



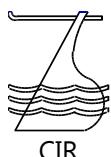
The Denmark School

Youth and Islamist Radicalisation Lille, France

English Summary



**Chahla Beski-Chafiq
Jane Birmant
Hichem Benmerzoug
Akim Taibi
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Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation (CIR)
Department of Political Science
Aarhus University, Denmark
April 2010

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ADRIC

Agence de Développement des Relations interculturelles
pour la Citoyenneté, Paris



English summary of research report prepared for the
Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation (CIR)
Department of Political Science
Aarhus University, Denmark
April 2010

Islamism and Radicalisation – *the Denmark School*

The ambition of the Denmark School is to remedy the fragmentation between different fields of research in Islamism. The Denmark School wants to explore the phenomena of 'Islamism' in its different manifestations and to highlight the mechanisms of radicalisation processes among Muslim youth in Europe. One of the innovative approaches is the linkage between 'soft security' and 'hard security'. While other projects mainly focus on *terrorism*, this project first of all focuses on *Islamism*. The identification of Islamism requires a distinction between three possible phases: 1) ideology, 2) movements and 3) political regimes.

The study of Islamism in international relations is usually limited to treating only one aspect of Islamism as a transnational actor, namely terrorism and the corresponding anti-terror measures. But Islamist ambitions and strategies are expressed through a number of other means, such as foreign policy, boycotts, crises, strategic alliances and perhaps even the acquisition of WMD. These must be mapped in order to provide an empirical basis for studying contemporary Islamist world views and conceptions of international relations.

Mehdi Mozaffari

Head of the Centre for Studies in Islamism
and Radicalisation (CIR)

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This is an English summary of the report on the city of Lille in France. Like two previous reports on Denmark (with special focus on Aarhus), one on Parma and Verona in Italy and one on Leicester in the UK, this report is based on empirical research. In the case of Lille, the research was conducted by Dr. Chahla Beski-Chafiq, Jane Birmant, Hichem Benmerzoug, Akim Taibi and Ariane Goignard, all from the Agence de Développement des Relations interculturelles pour la Citoyenneté (Adric), Paris.

A synthesis in English of the five reports will be published later in the same series.

It is important to mention that, for the sake of harmonisation, CIR organized meetings between the researchers to discuss and prepare the practical questions related to the process of investigation. At these meetings, the participating researchers coordinated their research and elaborated a common interview guide. It is also important to stress the independent character of these investigations. The projects have been carried out in accordance with the standards for good research practice, and the Centre has in no way interfered in the research process.

In this delicate and highly sensitive field of research, carrying out interviews is a difficult task and the researchers have faced various obstacles during the process. The completion of the investigations has taken many months. The interviews have mainly involved three different groups: Young Muslims, religious leaders and social workers who work with activities and issues in relation to Muslims and immigrants on a daily basis.

The first version of the reports was finished during the autumn of 2009 and was submitted to an international committee of experts for evaluation. Based on the comments of this committee, the researchers revised their reports. I should like to thank the members of the evaluation committee for a wonderful cooperation.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the reports exclusively reflect the findings of the researchers and do not necessarily express the views of CIR.

Mehdi Mozaffari

Head of CIR

Reports from CIR:

Youth and Islamist Radicalisation

Lille, France – English Summary

Dr. Chahla Beski-Chafiq, Jane Birman
Hichem Benmerzoug, Akim Taibi
and Ariane Goignard

April 2010

Jeunes et radicalisation islamiste

Lille, France

Dr. Chahla Beski-Chafiq, Jane Birman
Hichem Benmerzoug, Akim Taibi
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April 2010

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Radicalization among Young Muslims in Aarhus

Lene Kühle and Lasse Lindekilde

January 2010

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English Summary

Youth and Islamic Radicalisation: Trajectories, Main Factors and Actors

Lille, France, 2008-2009



This document is a summary of research conducted as part of a European study on religious radicalism among young Muslims, done by the Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation (CIR), Aarhus University, Denmark, under the direction of Professor Mehdi Mozaffari.

The French part of the research was assigned to Adric (Agence de Développement des relations interculturelles pour la citoyenneté). It was directed by sociologist Chahla Beski-Shafiq with the participation of Jane Birmant and Hichem Benmerzoug¹.

The city of Lille was chosen due to various factors which allowed for a collective and comparative study with other European cities selected for the European research project, ie Aarhus (Denmark), Leicester (UK), Parma and Verona (Italy). Additionally, populations with an immigrant background (including those from so-called Muslim countries) are integrated in a very visible manner in the overall population of Lille and the Muslim religion is immediately and easily recognizable/apparent/noticeable.

Our summary focuses on the following:

1. Challenges, problematics and research methodology
2. Realisation of field survey
3. Research results
4. Perspectives of further investigation

1. Challenges, Problematics and Research Methodology

In France, the first Muslim country, from a demographic point of view, in Europe: The number of Muslims is estimated to be 5-6 million.² Since the late 1980s, Islamism and its

¹ Chahla Beski-Chafiq has a doctorate in sociology. Jane Birmant holds a postgraduate degree in sociology and Hichem Benmerzoug is a doctoral candidate in sociology. Furthermore, Akim Taibi who holds a postgraduate degree in European Studies and International Relations, has contributed to the surveys of the religious actors. Finally, Ariane Goignard, the coordinator of activities at Adric, who holds a Master in sociological studies, coordinated the overall research.

social, cultural and political influence have been greatly questioned by the media, but also by academic research and social workers. Our study therefore takes up complex questions on young people's relations to Islam and Islamism. Furthermore, we have taken into account the specificities of France. Indeed, in this country where there is a significant presence of so-called Muslim people, where secularism and the French model of integration lead to regarding migrants as members of the nation-state and not as a component of separate communities, from the 1990s, Islamism has caused vast socio-political and theoretical controversies at the heart of which are issues related to young people's relations to Islam. Reflecting on the above questions allowed us to construct our hypotheses and working method in the following way.

Theoretical Framework, Objectives and Method

Based on the findings of various studies about youth, we could distinguish Islam and Islamism in France, two major trends: first, the development of an individual Islam, adapted to secularism, and on the other hand, the deployment of an Islam that, in various forms, projects the socio-political model of a supposed *ummah* based on religious values, rules and codes. As to the latter, the different observations agree on establishing a distinction between movements (violent or not) which reject any blending together with societies that are not managed according to Islamic laws, and the consensual groups who lead a communitarian conquest in French society. Pursuing this goal, resorting to Islam aims at establishing, within French society, a Muslim community built on standards and codes based on Islam, and at provoking a socio-political and communitarian reorganization which would bring about various implications concerning the common laws in relation to the requirements of religious laws. The different studies agree that these phenomena move away from both the Islam experienced by the parent generation and from the individual and secular Islam experienced by a significant part of young people, and that this new Islam becomes the source and resource of a new communitarian identity, taking different forms. Now, researchers move away in their analysis of these movements with multiple names: 'Islamic communitarianism' ['communautarisme islamiste'], 'neo-communitarianism' ['neo-communautarisme'], 'new Islamic fundamentalism' ['nouveau fondamentalisme islamique'] or 'hitherto unknown universal Islam' ['islam universel inédit'].

