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Thesis Prospectus Draft

<u>Why do Muslims in France join pro-violence Salafi groups?</u>

Research Question/ Overview:

The focus of this thesis will be Muslims in France, but it will take a closer look at why French-born Muslims join pro-violence Salafi groups. Since there are multiple possible explanations to this question, the first task will be to explain the social context in which French Muslims are living. This includes social and economic exclusion, in addition to other discriminations. I will investigate the laws that have caused tension between the Muslim population and the French state, as well as analyzing aspects of everyday life that lead to their marginalization. Secondly, I plan to research the Salafi groups and the role they play in the recruitment of Muslims. I will study not only the structure of pro-violence Salafi groups, but how they reach out to young French Muslims. The goal of this thesis is to distinguish which factor pushes French Muslims the most towards these groups and why. I will compare each option and discuss why it is or is not more effective than the other. Finally, I will offer some possible solutions to the present problem to combating further growth of pro-violence Islamic groups in France.

Background:

History of the Muslim Presence in France

Before discussing the Salafi movement and French Muslims in France today, it is important to understand why there is such a large population of Muslims in France. After World War II, there

was a great influx of immigrants from North and West Africa, most countries that were ex-colonies of France. These included Algeria, which contributed about 43% of the total immigration, Morocco, sending 28%, and Tunisia with a smaller 11%.[1] The immigrants began to cross the Mediterranean in the 1940s to help repair the war ravaged nation and its economy. They continued to immigrate into the 1960s, but these immigrants were mostly men who worked and lived together. In 1973, however, France stopped this flow of labor immigration. This marked a new era in the history of French immigration, for it then started family reunification.[2]

With this wave of women and children from Africa joining their husbands and fathers, came a now completed Arab minority in France. These families moved into housing complexes with poor living conditions in areas outside of cities called *les banlieues*, or suburbs. After the end of economic growth in France in the 1980s, the view of French Muslims began to change. There was more anti-Maghrebian racism—Maghreb meaning North Africa. In the 1950s and 1960s, the first generation immigrants remained mostly quiet, and were rather "invisible". However, this changed with the birth of the second generation. They were French, yet they were still perceived as immigrants by the French. Since they were viewed this way, they were and have been equally excluded.[3]

The Minority Today and Les Banlieues

Today in France, there are about five million Muslims in France. Since the France follows strictly the law of laïcité, data concerning the religious orientation of French citizens cannot be

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[1] Caeiro, Alexandre, 'Muslim Youth in France', Paper presented at the International Conference Muslim Youth in Europe: *Typologies of religious belonging and sociocultural dynamics*, Edoardo Agnelli Centre for Comparative Religious Studies, Turin, 11 June 2004 - http://www.cestim.it/02islam-caero-torino.pdf, accessed 11 November 2006.
[2] Laachir, K. (2007). France's 'ethnic' minorities and the question of exclusion. *Mediterranean Politics, 12*, 1, 101.
[3] Ibid. 101.

gathered. On the other hand, information about the nation of origin of an individual can be gathered. In turn, it is assumed that those with a nation of origin in North or West Africa are Muslim. Since this figure is not exact, it is said that the range of population of Muslims in France is three to seven million.[4]

The *banlieues* in which the first wave of immigrants lived still exists today, and they have become a large part of this minority's existence in France. Khaled Kelkal, a French terrorist of Algerian origin and member of Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA)[5], spoke about the differences between the city and the *banlieue*, calling it "a big wall, an enormous wall."[6] This is often the view of those occupying these suburbs that are in very poor conditions. From these areas stem many other problems. Boualem Azahoum, an activist from Lyon that campaigns against issues that are plaguing the *banlieues*:

> **"… extremely dilapidated housing, the chaotic urbanism(one wonders how it was allowed to happen), excessive marginalization, antiquated state schools merely churning out the future unemployed. It is also the omnipresence of an oppressive polic force… It is a completely forgotten and abandoned population and, although these problems are affecting immigrants and their children, other populations are also affected."[7]**

The issues mentioned by Boualem Asahoum are of a great importance to this thesis. It is important to understand the context in which this ethnic and religious minority is living and what this environment has and will create. For example, the French Ministry of Employment reported in 2000 that there was a great difference in the unemployment rate

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

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

[6] "Moi, Khaled Kelkal." *Le Monde* 7 Oct. 1995. Print.

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

among French citizens. The unemployment rate of the French-born was five percent, while naturalized citizens had an unemployment rate at eleven percent. Even higher, the Ministry found that there was a twenty percent rate of unemployment among foreigners of North African origin.[8] Problems like these will be a pillar of the side of the argument that social conditions may be the reason that some Muslims decide to enter pro-violence groups, joining them to retaliate against a nation that rejected them. Is this the case? While it is believed that this does play a great role in this phenomenon, it is equally important to look at other factors.

Salafi Movement and Recruitment.

