Secular Fundamentalism and Islamist Radicalisation in the West

An investigation into processes of homegrown Islamist radicalisation in France

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Introduction

Laïcité was originally introduced in French law in order to ensure the freedom of conscience and religion, equality among the various faiths, and separation of the State and the Church. When the principle of *laïcité* is considered as the protection of the rights of all citizens to practice the religion of their choice, and for all religious groups to be treated equally and with respect, these values would appear to be incompatible with radicalization. Is it conceivable that this principle could be fostering homegrown radicalization? This paper argues that there is an evident gradual intensification of the implementation of *laïcité* in French society; it has come to impose several restrictions on how people are allowed to practice and express their religion and has become a subverted version of the very principles it was intended to uphold. In fact, the state now interferes more in religious affairs than in any other secular state.[1] For the majority of French Muslims these restrictions cause frustration and feelings of discrimination, ostracism and exclusion. Also, *laïcité* feeds Islamophobic discourse against them, labelling them as angry, unstable members of society, who refuse to assimilate and do not uphold the values of the Republic; accusations which, as shall become evident, are unfounded and false. These restrictions affect different religions disproportionately and therefore *laïcité* may be perceived as failing to uphold the values of equality and neutrality.

By studying the way in which perceptions affect the behavior of French citizens towards each other, it is possible to argue that escalated tensions due to a rise in terrorist attacks in the 21st century, combined with the difficulties encountered by the French Muslim community to assimilate acceptably, may be leading to their social exclusion. Issues such as these, as well as an increasing visibility of Islam in France, have resulted in the 'neutralisation' of the public sphere according to a fundamentalist application of *laïcité.* Individuals who are excluded from society due to their religious affiliation are prone to ostracism, stigmatization and discrimination, as well as a perception of their situation as deprived and unjust[2]. Models of radicalization repeatedly propose psychological transformations leading to behavioral changes and resulting in the legitimization of violence. It is extremely interesting to see how an ostracized individual's social relations, in combination with a psychological vulnerability caused by isolation from society, can lead to their radicalization. Thus, although the

[1] Liogier, "Laicité on the Edge in France."
[2] Laborde, *Critical Republicanism,* 216.

contingencies may not be initially evident, the role of *laïcité* in the homegrown radicalization of French Muslims is at the heart of this highly relevant research.

The study begins by laying out the theoretical framework, suggesting the necessity for an interdisciplinary approach to the research question, and defining some theoretical concepts which are used throughout the paper. This is followed by a methodological explanation, where the qualitative research methods are elaborated on and process tracing as a methodology is described and justified. The subsequent three chapters are organised as follows. Chapter One introduces a historical perspective to debates on *laïcité* and its apparent 'confrontation' with Islam in particular. It is suggested that the exclusion of expressions of religious affiliation in the public sphere may be leading to the social isolation of French Muslims. Chapter Two founds the hypothesis in psychological theories and sociology, and thus establishes patterns linking the effects of *laïcité* and ostracism to the process of homegrown radicalization of French Muslims. The third Chapter constitutes two empirical investigations which connect the patterns and processes established in the two preceding chapters to carefully selected case studies. This method of inquiry helps to reduce the effects of 'selection bias', to which the hypothesising attempted in Chapter Two is perhaps susceptible, and to reveal causes not identified by the hypothesis, contributing to its further development. Last but not least, the Conclusion melds these three chapters by combining the pertinent conclusions drawn from each one. The summary of the key findings establishes relevant factors which explain homegrown radicalisation and provide evidence of where and how *laïcité* is contributing to these processes in the case of French Muslims.

Theoretical Framework and Definitions

The paper relies on a theoretical framework that lends coherence to the investigation allowing for an interdisciplinary approach. Accordingly, sociological studies are complemented by psychological theory, a crucial aspect for development of the study of terrorism, in order to properly understand the circumstances and conditions under which individuals become more or less susceptible to radicalisation. Different theoretical approaches have been chosen to improve the depth of the study, and to help to lay out the different stages which have an implication on the hypothesis. They are not so distant from each other, they are applicable within social science and compliment one-another. Sociological studies as well as those within the field of psychology are often used together and since the early twentieth century have frequently been combined to produce socio-psychological theories. This allows the hypothesis to be studied from dual theoretical perspectives: historical and socio-psychological, the outcomes of which

are grounded in descriptive observational studies provided by empirical research. The paper can thus be divided into two sections: one which describes the historical and theoretical factors, and the second which provides empirical elements by tracing evidence from the existing literature and field research in order to assess the hypothesis.

Firstly, the historical narrative outlines France's particularly turbulent history, wrought with conflict, which has instilled into the French consciousness a sentiment of intense pride for the Republic, it's values and principles. This entails an interpretivist study from the perspective of sociological theory, drawing meaning from the experiences of French Muslims, French society, and their social interaction. Centuries of almost constant confrontations between the State and religion have led to many transformations of the relationships between the state and the citizens, the state and the church, and also the way in which French citizens relate to religion.[3] These confrontations and relationships are key to understanding the current approach to secularism in France and have an important bearing on how the French perceive citizenship and identity.[4] The culmination of ideological struggles resulted, during the Third Republic in 1905, in the first pronouncement of *laïcité* in French law. Combined with the collective memory of the colonial period[5], this renders the case of France even more complex[6].

Secondly, the thesis relies on theories of psychology of terrorism and socio-psychological explanation of the process of radicalisation. It has been widely acknowledged by psychologists and psychiatrists that it is increasingly important to apply their expert knowledge to the study of terrorism. As Marta Crenshaw[7] stated, "it is difficult to understand terrorism without psychological theory, because explaining terrorism must begin with analysing the intentions of the terrorist actor and the emotional reactions of audiences."[8] Many attempts at 'profiling' have been made, and most conclusions do not go beyond generalising observations, as Jeff Victoroff, leading expert on human aggression, the psychology of terrorists and suicide bombers, states: "The field is largely characterized by theoretical speculation based on

[3] Salton, "France's Other Enlightenment."
[4] Legal precedents to the 1905 law concern individuals' rights and freedoms, and place restrictions on the influence of the church on the state (Loi du 15 mars 1850 sur l'enseignement -Loi Falloux- on schooling in France which was abrogated by the order no. 2000-549 15th June 2000) Plurality is guaranteed by legal recognition of some religions.
[5] Particularly the Algerian War of Independence, the roles played by different groups in French and Algerian society has had lasting implications on their families' situation, their social, political and religious status.
[6] Bertossi, Christophe and Karakurt, Turkan, "Les Musulmans, La France, l'Europe."
[7] Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, and Professor of Political Science at Stanford University
[8] Crenshaw (1990) as cited in: Silke, *Terrorists, Victims, and Society*. Xvii

subjective interpretation of anecdotal observations."[9] Although psychology is crucial to understanding terrorism and its perpetrators, it has "been a very minor contributor and one that has arguably grown less active and vigorous with time."[10] There are several speculations as to why there was decreased interest in pursuing these kinds of studies from a psychoanalytical perspective, however I would argue that this is no longer the case and that there is a renewal of interest in the study of psychology of terrorism. The lack of contributions to the study of terrorism from this perspective is due to the difficulty in gathering information on the topic, as "physical manifestations of terrorism as well as public responses to it are, in principle, much more accessible to research than the psychology and sociology of terrorists." [11] The majority of studies are conducted following an incident, which is likely to have eliminated the perpetrator[12], in which case the absence of an individual to study renders psychological research impossible. Many convicted terrorists may also be unable or unwilling to commit to such investigations.

The thesis investigates the putative correlations and processes linking *laïcité* and the radicalisation of French Muslims. This effectual relationship is extremely understudied, although it has been approached in journals and the popular press[13] , it is a sensitive topic which is avoided and infrequently debated in either English or French academic and scholarly literature. The hypothesis to be explored is that the gradual intensification of *laïcité* over recent decades has contributed to producing the circumstances under which certain individuals become more susceptible to extremist interpretations of Islam, and that in so doing, the state may be increasing the risk of radicalisation among French Muslim communities. Hereafter, this shall be referred to either as simply 'the hypothesis' or the 'susceptibility to radicalisation' theory.

First and foremost, it is necessary to set out working definitions of the key concepts which this thesis addresses and which it relies upon in order to approach the hypothesis correctly. These are discussed as follows: *laïcité*, secular fundamentalism, terrorism, Islamism and *jihadism*, homegrown terrorism, radicalisation and ostracism. According to political theory,

[9] Shaya, "How to Make an Anarchist-Terrorist," 534.
[10] Silke, *Terrorists, Victims, and Society*.
[11] Silke.
[12] Perpetrator deaths (accidental or intentional – in the case of a suicide attack) as a result of their attacks have steadily increased, an 11% increase from 2014 to 2015 was recorded by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Center of Excellence at the University of Maryland.
National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, "Annex of Statistical Information: Country Reports on Terrorism 2015."
[13] Zaretski, "How French Secularism Became Fundamentalist"; McCants and Meserole, "The Francophone Factor: An Interpretation of Hostile Sunni Extremism in the World"; McCants and Meserole, "The French Connection."

Laïcité can be understood as political and legal secularism or 'the secular state'[14]. From a similar angle, Eoin Daly[15] defines *laïcité* as 'Constitutional Secularism'[16], for the fact that apart from the law of 1905, the only outright mention of *laïcité* was made in the Constitution of the Fourth Republic: "France is an indivisible, secular (*laique*), democratic and social Republic". Later this was supplemented by the phrase: "It ensures equality before the law to all citizens, without distinction of origin, race, or religion… it shall respect all beliefs,"[17] within the Constitution of the Fifth Republic. However, it can also be viewed as a type of secular fundamentalism which is, in sociological terms, a doctrine which presumes that any alternative approach to that of the dominant ideology is unreasonable and therefore wrong. "The secular fundamentalist asserts that the supreme political value is to produce a political system that accepts liberal principles of political morality as embodiments of the supreme political value."[18] That is to say, for the secular fundamentalist, the intensification of the application of *laïcité*, the laws and restrictions which ensue, are reasonable on the grounds that they actually permit citizens the freedom to adhere to their religion and other principles because this is delineated within the parameters of this overriding political value. It is possible to argue that *laïcité* has potentially become as demanding and intolerant of alternative approaches to the place of religion in the Fifth Republic as the traditional religious dogmas and beliefs it overcame and displaced in the Third.

Terrorism,[19] due to the array of variations of this term, its typologies, ideological origins and conceptions, as well as methods of execution, and despite the numerous qualitative and quantitative studies on it, remains a phenomenon which lacks a single working definition. Terrorism is commonly referred to as a form of political violence, listed among "war, genocide and ethnic cleansing among its main categories"[20]. Miller[21] understands terrorism "as an illegitimate effort by subnational, clandestine factions to sabotage existing governing systems

[14] Maclure, "Towards a Political Theory of Secularism," 22.
[15] Political theorist of constitutional law
[16] Daly, "The Ambiguous Reach of Constitutional Secularism in Republican France: Revisiting the Idea of Laicite and Political Liberalism as Alternatives," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 32, no. 3 (September 1, 2012): 583–608, doi:10.1093/ojls/gqs011.
[17] Conseil Constitutionelle, Constitution du 4 octobre 1958.
"La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale. Elle assure l'égalité devant la loi de tous les citoyens sans distinction d'origine, de race ou de religion. Elle respecte toutes les croyances."
[18] Campos, "Secular Fundamentalism," 1824.
[19] Locatelli, Andrea, "What Is Terrorism? Concepts, Definitions and Classifications.," in *Understanding Terrorism: A Socio-Economic Perspective*, ed. Caruso, R. and Locatelli, A., First edition, vol. volume 22, Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing, 2014), 1–
[20] Miller, *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism*, 1.
[21] Professor, Duke University History Department

and do great harm to innocent civilians in the process."[22] This definition is pertinent in the case of France which, unlike many European countries, has a long history of political violence. The use of violence as a means of achieving a political goal is also enumerated by Locatelli[23],who, with reference to Charles Tilly[24], understands this as "opposing (or sustaining, in the case of state terrorism) a given regime, claiming independence, calling for social revolution or fostering policy change."[25]