The theoretical differences in this regard are mostly about qualifying/defining the goals and consequences of the movements of re-Islamisation on the socio-political life of the

² In France, the Data Protection Act of 1978 prohibits all registration of ethnicity or religion in official surveys. The figures in this regard are therefore subject to very different estimates. In 2003, the Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, estimated the number to be between 5 and 6 million. There is now consensus among representatives of religious communities and government officials that the number is 5 million. See: Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse. *Intégrer l'Islam*. Paris: O. Jacob, 2007, p. 38.

young people concerned and on French society. Some researchers, like Kepel³ and Venner⁴, emphasize the anti-democratic character of these movements, while others, like Roy⁵, note their possible integration into French society, even if that makes society move towards a multicultural system and a flexible application of secularism. Still others, like Khosrokhavar⁶ and Cesari⁷, find a plurality of Islam experienced by young people, particularly the existence of new trends that promote the integration of Islam in democratic citizenship. These theoretical controversies unfold among other things in the debates of the intellectuals who advocate a return to Islam as a source of community identity. Such is the case of Tariq Ramadan and the instances of movements of re-Islamization like the UOIF (Union des Organisations Islamiques de France) who bring together several Islamic associations, including Jeunes Musulmans de France (JMF) and Etudiants musulmans de France.

In the final analysis, these theoretical, political as well as media-related debates present the following problematics:

Does a communitarian re-Islamisation generate the same values as a democratic citizenship based on freedom and equality? Does a re-composition of identity based on religion have the same perspectives of equality in mind as envisaged by the democratic vision of the relationship between individual citizens (particularly between Muslims and non-Muslims, between women and men)? Or, does it rather promote discriminatory segregation? Does a religiously based communitarianism support the development of Islamist radicalisation, or does it slow down such a development?

In the light of these findings and these issues, we built our fieldwork on a three-dimensional methodological approach:

1. Distinguish Islam from Islamism: There is a fundamental difference between practicing Islam as a religion that presupposes membership of an open religious community (mainly expressed through the practice of an individual Islam adapted to secularism) and Islamism that ideologises Islam to plan a presupposed membership of any Muslim person to a community (*ummah*), constructed according to standards and codes based on Islamic law. Therefore, instead of defining this process as *the radicalisation of religious practices*, we prefer to speak of the *process of Islamist radicalisation*.

³ Gilles Kepel. *Fitna*. Paris: Gallimard, 2004; *Djihad. Expansion et déclin de l'islamisme*. Paris: Gallimard, 2001; *La revanche de Dieu, chrétiens, juifs et musulmans à la reconquête du monde*. Paris: Seuil, 1991.

⁴ Fiammetta Venner. *OPA sur l'Islam de France. Les ambitions de l'UOIF*. Paris: Calmann Levy, 2005.

⁵ Olivier Roy. *L'Islam mondialisé*. Paris: Seuil, 2002; *Généalogie de l'Islamisme*. Paris: Hachette, 2002.

⁶ Farhad Khosrokhavar. *L'Islam des jeunes*. Paris: Flammarion, 1997.

⁷ Jocelyne Cesari. *L'Islam en Europe. L'incorporation d'une religion*. [online] Available at: <http://cemoti.revues.org/document720.html> (accessed 11.10.09)

J. Cesari. *Faut-il avoir peur de l'Islam?* Paris: Press of Political Science, 1997.

J. Cesari. *L'Islam en Europe*. Op. cit.

By Islamism we understand: A doctrine that projects Islam as an ideology governing all spheres of individual and collective life and aims at mobilizing people of Muslim affiliation in building a society or community based on religious values and laws. This broad definition embraces different tendencies, from the radicals, violent or not, to tendencies identified as open, consensual and carrying a plurality of trends.

2. Avoid research of a profile type of the young Islamist who could be a potential terrorist: Different studies show that there are no typical profiles of young Islamists which can be regarded as potential terrorists and that the development of violent radicalism unfolds within a vast and multifarious movement of Islamist radicalisation. Moreover, we note that the phenomenon of Islamist radicalisation cannot be explained solely by factors related to socioeconomic problems (including school failure, unemployment and lack of access to consumption). It is not just young people who are excluded or at risk of failure who are likely to be captivated by Islam. It also attracts young people with a standard course and from different social classes, especially middle-class and well-off environments. As with any ideologisation, personal adherence to Islam can be explained by a number of factors (including the search for recognition, an ideal or a connection, particularly in case of resentment against injustice, humiliation or experiences of exclusion). Adherence to Islam among youths finally relates to a dynamic of identity construction which is in conformity with the ideas they develop through interactions with their environment: themselves, others, and society.

3. Open up the view on Islamism: In our research, we study the making of supporters of Islamism, including the observation of the role played by different actors around young people. Indeed, the process of Islamist indoctrination of young people questions the influence of the families and the surrounding society in their capacity of teaching values and constructing social reference points in identification matters. So for us, it is a question of a multidimensional process that, besides the young people and the Islamists as politico-religious actors, involves other social actors: parents, education professionals, religious actors, political actors, the media, etc.

Building on these methodological axes, our most important aim is to explain the impact of re-Islamisation in the development of Islamism among young people at local level. We want to know to what extent the global process of re-Islamisation involves youths in Islamism or, rather, makes them stop. It is in this context that we have been interested in the ideas of Islam and Islamism on the part of Muslim youths and the actors around them. This approach should lead us to understand the impact of the phenomena of re-Islamisation on the identity development of the young people and on their attitude to our common societal principles and values. It should also enable us to understand to what extent this attitude brings them closer or further away from Islamism, and to examine the risks and scope of the development of Islamism among young people as well as the factors promoting or inhibiting this process.

Consequently, the interviews were conducted based on questionnaires and for youths and parents, we adopted an open approach that integrates their life stories.

2. Realisation of Field Survey

The following points are briefly presented:

- a) The area of the survey
- b) Encountered obstacles
- c) Number and profiles of respondents

a. The Area of the Survey

Located in the heart of the metropolitan area of Lille⁸ in the region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, the city of Lille, which has 226,800 habitants⁹, is the main city of the second-most populated region of France after Ile de France.

This specific location, enhanced by a dense transport network (a river port, an airport, two railway stations, a freight station, an intersection of five motorways), makes Lille is a real gateway to Europe. Because of its past mining and textile industry, Lille has experienced several waves of immigration from Europe (from Belgium in the 19th century, from Poland in the inter-war period, and later from Italy and Portugal). After the Second World War, it also became the haven of populations from the Maghreb (especially Algeria and Morocco). This North African population now constitutes the majority of the supposedly Muslim population of Lille while the so-called Muslim immigration itself Muslim from Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa is more recent and less numerous. Overall, the Muslim presence in Lille is visible.¹⁰ Indeed, Lille is home to many mosques and Muslim cultural venues, a Muslim grammar school (the second in France) opened in 2003 and a Muslim faculty, the Avicenne des Sciences Humaines Institute (Avicenne Institute of Human Studies), inaugurated in 2006.

⁸ Greater Lille consists of 80 municipalities, counts 1.2 million inhabitants and is situated at the centre of a 350 kilometer wide perimeter with 100 million inhabitants on the border of Belgium and across the north of Europe.

⁹ This figure includes Lomme and Hellemmes, two municipalities incorporated in 1977 and 2000 respectively.

