Review* 30.3 (297): 297+. SAGE. Web. 19 Oct. 2009. Pp. 299.

After the fall of political Islam in France, Salafism became a viable option for Muslims (a small number of them) who felt that they were politically disenfranchised and disconnected. Salafism itself rejects French society and prohibits political participation. Political participation is considered a compromise of Islam and a lack of faith in God. Salafis, in sum, are only able to obey the rules of God. The followers of Salafism are not allowed participate in any democratic or political activity, such as voting and protesting, that is not related to Islam, and the only path to complete compliance with God's wishes is to reject anything that is not Salafi. During presidential elections of 2002 and 2007, for example, Salafi leaders urged French Muslims to resist voting in order to separate themselves from the French democratic system. This attitude of political self-exclusion has been one of the defining attitudes of the Salafi movement, and it has greatly set it apart from other Islamic movements in France, especially the political Islamic groups.⁹²

Herein are the roots of the rise of Salafism in France. At the very moment that the Muslim population felt like its political representation had failed and become collaborators with the French government, the Salafis denounced these “collaborators” and preached total separation from the political, democratic system. The Salafi movement was able to use the momentum of the Islamists' failure to explain the deception of promises of re-islamisation. The leaders of the Salafi movements stated that these unsuccessful movements had attempted to use Western methods to create an Islam that would conform to a Western mold. These actions were illustrated as unacceptable and an alteration of the religion. Salafis proclaimed that these Islamic political leaders were threatening the *umma*—the Muslim community—which weakens Islam

⁹² Meijer, Roel, ed. *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*. New York: Columbia UP, 2009. Print. pp 371

through *fitna*—division of the *umma*.⁹³ Many Salafis denounced and criticized members of the Muslim Brotherhood and the UOIF for their negotiation with the French political system. They proclaimed that the political Islamists had tried to mix democracy with Islam, mixing a political culture with the Islamic system.⁹⁴ The mix of the loss of faith in political Islamists and the anti-political beliefs of the Salafis in France created an environment in which the Salafis could grow as a leader of the French Muslim population.⁹⁵

With the absence of a powerful Muslim Brotherhood and the UOIF in France, the Salafi movement has been given more room to grow. The Salafi movement in France seemingly became the “Islamic variant”⁹⁶, for it is especially attractive to French Muslims groups that feel as if they are disenfranchised by the French political system and have lost any desire to participate. The Salafi movement provided an escape or an “exit strategy” from the surrounding French society and political life.⁹⁷

Conclusion

Once the political Islamists failed to bring change for the French Muslim community through participation in French politics, Muslims began to distance themselves from groups like the UOIF. Following the fall of the political movement, Salafi groups seized the opportunity to attract disenfranchised French Muslims that had lost trust and interest in the French political system. The Salafis preached that participation in the modern, democratic processes is prohibited

⁹³ Amghar, Samir, Amel Boubekeur, Michael Emerson, Chris Allen, Valerie Amiraux, Tufyal Choudhury, Bernard Godard, Imane Karich, Isabelle Rigon, Olivier Roy, and Sara Silvestri. "European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society." *Centre for European Policy Studies* (2007). Print. pp 50.

⁹⁴ Amghar, Samir 2006, “Le salafisme en Europe : la mouvance polymorphe d’une radicalisation”, *Politique Etrangère*, No. 1. Pp. 76.

⁹⁵ Boukhars, Anouar. "Islam, Jihadism, and Depoliticization in France and Germany." *International Political Science Review* 30.3 (297): 297+. SAGE. Web. 19 Oct. 2009. Pp. 299.

⁹⁶ Amghar, Samir, Amel Boubekeur, Michael Emerson, Chris Allen, Valerie Amiraux, Tufyal Choudhury, Bernard Godard, Imane Karich, Isabelle Rigon, Olivier Roy, and Sara Silvestri. "European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society." *Centre for European Policy Studies* (2007). Print. pp 23-24.

⁹⁷ Meijer, Roel, ed. *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*. New York: Columbia UP, 2009. Print. pp 374.

and contrary to the teachings of the Prophet. While ignoring political participation, Salafi groups have encouraged entrepreneurship and commercial involvement. Through these circumstances and actions, the Salafi movement has found a fertile environment and has attracted more and more followers, but they are largely not attracted to the pro-violent groups. In Part II I will further discuss factors that have deterred the growth of the jihadi Salafis, but have largely not affected the peaceful predicative and politico factions.

PART II

WHY MIGHT PRO-VIOLENCE GROUPS BE DECLINING?