It is widely acknowledged that the Islamist threat deserves greater attention in terrorism studies as there are many misconceptions and misunderstandings of vital concepts and terminology such as Islamism and *jihadism*, and even Islamism and Islam, for example. Boubekeur[26] discusses political Islam as experienced in Europe denoting "the recourse to Islam as the first justification of one's political action, notably where demands are made *vis-à-vis* political authorities or in the methods of mobilisation and engagement proposed to Muslim communities"[27]. Although this type of Islam is adhered to by a minority, it is "this Islam that attracts European policy-maker's attention when dealing with questions of radicalisation, institutionalisation of Islam, juridical adaptation of Islamic codes and the defence of citizenship rights for Muslim minorities."[28] Islamism is a term which can be associated with *jihadism*, a militarized and politicised Islam, providing "religious legitimisation of terrorism", and can also be defined as a "terrorist branch of contemporary political Islam."[29]

There is an increasing awareness of the threat posed by homegrown terrorism in the West, and many issues surround it in European countries which are home to a large Muslim community. France is home to the majority of Europe's Muslims, almost a third, although exact figures are difficult to come across due to French domestic policy prohibiting the authorities from collecting data referring to citizens' religious affiliation or identity[30]. Radicalisation has been defined as a transformational process and a phenomenon which can lead to homegrown terrorism. Homegrown radicalisation refers to the radicalisation of individuals in their country of residence. Homegrown Islamist radicalisation can result in violent *jihad* and political

[22] Miller, *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism*, 1.
[23] Andrea Locatelli is associate professor in the Department of Political Science at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan
[24] American sociologist and political scientist
[25] Locatelli, Andrea, "What Is Terrorism?," 8.
[26] Researcher at the Université Pierre-Mendès in Grenoble, France and Research Associate at the Centre Jacques Berque in Rabat, Morocco.
[27] Boubekeur, Amel, "European Islam," 14.
[28] Boubekeur, Amel, 15.
[29] Tibi, Bassam, "Jihadism and Intercivilisational Conflict," 42.
[30] Saba, Elizabeth, "The Difficulties of Muslim Integration in Europe."

violence. This definition presumes "psychological transformations that occur among western Muslims as they increasingly accept the legitimacy of terrorism in support of violent jihad against Western countries."[31]

It has been suggested that, following the atrocious attacks on the Twin Towers (9/11), there was an increase of fear and Islamophobia in the West. Western Muslim communities felt unable to live up to expectations, to 'prove' their 'Britishness' or 'Frenchness', and thus unable to identify as such. This led many of these individuals to find refuge in an alternative identity, for some, this was their religious identity[32]. It is arguable that consequentially, in a society which is highly suspicious of outward displays of religious identity, French *laïcité* has, in correlation with a rise in Islamophobic attitudes, contributed to the ostracism of French Muslims. Ostracism can be defined as the act of "being ignored and excluded", often occurring "without excessive explanation or explicit negative attention."[33] It can refer to individual or group exclusion "or a group of people being excluded, with a single person or a group excluding them."[34] Significantly, ostracism "is often operationalised as an unfolding sequence of responses endured while being ignored and excluded."[35] Thus, it can be understood as a *process*, a sequence of reactions, and one can expect the individual's behaviour to change over time, whilst being subjected to apathy and exclusion. Ostracism has a notable effect on an individual's identity-building, and this is particularly important in the consideration of French Muslims, as they battle with multiple identities. For acceptance by mainstream society, they must 'become French', yet they must also come to terms with their ethnic identity and their origins, and also identify with their religion. In the French context, *laïcité* plays a role in neutralizing the social sphere of civil society from displays of religious identity. Studies have shown that individuals often rely on a public and private identity, and that immigrants often have multiple identities, which help them to feel included and accepted in a variety of social settings. Thus, it is important to understand how being obliged to supress one's identity is comparable to ostracism.

Methodological Explanation

The Thesis is qualitative and iterative, it uses both deductive and inductive approaches to theory and to research. Proceeding from the idea of path dependence, the methodology

[31] King and Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists," 603.
[32] Saeed, "Media, Racism and Islamophobia"; Gould and Klor, "The Long-Run Effect of 9/11," 2065.
[33] Williams, "Ostracism," 429.
[34] Knapton, Holly M., "The Recruitment and Radicalisation of Western Citizens," 39.
[35] Williams, "Ostracism," 429.

chosen reflects a logical approach to the topic and to the treatment of the hypothesis. The choice of process tracing as an integral research method, and by association the structure of the thesis, should make evident the decisions which were taken in the planning and execution of this project. It was clear from the outset that the case of homegrown terrorism and radicalisation in France would be chosen for the purpose of this research as it has unique cultural, historical and media relevance. Firstly, research was conducted on cases of terrorism which had been committed in 2015, including the notorious Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan attacks. Attention was then focused on the debate concerning *laïcité* in France today, which is considered one of the most important issues in contemporary France as it touches upon diverse and divisive subjects such as, but not limited to, religious diversity and religious tolerance, multiculturalism and secularism, and also French culture and identity. The case focuses therefore on the French Muslim population, immigrants and their children or grandchildren more precisely, and the circumstances under which some individuals may become attracted to extremist Islamist views, and become radicalised in the process. The case was chosen for its political importance, not only because this thesis challenges the conventional discourse on *laïcité,* but because of the current debate on terrorism, migration, and radicalisation in Europe.

In addition to scholarly research of the literature, empirical field research was undertaken in Paris, France. This experience lasted approximately eight days in April 2017 during which many conversations and in-depth discussions about the topic and the hypothesis occurred. Visits to both the *Grand Mosquée de Paris* (Grand Mosque of Paris) and the *Rencontre Annuelle des Musulmans de France* (Annual Meeting of French Muslims) were enriching, and the opportunity arose to speak to Imams, professors and researchers, as well as the President of the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman* (French Council of Muslim Faith), one of the two most important Islamic organisations in France. All individuals were extremely receptive of the ideas, concepts and the topic in general. The discussions prompted them to speak about *laïcité,* and Islam's integration into the republic, as well as radicalisation of French Muslims. Although questions for a semi-structured interview had been prepared in advance, these people were unwilling to be recorded. The decision was taken to continue the discussions nonetheless, and lengthy, enlightening conversations were held. There was much agreement with the hypothesis that *laïcité* is a cause of some grievance for Muslims in France, who regret particularly not being able to wear religious garb to which they are accustomed and which for many people is a requirement in Islam. This is something which they believe should be so simple, but which is unnecessarily condemned by the very strict application of secularism in

the public sphere in France. They do not believe that secular laws target them directly, or at least do not want to express this overtly, however it is extremely regrettable to Muslims that they are affected to such an extent.

This thesis uses process tracing as a methodological approach, within social science this attempts to trace links between possible causes and observed outcomes[36]. The researcher can use a variety of qualitative sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident in the pattern and values of the variables which occur in that case. It is possible therefore to identify patterns which the theory may evidently or implicitly imply. The suitability of this method for the thesis is that this approach is applicable to particular historical cases and takes into account the sequential processes within the case rather than on correlations of data across cases. It is therefore sufficient to focus in-depth on one case, that of French Muslims, rather than to look for correlations between cases in for example, in the United States, Britain, Holland and France.

Within the thesis causal mechanisms, which are, according to the scientific realist school, "independent stable factors that under certain conditions link causes to effects"[37] are essential for clarification of the effects. Process-tracing can be used in case studies to either uncover evidence of these mechanisms at work or to explain the outcomes. Vigilance is required as these factors operate only under certain conditions, however, this allows the consideration of many contextual and intervening variables. Conducting the research, one must avoid confirming necessity or sufficiency of an argument and remain open to alternative possibilities. It is also essential to consider the connection of a variable to *conjunctions* of variables that may themselves be necessary or sufficient for an outcome. Therefore, in this thesis, *laïcité* may not be *necessary* in leading to feelings of ostracism, discrimination, identity crisis… but there is a *relationship*.

Let us assume that variable A (*laïcité*) leads to Y (radicalization) only in conjunction with B and C (ostracism, discrimination). Assume further that the conjunction ABC is sufficient for Y, and that the conjunction BC cannot cause Y in the absence of A. In this instance, A is a necessary part of a conjunction that is sufficient for the outcome Y. Many different combinations of relationships, dependencies, necessity and sufficiency are possible. If equifinality is present, and the conjunction ABC itself is not necessary for the outcome Y, it

[36] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 147.
[37] George and Bennett, 8.

will be evident that this might arise through another combination that has nothing in common with ABC. This may in fact be the case, and as shall be demonstrated, there are multiple paths to radicalisation.

It is not possible to resolve whether a causal condition identified as contributing to the explanation of a case is a necessary condition for that case, for the type of case that it represents, or for the outcome in general. It is possible however to accept a plausible claim that the presence of a variable 'favours' the results or is a 'contributing cause'[38], which could be a necessary condition, or not. Process tracing evidence and congruence (agreement/compatibility) tests shall provide useful evidence on determining relative weights for variables (such as variable A, described above) in a single case or in a small number of cases.

On the question of representativeness, it shall not be possible to select cases that are directly representative of the entire French Muslim population, due to its extreme diversity, and the difficulty in studying groups of the population in any case due to the lack of a census on religious affiliation, which is French policy. It will also be impossible to claim that the findings from the research are applicable to this category of the population unless in contingent ways. *Ergo*, this research is only applicable to French Muslims when the independent variables are present. The goal of the research is to establish cumulatively contingent generalisations, in other words, a precise overview of the contingencies which apply specifically to the case of French Muslims shall be outlined.

It is widely stated that case study researchers are more interested in revealing the *conditions* under which a specified outcome occurs, and the *processes* through which they occur, rather than the frequency with which they arise. For this thesis, cases have been selected with the goal of providing the strongest possible implication on the theory, which are cases where the variables are at extreme values and the contributory mechanisms are distinctly evident. Deviant cases can be used to identify left-out variables. Further research could study contingent generalisations which apply to subclasses of cases similar to those in my research, other religious minorities for example. Additional mechanisms which may not be so evident in the present research could be uncovered in cases that have less extreme weight on the pertinent variables such as, in less secular fundamentalist societies. The research and methods therefore have a certain degree of transferability and replicability.[39]

[38] George and Bennett, 27.
[39] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 47.

The objective of the research is not to make bold statements about the effect of French secularist policies on the Muslim French community, but to investigate the contingencies, relationships, and assumptions of the theory. Thus far, only probabilistic or indeterminate predictions can be made. Effort will be made to demonstrate that alternative explanations for the radicalisation of French Muslims have been seriously considered to avoid providing the basis for a suspicion of 'imposing' a favoured theory or hypothesis as the explanation. This is complicated as the reader could suppose that cases are selected based on assumptions or through intense commitment to the hypothesis. The challenge will be to reconcile conflicting interpretations, or to choose between them wisely. This type of challenge arises as the explanation provided differs from earlier scholars, but the superiority of this innovative interpretation cannot be proven outright. In this case, which explanation is correct? Or, are both explanations part of the overall explanation? Demonstration of the variety of explanations occurs in chapters Two and Three, where other socio-psychological mechanisms are considered independently and, where applicable, in support of the hypothesis. Where the data or generalisations available do not permit a choice between competing explanations, all of these shall be held as equally possible and the implications of all the possible explanations for the development of the theory shall be considered. The structure of the thesis should emphasise the importance of my research; the historical approach, theoretical explanation, and the empirical investigations are all indispensable for supporting my theory-oriented analysis and each step is necessary for readers not already familiar with the case to comprehend the investigation.

Chapter I: Historical Chronicle

Chapter One provides the essential historical and conceptual background by tracing the evolution of *laïcité,* and outlines issues concerning the relationship of religion and state, as well as those related to the integration of Islam into French civil society. Finally, it introduces key concepts concerning radicalisation of French Muslims including the phenomenon of homegrown terrorism, with respect to how these relate to my hypothesis. The historical background focuses on two time-frames, each with their own significance for the research. The first, from 1905 and 2004, corresponds to the period between the year in which *laïcité* was established in France, and the year in which the ban on conspicuous religious signs and symbols in French public schools was passed. This period is key for reaching an understanding of *laïcité*, as well as introducing issues concerning the sedentism[40] of immigrants in France, their integration, and that of Islam as well. This introduces several contentious debates including those of immigration, citizenship and identity in France, these shall be tackled briefly in this context but shall be examined in more depth in the main body of the research. Part Two studies the period between 2004 and 2015, from the year of the enactment of the law banning ostentatious religious symbols, to the year of the disastrous terrorist attacks in Paris. This period specifically relates to a turbulent period of recent French history during which Western countries in general became more sensitive to the Islamic religion. It is important to historically ground the susceptibility to radicalisation hypothesis and present the conditions and the case succinctly. From the outset, a theoretically based historical explanation of the case of religious tolerance and most significantly of Islam in France is provided, following which each significant step toward the outcome is explained by reference to a theory. Finally, the Chapter looks at the French experience with terrorism in the history of the Republic, including the contemporary phenomenon of homegrown terrorism.