¹⁰ When speaking of Muslim populations, it is necessary to bear in mind two important points. First, in France, the term immigrant refers to any person with foreign parents born abroad and living in France. Thus, when a person acquires French nationality, this person is no longer foreign, but remains an immigrant. Conversely, a person with French parents born abroad is not an immigrant. However, it is customary to count repatriates from Algeria and the former colonies in net migration. On the other hand, since ethnic or religious censuses are not allowed in France, it is difficult to estimate the precise number of Muslims. The selected figures are therefore based on estimates that take into account the countries of origin of the persons in question or their parents.

Quantitatively, INSEE¹¹ estimates that, in 2006, the city had 9,311 persons with acquired French citizenship (4.1% of the population of Lille) and 17,983 foreign nationals (8% of the population of Lille) of which, by order of importance, 5,161 were Moroccans and 3,779 Algerians.¹² These populations are highly concentrated in four districts of south and east of the city: Wazemmes, Lille-Sud, Lille-Moulins, and Fives. These districts are affected by the Projet Urbain de Cohésion Sociale/Urban Project of Social Cohesion (PUCS) which targets the districts mostly affected by unemployment and social and educational challenges of a particularly young population with a high percentage leaving school without a school-leaving certificate.

On the whole, the seven mosques in Lille were constructed at the initiative of Algerian and Moroccan immigrants and are situated near areas with a high concentration of immigrant population of different origins.¹³ The leaders of four of the mosques estimate the attendance to about a hundred people a week (for each of them). Among the three other mosques, *Al Imane* (also known as the Mosque of Lille-Sud) has the highest attendance. *This mosque is a particularly important place frequented especially by young adherents who do not necessarily live in the district, nor work nearby.*

The activities of the mosque of Lille-Sud are incorporated in the activities of the cultural and religious centre of Lille-Sud, administered by the Ligue Islamique du Nord/Islamic League of the North (LIN). Created in 1983, LIN is the Muslim organisation considered the most important in the region, both through the many services available to Muslims and because of its religious and administrative influence. The Friday sermon delivered in Arabic and French plays a significant role in attracting new generations. In addition to the actual acts of worship (organizing prayers, celebration of religious festivals, funerals, chaplaincy), the activities of the centre include the teaching of Arabic and Islamic culture, training seminars for active members of the association, hotlines for people in physical or moral distress, a library, a press wall as well as a newsletter. The centre also includes a women's department with activities for women. Finally, LIN has made several breakthroughs in the political arena by inviting candidates in national and local elections to speak in the conference room of the cultural centre.

It is worth noting that the mosque houses the Averroes grammar school, the second private Muslim educational institution in France, after the private Muslim secondary school at the island of Réunion. The Muslim Averroes grammar school which opened its doors as a private institution according to an agreement with the State, provides education in accordance with the programmes of the Ministry of Education. Its

¹¹ Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies).

¹² Next are 3,464 Europeans, 3,368 Africans (excluding North Africa) and 2,211 nationals of other countries.

¹³ The expression immigrant population also contains French people who have obtained French nationality or are born in France of immigrant parents.

specificity consists in teaching Arabic language, culture and literature (to beginners or experienced), as well as in the opportunity to attend a weekly course in Muslim culture.

Moreover, another point to note is the active presence of the association of Jeunes Musulmans de France/Young Muslims of France (JMF) in the socio-cultural institution that incorporates the Mosque of Lille-Sud. As a nationwide association established in 1993, the JMF have, since the start, been supported by the Union des Organisations Islamiques de France/Union of Islamic Organisations of France (UOIF). Currently, France has thirteen sections of JMF and three to come. Their cultural activities, sports and organisation of social debate are directed at young people generally and aim to support young people in carrying out their project, at the same time complying with Muslim precepts of morality or ethics.

Furthermore, Amar Lasfar, the imam of the Mosque of Lille-Sud, a 48-year-old French Moroccan and, at the same time, boss of a travel agency, seems to be a charismatic personality and renowned in Lille for still another title: As president of LIN and rector of the Mosque of Lille-Sud, this regional representative of the UOIF has also held the chair of the Conseil régional du culte musulman/Regional Council of the Muslim Faith (CRCM) since 2008. The name of Amar Lasfar is often cited by local and national media in high-profile cases on the practice of Islam, anti-Muslim racism and Islamism. He advocates integration of Islam into French society within the framework of Islamic law. This line, also defended the UOIF, aims to acquire a substantial popular base and establish a number of leaders or managers to build a strong and legitimate representation of a Muslim community united around religious values. This project should allow them to negotiate with state authorities in order to secure respect for Muslim standards and laws within the framework of a multicultural republic. So, the position of Amar Lasfar is for an open secularism and against the law banning religious symbols (the veil) in public schools in 2005. Socio-cultural and political activities such as conferences and debates with figures like Tariq Ramadan and debates in connection with the presidential election organized by the Ligue Islamique du Nord are also consistent with this logic.

Given this context, Lille seemed to us as an appropriate area in which to observe the process of re-Islamisation among youths and the individual, societal and global consequences.

Nevertheless, since the first phase of fieldwork, we have been faced with a major challenge: communicating on these matters, not only with religious actors, but also with political and social actors. This fact constitutes one of the great obstacles to analysing the facts and phenomena related to Islamism in French society.

b. Encountered Obstacles

Consequently, it took much more time and energy than expected to get appointments with political and religious actors, as well as with social and educational professionals. Everywhere, the structures we contacted told us tirelessly that they had to consult their groups before answering us. In some cases, the answer was never given. The appointments made with people from Averroes grammar school and the Ligue Islamique du Nord were canceled repeatedly. The reason given was lack of time. After having attended a Friday sermon led by Amar Lasfar, we could talk to him for five minutes and got the promise of a meeting that never came off.

Some interlocutors were, however, more expressive and made criticisms of the research. Their comments focused on the view that such a study would necessarily nourish the stigmatisation of Islam and Muslims. During our contacts with various local actors, we found out that it would be impossible to have a serene and frank dialogue on Islamism. Indeed, on the one hand, political leaders and religious actors officially say that the local atmosphere is serene with regard to this subject, while on the other hand, the mere mention of Islamism entails significant reluctance, tensions and suspicions in a significant number of the actors we met. Even among the actors who agreed to be interviewed, we experienced great distrust. Before each meeting, the interviewees all asked if all our study was for or against Muslims. We also observed that the concept of radicalisation to many seemed exclusionary for fear of slipping into racism and becoming an accomplice of the media that would stigmatise Muslims. This is a significant indicator of the widespread confusion about the ideological dimension of Islamism and about how it differs from the repeatedly emphasised “essence of the Muslim religion”. Thus, there was a categorical refusal to respond specifically to the role of specific types of actors in the development of Islamism. It should be noted that these problems were of lesser importance in our interviews with young people.

c. Number and Profiles of Respondents

With the purpose of carrying out the status report, we approached fifteen local structures: organisations involved in the care of young (recreation, prevention) and religious bodies (including places of worship, the Ligue Islamique du Nord, the Averroes grammar school and the Avicenne Institute). Except in the cases of no response mentioned earlier, we have been able to carry out four meetings with professionals from different backgrounds (urban politics, socio-cultural recreation, prevention of juvenile delinquency and socio-economic integration of young people) who have kindly helped us. Building on these actors who were convinced of the need for reflections on young people and Islamism, we worked with tact in order to conduct the necessary interviews with educational and political actors (elected politicians, teachers, educators, recreation counsellors of local political authorities), and with young people. It should be stressed that, in relation to the young people and especially the young men, having attended sermons in the mosques

facilitated contact with them. An introductory intermediary was enough for volunteers, by word-of-mouth, subsequently presented themselves spontaneously. However, a significant part of our interlocutors expressed their desire to remain anonymous and some of them did not want to be recorded.