CHAPTER IV

Suffocating Pro-violence Jihadi Salafi Groups through Anti-terrorist Policies

The Birth of Strict Policies

In 1998, Ahmed Ressay, an Algerian man, was in training at an Afghanistan terrorist camp, where he and other trainees conspired to carry out a terrorist attack. The group decided that they would meet in Canada and rob banks to get the money to carry out an operation in the United States. The target was Los Angeles International Airport, since it is “sensitive, politically and economically” in the words of Ressay. He planned to put explosives in a suitcase and explode them inside the airport.⁹⁸ This plan, however, would be thwarted on December 14, 1999, when he was arrested at the U.S.-Canadian border with a trunk full of explosives meant to be used in the planned attack. Surprisingly, the United States was tipped off not by its own authorities, but by the French authorities who had been tracking Ressay in Canada for several years and had warned Canadian authorities of Ressay’s presence numerous times. The French

⁹⁸ “The Lessons of Ahmed Ressay.” *Toronto Star* 6 Jan. 2002: A06.

provided the FBI with an enormous amount of information concerning Ressam and his associates once he was arrested.⁹⁹

Why is this significant? Just twenty years before, the synagogues of Paris were threatened by terrorist attacks. In just a week's time in October of 1980, six explosions were carried out on Jewish targets by the Palestinian Liberation Organization in France. At that time, French authorities were not even capable of foreseeing terrorist attacks on their own soil, much less in their own capitol. During the 1980s and early 1990s, France was seen as an asylum for international terrorists belonging to fundamentalist, pro-violence groups. Into the late 1990s, this would change with a wave of new anti-terrorism policies and efforts by the French government, which hoped to eliminate their existence and their terror campaigns. One can see from the events described that the strength of French anti-terrorist efforts was quite weak only twenty years ago, but they have grown powerful enough to prevent terrorism both domestically and internationally, lending a hand to nations like the United States.¹⁰⁰

As a result of many terrorist attacks during the 1980s like the bombings described, new legislation was created in September of 1986 to address the growing terrorist threats in France. The legislation created *the Unité de Coordination de la Lutte Anti-Terroriste* (Coordination Unit for the Fight Against Terrorism, or UCLAT) and the *Service pour Coordination de la Lutte Anti-terroriste* (Service for the Coordination for the Fight against Terrorism, SCLAT), which would allow an easy, direct flow of information and a partnership between the French judicial and intelligence community. From this new relationship, a new breed of investigating magistrate, or a mix between a prosecutor and a judge, was created. These magistrates were responsible for carrying out an impartial investigation and determining whether or not a crime is worth

⁹⁹ Shapiro, Jeremy, and Bénédicte Suzan. "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism." *Survival* 45.1 (Spring 2003): 67.

¹⁰⁰ Shapiro, Jeremy, and Bénédicte Suzan. "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism." *Survival* 45.1 (Spring 2003): 67-68.

persecuting. In dealing with cases of terrorism, a small group of these magistrates grew more and more familiar with terrorist networks and would later grow to become powerful actors in the fight against terrorism in France.¹⁰¹

A few years after the 1986 legislation, strict security evolved further after the penetration of French borders by the Armed Islamic Group from Algeria, which is a union of Salafi groups with differing levels of doctrinal adherence.¹⁰² The roots of the GIA began in Algeria, where in 1992 the military government decided to cancel an election in which it seemed that the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) would win. In opposition, angry supporters of the FIS formed the militant Islamic Salvation Army. Soon after, the more radical members of the Army separated to form the GIA, who promised to remove the secular Algerian government and create a state under Islamic law.¹⁰³

Soon enough, the GIA formed a new undertaking—to make war against the West and Western laws. Europe would be its battlefield, but France was a particular target. It was seen as “the mother of all sinners”¹⁰⁴, for it had devastated Algeria through colonialism, used it for its resources, and, most importantly, removed the importance of Islam in Algeria through imposing French secularism. France had become the GIA’s target, and attacks quickly ensued. Consular agents were kidnapped in 1993 in Algiers, but the French authorities would respond by detaining one hundred and ten people in France, taking eighty seven into custody. In November 1994, the Chalabi network, the support group for the GIA militants fighting the Algerian government, was

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 76-79.

¹⁰² Wiktorowicz, Quintan. "The New Global Threat: Transnational Salafis and Jihad." *Middle East Policy* 9.4 (2001). Pp 27. Wiktorowicz explains that although the different factions of the GIA viewed themselves as Salafis, some were more like “criminal gangs” than ideological groups. They did, however, all legitimize violent acts with Salafism.

¹⁰³ Vriens, Lauren. "Armed Islamic Group." *Council on Foreign Relations*. 27 May 2009. Web. <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/9154/>>.