Part I: A Period of Adjustment (1905-2004)

French Twentieth Century history has been particularly agitated concerning *laïcité*, in particular with the accommodation of Islam. This paper focuses on the way in which the French Muslims can, and do, practice their religion and express their religious identity in the context of French *laïcité*. Comprehensive discussion of issues concerning the Islamic faith in France necessitates revision of the content of the 1905 law, of which Article one states: “The Republic ensures freedom of conscience. It guarantees freedom of worship limited only by the following

[40] Sedentism: the state of living in one place permanently.

rules in the interest of public order."[41] The clause 'in the interest of public order' has been widely criticised and debated, it is also significant for the present research. The law further separates state and church: "The Republic neither acknowledges, nor pays for, nor subsidises any form of worship."[42] Exceptions were made however for the provision of chaplaincies to ensure freedom of worship in public institutions such as hospitals, prisons, upper-high and high schools[43]. The remaining Articles of the law concern the distribution of goods, pensions and properties. Although all religious associations henceforth became subject to private law, the distinction between the private and the public sphere is not clearly defined in what concerns *laïcité*. The distinction is central to the contemporary debate on the application of *laïcité*. It is possible to distinguish between the private sphere, relating to families, and to individuals, as well as the public and social sphere of 'civil society' and finally the public and civic sphere of the state, relative to law and legislature[44]. It is widely acknowledged that religion has its place in the first two spheres, however it is excluded from the third sphere in order to respect the principle of neutrality of the state towards religion, and also to ensure that religion does not influence the functioning of the state.

The separation between church and state needs further explanation, as this separation is not so self-evident. The state still intervenes continuously in matters of religion, which is hugely contested on the very basis of the principles of the law separating the church and state, and the distinction of three spheres of influence as stated above. Raphael Liogier, French sociologist and director of the '*Observatoire du religieux'*, states that "France happens to be in fact one of the European states which interferes the most frequently in religious matters." [45] By studying the discussions on the manipulation of *laïcité* and the restrictions it places on the practice and expression of religion, it becomes clear that in contemporary France, terms are often contradictory. Religious equality is central to the state's approach to its relationship with the church; Salton, professor at Aberystwyth, equates this with religious tolerance, and states that "a situation of *laïcité* without religious tolerance would be contradictory as it would betray the spirit of the 1905 law and of French constitutional law."[46] Salton also makes an insightful

[41] Buisson and Briand, Loi du 9 décembre 1905 concernant la séparation des Eglises et de l'Etat, Article 1.
"La République assure la liberté de conscience. Elle garantit le libre exercice des cultes sous les seules restrictions édictées ci-après dans l'intérêt de l'ordre public".
[42] Ibid, Article 2.
"La République ne reconnait, ne salarie, ne subventionne aucun culte."
[43] Bondeelle, "Des Origines de La Laicité, En France, À Aujourd'hui," 33.
[44] Bondeelle, 35.
[45] Liogier, "Laicité on the Edge in France," 26.
[46] Salton, "France's Other Enlightenment," 31.

contribution to the well-developed discourse on *laïcité* by making the necessary distinction between hostility, indifference and neutrality to religion.[47]

The distinctive approach of 'neutrality to religion' is essential for understanding the way in which *laïcité* is conceptualised nowadays. The law of 1905, by assuring freedom of conscience and the separation of church and state, assumes not indifference but impartiality or *neutrality* of the state towards religion, however this is also a matter of contention. Michel Troper, professor at Université de Paris, has succinctly summarised the contradiction in one question, "Do secularism and neutrality consist of allowing all values to be expressed or propagating neutrality as a value?"[48] This indeed leads one to question whether it is the people who are supposed to remain neutral to religion, or whether it is the public and social sphere which is intended to be neutral, and allow for religious plurality? Neutrality has come to be understood, however, as the need for a neutral public and social sphere, thus attempts at neutralising this space began in 1936 with the banning of all types of propaganda, political or religious, as well as proselytizing, at schools[49]. Following this, in respect to pluralism and the principle of neutrality, students' freedom of expression was defended in the 'Jospin law'[50]. Students were assured the right to wear 'discrete religious signs', however all conspicuous religious signs were banned. This was institutionalised in 1994 by the 'Bayrou Circular'. The document, addressed to rectors, academy inspectors, departmental managing directors of national education, and headmasters, advised them to ban religious signs which could count as proselytising, those which would endanger the security of the students, as well as those which might disturb the pleasant atmosphere in the classroom[51]. Thus, towards the end of the twentieth century, the state was already prepared to restrict peoples' expression of their religious beliefs within the public and social sphere. These developments have prompted a debate on whether the state is misunderstanding or even subverting the laws relating to *laïcité*, and it is to this debate that we shall now turn.

In the later twentieth and the early twenty first centuries, there was a perception in French society of there being a revival of religious identities[52]. Whether real or perceived, this development was of particular importance concerning the integration of Islam into society, which had become increasingly visible from the 1970s onwards. This is partly due to the recent

[47] Salton, 35. These terms are intrinsically linked to the debate on Islam and *laicité.*
[48] Troper, "French Secularism, or Laicité," 1279.
[49] Zay, "Circulaire de Jean Zay; Circulaire Du 15 Mai 1937."
[50] Ministère de l'éducation nationale, Loi d'orientation sur l'éducation.
[51] Bayrou, "'Circulaire Bayrou.'"
[52] Lagrange, "Le renouveau religieux des immigrés."

ending of the decolonisation process in North Africa, especially the end of the long, costly war of independence in Algeria, in 1962[53]. Arriving in France during the '*Trente Glorieuses*', the first migratory flow was encouraged as France was lacking the manpower necessary for national reconstruction following the end of the Second World War[54]. Subsequent migration reunited families with their husbands, fathers and brothers now installed in France. As Habermas has noted, immigration and "the Muslims next door force the Christian citizens to face up to the practice of a rival faith. And they also give the secular citizens a keener consciousness of the phenomenon of the public space of religion."[55] Habermas argues that the political community must be opened up to the participation of foreign minority cultures, and that this is essential in promoting affiliation to their adoptive homeland, as well as with their integration into the public sphere.[56]

Laïcité and its principles, when understood correctly, should be a strong defence for minorities against all forms of discrimination, and an affirmation of equality.[57] The difficulty of integration and the political consequences became visible in the late 1980s, particularly the image of the Arabs confronting the values of the Republic, an image spearheaded by Jean-Marie le Pen.[58] This image was due to the colonial legacy of the "Muslim-Arab-Maghrebin as belonging to a fundamentally inferior society, whose only hope was to merge with the host society, which had given him the short-lived boon of a job for wages."[59] It was during the same decade that strikes were organised by Muslim factory workers, who very publicly protested by praying in car-parks; by the end of the decade efforts were being made to reduce the visibility of Islam in France. In the 1980s, projects were initiated to facilitate the integration of Islam into French society, beginning with the establishment of the *Conseil Représentatif de L'Islam en France* (CORIF/Representative Council of Islam in France)[60], and the *Fédération National des Musulmans de France* (FNMF/National Federation of French Muslims)[61]. Leading into the beginning of the 21st century, attempts were made to facilitate the integration of Islam in the Republic, resulting in the establishment of the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman*

[53] Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*.
[54] Shahram Akbbarzadeh and Fethi Mansouri, "Contextualising Neo-Islamism," 2.
[55] Habermas, "Notes on Post-Secular Society," 20.
[56] Habermas, 24.
[57] De Coorebyter, "Laicité : La Mauvaise Réputation," 2..
[58] Giry, "France and Its Muslims," 92.
[59] Liogier, "Laicité on the Edge in France," 33.
[60] Roy, *La Laïcité Face À L'islam*, 51.
[61] Zeghal, "La constitution du Conseil Français du Culte Musulman."

(CFCM/French Council of Muslim Faith), in 2003[62]. However, contentions on the visibility of Islam in the public sphere and of the principles of *laïcité* persist well into the present day.

There is perhaps no better example to illustrate the amalgamation of questions of integration of French Muslims, and thus of Islam in France, of religious identity, of national identity, of freedom of expression and of *laïcité*, than the question of the headscarf (*hijab*) in France. This debate has been widely documented, and its analysis is not the intention of this paper, however its importance merits mention. The headscarf is, as a visible sign of religious affiliation, precisely what prompted inquiries in France which, in the spirit of neutrality of the public sphere, have resulted in laws which impose important restrictions on the expression of religious identity for all faiths. Thus, in 2003 a Commission to investigate the 'Application of the Principle of Secularity in the Republic' was assembled; the resulting report became known as the 'Stasi Report', named after the Mediator of the Republic, and head of the Commission.[63] Within months of presenting the Report to then-President Jacques Chirac, a law forbidding wearing conspicuous religious symbols was passed by the National Assembly[64]. From 2004 therefore, there was an increasing perception of victimisation on the part of French Muslims, who felt personally affronted by the law, and by the intensification of the application of the principles of *laïcité*. The ban was promoted as defending gender equality, and the secular nature of public schools, but criticised on "being based on an interpretation of *laïcité* that was neither philosophically necessary nor historically justified."[65] This distorted interpretation ultimately amounts to an exclusion, and not only from the public sphere, relating to the state, but also from civil society; this is what Daly refers to as the object of *laïcité* – "its *object* spilling over, increasingly, from the institutional to the social. This is evident in the legislative prohibition on 'conspicuous' religious dress in public schools, in 2004, and on public face-veiling in 2010."[66] (emphasis in original).

Part II: A Period of Escalation (2004-2015)

The period between 2004 and 2015 is characterised by a region-wide increase in suspicion towards Muslims due to terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), which alerted Western society to the phenomenon of 'homegrown' terrorism. The concept of

[62] Zeghal.
[63] O'Brien and Stasi, *The Stasi Report*.
[64] L'Assemblée Nationale et le Sénat, Loi encadrant, en application du principe de laicité, le port de signes ou de tenues manifestant une appartenance religieuse dans les écoles, colleges et lycées publics (1).
[65] Giry, "France and Its Muslims," 92.
[66] Daly, "The Ambiguous Reach of Constitutional Secularism in Republican France," 587.

terrorism, including 'homegrown terrorism' is addressed in greater depth in the following part of this Chapter. The 2004 law acted as a break with history as French citizens began to come to terms with, among others, the fact that Islam had become the second-most practiced religion in France. This had been facilitated by the sedentism of French Muslims whose integration into French society had been a significant obstacle due primarily to the colonial legacy felt by both the French and the immigrants and, notably, because of an intensification of the application of *laïcité*. Daly argues that this animosity and intensification is due to a "revived apprehension of deep religious identities" and "underlies the motivation to project constitutional secularism into juridically private contexts."[67]

The study of this period is particularly interesting for understanding issues which concern the integration of French Muslims into civil society, including the integration of Islam into the French public sphere. This discussion has a great bearing on individuals' identities in France, not only of national identity, but of self-identification in particular. In 2005, urban riots broke out in suburban areas of 200 French cities[68]. In a Parisian suburb, two youths died by electrocution while hiding from police. The deaths prompted rapid spread of rioting across France, causing unprecedented disorder and violence which brought social scientists and political commentators face to face with the debate on identity, citizenship, and social inequality in French society. The most important conclusions drawn were those concerning the treatment of minorities and their perceived discrimination and stigmatisation. President Sarkozy, voted president of the *Union Pour un Mouvement Popluaire* (UMP/Union for a Popular Movement) in 2004, tackled the issue by stating that "France's integration strategies 'have failed'"; he also "introduced 'obligatory interaction contracts' for migrants that heavily focus on assimilation, including language and culture requirements for long-term (ten-year) resident permits."[69] These statements brought into question French Republican citizenship and democracy, and in particular the treatment of religious minorities. Furthermore, to draw on aforementioned arguments on neutrality, Daly has also pointed out that as a result of the,

> "rightward-leaning, nationalist and exclusionary political discourse that gained traction during Sarkozy's Presidency, under threat from the National Front, *laïcité* has outgrown its republican and liberal ethos to be appropriated as a disciplinary tool for 'ostentatious' displays of religious difference in the public square."[70]

[67] Daly, 595.
[68] Koff and Duprez, "The 2005 Riots in France," 714.
[69] Koff and Duprez, 717.
[70] Daly, "The Ambiguous Reach of Constitutional Secularism in Republican France," 608.