We also managed to carry out sixty-seven interviews with young people (32 interviews), parents (7 interviews), socio-educational actors (20 interviews), religious actors (3 meetings) and elected politicians (5 interviews). The profiles of the interviewees have a rich diversity, both in the course and area of activity and in regard to age, sex, etc.

The Young People Interviewed

Through acquaintances made in places of worship, especially the El-Fath mosque in Wazemmes, the El-Imane mosque in Lille-Sud and the Averroes grammar school and the JMF association (Young Muslims of France), we talked with thirty-two young people, twenty-three men and nine women of varying age: eight people aged between fifteen and twenty, eight between twenty-one and twenty-six, thirteen people among twenty-six and thirty years and three people between thirty and thirty-three. We were particularly interested in young adults since we sought to examine the evolution of their journey in their relationship to religion.

The majority of those interviewed, twenty-four people, come from Algerian families (eleven) and Moroccan (thirteen individuals). Four of them are children of mixed couples (Algerian/French, Algerian/Senegalese, Algerian/Moroccan, and a Congolese couple where one partner is Christian and the other Muslim). Three are children of families from Syria, Guinea and the Comoros. The latter is a French convert.

While twenty-four of the thirty-two young people are children of immigrant families, seven had their own path of emigration coming to France: They are men between fifteen and thirty-three years of age. In addition, this panel has two converts: one French and one from a Congolese couple (Christian/Muslim).

These thirty-two young people also have very varied activities: students in secondary or grammar school (3), vocational training (3), university students (6 students from bac+1 to bac+4), young people in employment (14) and looking for employment or education (6).

Baccalauréat

Final secondary school examination, qualifying for university entrance, approximately the same as A-levels (UK) or high school diploma (US).

The *baccalauréat* or *bac* is taken by students who have completed their final year at the *lycée*; successful candidates may go to university. There are three main types (*filières*) of *bac*, each corresponding to a specific field: *bac L (littéraire)* being arts-oriented, *bac S (scientifique)* science-based and *bac ES (économique et social)* economics and social studies. Within each domain various obligatory and optional subjects can be combined to give up to eleven different types of diploma. There is also the *bac professionnel* which offers thirty-

eight different specialist or vocational subjects.

The different levels of studies in France are referred to in terms of *Bac+* (*Bac+2* for the *DEUG*, *Bac+3* for the *licence*, *Bac+4* for the *maîtrise*, *Bac+5* for a *DEA* or a *DESS*) and are used in job advertisements, CVs and day-to-day life in order to indicate one's level or years of studies.

Dictionnaire Francais-Anglais Larousse, www.larousse.fr

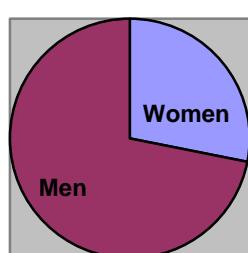
The profiles of the fourteen young workers are also diverse: Three passed their bac or bac professional (various kinds of school leaving examination) and work as a welder, an electrician, and a worker, of the six who passed a bac+2, five work in businesses like garages, consultants, commercial agents or in restaurants, and the last one has opened his own business. Four passed a bac+3 and bac+4 and work in the computer business or in the area of youth coaching and education and supporting educational and charitable activities. One passed a bac+5 and holds a management position.

Of the three students in vocational training, both passed a bac or bac professional and are training to become a social worker and crane operator and the third passed a bac+3 and is training in the health field.

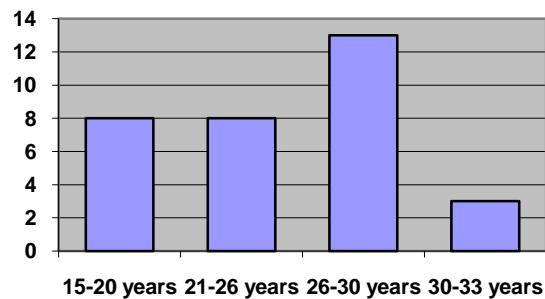
Finally, concerning the six young people looking for employment, three are newly arrived and an education level equivalent to primary and secondary school; two passed a bac professional and one has a bac+3.

The tables below show the distribution of the young interviewees according to their profiles:

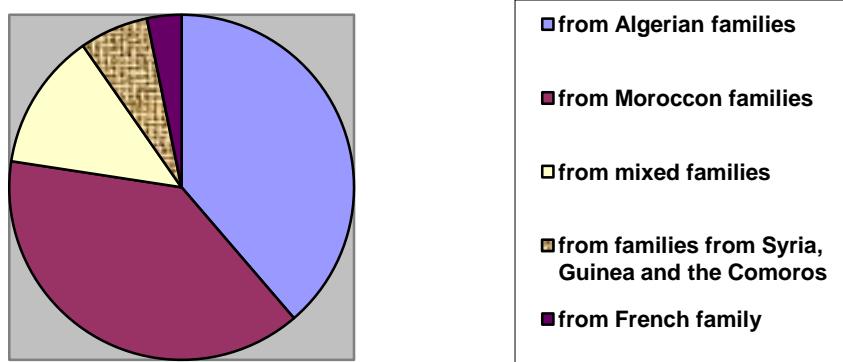
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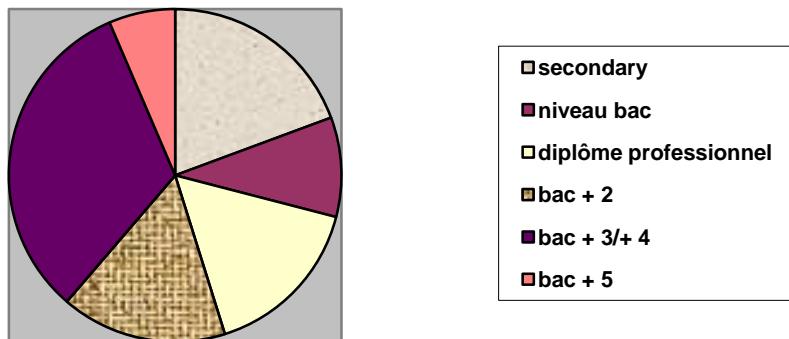
According to age



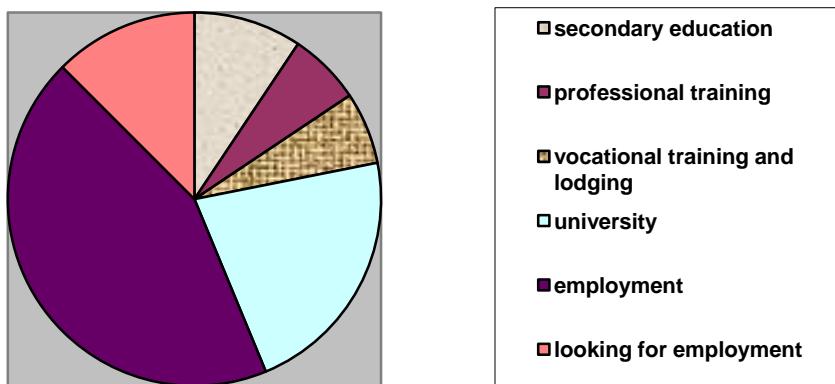
According to the immigrant background of the interviewees or of their families



According to their level of education



According to activity



The Social and Educational Workers Interviewed

Among the twenty social workers, we have eleven men and nine women, five of whom are from North African immigration and their level of education goes from bac+2 (two) to bac+8 (three); nine others have a level of education equivalent to bac+3 and six have a level of education of bac+4 to bac+5.