¹⁰⁴ Laïdi, Ali, and Ahmed Salam. *Le Jihad en Europe Les Filières du terrorisme islamiste*. Paris: Seuil, 2002. p.193.

destroyed by French authorities. Out of the ninety three people arrested from this group, seventy eight were tried.¹⁰⁵

In 1994, the GIA retaliated against France by high jacking a flight from Algiers to Paris. By doing this, France realized that the GIA was no longer a threat just in Algeria, but it was also capable of attacking on French soil and endangering French citizens. The highjackers demanded that France stop giving aid to the Algerian government, reparations for damages inflicted by France in Algeria during the colonial period, and the release of the leaders of the FIS. French authorities did not comply, and stormed the plane on the tarmac in Marseille, killing all of the highjackers.¹⁰⁶

These confrontations between pro-violence Islamic groups like the GIA and France have helped form the strict security policies. Through measures taken in fighting terrorist attacks, the French system has proved to be one of the strongest anti-terrorism forces in the world. After the highjacking of 1994, the French government initiated a dismantling of Islamic networks in France and Europe. In June of 1995, a force of four hundred police officers arrested one hundred and thirty one people in major cities like Paris, Marseille, and Orléans. Legislative changes ensued in 1995 and 1996, which defined conspiracy to commit terrorism and terrorism itself.¹⁰⁷ This allowed the aforementioned magistrates to launch preemptive investigations before terrorist attacks occurred, giving them even more power. Also, the relationship between magistrates working on Islamic terrorist cases worked directly with the *Directorate de la Surveillance du Territoire* (Directorate of Territorial Security, or DST). This, in turn, brought the judicial

¹⁰⁵ Shapiro, Jeremy, and Bénédicte Suzan. "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism." *Survival* 45.1 (Spring 2003): 67-80.

¹⁰⁶ Beyler, Clara. "The Jihadist Threat in France." Pp 98.

¹⁰⁷ Article 421-2-1 of the French Penal Code.

"The participation in any group formed or association established with a view to the preparation, marked by one or more material actions, of any of the acts of terrorism provided for under the previous articles shall in addition be an act of terrorism."

authorities, the magistrates, and the DST, even closer. This powerful force had an immense judicial power and access to intelligence. This created an effective system in finding and detaining terrorist suspects.¹⁰⁸

The result of this strong anti-terror force was an environment in which violent Salafis can find little room for growth. Through strict anti-terrorism policies and strategies, the French government has been able to largely choke out the violent Salafi movement, but has done little to affect more peaceful Salafis. In the next sections, I will discuss the strategies employed by the French government to suffocate the pro-violent Salafi movement.

Powers and Strategies of the French Authorities

THE POWER OF MAGISTRATES

Regardless of attacks by pro-violence groups during the middle and late 1990s, France has been heavily criticized for its actions in the name of national security and the seemingly limitless of its magistrates that investigate terrorism cases.¹⁰⁹ One issue that is often debated is indiscriminate detention. French anti-terrorism law allows magistrates to hold suspects involved in terrorist cases for four days before charging them, unlike the usual two days. They have the ability to also issue and carry out search warrants during the night and ask for trials without jury in some cases. The previously discussed fusion of the magistrates and DST grew even more powerful upon the creation of these allowances.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Shapiro, Jeremy, and Bénédicte Suzan. "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism." *Survival* 45.1 (Spring 2003): 82.

¹⁰⁹ See the following article for more information on the criticism of French counterterrorism:

"War against Fundamental Rights: French Counterterrorism Policy and the Need to Integrate International Security and Human Rights Agreements." Review. *Suffolk Transnational Law Review*: 459-84

¹¹⁰ Shapiro, Jeremy, and Bénédicte Suzan. "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism." *Survival* 45.1 (Spring 2003): 84.

The French authorities have ultimately been given a “catch-all crime law.”¹¹¹ Preventative roundups and indiscriminate detention have become useful in battling domestic terrorism, although the sweeps and detentions sometimes catch people that are not involved with terrorist networks. Although there is outside criticism of the unchecked power of magistrates, there is no authority to control them. In fact, French anti-terrorist laws of 1986 and 1996 give them total responsibility to decide what comprises “terrorism”. The 1986 legislation essentially places a large amount power in the hands of small group of anti-terrorism magistrates who face little scrutiny from the judicial system and no supervision from any outside authority. In addition, the 1996 legislation allowed magistrates to punish suspects conspiring to launch a terrorist attack, giving magistrates the power to take preemptive measures. This allows them to round up and arrest and detain large groups of people for interrogation—all to stop the possibility of an attack.¹¹²

DEPORTATION

In March 2005, the 1945 Foreigners Act and the 1952 Asylum Law were combined and replaced by The Immigration Code. This new code incorporated reforms in 2001 to allow the expulsion of people who are suspected of having ties to terrorist groups. The Code has two parts: criminal deportation and administrative expulsion. Criminal deportation is ordered after the conviction of a criminal and the individual is then banned from French territory and the deportation order is made by a competent judicial authority. Administrative expulsion, on the

¹¹¹ Crumley, Bruce. "Fighting Terrorism: Lessons from France." *TIME*. 24 Sept. 2001.