Thus, although one may not immediately recognise the interconnectedness of discussions on citizenship, integration, discrimination, *laïcité*, and political activism, demonstrated by the discussions above, there could in fact be more adjoining these issues than might be apparent.

The political climate in the first decade of the 2000s was one of increased tensions, due to an evident rise in cases of homegrown Islamic terrorism in Europe, but also of anti-Muslim sentiment, particularly since the attack on the American Twin Towers in 2001[71]. Horrific attacks took place in Madrid and London[72], and it was these in particular which drew our attention to the phenomenon of homegrown Islamic terrorism in Europe. In 2015 France suffered a series of serious, and deadly, terrorist attacks including shootings, stabbings, a beheading, hostage takings and suicide bombings[73], some of which were the most devastating to have been carried out on its mainland since the Algerian War. The most notorious of these attacks were the '*Charlie Hebdo*' and the 'November 2015 Paris Attacks'. The magnitude and frequency of the attacks will have lasting implications for the Muslims in Europe and have already given rise to stigmatisation[74].

Many authors have referred to the French Revolution as a turning point in the history of Europe regarding political violence and the relationship between the State and society[75]. The popular claim to governance, the ideologies involved, and the methods of political opposition utilised would, from then onwards, allow categorisation of terrorism as "an evolving complex of forces in civilian zones of violent combat over control of state power between officials in government and insurgents in society"[76]. For more than a century following the Revolution, until the establishment of the Third Republic, and indeed well into the early twentieth century, French politics and ideas appear to have been carried out within a 'battlefield' concerning "struggles over the place of religion in France, over youth and education, over the nature of the socialist movement, over the very identity of the Third Republic."[77] Gregory Shaya, Professor at the College of Wooster, has studied the case of French anarchist-terrorists in the context of the late nineteenth century France, during which "a string of anarchist bomb attacks set off a

[71] Strabac and Listhaug, "Anti-Muslim Prejudice in Europe."
[72] Madrid bombings in 2004 and the London subway bombings in 2005.
[73] 7-9 January Charlie Hebdo attack included shootings, and hostage taking; 3 February stabbing; 19 April shooting; 26 June beheading; 21 August shooting and stabbing 'Thalys train attack'; 13-14 November Paris Attacks included shootings, hostage taking and suicide bombing.
BBC, "Timeline: Attacks in France."
[74] Hajjat and Mohammed, *Islamophobie*.
[75] Douthwaite, Julia V., "Martyrdom, Terrorism and the Rhetoric of Sacrifice"; Miller, *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism*.
[76] Miller, *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism*, 3.
[77] Shaya, "How to Make an Anarchist-Terrorist," 522.

tumultuous debate". Similar to the way in which contemporary terrorist attacks are treated, "this debate inquired obsessively into the nature of a homegrown threat to society."[78] Shaya's study of homegrown terrorism also considers psychological approaches to understanding the pathway to terrorism.

As mentioned previously, the increase in 'homegrown' terrorist attacks, whether attempted or in fact carried out, is an important factor to consider when discussing the treatment or integration of European Muslims. Gilles Kepel[79], widely acknowledged as being the progenitor of the 'conventional wisdom' on radicalisation in France, in discussing the case of domestic radicalisation of British Muslims, declared 'the solution' "is the wholesale adoption of the French model of 'radical secularism'", which he claims, is the reason why France has (or, had) not suffered from terrorist attacks.[80] He argued that France remained untouched because of the success of its assimilationist policies and the strength of its secularity, which require immigrants to adopt French language and customs, manners and dress, to acquire French tastes, and to adapt to French culture. There are no hyphenated identities in France of the type you might find in other Western multicultural societies such as British-Asian or British-Muslim, African-American, *etcetera*. It is possible to say that in the twenty-first century, it has become increasingly evident that French society is in the midst of an identity crisis, with more and more interrogations on what constitutes French national identity, particularly in the last decade.

Kunst, expert in social, personality and experimental psychology, has researched how stigmatisation due to religious beliefs can affect the identity formation of Muslims living in Western societies that are wary of Islam[81]. Additional studies developed the 'Integrated Threat Theory' which defines negative associations of Islam in society with the perception of Muslims and Islam as "a realistic threat (i.e., a threat to the very existence of the perceiver)", or as "the perception of Muslims and Islam as a symbolic threat (i.e., a threat towards the perceivers' values)."[82] How the French Muslims perceive their situation is equally as important as the way

[78] Shaya, 522. Shaya's research concerns also the pathway towards anarchist-terrorism, and other issues of interest for the present research. He engages with the case of French terrorists, and attempts to come to an understanding of their motivations, and of the concept of 'homegrown' terrorism. Shaya finds compelling arguments to prove that anarchist-terrorism is a product of republican secularism, and that "the dynamiters are the product of the secularists."
[79] Political scientist, specialised in contemporary Middle East and Muslims in the West
[80] Githens-Mazer and Lambert, "Why Conventional Wisdom on Radicalization Fails," 891.
[81] Kunst et al., "Coping with Islamophobia."
[82] Kunst, Sam, and Ulleberg, "Perceived Islamophobia"; Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman, "Prejudice Toward Immigrants."

in which French Muslims are perceived by mainstream society. It is arguable that the rise in homegrown terrorism has altered the French peoples' perceptions of Islam, and of French Muslims. Results of polls and surveys carried out in France are easily misleading, such as one completed by the Pew Research Centre published in January 2015, which points optimistically towards the French as holding *the* most favourable views of both Jews and Muslims when compared to six other European countries. "Indeed, 89% of French adults held favourable views of Jews, while 72% felt similarly about Muslims", indicating that there is wider tolerance of religious diversity in France than might be expected.[83] In reality however, alternative studies have shown a rise in hate crimes towards the followers of these religions but predominantly Muslims, and particularly in the immediate aftermath of a terrorist attack[84].

French Muslims perceive their situation as having to choose between their religious or their national identity, even though they may identify with both, which is a cause of widespread frustration within the Islamic community in France. Muslims therefore assimilate to Western values and take on the national identity of their host country, or else feel at risk of ostracism by mainstream society, as well as becoming the victims of racial discrimination and Islamophobia[85]. Saeed, expert in media theory, proposes that "such treatment may result in individuals believing that they must either reject their Muslim faith, or risk being rejected by mainstream society."[86] Chapter Two elaborates in greater detail as to the importance of perceptions of an individual's status as they stand, and relatively, in comparison to the mainstream society. As Raphael Liogier has discussed extensively, perceptions and the 'structure of the cognitive field' is to do with how we conceive ideas about one another. His discussion on this topic is focused on the visibility of religious symbols in the public square; he argues that:

> "We think we see things passively, when the very way in which we distinguish them cognitively (excluding, including, hierarchically arranging, emphasising certain parts of reality in our perception to the detriment of others) is correlated with the way in which we distinguish them socially (excluding, including, hierarchically arranging, emphasizing certain parts of the population, of certain activities)"[87].

[83] Sahgal, Neha and Webster, Bill, "French Have Positive Views of Both Jews, Muslims."
[84] Bounoua, Mélissa, "Après Les Attentats, Des Musulmans Agressés Partout En France."
[85] Liogier, *Le Mythe de l'Islamisation.*
[86] Gould and Klor, "The Long-Run Effect of 9/11."; Saeed, "Media, Racism and Islamophobia."
[87] Liogier, (2009). p. 43 '*Laicité* on the edge in France: Between the Theory of Church-State Separation and the Praxis of State-Church Confusion'.

Therefore, it is possible to deduce that the terrorist activities of certain French Muslims would be associated with the wider French Muslim community, altering the way in which we distinguish them cognitively and consequentially, socially. This could possibly have led to, once again, the necessity to remove the visibility of religious identity from French civil society, this time by passing a law banning the *burqa*, the 'head-to-foot-veil', in 2011[88].

This Chapter has laid out the historical and conceptual basis for theoretical exploration of the hypothesis in the following Chapter. The historical implications of *laïcité* in French society have been explored, particularly those concerning the integration of Muslim immigrants and their religion. The second part of the Chapter established France's past and contemporary experiences with the phenomenon of homegrown terrorism. The analysis begins to demonstrate potential correlational relationships between *laïcité* and homegrown Islamist radicalization. The following Chapter studies terrorism from a socio-psychological perspective, thus the concepts elaborated here provide a basis for a more detailed discussion on theories of psychology of terrorism, and their application to the case of homegrown Islamist radicalisation in France.

[88]Adam Taylor (2016) 'Banning burqas isn't a sensible response to terrorism'. *Washington Post.* ; Raphael Liogier (2010) 'France's attack on the veil is a huge blunder'. *The Guardian.*

Chapter II: Psychology of Terrorism and Radicalisation *en France*

Chapter Two provides an overview of the field of the psychology of terrorism and identifies the specific independent variables for the hypothesis. Although it is impossible to get inside another's mind, successful attempts at analysing psychological characteristics of terrorists have been made. A selection of studies undertaken by leading psychologists and psychiatrists are examined in order to familiarise the reader with research founded on psychoanalytical bases. Part One of the Chapter emphasises the importance of this approach to the study of homegrown Islamist radicalisation by examining relevant psychoanalytical studies of terrorism and receptiveness to radicalisation. Finally, it assesses the hypothesis against five renowned models and pathways to radicalisation, with a specific focus on homegrown radicalisation in order to observe whether *laïcité* can be a precursor to, or a mechanism within, the causal patterns brought forward by each theoretician. Part Two discusses how the independent variables of ostracism, discrimination, integration, identity and religion operate individually, and in conjunction with one another, to provide contingent generalisations on how and under what conditions they affect the dependent variable of French Muslims and contribute to their radicalisation. The aim of this kind of examination is to identify where *laïcité* may feature in the radicalisation process of French Muslims and should make it possible to determine the conditions under which the contingencies occur. The discussion highlights the importance of interdisciplinarity in studying radicalisation of Muslims in the West. Through deeper understanding of the processes of radicalisation, combined with a psychological approach to this, and a focus on sociological contributory factors, socio-psychological factors related to the radicalisation of French Muslims are identified.

Part I: Psychological Studies

Concerning the many studies which have been carried out in an effort to analyse the 'terrorist personality', psychologists have focused their studies on the mental state of the individuals who had committed terrorist acts[89]. Much of the research focuses on psychopathology, aggression and narcissism[90]. There is little consensus on these personality types, however these studies have nonetheless contributed to today's 'conventional wisdom' on terrorist personalities. John Horgan, professor of Global Studies and Psychology, Georgia State University, criticises previous studies on the topic for assigning a psychological affliction to

[89] See: Taylor, 1988; Taylor & Quayle, 1994; Cooper, 1978; Kellen, 1982; Burton, 1978
[90] Martha Crenshaw, "The Psychology of Political Terrorism."

the perpetrator of the attack without having been able to conduct an examination with the outcome being a psychiatric diagnosis, stating that "there is poor evidence for the principle that psychopathy is an element of the psychology of terrorist organisations."[91] Marta Crenshaw's study on West German terrorists from the 1970s founds her theory that "certain emotional deficiencies blind narcissists to the negative consequences of their actions." Within her study, she quotes Lee Bollinger (President of Columbia University) who carried out research personally with terrorists:

> "The terrorists he interviewed demonstrated a feature characteristic of individuals with narcissistic and borderline personalities – splitting. He found that they had split off the de-valued parts of themselves and projected them onto the establishment which then became the target of their violent aggression."[92]

Within his investigation, Horgan studies the 'Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis', as developed by multiple authors, who focused their attention on minority groups and movements within society whose demands were to change the society they lived in. He explores how, and under what circumstances, these groups turn to violence, and what might cause its escalation. The adherence to this kind of group and participation in violence is a result of "a real or imagined underprivileged, disadvantaged status as an aggressive response from a failure to have their grievances resolved."[93] Some authors refer to many other characteristics, such as frustration or lack of goal attainment, which are still salient in contemporary studies. These theories still provoke the same critique, particularly that this still does not explain motivations for aggressive behaviour; in other words, it is still not possible to predict which individual will commit a terrorist attack. Criticism of attempts at terrorist profiling also arise considering the transferability of the theories from the individual to the group level: whereas these may be applicable to individuals (if still unverifiable), they lack validity at the group or collective level.[94] What is for sure is that there is more of a mind-maze than a mind-map when attempting to comprehend the terrorist mentality.