What is the Salafi movement? One must understand first what the word *salafi* means. *Salaf* means "to procede" and has been used to describe the followers of *al Salaf al salih*, or the fathers of the Islamic faith that were companions of the Prophet Muhammad. These followers learned the faith directly from the Prophet; therefore, they truly understood the religion. As a result, the Salafis strive to remove impurities in Islam that have appeared over centuries of its practice. One particular concept of the Salafis is the *bid'a*—or innovation. They see any innovation in the faith as a deformation of Islam and reject it. In addition to this anti-innovation ideology, Salafi scholars spend time studying the Had ith, the quotes of the Prophet, and ensuring that those that are false are eliminated and that the true, pure version is available. [9]

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[8] Caeiro, Alexandre, 'Muslim Youth in France', Paper presented at the International Conference Muslim Youth in Europe: *Typologies of religious belonging and sociocultural dynamics*, Edoardo Agnelli Centre for Comparative Religious Studies, Turin, 11 June 2004 - http://www.cestim.it/02islam-caero-torino.pdf, accessed 11 November 2006. p. 3.
[9] Stemmann, Juan Jose Escobar. "Middle East Salafism's influence and the radicalization of Muslim communities in Europe." *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*. Volume 10, No. 3. September 2006.

Before discussing the issue of pro-violence Salafi groups, or *jihadists*, it is imperative to understand that this group is a minority. The Salafi movement does not consist of only jihadists, and, in fact, most are a part of the mainstream *al-Salafiyya al-'ilmiyya*—'the salafi of the scholars.'[10]

What has caused the rise of Salafi fundamental activity? One answer is globalization. Salafism is a global movement and some of its neofundamentalist groups through the shrinking of the world, and as Olivier Roy argues, neofundamentalism is a "tool of globalization." Religion can be adapted to nearly any society, as a result of its ability to separate from culture and give people the opportunity to live in a community of believers.[11] This gives it adaptability. Therefore, Islam is able to exist in a highly secular nation like France, while globalization also aids in the easy transmission of ideas and ideologies—including those that are fundamental. Like any other organization, the recruitment of members is necessary, and the Salafi movement is no exception. Salafism, both reformist and pro-violence, has found a favorable environment in the poor suburbs of Europe like the *banlieues* of major cities in France. There, Salafi Imams in mosques influence young Muslims to follow the stricter form of Islam. Also, Islamic centers created by organizations like the Muslim World League preach the message of a strict Islam like Salfism.[12] These tactics are somewhat similar for the more extreme, violent groups, in which recruitment may be seen in mosques. Typically, their recruitment

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[10] Coolsaet, Rik. *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge in Europe.* Burlington: Ashgate Pub Co, 2008. Print. pg.41

[11] Roy, Olivier. *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

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

methods are not openly aggressive and appear in the form of books and videos explaining the ideas of the violent side of this movement.[13]

Why France?

I have chosen France to study the Salafi movement for two reasons. The first reason is that France has been an area of my studies. Secondly, the Salafi's arrival in Europe wasstrongest in France, for it came to Europe at the same time as the creation of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, a former French colony. This leads to an easier movement of the Salafi ideologies to France.[14]

Salafism is somewhat new in France, emerging in the 1980s. In the 1990s, *Salafiyya al-ilmiyyah*, the scholarly and reformist Salafis, and *Salafiyya al-Jihadiyyah*, the violent Salafis, split. The fighting Salafis in Europe came from the Algerian groups. In 1998, violent groups from places like Morocco (Moroccan Islamic Combatants Group) and Tunisia (Tunisian Combatant Group). I bring attention to these groups, because they are both former French colonies.[15]

Methodology:

In order to study this topic, I will use both primary and secondary sources. Though more scarce than secondary information, I plan to use primary sources like government documents to monitor significant information concerning the Muslim population of

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[13] Sageman, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004. Print.
[14] Stemmann, Juan Jose Escobar. "Middle East Salafism's influence and the radicalization of Muslim communities in Europe." *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*. Volume 10, No. 3. September 2006.
[15] Ibid.

France. These may include economic and social indicators like unemployment rates, high school and college graduates, and statistics concerning entrance to the work force and finding an occupation. In addition to these, there are many interviews with leaders of both pro-violence groups and young Muslims living in France, which are found in qualitative research done in articles written by experts in this field. This goes beyond statistics and offers a real sense of how some of the French minority feels about their relationship with the state and/or movements like Salafism. Marc Sageman, who has done an immense amount research on global terrorist networks, has published data concerning these groups that may be useful in finding out the number of Muslims in France that are deciding to join these groups and what kind of history individuals joining them have.

Secondary sources are where the bulk of information concerning theories of why young Muslims join pro-violence groups is found. I have already gained access to books and essays written by scholars on Muslims in Europe like Jocelyne Cesari, Olivier Roy, and Rik Coolsaet. These knowledgeable sources go beyond the data and give theory to what is going on in the Muslim community in France. I have also come across ethnographical based sources that give me an insight into how *les jeunes de la cite* live their lives in France. They explain life in the *banlieues*, confrontations with the police, marginalization by French society, and problems with the state. Many scholars have also written essays, which I have found, on the history Salafism in France, as well as the jihadist sectors that have branched from the movement and made their way into France. My goal is to use both theories and quantitative data in order to find a correlation between joining the pro-

violence Salafi movement and either social context of Muslims in France or recruitment by fundamental leaders.