¹¹² Shapiro, Jeremy, and Bénédicte Suzan. "The French Experience of Counter-terrorism." *Survival* 45.1 (Spring 2003): 85.

other hand, can be ordered directly by the Interior Ministry. Individuals facing criminal deportation may appeal the order and have the court rescind the deportation.¹¹³

In the past few years, these tactics have been used to fight the growth and existence of terrorist networks in France. With a “zero policy”, France has expelled numerous imams who preach anti-Western rhetoric. After the bombings in London in 2005, Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy pledged to take action against “radical elements”, which he did by expelling imams¹¹⁴ to their nation of origin and removing their French citizenship.¹¹⁵ From 2001 to 2007, the French government used its expulsion policies remove more than seventy people from French territory, proclaiming them to be “Islamic fundamentalists.” Fifteen of these individuals were imams, which have been branded as “hate preachers” by the French government.¹¹⁶

French authorities have also attempted to suffocate the Salafi movement in France using techniques of deportation and expulsion. Once they began to realize that Salafism was growing and forming its own organizational structure, it took action to destroy its infrastructure starting with imams. In 2001, a Salafist convention was postponed and the theologians chosen to speak at the convention were arrested at Charles de Gaulle and deported. Furthermore, Salafist sheiks were barred from entering France and many other imams were either expelled or placed under surveillance. Abdelkader Bouziane, the imam responsible for the bringing Salafism to Lyon, was sent back to Algeria. An Iraqi imam, Ali Yashar, of the mosque in Argenteuil was removed from his position and was sent to live under surveillance in Lozère.¹¹⁷ Through these actions, it is clear that the French government is willing to go as far as removing potential pro-violence religious leaders from France, including those that are Salafi.

¹¹³ *In the Name of Prevention*. Publication. Human Rights Watch, June 2007. Pp 15.

¹¹⁴ Islamic scholars and religious leaders.

¹¹⁵ Beyler, Clara. "The Jihadist Threat in France." Pp 106.

¹¹⁶ "France: Terror Expulsions Policy Lacks Basic Safeguards." *Human Rights Watch*. 4 June 2007.

¹¹⁷ Amghar, S. 2009. *Ideological and Theological Foundations of Muslim Radicalism in France*. MICROCON Policy Working Paper 4, Brighton: MICROCON. pp 6.

SURVEILLANCE

Radical mosques have been thought to play an important role in the radicalization¹¹⁸ of young French Muslims and their transformation into terrorists. In order to stop this, the Renseignements Généraux (RG), or the French internal intelligence service, has been monitoring all mosques, as well as their imams and sermons, since the mid-1990s. One particular section of the RG, the *Milieux Intégristes Violents* (Violent Fundamentalist Environment), monitors 1,700 mosques and Muslim places of worship in France. Through this surveillance, they have found “radical” mosques throughout France in almost every *région*. The RG determines whether or not a mosque is “radical” by collecting sermons each Friday from each mosque through various, unknown methods and then analyzing them. They use these sermons to find out specifically if the mosque is preaching radical Salafism or if they are supporting terrorist recruitment.¹¹⁹

The RG has reported that the number of Salafi mosques in France is low, and RG’s former director Pascal Mailhos estimated that there were about eighty mosques in France that were “under constant pressure” from radical networks in 2006. He also stated that half of those resisted radical pressures, but the other half were led by radical imams. The RG does have a protocol when dealing with these “radical imams.” Once a radical imam is identified, the RG notifies the local criminal police forces, who then threaten him with expulsion unless he softens his radical preaching.¹²⁰ Through the combination of surveillance and possible expulsion, French authorities have created a tool to leverage its radical Salafist leaders and slow the spread of pro-violence Salafism.

¹¹⁸ The article *An Inside Look at France’s Mosque Surveillance Program* by the Jamestown Foundation refers to groups “radical” groups with al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, which are both jihadi Salafi groups. Therefore, in this instance “radicalization” refers to a change to a jihadi Salafi mentality.