Analysing the Terrorist Identity

In the late twentieth century, many more attempts at developing similar theories were undertaken in Europe, this time focusing on characteristics of the individuals, to which it is necessary to pay particular attention. These theories studied the inclination of 'intellectuals'

[91] John Horgan, "Terrorists, Victims, and Society," 7.
[92] Martha Crenshaw, "The Psychology of Political Terrorism."
[93] John Horgan, "Terrorists, Victims, and Society," 10.
[94] John Horgan, 11.

and ‘affluent youth’ and their motivations to change the society within which they lived; their motivations of course vary, however the demand for social change is paramount as it is “based on the frustrating conditions of conflicting social climates which… give rise to terrorism and extremism.”[95] This factor is investigated in greater depth in the following section as this is indispensable in the theory of susceptibility to radicalisation of French Muslims.

Psychodynamic, or psychoanalytic accounts, it has been admitted within the field, have limited saliency in the study of terrorism nowadays, however several scholars utilised methods associated with psychoanalysis in an attempt to draw out a terrorist ‘identity’.[96] Horgan refers in particular to Erikson’s 1968 ‘personality theory’ which “suggests that the formation of an ‘identity’ (and soon after, ‘negative’ identity) is crucial to personality development.”[97] Others have contributed to the development of this theory by adding the dimension of ‘belonging’ to a group, thus association and collectiveness becomes an element in the identity building of the terrorist.[98] It is possible to deduce that identity formation and a sense of group belonging are extremely important factors for these individuals, and that characteristically, the lack of a clear identity, or of acceptance within a group, can cause disruptions to that individual’s personality development.

The study of intellectuals and ‘affluent youth’ have been associated with studies on the apparent normality of terrorists; these studies stress the absence of evidence to support the previous studies, and therefore of any psychological abnormalities. Some scholars link these observations to intelligence, openness, education, and preparedness, also stating the difference between non-political and political murderers, “the politically motivated killers generally came from more stable backgrounds and the incidence of psychological disturbance was much less than in the ‘ordinary criminals’.”[99]

These studies and theories have contributed to the vast efforts which have been made in understanding terrorist psychology, although motivations are difficult to define, as well as their identity. Radicalised individuals will not always commit to terrorism, and the causes of terrorism are still misunderstood, if indeed understood at all. This certainly does not deny any importance to the research which has been carried out in this domain.

[95] John Horgan, 11.
See also: Kampf, 1990; Birrell, 1972; Friedland, 1992 and Heskin 1980, 1984
[96] John Horgan, 15.
[97] John Horgan, 15.
[98] Ibid. See also: Post; Kaplan and Cairns, 1981, 1989
[99] John Horgan, “Terrorists, Victims, and Society,” 15.

Receptiveness to Radicalism

As can be deduced from these observations, the individual is incredibly difficult to characterise. Likewise, Andrew Silke, forensic psychologist and Honorary Senior Research Associate of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St Andrews, admits the difficulty in defining the terrorist groups, and even what a 'terrorist' is. Silke affirms that groups vary in ideology, size, influence (reach), tactics and methods. Significantly for my research, he studies marginalisation and discrimination with the goal of identifying receptiveness to radical ideologies, stating:

> "if marginalised groups are discriminated against or internal sections believe that there is discrimination, there will always be those within such communities who will be receptive to radical ideologies advocating changing or reforming the established, mainstream social system."[100]

Whilst the importance of discrimination as a cause of marginalisation is acknowledged, Silke admits that this is still insufficient for pushing an individual to commit acts of terrorism, an important feature to consider when studying susceptibility to radicalisation.

In addition to these topographies, Jerrold Post, professor of Psychiatry, Political Psychology and International Affairs at George Washington University, and founding director of the CIA Centre for the Analysis of Personality and Political Behaviour, includes the generational factor, claiming that there is "an increased radicalisation and recruitment of terrorists from second-and third-generation émigrés to the global Salafi *jihad.*"[101] He explains how barriers to integration and day-to-day difficulties concerning discrimination and other experiences pertaining to the social conditions of Muslim immigrants in Europe "promoted feelings of alienation among young Muslims who felt excluded from the rigid European social structure."[102] Post identifies the individuals as not initially being overtly religious. Searching for a "companionship, acceptance, and a sense of meaning and significance" they will turn to religion, and eventually this will make them "vulnerable to extremist religious leaders and their radicalisation within Muslim institutions." [103] Although there is not one established path to radicalisation, the features identified here are pertinent for the present research and the investigations in the following section.

[100] Andrew Silke, "Terrorists, Victims, and Society," 39.
[101] Post, *The Mind of the Terrorist*, 225.
[102] Post, 226.
[103] Post, 226.

Models and Pathways to Radicalisation

Five models have been chosen for investigation here, as previously selected for a study by Michael King and Donald Taylor of the Department of Psychology at McGill University. Their review of these five models is particularly relevant and, as experienced psychologists, they provide a scientifically sound basis to draw conclusions from their observations of psychological factors, which have been brought forward previously as contributing to radicalisation. The psychological factors which they hold to be most important in their analysis as contributing to the radicalisation process are: "group relative deprivation, identity conflicts, and personality characteristics."[104] Assessment of these five models is used to determine if, and when, *laïcité* contributes to the process of radicalisation of French Muslims.

The first model for investigation is that of Randy Borum, forensic psychologist and associate professor at the Department of Mental Health Law and Policy at University of South Florida, which has been classified as a 'linear and progressive' model. The stages and factors involved in here are: social and economic deprivation, inequality and resentment, blame and attribution, and finally, stereotyping and demonising the enemy[105]. Borum explains his model as being initiated by deprivations, either "economic (e.g., poverty, unemployment, poor living conditions) or social (e.g., government-imposed restrictions on individual freedoms, lack of order or morality)."[106] He continues that, the more the individual perceives their situation as an 'injustice', the more they will create for themselves a sense of relative deprivation, and gives the example of Middle Eastern peoples compared to citizens of the United States, "a caricature of affluence and wasteful excess"[107]. Injustice, perceived or real, will lead an individual to place blame on the 'outgroup' which is held responsible for their "illegitimate situation"[108]. This is a key factor in the radicalisation process as only a minority of the 'ingroup' will pass from this mechanism to the legitimisation of violence against the outgroup. As has been discussed in the previous Chapter, *laïcité* is a policy which is held in great disdain by those individuals wishing for the freedom to express their religious identity within the public sphere of civil society in France, which is prohibited by law. The enforcement of the 1905 law of separation stipulates

[104] King and Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists," 602.
King is PhD candidate at the Dep. of Psychology at McGill, with a focus on the psychological processes involved in radicalization and the legitimacy of terrorism; Taylor is professor of psychology within the same department.
[105] Borum, Randy, "Understanding the Terrorist Mind-Set"; King and Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists," 604.
[106] Borum, Randy, "Understanding the Terrorist Mind-Set," 7.
[107] Borum, Randy, 8.
[108] King and Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists," 604.

that religion is a strictly private matter, the reinforcement of the law in 2003 by the Stasi Report and the banning of 'ostentatious' religious symbols the following year, which was perceived overwhelmingly as targeting the Muslim headscarf, are all factors which could prompt the first mechanism in this process of radicalisation which here, has been termed social deprivation.

The second model analysed is that put forward by Wiktorowicz, expert on national security engagement and counter-terrorism, and former White House security advisor. This four-point model stresses socio-psychological factors from the outset. The first stage in this process is a 'cognitive opening', followed by 'religious seeking', 'frame alignment' and ending in 'socialisation'[109]. According to Wiktorowicz, the cognitive opening is closely linked to 'seeking' which, "shakes certitude in previously accepted beliefs"[110], allowing for the cognitive opening to arise, and increasing the individual's susceptibility to extremist interpretations. Although the author's attention singularly focused on recruitment by the *jihadist* group from the United Kingdom, al-Mujahiroun, the theoretical framework and the model for radicalisation is indeed transferable to other national and organisational contexts. The sequence of stages in this model closely resembles the processes which shall be explored in the second Part of Chapter Two, which links the current enforcement of *laïcité* and the psychological processes of ostracism, which, as shall be demonstrated, leads eventually to radicalisation.

The model developed by Moghaddam[111] perceives radicalisation as a staircase that the individual climbs, leading to recruitment depending on particular circumstances, and ultimately enticing the individual to commit a terrorist act. The ladder consists of six steps, beginning with the individual's 'psychological interpretation of material conditions', 'perceived options to fight unfair treatment', 'displacement of aggression', 'moral engagement', 'solidification of categorical thinking', leading ultimately to the sixth and final stage, 'the terrorist act'.[112] Moghaddam also places considerable importance on the factor of relative deprivation, and couples this with perception of perpetual underachievement of the individual, or their insecurities, thus, injustice also features highly in the early stages in this model[113]. Moghaddam links his hypothesis to the psychology of intergroup relations[114], again a central feature of those

[109] King and Taylor, 605.
[110] Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 85.
[111] Fathali Moghaddam is an Iranian-born psychologist and professor of psychology at Georgetown University, and director of the Conflict Resolution Program in the same institution.
[112] King and Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists," 605.
[113] Fathali M. Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration.," *American Psychologist* 60, no. 2 (2005): 163-164, doi:10.1037/0003-066X.60.2.161.
[114] Moghaddam, 164.

explored earlier. Self-awareness and group relations, interaction and inclusion or exclusion are thus seen as prominent features in the hypothesis which identifies *laïcité* as a key determinant in the process of the radicalisation of French Muslims.

The fourth model selected is that of Silber and Bhatt, two Senior Intelligence Analysts for the New York City Police Department (NYPD) Intelligence Division, whose study is particularly interesting for the present research as it is uniquely focused on homegrown Islamist radicalisation. Their model is also composed of a four-stage process, however interestingly the first stage in this case is termed 'pre-radicalisation', referring to "their life situation before they were exposed to and adopted jihadi-Salafi Islam as their own ideology."[115] This stage is followed then by 'self-identification', 'indoctrination' and ends in 'jihadisation'. The authors' study of radicalisation in the West suggests that this "often starts with individuals who are frustrated with their lives or with the politics of their home governments. These individuals ultimately seek other like-minded individuals and form a loose-knit group or social network."[116] The link in the chain between the first and second stages is a 'key driver', which prompts the individual to turn to Islam in response to a personal crisis, which can include "losing a job, or the result of an ongoing situation, like discrimination or an identity crisis."[117] In France, political grievances linked to discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation can lead individuals to pass easily from the first to the second stage, whereby the individual seeks association with a larger ideological movement with which they can identify closely, and use to legitimise their behaviour from that point forward.

The fifth model investigated is that of Sageman[118], which interestingly is the only model classified as a non-linear process. The four factors contributing to this radicalisation process are 'sense of moral outrage', 'frame used to interpret the world', 'resonance with personal experience' and lastly, 'mobilisation through networks'[119]. This model is reviewed as a combination of cognitive and situational factors, which do not have to occur in any specific order, however it is unclear whether all factors must be experienced in order for radicalisation to occur, or even whether all factors are of equal importance in the process. The two first-mentioned factors in this model can be related to reactions to foreign policy, and to the Islamist extremist worldview of a war on Islam. The third is more personal, and Sageman identifies this

[115] Silber, Mitchell D. and Bhatt, Arvin, "Radicalisation in the West," 6.
[116] Silber, Mitchell D. and Bhatt, Arvin, 18.
[117] King and Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists," 607.
[118] Marc Sageman is a forensic psychiatrist, sociologist, independent consultant, director of research at ARTIS first scholar in residence at the NYPD, and former CIA officer
[119] Ibid., 605,608.

factor as being particular to the European situation, where Muslims are generally less well off than the average American Muslim family[120]. This could be perceived as a kind of relative deprivation, depending on the individual's perception of their current situation, and could induce the individual to seek networks of likeminded individuals. Adherence to a group ideology is the fourth factor contributing to an individual's radicalisation in this model and is the only non-cognitive factor. This is applicable to the situation of French Muslims ostracised on the basis of their religious identity, as described in the following section. They are typically seeking inclusion and a sense of belonging in a group, with an ideology which will fulfil their need for a meaningful existence.

Part II: Susceptibility to Radicalisation

This Part of the Chapter focuses on how some French Muslims struggle to live up to the assimilationist expectations of French mainstream society and suffer stigmatisation as a result. It is important to state here that this investigation does not conclude that this is the only reason for radicalisation of French Muslims, nor does it aim to say that French Muslims are not well integrated, nor that they all suffer stigmatisation, or that all stigmatised French Muslims will become radicalised. It is also paramount to keep in mind that there is only a very small minority who may become radicalised, and even fewer who may then go on to carry out terrorist acts. This research aims improve an understanding of the implications of the intensification of the application of French *laïcité*, how this can alter the psyche of French Muslims, and what role this plays in their radicalisation.