Professionally, eighteen work in the fields of education and socio-education: Three are teachers and one a librarian in secondary and higher education; three are involved in women's access to rights and issues related to sexuality; eleven are professionals working with youth coaching and education (six among local youth, two in recreation activities, one with social assistance in an institution for young people, one in a institution for newly arrived young people and one is a counsellor of socio-economic integration).

Among the four professionals in secondary and university education, we have two teachers from the Avicenne Institute, a teacher from a private Catholic school and a librarian from a public school.

We also met an administrative officer and project manager of Urban policy [Politique de la ville].

If we look at the duration of their professional experience, we see that it varies quite a lot: Eight people have more than ten years' professional experience (including three with nearly twenty years or more), seven people have from five to ten years' experience, three have two to five years. Only two people have less than one year's experience. Thus, the majority of the professionals interviewed have a profound knowledge of the area.

The Elected Politicians Interviewed

The five elected politicians we spoke to also have different profiles: Four men and one woman, one is less than forty years, two less than fifty years and the last two are more than fifty years old. They all have a higher education and are graduates. Through their professional and military careers, they have regularly met the so-called Muslim population.

The Parents Interviewed

The parents we met, four fathers and three mothers, have profiles representative of the evolution of North African immigration into France. Two fathers belong to the first generation of immigrants: young workers who left their country (Morocco) to come and work in France. The two other fathers, in their forties, are children of Algerian immigrant workers, both born in France. Their education went until the bac (school leaving certificate) and they are employed at a factory and in trade. The three mothers, aged thirty to forty years, daughters of Moroccan and Algerian immigrants, have very different paths: The first, from an Algerian working-class family, grew up in France. Married to an Algerian, the mother of three children aged eight to twelve years and she works in the health sector. The second, the daughter of Moroccan immigrants, came to France as an adult to help his ailing father. She then resumed her studies until her Master's degree and married a Moroccan. The mother of four children aged two to eight years and she works in the social sector. The last one, thirty years old, comes from an Algerian immigrant family (the father Berber and the mother Kabyle). Came to France at the age of five and pursued her graduate studies to bac+6 and is now in middle management. She is the

mother of two children aged two to eight years. She chose not to marry and lives separated from the children's father, while preserving their relationship.

The Religious Actors Interviewed

Given the difficulties in obtaining interviews with religious actors, we have been asked to attend sermons and ceremonies for our study. We were also able to talk to the imam of a mosque in a city near Lille, whose past and present experience enables him to have a good knowledge of the Lille mosque. Finally, we also met female religious actors, including a chaplain and a woman who is active in the Ligue Islamique du Nord.

3. Research Results

A Visible, but Illegible Issue

The widespread suspicion that we met just as much with all the social workers as among the religious and political actors is an immediate indication of the extent of the existing confusion about Islam and Islamism and demonstrates a lack of knowledge and recognition of Islamism as an ideological and political phenomenon. Indeed, the fear of stigmatisation of Muslims makes the actors avoid the subject or adopt a cautious attitude which sometimes hinders more thorough observations and reflections. However, during the interviews with the social and educational workers, their comments and questions revealed the extent of their concern about Islamist radicalisation among young people which they sometimes referred to as fundamentalism and other times as extremism. Except for a minority of social and educational workers who did not observe any of these phenomena among the young people, a majority who is in daily contact with the young people from the districts, sees some signs and symptoms become still more visible concerning the development of Islamism among young people.

The observations of the professionals emphasize a tendency towards an exacerbation of the visible religious identity; according to them, towards a change of behaviour in the young people. In this regard, the observations returned to:

- **hardened attitudes concerning religious codes:** Here, the professionals say that young people, between 17 and 25 years, adopt certain ways of speaking and dressing with the intent to display their religious affiliation. They also adopt rigid attitudes about *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (unlawful).
- **codifications according to sex out of respect for culture and religion:** The most specific observations in this area come from the professionals interviewed. They are part of a development of sexist tensions – obligations imposed on women like virginity and codes of modesty – among many young boys and especially among those who call themselves Muslims. A sex-education counsellor reported a rise in the requests for a reconstruction of hymens on the part of young girls. The return to the veil among young women reared in France is also questioned, but the professionals are divided on the link

between this phenomenon and Islamism. Some see a link between the significant increase in the use of the veil and the spread of codes according to sex among young people, others consider the veil as a cultural choice.

Young People and Islamism: the Match of a Product, an Individual and an Environment

Speaking of the causes of these phenomena, an educator, coming from a North African immigrant family, having grown up and worked in the districts, puts forward a remark that crystallizes the thoughts of the other professionals interviewed: "*A radical, it's like a drug addict. It's the match of a product, an individual and an environment*". The various professionals reject this metaphorical expression emphasizing the attraction of the Islamist discourse with young people who are in need of structures and recognition. Among the young people involved, they observe feelings of social and economic exclusion, confinement and withdrawal, group effects and the internalisation of victimisation. Big brothers influence, according to some professionals, the young ones and pass on this message of victimization to them.

Others question the parents' role: Some immigrant parents do not know French and the men often became fathers quite late. This creates a cultural gap between children and parents who do not listen enough to them and do not integrate the life they have or may have in France. For some professionals, young people who have lost their structures and are approached by preachers experience a greater risk of radicalisation. The media are also widely drawn into a cause by professionals in their way of treating information. Moreover, some professionals interviewed criticize the ambiguity of the discourses and practices of local and national politics which, to satisfy election issues, create confusion between religion and politics. Finally, some point to international politics, more specifically to the rise of Islamism in the Islamic countries and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a factor in the development of Islamism among young people.

How should we act in relation to the development of Islamist radicalisation among young people? In response to this question, many professionals believe that it is necessary to develop the knowledge of secular values, while others speak for a knowledge of religions, even in public institutions. Contrary to this, others again note the negative effects of the articulation between the educational actions and religion. Finally, other professionals believe that, in order to block the road to radicalism, they need to cooperate more with schools and work with parents and grandparents. They want to solve the generation gap and improve the status of older people who have much to offer young people who have lost their structure. In addition, professionals suggest the need for clear and consistent policies based on secularism.

This last remark questions the role of those responsible in local politics. We met five of them during our study who questioned the phenomena related to Islamism and made observations that crossed those of the professionals.