¹¹⁹ Siegel, Pascale C. “An Inside Look at France’s Mosque Surveillance Program.” *Terrorism Monitor* 5.16. *The Jamestown Foundation*. 16 Aug. 2007.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

STOPPING OUTSIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Saudi Arabia, among other Arab nations, has given heavy financial support to spreading its Salafi version of Islam throughout France. In fact, the spread of the Salafi movement has been fueled by financial aid from Saudi Arabia and through imams trained there. For some time, France allowed this religious and financial support, but after September 11, 2001, the French government changed its position. France immediately halted the flow of funds from Saudi Arabia to France through charities like the Saudi Global Relief Foundation, which was controlled by the Saudi Ministry of International Affairs. In addition to deterring financial aid, the French government has attempted to make Islamic financial networks more transparent. Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin created the *Fondation Pour les Œuvres de l'Islam de France*, which was a public organization that would serve as a channel and monitor financial transaction for French mosques.¹²¹

Conclusion

Since the early 1980s, France has seen a complete turnaround in counterterrorism—going from blind to terrorist attacks on its own soil to stopping possible attacks in the United States. The French authorities have created an arsenal of policies and powers that allow it to protect France, although they may face criticism. Indiscriminate detention and expulsion have been the targets of human rights groups¹²², and a force of anti-terrorism magistrates hold an enormous amount of power in using these tactics. Salafi leaders, as discussed, have been a target of these magistrates, resulting in the expulsion of many Salafi imams. Mosques thought to teach radical

¹²¹ Beyler, Clara. "The Jihadist Threat in France." Pp 105-106.

¹²² See the following publication for criticism of French expulsion policy by the Human Rights Watch: *In the Name of Prevention*. Publication. Human Rights Watch, June 2007.

Salafism have been placed under heavy surveillance, and their imams have been threatened with deportation. Furthermore, the French government has attempted to stop the influx of outside financial aid from radical Salafi groups in other countries. Through these actions, the French authorities have suffocated the pro-violence Salafi movement in France through prevention of their violent attacks and destroying any type of organizational structure.

CHAPTER V

Competing Salafi Factions

Who's right?

As stated before, the French Salafi movement is divided into three groups: the politicians, the predicatives, and the jihadis. Each group is bursting with agreements and disagreements with the other factions. The politicians argue that the predicative faction is too old, growing up in a different time. They feel that they are out of touch with the rest of the world, and they do not have the skills, political knowledge, and realization of the changing world to be leaders of Salafism. Politicians see themselves as better suited to address political issues. They have often criticized predicatives for viewing teaching and prayer as the only solution as the world around them is falling apart.¹²³ Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Khaliq of the Turath movement in Kuwait

¹²³ For example: corrupt Muslim regimes repressing people, Israel still occupies Islamic lands, and the United States still launches attacks on the Muslim world.

described predicatives as “a collection of blind men who have given themselves the roles of leading the ummah in giving verdicts” and as “those who live in the Middle Ages.”¹²⁴

Though the politicos pride themselves on being aware of current affairs and better equipped to interpret today’s context of Islam, the predicative still pride themselves on removing themselves completely from the Western political sphere. The jihadis, however, view predicative Salafis as fools who are aware of the context of Islam in the world today. According to the jihadis, the predicatives ignore context and do nothing to stop the deterioration of Islam. They ignore aggression by the United States, thus they become part of the movement to destroy the “true” scholars of Islam. The leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi, accused the predicative Salafis of abandoning them and stated that they “handed us over to the enemy.”¹²⁵ These jihadi Salafis feel that the predicatives are not capable or are unwilling to reveal the context of the world to Salafi Muslims, thus hiding American and Zionist injustices.¹²⁶

The predicatives, however, denounce both the politicos and the jihadists. They oppose their ideas of protests and revolutions, arguing that the Prophet never supported such actions. Violent actions are viewed by predicatives as heretical and incapable of creating an Islamic state.¹²⁷ It sees this as a creation of Western influences, since protest and public opposition is often seen in Western democracy. Predicatives see the methods of politicos and jihadists as non-Islamic means to promote Salafism. Though they recognize the creed, they do not follow the “prophetic model.” Also, their actions are seen by predicatives as products of human desire. Instead of basing strategies to promote the Salafi creed on the teachings of Islam, they base them on human thought and what man feels is most effective—not what the Qur’an and Sunna says.

¹²⁴ Wiktorowicz, Q. 2006. “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement”, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29: 224.

¹²⁵ MEMRI, *Special Dispatch Series—No. 639*, 7 January 2004.

¹²⁶ Wiktorowicz, Q. 2006. “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement”, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29: 226-228.

¹²⁷ Amghar, Samir 2006, “Le salafisme en Europe : la mouvance polymorphe d’une radicalisation”, *Politique Etrangère*, No. 1. Pp. 71.

These critiques prove that Salafis do not disagree with politicians and jihadists over their beliefs, but it is the strategies employed by them that cause the separation.¹²⁸

Who's winning?