Ostracism and Radicalisation of French Muslims

The research indicates that feelings of rejection and ostracism could result in an increased risk of joining extremist terrorist groups. Studies on ostracism and its potential effects on an individual indicate that this can affect the self-esteem and a variety of emotions (such as sadness and anger), as well as feelings of belonging and meaningful existence[121]. In most cases, even if the group ostracising is despised, that is, regardless of the nature of the group ostracising, individuals will still be affected negatively by being excluded. Williams[122] further points out that scholarly interest in ostracism and related phenomena, which in this case is homegrown Islamic radicalisation, is "linked to its association with horrific violent events."[123] He goes so

[120] Sageman, Marc, "A Strategy for Fighting International Islamist Terrorists," 226.
[121] Knapton, Holly M., "The Recruitment and Radicalisation of Western Citizens"; Williams, "Ostracism," 434.
[122] Professor of Psychological Studies, Purdue University
[123] Williams, "Ostracism," 441.

far as to say that this fact is not simply 'correlational', and that "ostracism, social exclusion, and rejection are causally linked to a reduction in prosocial behaviours and an increase in derogation of the excluder"[124]. This means that the individual shows less interest in seeking the attention of the excluder, and consequentially may then focus reprisals on them. Furthermore, the individual may display "antisocial behaviours to others who may or may not have been the source of exclusion."[125] Thus, one may deduce that the individual would not care about the collateral damage caused by their actions.[126] It could be argued therefore that social isolation and the above negative attitudes play a role in triggering the planning of elaborate acts and committing violence.

In the case of French Muslims, this features prominently and is manifested in the frustration of many individuals who are struggling with stigmatisation on the basis of their religious beliefs, and a sense of not 'belonging'. The more difficult society makes it for an individual to feel involved, the more the individual will perceive this as exclusion, and stigmatisation; as "this is a behaviour that an individual cannot regulate, and in turn, this may affect their need for control and meaningfulness"[127]. Atoning for the loss of control and meaningfulness, individuals look for alternative groups, and in a state of frustration and lack of belonging, are highly influenceable; the group which they are attracted to generally has strong message content and persuasiveness, as well as coherent, as opposed to weak arguments[128]. Wood, expert in social behaviour, explains that individuals are highly perceptive of the attitudes around them and if in a weakened state, are more receptive to strong messages by stating that "attitudes are social phenomena… they emerge from and are embedded in social interaction."[129] Thus, when French Muslims perceive themselves as being excluded from mainstream society, they will seek alternatives to compensate for their failure of acceptance. Furthermore, when individuals become more easily influenceable, they are likely to become more susceptible to radicalisation[130].

It has been established that *laïcité* dominates the social sphere of civil society and alters mainstream societies' attitudes towards religious diversity and displays of religious identity

[124] Prosocial behaviour is behaviour which encourages interaction, engagement in group activities, and effort to remain an ingroup member.
[125] Williams, "Ostracism," 441.
[126] See also: Twenge et al., "If You Can't Join Them, Beat Them."
[127] Knapton, Holly M., "The Recruitment and Radicalisation of Western Citizens," 41.
[128] Wood, "Attitude Change," 545.
[129] Wood, 561.
[130] Knapton, Holly M., "The Recruitment and Radicalisation of Western Citizens," 41.

within this sphere. In combination with the subsequent stigmatisation of French Muslims, and their exclusion, this leads to an identity crisis on their part. In some cases, these individuals are more likely to strengthen their religious identity, when they perceive the attitude of mainstream society as rejection, and therefore as a failure on their part to 'become French'[131]. One of the circumstances is their affiliation to a group or acceptance within a group, normally with a strong message and persuasiveness. In their vulnerable state of acute influenceability, the ostracised individual will become more susceptible to radicalisation. McCauley and Moskalenko have identified three levels of radicalisation[132]: individual, group and mass-public. They have also enumerated twelve mechanisms of political radicalisation which range within their three levels from individual to mass-public levels. The first step in their pathway to radicalisation at the individual level is 'victimisation'[133] as a result of which, "individuals may enter the path of personal radicalisation as a result of a desire for revenge"[134]. It is possible to deduce from these arguments that discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation amounts to ostracism, leading to a feeling of victimisation, which is the first mechanism of radicalisation at the individual level. The second mechanism identified in this process is 'political grievance' which is also a prominent feature in the case of France, and closely associated with the debate on *laïcité*. At this stage in the process, individuals act in response to what they perceive as discrimination or victimisation, and are likely to commit violent acts. The authors clarify that although this mechanism takes place at the individual level, the individual "is likely to have some association with a larger intellectual movement."[135] This is to suggest that at this point, an individual will have self-identified with a strong, persuasive argument by one or another group, and will begin to act according to the group ideology.

As mentioned above, ostracism can lead to a feeling of lack of meaningfulness. This has implications on how an individual reacts to ostracism, since when they feel that their Muslim identity is under threat, as they may do for instance in a society which rejects public displays of religious identity, the need for assimilation is increased. Ostracism can affect an individual's pro-social needs, such as need for belonging and self-esteem, as mentioned earlier. Several

[131] Laborde, *Critical Republicanism*, 215.
[132] McCauley & Moskalenko define radicalisation as being "a dimension of increasing extremity of beliefs, feelings, and behaviours in support of intergroup conflict and violence." McCauley is Professor of Sciences and Mathematics and codirector of the Solomon Asch Center for Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict at Bryn Mawr College. Moskalenko is Postdoctoral research fellow at Bryn Mawr College.
McCauley and Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization," 415.
[133] McCauley and Moskalenko, 418.
[134] Knapton, Holly M., "The Recruitment and Radicalisation of Western Citizens," 43; McCauley and Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization," 418.
[135] McCauley and Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization," 419.

arguments above have outlined however that when ostracised, they will identify more with their religious identity, particularly if they feel that it is threatened in some way, further increasing their likelihood of committing violent acts against the mainstream society[136]. Need for control and meaningful existence are examples of anti-social needs and are particularly pertinent and dangerous when considering group radicalisation, referring to the formation of a group by individuals as a result of social exclusion. Groups of this kind may encourage the development and escalation of their devotion.

As noted in the previous section, there is little evidence for the mental instability of terrorists[137] however, Post highlights the importance of groups of individuals who perceive themselves as victims of society and come together, stating:

> "the combination of the personal feelings of inadequacy with the reliance on the psychological mechanisms of externalisation and splitting leads them to find especially attractive a group of like-minded individuals whose credo is 'It's not us – its them; they are the cause of our problems.'"[138]

It is in a group setting that individuals will tend towards one or another extreme on the spectrum of radical ideas supported by the group. Furthermore, individuals who seek inclusion and sense of belonging may increase their perception of the need to behave according to the group ideology, and therefore of justification of violence towards the group ostracising. This corresponds with the fifth and sixth mechanisms identified in the pathway to violence of McCauley and Moskalenko, which are: 5: Extremity shift in like-minded groups; and 6: Extreme cohesion under isolation and threat.[139] These groups can develop into terrorist cells associated with transnational or international terrorist organisations such as al Qaeda or more recently, ISIS. This has been the case in France, and the identification and incarceration of the individuals involved in such groups is becoming more and more frequent, particularly since the series of attacks carried out on French territory in 2015.

This Chapter has outlined some of the factors concerned with *laïcité,* including the politics of suppression of displays of religious affiliation and how this in turn can be termed a type of ostracism. By submitting the 'susceptibility to radicalisation' hypothesis to a psychological study, this Chapter has demonstrated how the process of ostracism develops parallel to processes of radicalisation of individuals and groups. Throughout the Chapter

[136] Williams, "Ostracism," 436.
[137] John Horgan, "Terrorists, Victims, and Society."
[138] Jerrold M. Post, "Terrorist Psycho-Logic," 31.
[139] McCauley and Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization," 418.

arguments have been brought forward suggesting that *laïcité* contributes towards producing the social and psychological mechanisms of radicalization of French Muslims. The following Chapter cross-examines the findings against profiles of susceptible individuals and cases of French radicals having carried out deadly terrorist attacks in France.

Chapter III: Empirical Investigations: French homegrown Radicalisation

This Chapter provides a complex empirical explanation of the combination of factors, variables and patterns identified above. The hypothesis is tested in two phases; the first investigates whether it is applicable to the groups most susceptible to Islamist radicalisation, namely prisoners, converts and students, and briefly addresses Internet radicalisation. These categories are identified as being the most vulnerable sections of society due to their isolation from society, their profile, and their youthfulness, respectively, and their influenceability, collectively. The second investigation looks at examples of French Muslim homegrown radicals who have committed terrorist acts on French territory. In particular, it focuses on the cases of the *Charlie Hebdo* (2015) attackers, the Kosher supermarket (2015) attacker, and the perpetrators of the November 15th, 2015 Paris attacks. Finally, the case of Mohammed Merah who committed the 2012 attacks in Toulouse and Montauban is examined. The results of this investigation aim to assess whether the empirical patterns match those predicted or implied by the theory.

Investigation 1: Susceptible Individuals

Prisoners

Prisoners are not an unusual choice for studies of radicalisation, and their case cannot be overlooked in the study of homegrown Islamist terrorism in the French context. Rosenthal's[140] 2006 study on European Muslim convicted terrorists, their motivations and paths to radicalization focuses specifically on French Muslims. One imprisoned French Islamist had confessed:

> "I understood that I was different, that I was not French, that I would never become French and had no business trying to become French either. I took it well. I was proud of my new Muslim identity. That was my reconquest of myself, my burst of lucidity, my awakening… no more desire to become part of this France that did not want me."[141]

In his analysis of statements made by imprisoned European Muslims, Rosenthal argues that "hatred of France is the unifying thread running through the testimonials of the inmates and, … clearly provides the primordial affect that has fueled the process of their radicalization."[142] He

[140] European & political philosopher. Hoover Institute, Stanford University
[141] Quoted in: Rosenthal, John, "The French Path to Jihad," 39. 'Ousman', among other French Islamists, was interviewed by Farhad Khosrokhavar for his investigation *'Quand Al-Quaida parle: Témoingnages derrière les barraux.'* (Grasset, 2006). 136-137. *(When Al-Quaeda speaks: testimonies from behind bars.)*
[142] Rosenthal, John, 45.

goes on to discuss the various motives including foreign policy, which can be classified as injustices that are indirectly felt[143], and points out that it is "rather *France* that they hold accountable for perceived injustices that they have *lived*"[144], (emphasis in original) which, as has been made evident, other authors have also acknowledged in their assessment of this phenomenon.

The number of Muslim prisoners in France hugely outnumbers those of other religions, they often account for more than 50 percent, and in some cases as high as 70 percent, of inmates[145]. Despite their high numbers little is done in France to accommodate them correctly within the prison facilities. This is particularly noticeable when their numbers are compared to the small number of Imams visiting prisons and available to prisoners across the French territory[146]. There are two major factors contributing to the inmates' radicalisation, particularly: frustration over their perceived (or real) discrimination within the prison, often accused of as Islamophobic treatment, and adjoined to this, policies of *laïcité* which directly affect the inmates and the practice of their religion.

Frustration alone is non-relatable to Islamic radicalisation, however within the prison context several factors related to religious practice allow some prisoners to connect their frustration to a desire for revenge, with reference to an extreme ideology. The lack of Imams is one important factor as noted by Khosrokhavar, professor at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, in his in-depth study on radicalisation in French prisons; not being able to practice their religion as they would desire is a source of great frustration for the majority of Muslim inmates[147]. Policies of *laïcité* also reach within the prison, most importantly, a ban on "the expression of Islamic identity"[148]. French *laïcité* also affects the fulfilment of dietary requirements prescribed in Islam, as *halal* food is only provided on a private basis, which means that it must be purchased at the canteen rather than being readily available as a meal choice.

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[143] Rosenthal refers to injustices suffered by Muslims abroad, such as the struggles in Chechnya, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine.

[144] Rosenthal, John, "The French Path to Jihad," 57.

[145] Khosrokhavar, "Radicalization in Prison," 289.

[146] As of January 2015, the number of Christian chaplaincies numbered 760 compared to 75 Jewish and 193 Muslim. Considering that the numbers of Christians and Muslims are close to equal in percentage of inmates, the difference is quite deplorable.
Ministère de la Justice, "Culte: Pratiques et organisation du culte en détention."