Political Islam and Local Political Actors

Except for an elected representative who questioned the usefulness of a study on Islamism and young people because of its potential harm to the image of Lille and its stigmatisation of Muslims in Lille, the other elected representatives we interviewed spoke of their observations and questions. To them, the Muslims of Lille constitute a heterogeneous public in which Islamic radicalisation remains a minority. They also note signs and symptoms that reflect the exacerbation of religious structures with young people and with some social and educational actors accompanying them: A rigidified codification of legal (permitted) and illegal (not permitted) as the extensive use of the principle of *halal* and *haram*, the development of gender segregation and dress codes. Here, some perceive the influence of religious actors of radical observance.

If the elected representatives, in connection with the causes of the development of these phenomena, point to the effects of the socio-economic exclusion and the stigmatisation of Islam, they insist mainly on the absence or failure of a clear and coherent policy in relation to secularism and its application. Thus, they denounce unequal treatment of different religions and the lowest means possible granted to Muslims to practice their religion, the compliance of policymakers with regard to communitarianism which favors Islamists, the lack of secular representation of Muslims in France, and lack of supervision of social workers in implementing the principle of secularism.

As to the actions against the development of Islamism among young people, the elected representatives are divided. Some think that the most important path of prevention is actions against the socio-economic exclusion, especially by improving economic integration. Others feel the need to support efforts in the direction of adapting Islam to secularism. In this regard, the need to regulate practices in order to deal with abuses is stressed together with the need for a protocol for responding to radicalised young people and punishing proselytising, especially when it is done by actors of public services or by recreation counselors close to the young people who may abuse their position of authority. The same concern was expressed concerning the actions of the mosque by an elected official who noted, however, that most mosques in Lille are fairly discreet. Another considers it important that the mayor met the imam when asked the question of radicalism. Similarly, an elected representative insists on respect for secularism and vigilance against communitarianism. In fact, all the elected representatives we met defended the principle of secularism as a bulwark against religious extremism and an asset for citizenship. Similarly, most insisted on an equal application of the principle of secularism and especially approved the establishment of Muslim places of worship, schools and faculties. Nonetheless, they wondered what means to use to ensure the coherence of the activities of these institutions with democratic values. Some assert the need for monitoring and political intervention in cases of radicalism.

Thus, the impact of religious actors and their position in relation to secularism constitute an important theme of reflection for the politically elected. Moreover, as we have already seen, the social and educational professionals also note the influence of preachers in the development of Islamism. The words of the religious actors interviewed allow for a deepening of these observations.

Religious Actors and Islamism: Diversity of Positions

Faced with several refusals of requests for interviews from religious actors, we still managed to speak with three religious actors of different profiles: An imam with a rich experience and good knowledge of the mosques of Lille, a chaplain and an important female actor in the Ligue Islamique du Nord (whose president is none but Amar Lasfar, imam of the important mosque of Lille-Sud).

The synthesis of the approaches of these three interlocutors, involved at different levels in the area of worship, enables us to distinguish three positions regarding the place of religion in the political field (broadly defined as the management of the city):

- Separation of worship and politics: The Imam clearly defines his status and role as a spiritual leader and representative of the sphere of worship. Beyond this field which includes the activities of practicing believers, the imam considers himself a secular citizen. He reminds us that part of the so-called Muslim population are not practicing Muslims and points out that he does not see himself as a representative of all Muslims in France. For him, being a Muslim does not immediately lead to a belonging to a community of Muslims surrounded by the standards and laws of Islam.
- Fusion of worship and politics: In the reflections of the religious actor from the Ligue Islamique du Nord, religion is seen as the glue that unites Muslims in a community supported by norms and rules based on religion. She defines being a Muslim as the respect of the Islamic order in which the notions of pure and impure set up borders between Muslims and non-Muslims. In this perspective, she defends the duty to wear the veil and the refusal of the canteen for children, even if there is a possibility of menus without pork or meat. She is opposed to the model of secular citizenship and has a modern Islam in mind integrated in the framework of a French society that would adapt to religious requirements.
- Fusion of worship and culture: In the reflections of the chaplain, religion is presented as a source of humanistic values and at the same time, she tends towards the idea of an Islamic morality binding each Muslim (including herself). In her approach, Islam is presented as a source of happiness: You then move away from Islam as a source of an order based on divine law. However, there are also moral judgments in her words, which appear to be based on religious law, e. g. the condemnation of homosexuality.

Based on these positions, the three religious actors have different approaches to religious education of young people. Thus, the imam specifically defines his area of intervention as

a spiritual guide, representing the sphere of worship, which is intended only for faithful adherents (that is only some of the Muslims of France). The religious actor from the Ligue Islamique du Nord contemplates her ideal of an Islamic education that targets children and young Muslims. Similarly, she speaks of 'Muslim women' as bearers of Islamic values which, according to her, advocate the preservation of the boundaries between the sexes. As for the chaplain, her approach to the role of religion remains pervaded by a kind of confusion in the sense that she sees a internal contradiction between the gendered norms that refer to Islamic law and those established by democratic values that recognize the choice of the individual concerning sexual orientation.

These ambiguities also exist in the thoughts of the parents we interviewed.

Parents: Islam as Facilitator and Islam as Constraint

The different conceptions of the religion brought by the parents interviewed (four fathers and three mothers) do not remain at a theoretical level: They are translated into socio-cultural attitudes. The comments of these parents who belong to different generations show that this is not a difference in approach between the first generation attached to tradition and the second generation in search of its roots, but rather a ideological construction of Islamic identity that transcends the multiple identity structures to establish standards and laws dictating the individual and collective lives of Muslims.

Thus, despite their belonging to different generations, three of the fathers share a conception of religion that implies a respect of the canonical duties and socio-cultural norms that can be adapted to the ways of life of people. Indeed, the Islam of these three fathers, two of which are retired workers of the first generation and the third is the son of immigrants, presents the image of a kind of Islam lived with a pragmatic sense that contrasts sharply with Islamism. In their view, Islam takes its place as a source of meaning and values of living together in peace. It is transmitted through rituals and almost naturally by being in a given environment. One of the mothers who considers herself as an autonomous individual, lives her belonging to Islam as a cultural link that brings her closer to other Muslims, without involving practices or some kind of duty to live under religious laws and standards. Another mother, the daughter of an immigrant family, has a torn identity because of the value conflicts between his strong desire for autonomy and her view of Islam as a source of standards and laws. The other two parents, a father and a mother, the son and daughter of immigrants, see, for their part, religion as a source of laws for the lives of believers.

Re-Islamisation of Young People: Challenges and Consequences

The data from the survey enable us to measure and duly analyse the complexity of the phenomenon of re-Islamisation of young people and its outcomes. Through the interviews with young people, two lines of ideological re-Islamisation appear: A tendency that defends the literal application of the Koran and the Sunna (especially represented by the Tabligh [Tablighi Jamaat/Society for Spreading Faith]) and the other that preaches a

fundamental Islamism and defends the possibility of reforms within the framework of Islam as a source of legislation (represented by the UOIF and JMF).