Although the French media, like the rest of the world, has been full of images of terrorist attacks and reports about terrorist networks, it appears that among the three factions of the Salafi movement in France, there is a winner. The predicative Salafis are by far the largest and the most dominant Salafi faction in France.¹²⁹ According to Samir Amghar, politicians are an “extreme minority”¹³⁰ and the jihadists are *ultra-minoritaire*, while the predicatives stand as the *ultra-majoritaire* of the Salafi movement in France.¹³¹

In Amghar's *Les Salafistes Français: Une Nouvelle Aristocratie Religieuse?*, he reveals a rather non-violent trend among Salafis. While jihadis may lead young, disenfranchised French Muslim to violence, young French Salafis have found identity through other means—commercial activity. More and more, young Salafis are opening Islamic bookstores and sandwich shops in the *banlieues*, instead of leading a life of violence. Through this, they are able to follow the example of the Prophet Mohammed, who was himself a trader. It becomes a ritual and an escape from the chains of discrimination and failure. They become successful, thus turning away from the violent tendencies of jihadis.¹³² The non-violent predicative Salafis in France find success through these practices, thus attracting more followers than the jihadi Salafis.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 219-220.

¹²⁹ Boukhars, Anouar. "Islam, Jihadism, and Depoliticization in France and Germany." *International Political Science Review* 30.3 (297): 297+. SAGE. Web. 19 Oct. 2009. Pp. 300.

¹³⁰ Amghar, Samir. "European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society." *Centre for European Policy Studies* (2007). Print. Pp 45.

¹³¹ Amghar, Samir. "Les Salafistes Français: Une Nouvelle Aristocratie Religieuse?" *Maghreb-Machrek* 183 (Printemps 2005): 15.

¹³² Ibid. 21.

CHAPTER VI

Muslim View and Disapproval of Pro-violence Salafi Groups

Shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001, President Jacques Chirac proclaimed that “Nous sommes tous Américain.”¹³³ ¹³⁴ Like the rest of the world, images of the World Trade Center burning and collapsing filled the front pages of newspapers. The attacks were impossible to ignore to all people, including French Muslims. Immediately after, Muslim leaders began to speak out against the actions committed by the terrorists that had connections to al-Qaeda. In October of 2001, the Salafi Shaikh Salih as-Suhaymee made statements condemning the terrorist attacks:

“Islaam is a balanced and moderate way, and it does not enter into negligence on the one hand nor exaggeration or extremism on the other...Islam encourages equity and justice amidst both Muslims and non-Muslims... Furthermore, Allaah has also prohibited oppression for himself, and has likewise prohibited His servants from oppression... He has

¹³³ We are all American.

¹³⁴ Gregory, Shaun. "France and the War on Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15.1 (Spring 2003): 139.

also ordered the fulfillment of agreements and obligations and has also forbade the killing of those non- Muslims which Muslim countries have agreements with.”¹³⁵

He then stated that because the terrorists did not follow these rules, their actions were impermissible and Islam does not support them. Salih as-Suhaymee also considered the attacks as “widespread murder” and the “assassination of innocent people.” Other Salafi leaders like Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Waahid bin Saaleh gave his opinion of terrorist plots and terrorism:

“The Salafi position with regarding those who incite or plan terrorist acts such as suicide, kidnap or bombings is that Muslims should inform the authorities of their activities. This is regardless of whether these acts are perpetrated in Muslim or non-Muslim countries. Muslim communities must be at the forefront of stamping out these non-Islamic acts that are done falsely in the name of Islam.”¹³⁶

Not only does Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Waahid bin Saaleh discuss terrorist acts, he calls them “innovators”, which is, according to Salafism, an unacceptable action. Since they are guilty of innovation and misconstruing the teachings of the Prophet, he argues that the perpetrators should not be defended or protected.

Although Shaikh Salih as-Suhaymee and Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Waahid bin Saaleh are not French Muslims, but they are just two examples of Salafi leaders that have spoken out against terrorist acts since the attacks of September 11, 2001. Their condemnations influence Salafis—French or not—to denounce pro-violence groups like al-Qaeda. In France, Muslim leaders have also publicly criticized violent attacks by Islamic groups. The director of the Grande Mosquée de Paris, Dalil Boubakeur, is one of these voices. On October 5, 2002, he spoke on behalf of la Grande Mosquée and French Muslims:

¹³⁵ *Shaikh Salih as-Suhaymee on Attacks on the WTC*. Publication no. CAF20008. SalafiPublications.com. Web.

¹³⁶ Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Waahid bin Saaleh. *Informing the Authorities of Terrorist Plots*. Publication no. MNJ140008. SalafiPublications.com. Web.