[147] The frustration is as a result of not being able to practice religious rituals in prison: prayer mats are forbidden in most prisons, prisoners are not allowed daily showers (washing is a requirement before prayer in the Muslim faith), not having access to Imams for Friday collective prayers (when Jews' and Christians' Saturday and Sunday ritual worship take place regularly), dietary requirements are not catered for. During Ramadan, or at all, *halal* options are not provided.
Khosrokhavar, "Radicalization in Prison," 290.

[148] Khosrokhavar, 289.

Admittedly, radicalisation in prisons takes place on a rather small scale[149], however even its infrequent occurrence is not insignificant in this study. A new radicalisation process is observed within French prisons which depends on close-knit relationships typically between a 'mentor' and one or two, rarely more than three individuals; these types of cells, or 'micro-groups' are formed in prisons where tight bonds are more important than in the outside world.[150]

Converts

Concerning the radicalisation of individuals who chose to convert to the Muslim faith, reports have indicated that there is a growing threat of violent attacks from this group. It is estimated that in France there are somewhere between 50,000 to 100,000 Muslim converts, also referred to as New Muslims, of a total number of approximately 4 million Muslims[151]. This group is considered to be particularly vulnerable to succumbing to extremist ideologies because of their eagerness to embrace their new faith, and for this reason are seen as easy targets among European Muslims. The targeting of this group by recruiters is however due primarily to their profile, being usually white European, enhancing their ability to travel across borders with less suspicion on the part of the authorities compared to their Arab counterparts[152]. This is contrary to ideas spread by conventional wisdom on radicalisation of Western Muslims, which claims that the targeting of this group is due particularly to their lack of clear knowledge on Islam, which could endanger them from the outset to adhesion to an extremist interpretation.

The radicalisation of New Muslims is extremely difficult to understand however, recent studies have made ground in this domain. Bartoswezicz, specialist in international security, conducted a study on European converts to Islam, and constructed a matrix of 'conversion trajectories' which emphasised the importance of 'conversion stories' or the individuals' path to conversion, as well as the effect that conversion has on them following the act. This approach allowed her to establish a typology of New Muslims' identities, as either Ambassador, Lost, Bridge or Castaway. These four typologies are more or less vulnerable to radicalisation depending on the circumstances under which they evolve, furthermore a convert is not limited to only one archetype and may change type as the environment and their behaviour are altered, depending on the extent of acceptance, rejection, inclusion or exclusion the individual

[149] Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe,* 40.
[150] Khosrokhavar, "Radicalization in Prison," 288-289.
[151] Figures are estimates because of the French prohibition of the collection of data referring to religious affiliation. Pew Research Center, "Mapping the Global Muslim Population," 21.
[152] Barteszewicz, Monika G, "Controversies of Conversions," 17.

encounters[153]. The two most vulnerable archetypes are, predictably, Lost and Castaway[154], although more surprisingly the Lost New Muslim is the more vulnerable according to Bartoswezicz's typologies. This archetype also constitutes the most variable type, as there exists an "overabundance of highly personalised factors" contributing to build-up of this group[155]. Individuals who had for a period experienced this archetype confessed to their vulnerability as a New Muslim of falling into extremism, as they were aware that they were an easy target during the early stages of conversion. This fact, and others relating to their vulnerability are brought up by Karagiannis, expert in radicalisation and Islam, who has identified converts' receptiveness to radical views[156], among which personal victimisation and perceived grievances feature prominently, as they did for McCauley and Moskalenko[157].

Students and Youth

As for the case of students and the French youth in general, there is a growing sentiment that their radicalisation is "one of the most important threats of international terrorism in the world today"[158]. In France fifteen to twenty-one-year-olds constitute the 'youth' and are understood here as the group most affected by radicalisation, concerning 63 percent of cases[159]. They are considered at high risk to radicalisation because of many factors which are mostly socio-psychological, although not necessarily applicable to all cases, but are identified in the majority of cases reported. Many of these factors are related to social exclusion, discrimination, and economic disparity. The factors relating more specifically to French youths are concerned with the family or their personal identity; the lack or absence of parental or family guidance can play a role, as well as the perception of their family's history or religiosity[160]. Their vulnerability is increased by their opinion of the acceptance of Muslims in French civil society and their opportunities (or lack of) therein. The category 'youths' can also refer to the ages fifteen to twenty-four, which merits studying in the case of France, if not insignificantly because of their comparatively high rate of unemployment compared to adult age groups; in 2012, their

[153] Barteszewicz, Monika G, 24.
[154] The Lost archetype experiences acceptance of their new identity, but exclusion from their environment (lack of belonging); the Castaway experiences rejection of their new identity, as well as exclusion from their environment. This is what the author refers to as the 'identity-belonging' dynamic.
[155] Barteszewicz, Monika G, "Controversies of Conversions," 26.
[156] Karagiannis, "European Converts to Islam," 106.
[157] McCauley and Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization."
[158] Bizina, Margarita and Gray, David, "Radicalisation of Youth as a Growing Concern for Counter-Terrorism Policy," 72.
[159] Bouzar, Dounia, Caupenne, Christophe, and Valsan, Sulayman, "Métamorphose," 10.
[160] Political history of parents for example, their position during the Algerian war of independence, or their low religiosity can label them as 'bad Muslims' and be considered a humiliation

unemployment rate reached a staggering 25.7 percent[161]. This is even more salient concerning French Muslims, as the unemployment rate of Muslim immigrants is approximately 12 percent, double that of immigrants from other origins (INSEE data)[162].

Many studies have been carried out concerning the radicalisation of French youths, attempting to establish a typology of the radicalisation process for this category. The stages of radicalisation typically coincide with a 'cutting off' in various senses of the term. The individual, preoccupied with their own purity eventually cuts himself, or herself, off from society, beginning with their immediate friendship group, pastimes, and eventually their studies. This is typically eventually followed, in much rarer and more extreme cases, by cutting off family ties, and the young individual may even decide to travel abroad once they have identified with one or another larger group ideology[163]. The involvement of parents and the community have been identified as the most important factors in identification of youth radicalisation; many signals are apparent during each stage of the radicalisation process which should be identifiable by friends, family and their immediate entourage[164]. The diversity of the composition of this age group attests to the equally numerous mechanisms playing a role in the radicalisation of French youth.

One manner of radicalisation which is readily available and particularly utilised by the youth is online via the Internet. The first identifiable differences between offline and online radicalisation is the fact that technology offers users a high degree of anonymity, and information can be shared instantaneously and accessed by individuals or by groups, simultaneously[165]. A 'Radicalisation Factor Model' has been developed which considers the individual characteristics, context-specific information, technology usage, behavioural patterns, the means utilised, the usage of technology by radical groups, and extremist groups and ideologies. The authors of the model highlight the importance of four factors: "the characteristics of the radicalised individual, the environment, the radical groups and ideologies, and the technologies related to online radicalisation."[166] The framework serves as a basis on

[161] Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France*, 104.
[162] Fredette, 106.
[163] Bouzar, Dounia, Caupenne, Christophe, and Valsan, Sulayman, "Métamorphose," 18.
[164] These include the behavioural changes mentioned, but also changes in the individual's physical appearance and choice of outerwear. Individuals may stop wearing makeup, and taking care of their appearance in the case of women, or growing a beard for men, and wearing traditional Islamic clothing in almost all cases.
[165] Petra Saskia Bayerl et al., "A Framework for the Investigation and Modeling of Online Radicalization and the Identification of Radicalized Individuals," in *Emerging Trends in ICT Security*, ed. Akhgar, Babak and Arabnia, Hamid, Emerging Trends in Computer Science & Applied Computing (Amsterdam; Boston: Morgan Kaufmann/Elsevier, 2013), 542.
[166] Petra Saskia Bayerl et al., 545.

which to understand the complexity of online radicalisation, which remains nonetheless highly intangible. As the narrative reads however, "No community should consider themselves immune from the global reach and connectivity of Islamist groups following in the footsteps of al Qa'ida."[167] This indicates that the threat of online radicalisation is prolific and many groups in society are vulnerable to falling victim to the spread of extremist ideas online.

It is specifically the reach and the availability of information online which supports what is known as 'self-radicalisation', which is defined as "the radicalisation of individuals without direct input or encouragement from others". Access to, and the dissemination of shared views, radical beliefs and ideas online is extremely difficult to regulate as the "Internet knows no geographical boundaries, thus creating a space for radical activists to connect to people across the globe."[168] The 'activists' demonstrate extremely sophisticated online behaviour, including the quantity and the content of online activity, their use of social media and the concealment of their true identity. Many methods exist however of 'Web Mining' which aim to target online radical profiles, using various techniques of 'web harvesting', and content, link and network analyses, as well as manual methods of analysis[169].

It becomes evident therefore that there are many groups in society vulnerable to radicalisation by very diverse means. This study has pointed out the weaknesses of certain groups and has laid out the typologies towards radicalisation but has also presented some means of prevention. It is possible to deduce from this brief analysis that the case of prisoners is the most country-specific considering the treatment of prisoners, specifically the policies of *laïcité* which reach within the prison facilities prohibiting the expression of Muslim identity. These policies severely restrict the free practice of the Islamic faith and cause intense frustration and a legitimate sense of being discriminated against when compared to other religions within the prison setting. Frustration alone was insufficient for allowing receptiveness of extremist ideologies, however the presence of a mentor and the formation of 'cells' within the prison facilities greatly increases the individual's vulnerability to Islamist radicalisation. Last but not least, these individuals' state of incarceration deprives them of the positive influences of family and the community; little interaction with alternative influences increases their susceptibility to feeling alienated from society. These are factors which were observed in the previous Chapter, indicating that *laïcité* may have an influence in the early stages of radicalisation. Having

[167] Staniforth, Andrew and Nitsch, Holger, "Preventing Terrorism Together," 551.
[168] Akhgar, Babak et al., "Investigating Radicalized Individual Profiles through Fuzzy Cognitive Maps," 559.
[169] Ibid., 565-568.

examined the groups most vulnerable, the attention shall now turn to carefully selected profiles which provide an enriching investigation.

Investigation 2: Profiles of French Radicals

This section examines some empirical examples of cases of radicalised French Muslims who have committed violent terrorist attacks in France. These cases have been selected because they are contemporary, they are diverse, and they are illustrative of the complexities associated with the investigation of susceptibility to radicalisation. The first pair to be examined are Chérif and Said Kouachi, two brothers who, on the 7th January 2015 attacked the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, killing twelve people including eight journalists, two police officers, a caretaker and a visitor[170]. The brothers had very different profiles, however both underwent a long process of radicalisation, leading to their violent attack. Having lost both their parents at a young age, the brothers lived a relatively isolated adolescence in a foster home in a small village. They returned to Paris around 2000 where, following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the two began to frequent the Adda'wa Mosque, where they met individuals whose piety made an impression on them, one in particular, Mr Benyettou, taught them and other young men; the group would become known as the 'Buttes-Chaumont'[171]. The following year, Chérif and Said began visiting Benyettou at his apartment where they discussed religious justification for suicide attacks, how to load bombs into trucks and attack American bases[172].

Chérif Kouachi was imprisoned in 2005 for nearly 20 months for attempting to leave France for Iraq. In prison, Chérif was exposed to intense Islamic resentment, and it was here that he met Djamel Beghal, one of France's most radical jihadists, and top al Qaeda operative. Said Kouachi, who struggled to find full-time employment, also began to follow a strict interpretation of Islam, and his fundamentalist attitudes eventually cost him his job. Once released, Chérif and Said continued to contact Beghal, and another former inmate, Mr Coulibaly whose case is discussed following this[173].

The Kouachi brothers therefore fit into two of the three vulnerable profile types identified earlier in the Chapter, specifically, 'prisoners' and 'youth'. It is clear that Chérif's radicalisation was welded in prison due to his contact with Dhamel Beghal, and the personal

[170] BBC, "Charlie Hebdo Attack."
[171] For information on this cell see: Yardley, Jim, "Jihadism Born in a Paris Park and Fueled in the Prison Yard."
[172] Callimachi, Rukmini and Yardley, Jim, "From Amateur to Ruthless Jihadist in France."
[173] Callimachi, Rukmini and Yardley, Jim.

grievances[174] he must have experienced during his incarceration. Said's radicalisation is less clear, however the loss of the support of his younger brother, to whom he had always been extremely close, may have increased his influenceability and made him more vulnerable to succumbing to a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. His behaviour altered, causing his subsequent unemployment, which could have led his perception of his present situation to that of 'relative deprivation'[175] which is a recurrent factor in the models of radicalisation discussed above.