The young of the first tendency attempt to apply the Islamic teachings to the letter. They grow beards and wear the kamis [traditional long shirt] and are therefore designated by the surroundings as radicals. Of the thirty-two young interviewees, we found ten men to be classified in this category. Aged from nineteen to thirty-two, they have an educational level equivalent to the bac professionnel or bac+2, with the exception of a man recently arrived from Algeria who has a primary school education. Most work (computer programmer, electrician, employed in a restaurant or business) or are in vocational training. Two of them are unemployed. Among these ten men, one is a convert, the others are from Muslim families. However, the majority, eight of them, describe their Islamic identity as the result of reclaiming a learned Islam which explains and provides the keys for living within the religion, an Islam different from that of their parents. "My parents didn't explain, they just told us not to do things, like not to steal, not to lie", said one of them, aged 21, born in a family of Moroccan origin. He says that he joined the religion after having attended the mosque and met some brothers. The remarks of most of the other men describe the same process: Entering into the religion as a path that you follow with the aid of brothers and in which you develop under the authority of scholars. This process allows them to gain access to a sense of communitarian belonging that makes them feel secure.

The young of the second tendency which defends a fundamental Islamism, reject the practices of the first tendency as backward and ignorant. About fifteen of those interviewed subscribe to this perspective. Aged 19 to 32 years, they have different profiles regarding their level of education (from bac to bac+4). You find among them both students and persons in employment (including association leaders), under vocational training or looking for employment (one person). About ten of these people, including four young women, express themselves in a very constructed manner and some are militants of the JMF. They plan to build their Islamic identity in France through the promotion of Islamic law as a universal law that can cover all aspects of contemporary life of Muslims, while preserving them from the misdeeds of an individualist modernity.

Beyond their differences, the re-Islamisation experienced by the young people of these two tendencies has points in common regarding the ideologisation of religion.

A Qualitative Evolution of Religiosity

Through the interviews, we have seen how, in both cases, the re-Islamisation is experienced by the young people as a course towards another Islam, a true Islam, complete and total who, in most cases, breaks with the traditional Islam of their parents. This true Islam presents itself as an ideology in Hannah Arendt's sense of the word, namely the logic of an idea that leads to purport to be true knowledge and a science capable of providing a key to an understanding of the past and present and to define the

steps to follow to access the future.¹⁴ Entering into this ideologised Islam is described by the young people themselves as a progression which is developing their Islamic identity towards a cultural belonging, more or less assertive, to Islamism. This process involves a qualitative shift in religiosity. We have outlined this phenomenon in a double table.

From an individual Islam to Islam as law

Different forms of religiosity: five levels of relation to religion
0 – Non-practice of religion, absence of any identity reference to Islam.
1 – Selective practice of rituals, participation in religious and traditional festivals. Islam is seen as a source of spirituality.
2 – Practice canonical duties (prayer, fasting during Ramadan, alms, etc.) without projecting Islam as a guide of conduct for personal and collective life.
3 – Association of religious practice to the projection of Islam as a guide of conduct for all aspects of personal and collective life.
4 – Action at local, national or international level for the development of Islam as an ideology encompassing socio-political life.

A representation of the true Muslim is associated to the levels described above, leading to an ideologisation of religious structures.

Various representations of Islam and good Muslims
1 – Priority is given to individual choice: The rituals of Islam as such are based on individual choice.
2 – Respect for canonical duties (prayers, Ramadan, prohibitions – alcohol, pork – alms, pilgrimage) differentiates between good and bad Muslims.
3 – Beyond rituals, religious codes to which the life of the individual and the family is subject (including sexuality and marriage), determine what are lawful and unlawful acts in the private and the public spheres.
4 – Beyond rituals and way of conduct of the individual and the Muslim family, religious codes separating Muslims from others and define their relationship. Islam presents a model based on religious codes that manage a community or an Islamic society.
5 – A healthy Islamic community cannot exist without the whole society becomes Islamic. The duty of a good Muslim is to fight disbelief in all its forms.

Indeed, the ideological re-Islamisation occurs by sliding from an individual Islam towards a communitarianism based on religious identity. Islamism spreads when religious practice is associated with a vision that projects Islam as an ideology. Islam becomes a

¹⁴ Hannah Arendt. *Le système totalitaire. Les origines du totalitarisme*. Paris: Seuil, 2005. Pp. 285-292.

guide of conduct dictating all aspects of personal and collective life. A further step is taken when the person becomes involved in propaganda for this ideology at local, national or international level.

An *Ummah* Fantasy

Young people's adherence to Islam does not necessarily similar to the act of entering a party or organisation, but occurs most often through the involvement of people in a process of indoctrination that cannot be accomplished in a conscious and formalized manner. This ideologisation does not imply the beginning of a rigorous practice of religion, but transforms religious codes into ideological structures. In this case, the formation of a fantasy vision of the *Ummah*, as a homogeneous unit based on values and norms derived from Islamic law, leads, on the one hand, to the construction of boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims and, on the other hand, to a hierarchisation between good and bad Muslims. This indoctrination leads young people to break more or less radically with the values of the surrounding society, resulting perhaps in dissent, but negatively affects their process of integration and transforms them into potential forces of development of Islamism, in various forms and at various levels (locally, nationally or internationally). It leads to the appropriation, by the young people concerned, of a complete and total vision of religion that goes against the values of the democratic society and which are considered non-Islamic or anti-Islamic. Interviewees describe these value conflicts presenting the ideologisation of Islam as a reassuring alternative because it proposes a definition of the identity of individuals as members of a community guided by holy laws that draw the limit of the lawful or unlawful, especially by means of codifications by sex.

The Role of Preachers

Here, the ideological re-Islamisation turns Islam into a support of a communitarian strategy seeking to develop a balance of power within French society in order to have *shari'a* law adopted in France. This requires reform of Islamic law, but mostly involves a redefinition of fundamental values of democratic and secular citizenship in France.

Entering this perspective, as the young re-Islamised people say, requires being accompanied by mentors: The role of preachers mobilised by the tendencies of re-Islamisation proves to be crucial. The references quoted by the young people generally show their preferences for one of the tendencies of re-Islamisation. However, in some cases, one of the young people quotes, on the one hand, Sheikh Yunis, a famous preacher of the Tabligh and on the other hand, Tariq Ramadan and Hassan Iquioussen, lecturers of the UOIF.

The discourses of these preachers challenge in various forms the young Muslims as actors of a re-Islamisation. The young people interviewed who are involved in this process appreciate, in fact, the "personal search" as proof of access to another Islam, an Islam

different from that of their parents' which is assimilated in traditions. As they point out, their individuality is involved in this process, but this individuality is far from being autonomous. Instead, it is seen as incomplete and in need of being under the guidance of Islam through intermediary mentors, which breaks with the value of autonomy of the so-called Western model. This value is also presented by Islamism as the cause of the breakdown of the relations of the community and the source of moral confusion and social ills. Communitarian Islamism thus reasserts the young people through the upgrading of a Muslim community based on respect of standards and laws of redemption in a world filled with crisis and uncertainty.

Politicisation of the Religious

Thus, Islam appeared as an alternative of justice and social equity, and belonging to this Islam is perceived, directly or indirectly, as being on the side of the righteous threatened by dominant powers who try with all means to stigmatise or demonise Islam and Muslims. This victimisation that constitutes a very prominent dimension in the discourse of re-Islamised people, is articulated in the revaluation of Islam as an ideology in defense of a just and healthy society in a world in crisis. This view justifies, in extreme cases, jihadism or terrorism. Even when this is not the case and radicalism is rejected, it nevertheless remains true that the vision of the world through the ideological spectacles of Islamism creates a binary vision: a Muslim world against the Other, symbolically embodied by the West. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict also crystallises this opposition to the extent that, in their interpretations, the emphasis is always on Western support for Israel (often referred to as 'Jews').