“French Islam, European Islam...the true Islam isn’t that one [violent groups], Islam of the middle way, of the future, of tolerance and humanism; that is our Islam: the one that respects the other, that inserts itself peacefully into republican institutions... (Translated from French).”¹³⁷

Mr. Boubakeur labeled the pro-violence groups as “a danger breaking down our doors” calling them “enemies of the modern world.” He also states that all Muslims have paid the price for their blind violence, indicating his recognition of the image that such terrorists give Muslims worldwide. This “image” raises a very important question: Are the violent actions of jihadi Salafi discouraging French Muslims from joining? Salafi leaders worldwide and French Muslim actors have repeatedly illustrated terrorists as murders and international outlaws—something that might harm their recruitment.

In *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other*, a study done by the Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Projects in 2006, findings support the hypothesis that the destructive actions of pro-violence groups have created an anti-terrorist sentiment through the French Muslim community. When asked whether or not they thought this type of violence is justified in order to protect Islam¹³⁸, 83 percent of French Muslims interviewed answered that they are “never justified” or “rarely justified.” Furthermore, interviewees were also asked how many Muslims in France, in their opinion, support pro-violence groups.¹³⁹

Eighty-nine percent believed that “very few” or “just some” French Muslim supported Islamic

¹³⁷ Boubakeur, Dalil. "ALLOCUTION du Docteur Dalil BOUBAKEUR." Speech. La Grande Mosquée de Paris, Paris, France. *La Grande Mosquée de Paris*. 5 Oct. 2002. Web. 23 Oct. 2009. <http://www.mosquee-de-paris.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=196:allocution-du-docteur-dalil-boubakeur&catid=40:plan-du-site>.

¹³⁸ The actual question asked was “Some people think that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Other people believe that, no matter what the reason, this kind of violence is never justified. Do you personally feel that this kind of violence is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?”

¹³⁹ “In your opinion, how many (Muslim/people) in our country support Islamic extremists like al-Qaeda—would you say most, many, just some or very few.”

extremist activities. These responses to these two questions affirm that among French Muslims, there is little support for groups like the pro-violence Salafis and their tainted image.¹⁴⁰

Throughout Europe and France, there is a general concern about the rise of Islamic extremism among non-Muslims, but the Pew survey reveals that Muslims in France also share these same fears. In fact, 73 percent of French Muslims share this concern with eighty-nine percent of French non-Muslims. This indicates that most French Muslims see these groups as a menace and a threat. In addition to these feelings, French Muslims do not trust leaders of these movements. About 85 percent of French Muslims interviewed said that they have no confidence at all in Osama bin Laden. Only 5 percent showed “a lot of confidence” or “some confidence.”

141

The overwhelming evidence from this study is that the support for pro-violence groups, including those that are Salafist, is minimal. As a result, it appears that the pro-violence groups in France have failed to establish a significant relationship with the French Muslim community. More importantly, the evidence suggests that their violent tactics do not appeal to the French Muslim community, thus diminishing their popularity. In Audrey Kurth's *How al-Qaeda Ends*, she discusses the decline of pro-violence groups. Two of her arguments for why such groups fail are the *diminishment of popular support* and *the inability to pass the cause on to the next generation*. Kurth argues that terrorist groups often lose popular support through revulsion among its own community through acts such as unnecessarily killing innocent people and civilians. In the case of France, French Muslims have been turned off as a result of these murderous goals. Concerning younger generations, young Muslims in France are likely

¹⁴⁰ *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other*. Pew Global Attitudes Project: Spring 2006 Survey. Pew Research Center. Web. 57-58.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* 50,60.

uninterested in becoming a suicide bomber or mass murder. This, in turn, leaves pro-violence groups with little ability to recruit a new generation to continue the cause.¹⁴²

Conclusion

The attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 shocked the world, including Muslims living in France. Although Salafi and French Muslim leaders have spoken out against the brutality that pro-violence Salafi's call "martyrdom." They have spoken out against these actions, and feelings of disapproval and concern for such groups are clear among the French Muslim community. Their violent tactics, on which they rely for change, have proven to be a factor that weakens support from French Muslims and the younger French Muslim generation. The tainted image of pro-violence Salafis and their loss of support and credibility among most French Muslims have created an environment in which they cannot grow.

¹⁴² Cronin, Audrey Kurth. "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups." *International Security* 31.1 (Summer 2006): 23-28.

CONCLUSION

A Changing Environment

The major variable that has influenced the survival of jihadi Salafis in France in the past is its environment. For the French jihadi Salafis, their surroundings have rapidly changed over the last thirty years, growing more and more inhospitable and unsupportive of such violent groups. In the 1980s, the movement migrated to France from North African nations like Algeria, seeking revenge for the French colonial past. Once they arrived, they found that France of the 1980s was a nation that was unprepared to protect itself against attacks launched by Islamic or terrorist groups.