The case of Amedy Coulibaly is closely related to that of the Kouachi brothers, as he declared that he was acting in order for the Kouachi brothers to be allowed to go free. Coulibaly took 19 people as hostages in a Kosher supermarket, Hyper Cacher in Porte de Vincennes in Paris, killing four before a siege was carried out and Coulibaly was shot down. The profile of Coulibaly is closest to that of a youth, and seems to have radicalised relatively quickly. It was in prison where he was described as a sheep and earned his nickname 'Doly', after the cloned animal[176] and where his first encounters with fundamentalist Islam took place. Coulibaly met both Chérif Kouachi and Dhamel Beghal during his imprisonment in Fleury-Merogis prison in 2006. He was shocked by the conditions under which they were kept, and apparently even filmed his living conditions along with four other inmates, sharing his videos with the press upon his release. Behavioural as well as clothing changes, new tastes in religious music, and alterations in his personal relationships, indicated stricter adherence to religion.

Coulibaly continued to frequent Beghal and Kouachi who collectively were planning to break free another inmate convicted for life for terrorism.[177] For this plot, Coulibaly was arrested and served a five-year prison sentence, and was freed in 2014. During the kosher supermarket hostage-taking, he is claimed to have shouted at the hostages "You will tell them they must stop, stop attacking the Islamic State, stop unveiling our women, stop imprisoning our brothers for no reason."[178] Evidently, political grievances were a strong motivation for his actions as well as a perception of discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation, both in terms of the treatment of women and the law enforcing them to remove their religious headgear,

[174] As discussed earlier in reference to: Khosrokhavar, "Radicalization in Prison."
[175] This was identified as one of the most important socio-pyschological factors contributing to an individual's radicalization in: King and Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists."
[176] Piret, Charlotte, "Amedy Coulibaly, Le 'businessman' terroriste."
[177] Callimachi, Rukmini and Yardley, Jim, "From Amateur to Ruthless Jihadist in France."
[178] "Vous leur direz bien qu'ils arrêtent, qu'ils arrêtent d'attaquer l'Etat islamique, qu'ils arrêtent de dévoiler nos femmes, qu'ils arrêtent de mettre nos frères en prison pour rien du tout": Piret, Charlotte, "Amedy Coulibaly, Le 'businessman' terroriste."

and that of Muslim men who constitute a large percentage of inmates in French prisons. It could be argued that in this case, policies of *laïcité* feature as a motivational factor for commitment to carrying out a terrorist act.

The next group identified coordinated and carried out a series of deadly attacks across Paris in November 2015, resulting in 137 deaths in total. The first strike took place at the Stade de France, followed by a series of shootings and a suicide bombing at cafés and restaurants, ending in a mass shooting at the Bataclan Theatre. The attacks were the deadliest in France since the second World War[179], and in the European Union since the Madrid bombing in 2004[180]. Among the perpetrators of the attacks, five have been identified as French nationals, namely, Bilal Hadfi, Salah Abdeslam, Brahim Abdeslam, Ismael Omar Mostefai, and Samy Amimour although Hadfi, and the Abdeslam brothers were born and raised in Belgium[181]. For this reason, only the profiles of Mostefai and Amimour are considered here and this is done simultaneously in order to reveal any parallels between the two.

These two share certain similarities, which can indicate similar paths of radicalisation, however as we have noted in the previous Chapters and earlier in this Chapter, the process is necessarily individualistic, and it is extremely difficult to establish an archetype radical. They are from the same age-group, aged 28 (Amimour) and 29 (Mostefai), and are both French nationals of Algerian origin, both men attended groups or mosques known to be frequented by Salafists, and both left France for Syria in 2013 and 2014[182]. Neither of the individuals had been in prison, however they had a history of petty delinquencies and both were under surveillance by Belgian authorities following their trips abroad. Accounts by those who knew each of them hint towards rapid alterations in their behaviour following their time spent abroad. It is possible to deduce that this period may have radically altered their approach to religion, and therefore their perception of their life situation, indicating that they had succumbed to indoctrination and may have passed into the stage of jihadization, as identified in the model of radicalisation proposed by Silber and Bhatt[183].

The final profile investigated is that of Mohamed Merah, who committed a series of three attacks killing a total of seven people in Toulouse and Montauban in 2012. This case, which

[179] Foster, Alice, "Terror Attacks Timeline."
[180] Lynch, Suzanne, "Europe's Open-Border Policy May Become Latest Victim of Terrorism."
[181] Mouterde, Perrine and Baruch, Jérémie, "Y a-T-Il Un 'profil Type' des Djihadistes Francais?"
[182] BBC, "Profile: Omar Ismail Mostefai"; LIBERATION, "Samy Amimour, Une Dérive Inexorable."
[183] These are three of the four factors contributing to radicalization of Westerners in: Silber, Mitchell D. and Bhatt, Arvin, "Radicalisation in the West."

predates the attacks examined above, has been included for its particular relevance for the theory. Merah, aged twenty-four at the time of the attacks, a French citizen of Algerian origin, was raised alongside his four siblings by his divorced mother. He had a history of petty crimes and spent two periods in prison in 2007 and 2009, he was known to the French authorities as he had travelled abroad to Pakistan in 2010 and 2011. He claimed allegiance to al Qaeda and stated himself that his attacks were a retaliation to French foreign policy, the situation in Palestine, and the 2004 'headscarf ban'[184]. A close acquaintance of his made a statement which may more clearly illustrate the situation:

> "Our passports may say that we are French, but we don't feel French because we were never accepted here. No one can excuse what he did, but he is a product of French society, of the feeling that he had no hope and nothing to lose. It was not Al Qaeda that created Mohammed Merah. It was France."[185]

Arguably, the case of Mohamed Merah provides an example which illustrates the many factors featuring in the models of radicalism discussed above, as well as those which were identified in the previous two Chapters.

Issues concerning identity and belonging in France are of importance, as well as those pertaining to the application of *laïcité* in contemporary French society. It is suggested that both of these factors almost certainly have played a part in the radicalisation of French Muslims who often perceive themselves as rejected by mainstream society due to racial, ethnic and religious discrimination. This investigation also illustrates how ostracism, caused by this rejection, can affect an individual's behaviour, making them more susceptible to extremist ideologies, and encouraging them to adhere to a larger group ideology in order to compensate for the lack of control over their present situation and of their sense of not belonging. Furthermore, this case illustrates how, once an individual has become affiliated with a larger group ideology, in this case al Qaeda, that the risk that they will carry out a violent attack as a type of revenge is vastly increased.

This Chapter has tested the hypothesis against three profile categories which emerge as the groups most vulnerable to Islamist radicalisation. Although not exclusive to France, they are prominent among those which have been studied in connection to homegrown radicalisation

[184] Cody, Edward, "Mohammed Merah, Face of the New Terrorism."
[185] Rosenstein, Brent M., "'L'éternel Immigré': Identity and Radicalism in France since 1962" (Master of Arts in European Union Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014), 73; Meyer, Karle E., "Who Gets to Be French?," *The New York Times*, April 11, 2012, sec. The Opinion Pages, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/12/opinion/who-gets-to-be-french.html.

and terrorism in the West. These groups were studied in the French context to investigate whether there were factors connected to the hypothesis and particularly the application of *laïcité*, or perceptions of this, which altered the individual's understanding of their present situation. It was found that within the three groups there were factors connected to relative deprivation, discrimination, identity and religion which featured prominently, indicating a correlation with the hypothesis. Finally, an investigation into the profiles of French homegrown terrorists questioned whether the hypothesis and the established mechanisms leading to radicalisation were applicable in these cases. In almost every case there were correlations between the profiles, the processes of radicalisation, and the hypothesis that *laïcité* contributes towards producing the circumstances under which certain individuals become more susceptible to extremist ideologies and therefore vulnerable to Islamist radicalisation

Conclusion

This Thesis has addressed various issues concerning the radicalisation of French Muslims by examining the socio-psychological factors connected to this. The first Chapter established a historical context of the case. The Muslim identity, by its very nature, especially in the case of female adherents, is a visible religious identity and for that reason, it is perceived as being targeted by strict French secular laws which limit the expression of religious affiliation in the public sphere. The debate on *laïcité* has prompted many to argue that the way in which it is applied today is increasingly fundamentalist, subverting the principles it was supposed to protect as stated in the 1905 law, such as the equality of religions, and the freedom of worship in the Republic. The analysis presented several theoretical concepts with a focus on homegrown Islamist radicalisation and terrorism in France. The second Chapter grounded the hypothesis in theories of the psychology of terrorism in order to discern under which circumstances certain individuals become more susceptible to adhering to extremist interpretations or fundamentalist ideologies. An examination of five renowned models of radicalisation revealed several common socio-psychological factors identified in this Chapter as being causal mechanisms in the process of homegrown radicalisation. Following this, the study described how ostracism affects an individual and linked this to the types of social exclusion experienced by Muslims in France. This demonstrated how the process of ostracism of French Muslims can facilitate their radicalisation, particularly how policies of *laïcité* cause the individual to suppress their religious identity, which is equivalent to being ostracised. When coupled with the Islamophobic attitudes of mainstream French society, this can cause them to seek refuge in their religious identity. This identity is strengthened when the individual begins to adhere to a larger group ideology and, behaving in accordance with it, will eventually come to legitimise violent action against the ostracising group.

Although this hypothesis cannot be proven outright, this Thesis has nonetheless contributed to the important discourse on homegrown Islamist radicalisation in France and has presented sufficient strong evidence to suggest that indeed *laïcité* could be one of the key catalysts leading towards the radicalisation of vulnerable French Muslims. Chapter Three served as a type of congruence test and provided useful empirical evidence which helps towards determining the relative causal weights for the independent variables, such as *laïcité*, social exclusion, discrimination, and ostracism. The small number of cases selected provide the most interesting examples of individuals most susceptible to radicalization and outline the circumstances specifically applicable to them. As demonstrated in the first two Chapters,

citizenship, identity, religion, integration, social relations, *laïcité*, and political activism are all interconnected in the study of radicalization of French Muslims. Assimilationist policies help foreigners to adapt to Western values and therefore should be assisting the adoption of the national identity of their host country. However, many are at risk of ostracism and racial or religious discrimination by mainstream society. Multiple social and psychological factors feature in this discussion and therefore it is worth repeating the significance of an interdisciplinary approach in studying radicalization of Muslims in the West.

Throughout the Thesis some prominent issues have been raised concerning the hypothesis, the most pressing concern is that the intensification of the application of *laïcité* is impacting on Muslims identity building and is contributing to their marginalization caused by discrimination. Barriers to integration and troubles associated with discrimination encountered daily by Muslim immigrants or their descendants living in Europe markedly alienate them and contribute to their exclusion from the social apparatus. Their search for acceptance and a sense of belonging can lead them to being overtly vulnerable to religious extremism and radicalization. In the models of radicalization and the cases studied, the most important situational and cognitive factors can be summarized as: social deprivation, injustice, inequality, cognitive opening, (religious) seeking, intergroup relations, self-awareness, interaction, inclusion and exclusion, their life situation, self-identification, indoctrination, a sense of moral outrage, worldview, resonance with personal experience and mobilization.

It is necessary to draw parallels between these factors and the process and effects of ostracism, as many of the socio-psychological factors in radicalisation can emanate from the negative effects of being excluded from a group. The more an individual perceives him or herself as a victim of society the more this shall be conceived of as exclusion and stigmatisation. Individuals become highly influenceable once they feel they lack control or meaningfulness, which they try to compensate for, often by seeking belonging in an alternative group. It is defendable to claim that when French Muslims are excluded from mainstream society they will seek a new ingroup to make up for not feeling accepted, and in a perilous state of influenceability, they are likely to be more susceptible to radicalisation. The discussion has brought forward strong evidence for the hypothesis that *laïcité* can be a key driver or contributory factor in this process, particularly the politics of suppression of one's religious identity, which is a type of ostracism.

It is possible to identify behavioural changes in the early stages of the processes of both ostracism and radicalisation and it is urgent that societies are educated to make their

identification possible. If an individual is approached and their situation improved through stronger family and social ties, it is less likely that the non-negligible effects of discrimination, exclusion, ostracism and extremism will occur. Further research into the effects of social and cognitive factors in the process of radicalisation is paramount and should focus on advancing our knowledge of the effects of ostracism, political processes, secularism, and social relationships, either separately or in connection. It would be possible to extend the research as mechanisms identified in the present research are transferrable to other religious minorities and more or less secular fundamentalist societies. Moreover, by applying similar methods of study to other societies, new mechanisms may be revealed which could contribute further to reducing cases of homegrown radicalisation in the West.

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