The entry of young people into Islamist ideology does not automatically result in a support of jihadism. However, the development of Islamism among young people creates a global context of ideologisation of Islam contributing to justify jihadism as a imposed political option. It is also worth noting that most of the re-Islamised young people interviewed of any tendency equate the Islamist implication of jihadist and terrorist movements with ignorance. At the same time, they analyse what they call radicalism as the result of political and social ills such as racism and discrimination, social and economic difficulties, political domination of Muslims, which ultimately refers the responsibility to the dominant powers whether they are Western or supported by Western powers.

In fundamental Islamism, as seen throughout the remarks of the young interviewees, victimisation is also related to a call for Islamic values and laws as a source of prosperity and happiness. This Islamism does not reject the West as a whole and does not question the entire Western civilisation, but the West is presented as the Other whose values are contrary to Islamist ideals, the Other whose cultural dominance may dilute Islamic values, alienating and making Muslims feel inferior. Indeed, the moment the Islamist vision makes Islam the source of socio-political features of identification, the "Muslim

"world" and "Muslims" are transformed into a homogeneous group sharing the same ideals. Such a construction requires the image of the West which is also assumed to be homogeneous and ideological. This leads to a double confusion: On the one hand, the democratic values lose their universal legitimacy by being described as Western and on the other hand, Islamist values are presented as universal values derived from Islam, the source of laws applicable to all times and all places. Fundamental Islamism that wants to be adaptable to the surrounding society (in this case, French society) also suggests a compromise between Islamist values and principles of equality, freedom and secularism. In this perspective, this Islamism proposes for example the wearing of the veil as a symbol of a religious identity. Hence, the display of a new model that is both a counter-model of the traditional Muslim woman and the liberated Western woman: an active, veiled Muslim woman. The re-Islamised men, in turn, totally appreciate the veil as a symbol of refound modesty.

The Place of Gender

In the two tendencies defined above, Islam creates a order of redemption that allows the individual to avoid evil and live well. In this order, the organisation of gender relations is central. The call for the veil symbolises this phenomenon. Most women who are part of the fundamental Islamism advocate the return to the veil as the discovery of a learned and modern Islam. They feel promoted by this new image of "the Muslim woman", coming out of the private sphere, studying, working, but remaining within the framework outlined by Islamic values. As stated by the militant woman from the Ligue Islamique du Nord, these values are not in the sense of autonomy advocated by feminism, namely the recognition of freedom and equality of women as individuals. In this vision, obedience to divine law transcends women's rights to freedom and equality. This is also the view of Malika, a twenty-one year old young woman from a Moroccan immigrant family, and second-year student who, along with his studies, works in recreation. She says that she made the choice to wear the veil after having asked herself some questions and having found answers in books, courses and lectures. She mentions the names of Sheik Younis, a lecturer of the Tabligh, and Hassan Iquioussen, a lecturer of the UOIF. Malika says that she veils herself in obedience to God and almost smiles when reciting, "Obedience is the translation of love". To the question: "Why don't men have to wear the veil to obey God?", Malika replies, "The weakness of men is woman", and explains that women wear the veil to protect themselves and men from temptation.

The same idea is developed by the men interviewed, both among those who advocate a literal interpretation of the *Koran* and by those who advocate an Islam adapted to the French context. Most of them insist on the rights that Islam grants women, at the same time insisting on the different roles of men and women. While incorporating the changing situation of women, such as access to school, to paid work and to the public sphere, patriarchal management of women's sexuality is rehabilitated by the revaluation of the sexual order that would ensure the preservation of the family unit. Changing family

patterns in modern, democratic societies which leave the choice of living arrangements and sexuality to autonomous individuals, are also regarded as a perversion of morals of which the liberation of women seems primarily responsible.

Despite their differences, the discourse of the Islamist tendencies meet in the denunciation of women's liberation and autonomy which would lead to family breakdown and the perversion of morals. We have observed the role of women as socio-political actors of fundamental Islamism in which the discourse blames young, so-called Muslim women who live "outside Islam" and values those who return to the veil, thus restoring a "missing" link with the community and the family.

4. Perspectives of Further Investigation

Our research provides numerous clarifications to questions raised by Islamism in European countries. Indeed, we further develop the analysis of the on-going process of re-Islamisation among immigrants and their descendants in various European countries, already studied by various researchers (Kepel, Roy, Césari, Khosrokhavar). The context of Lille: A medium-sized city where the so-called Muslim population is visible and where the presence of young people and the activity of fundamental Islamists (related to the UOIF) are important, has enabled us to clarify the challenges and consequences of this phenomenon. We have also examined and crossed the issues of the two strong and influential currents of re-Islamisation competing to win young people for their cause: One tendency that advocates a literal application of the *Koran* and the *Sunna* (especially represented by the Tabligh), and the other that defends a fundamental Islamism and the possibility of reform within Islam as a source of laws (especially represented by the UOIF).

In studying the consequences of young people's adherence to these tendencies, we have thrown light on the fact that these tendencies act, beyond their differences, in the same direction of an ideologisation of Islam as a carrier of a social and political project (in the sense of managing the Muslim community in accordance with Islamic rules and laws). The appropriation of this vision is often, in young people, accompanied by a phenomenon that articulates the revaluation of Islam as a doctrine tending towards a just and healthy society in a world of crisis. This idea promotes a schematic view in which the Muslim world opposes a dominant and invading "West", and in which jihadism would just be a "reaction". If fundamental Islamism differs somewhat in its teachings, supporting reforms to make life in Islam possible in European countries, it still leads, by propagating the idea of an Islam as source of Islamic rules and laws for the Muslim community, to a questioning of the universalism of secular, democratic values as the fruits of "Western" culture. The issue of gender equality and women's rights is, as we have shown, the perfect illustration.

These observations could be developed by an examination of the interaction between these currents and jihadism the visibility of which has been demonstrated in Roubaix, a

nearby city to Lille, by several studies. A comparative approach between Lille and nearby cities like Roubaix and Tourcoing (another city with a high concentration of a so-called Muslim population) would be very instructive to elaborate the results of our study, as also stated in the comments of CIR to our investigation.

Similarly, as CIR also noted in relation to our report, another aspect that we have raised: The question of converts deserves further development. This question constitutes a very important field of consideration on the development of Islamism in European societies. And in the context of our observation, we have seen its importance, especially within the strategy of fundamental Islamists. However, to go further, we need to investigate further.

Finally, our study has explored the dimensions concerning social gender relations, often downplayed in studies on Islamism. Thus, we have observed the great importance of this aspect in the process of young people's re-Islamisation of the young as well as the central role it occupies in the discourse and actions of Islamist movements.

These observations fuel the understanding of the characteristics of Islamism which is not an ideology that can be reduced to fundamentalism, but which also incorporates modern elements with the aim of presenting a political alternative to the model of Western democracy. This thought deserves to be further developed through complementary and comparative studies.

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Map of Lille

Plan de Lille