During the jihadi Salafi's "honeymoon" years in France, they were able to benefit from the failures of the French society and state. They found a Muslim, immigrant population with a generally low socio-economic status. These minorities had largely been pushed out of the cities

and into cheap, dilapidated housing projects built by the government outside of cities. These *banlieues* proved to cause even more problems, concentrating poverty and marginalization. From these centers of marginalization, the jihadi Salafi groups could pull young Muslims away from a life of social exclusion, unemployment, and discrimination and into a fight against the society and government that seemingly has little concern for them.

In addition to socio-economic conditions, French integration and its failures has also aided jihadi Salafi recruitment. While the French government claims that it has tried to integrate its Muslims, issues have revealed its failure to do so. Because many French Muslims feel isolated from French society and live in areas with high levels of crime, they feel disconnected from French authorities. The riots of 2005 act as an example of this, with French Muslims in nearly all major cities revolting against the death of two Maghrebi boys while running from French police. This lack of a relationship between French Muslims and the French authorities and government has been intensified by policies like *laïcité*, which have long been in place. However, surfacing issues during the 1980s and early 1990s rekindled problems of religious expression—and respect in the eyes of some French Muslims—between the French government and Muslims. Besides the social exclusion that failed integration has created, perceived religious disrespect by French Muslims has been an asset of the jihadi Salafi groups, giving them a platform to preach retaliation against a system that appears to not respect Islam.

While failed integration has played a great role in violent radicalization, the failure of political Islam in France has as well. Political Islamic groups gained power during the 1990s in France, but they would eventually prove to be an unimpressive voice for French Muslims. The Muslim Brotherhood and the UOIF, two political Islamic organizations, could not stop the riots of 2005, and they have been unsuccessful in helping French Muslims surmount issues like the

headscarf affair. This failure to represent Muslims provides the jihadi Salafis an opportunity to attract followers.

While these three factors are significant in creating a receptive atmosphere for jihadi Salafi recruitment, I argue that other stronger influences have changed this environment. Though most French Muslims still have low socio-economic statuses, integration has yet to be successful, and political Islam seems to have little support from French Muslims. Events in the late 1990s and 2000s have transformed the old France that was a prime location for Islamic terrorist in the 1980s into an anti-terrorism powerhouse. With attacks like September 11th, jihadi Salafi groups are often seen for what they do, not actually what they believe. The image that they send to potential followers is that of violence and terrorism—not the most attractive lifestyle for young French Muslims.

This is where the predicative Salafis are able to defeat their pro-violence cousins, offering young, marginalized Muslims an escape not by violence and suicide missions, but through separation from an unwelcoming society and potential economic success.¹⁴³ I see this as one of the greatest influences on the failure of pro-violence Salafi groups in France. They have been unsuccessful in forming a strong enough relationship with the French Muslim community, and an extreme majority of Muslims see their actions as unsupportable. Salafi and French Muslim leaders alike have spoken out, pronouncing them to be untrue Muslims who do not follow the teaching of the Prophet. Without interest from new generations of Muslims, the jihadi Salafi movement has little opportunity to grow in France.

Outside of the Salafi movement, the French government has been one of the greatest actors in creating an inhospitable environment for pro-violence jihadi Salafi groups. Harsh anti-terrorist policies have, in fact, aided the predicative Salafi movement through the removal of

¹⁴³ This refers to the trend of commercial activity among French Salafis.

jihadi Salafi imams that spread their ideologies through revolutionary rhetoric. Through close surveillance, deportation, and a force of anti-terrorist magistrates, the French government has been one of the world's most successful anti-terrorist forces. This contrasts completely with the old French environment. While the jihadis could survive under the lenient terrorist policies of the early 1980s, the present efforts have essentially weeded the French Muslim community of nearly all pro-violence Salafism leaders as well as blocking foreign jihadi influences. The French government has, in short, been an unrecognized ally of the French predicative Salafis through their effective tactics and policies to suffocate the pro-violence jihadi Salafi movement in France.

Today's France is much different than yesterday's France. Pro-violent jihadi Salafi groups find little shelter inside French borders, and the French Muslim population gives them little support. While the risk of radicalization still exists in France as a result of the current state of French Muslims, it is important to understand that radicalization does not have to be violent. Marginalized Muslims may be drawn to the fundamentalist Salafi movement, but they are more likely to join the non-violent faction of the predicatives. As a result, the pro-violent jihadi Salafi movement is currently facing decline and failure to find success in attracting French Muslim followers. My observation of the failure of jihadi Salafis in France is shared by Samir Amghar, Researcher of Sociology at the School for Advanced Studies of the Social Sciences, who has published of several articles concerning the Salafi movement in France. Like him, I conclude that the jihadi Salafi movement has been suffocated by French anti-terrorism legislation, a lack of interest among young French Muslims, and the triumph of the predicative French Salafis.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Amghar, Samir. E-mail interview. 22 Oct. 2009.

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