Hypothesis:

From the research that I have done so far, I have learned that there is not just one answer to the question that this thesis asks. This is why it is important that I research the two possible solutions in depth. Though I have just begun the research, my hypothesis concludes that it is the social context that provides the perfect environment to create individuals that are willing to join such pro-violence groups. Thus far, I have found that there is an apparent amount of discrimination and isolation of Muslims in France, which is found in sources by Cesari and Coolsaet. What are truly striking are the studies which include interaction and interview with members of the French Muslim population. From these sources, the general feeling is that they feel incredibly marginalized by the French government when, in fact, they are with the existence of *banlieues*. While the viewpoints of these individuals are crucial, quantitative data like unemployment rates and minority success in schools remains equally important to give support to these qualitative finding. Although actions on the part of the pro-violence Salafi groups are important, I have so far found that in Europe they have more of a presence, and less of a recruiting force. As Sageman says: "So far, the concept of recruitment as an active organizational process is not relevant for the global Salafi jihad." [16] I believe that without each other, the two answers to the thesis' question that I have proposed would be difficult to stand alone. However, I have found greater evidence for the existence of inequality and social

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[16] Sageman, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004. Print. pg 124

exclusion in French society, which pushed some French Muslims to reach a fundamental

ideology and, in turn, join these pro-violence groups.

Bibliography:

Allievi, Stefano, and Jorgen S. Nielsen. *Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and across Europe*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2004. Print.
    The authors of this source explain the transnational characteristics of Islam, which provides some explanation as to how Islam has interacts with its surrounding in Europe. This will prove to be useful in describing the background of Muslims in France and how their religion has been influenced.

Amghar, S. 2009. *Ideological and Theological Foundations of Muslim Radicalism in France.* MICROCON Policy Working Paper 4, Brighton: MICROCON.
Amghar's article addresses radicalization that is coming from the Muslim population. He argues that the link between the Muslim population and radicalism is not based on just poverty. He says that it is more likely to be insufficiency of political and social regulation.

Amghar, Samir (2006), "Le salafisme en Europe : la mouvance polymorphe d'une radicalisation", *Politique Etrangere*, No. 1.
Amghar's article talks about Salafism in Europe, but he also describes three different groups of Salafis that are emerging. One places importance on "Jihad", another finds preaching and religious courses as most important, and the last group is more political. This article will be useful in exploring the different levels of Salafism in Europe.

Amrani, Younes, Beaud, Stéphane, *Pays de malheur!: Un jeune de cité écrit à un sociologue*, Éditions La Découverte, 2005.
This French source explains nearly every aspect of a young Arab in France. The subjects include the relationship between them and the police, high school life, family life, and the discrimination that they feel.

Bordet, J. 1998, *Les « jeunes de la cité »*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.
This French text gives an insight into life in the *banlieues*. It explains how young Muslims live everyday and the struggles that they face. Sources like this are important, because it exposes the social context of the minority.

Bouteldja, Naima. "France: voices of the banlieues." *Institute of Race Relations* 51.1: 90-99. Print.
Naima Bouteldja conducted research through interviewing two women who are knowledgeable of the situation in the *banlieues*. Each interviewee uncovers political activism taking place in the suburbs.

Caeiro, Alexandre, 'Muslim Youth in France', Paper presented at the International Conference Muslim Youth in Europe: *Typologies of religious belonging and sociocultural dynamics*, Edoardo Agnelli Centre for Comparative Religious Studies, Turin, 11 June 2004 - http://www.cestim.it/02islam-caero-torino.pdf, accessed 11 November 2006.
This article answers three questions: Who are the Muslim youth in France? What is the spectrum of their religious practices? What are their interactions with non-Muslims? By answering these three questions, he discusses the socioeconomic position of the Muslim youth in France, as well as social and professional interaction with other non-Muslims.

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

Though Cesari discusses many aspects in the relationship between today's European and American governments and Muslims, I find that her explanation of "Islam as a Stigma" is of utmost importance. This is so significant, because it gives an explanation of a new, Muslim identity that has been created through socio-economic conditions.

Chateignier, Cindy, Marion Dutrevis, Armelle Nugier, and Peggy Chekroun. "French-Arab students and verbal intellectual performance: Do they really suffer from a negative intellectual stereotype?" *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 24.2 (2009): 219-34. Print.
This study addresses student performance in French schools with the goal of finding out if French-Arab students have more difficulty in achieving high scores in school. It explores the effects of stereotypes on this minority group and does quantitative research to study the issues.

Coolsaet, Rik. *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge in Europe*. Burlington: Ashgate Pub Co, 2008. Print.
This source is a compilation of thirteen articles written by scholars, and the subjects of the articles discuss several important topics for this thesis. Edwin Bakker discusses global Salafi jihadists in Europe, Jocelyne Cesari explains some of the possible causes of radicalization in Europe, and three other scholars give solutions to the rising radicalization.

Frickey A, Murdoch J, Primon J-L, (2003) "From Higher Education to Employment: inequalities between ethnic backgrounds in France", paper presented at the 6th conference of the European Sociological Association (ESA), September, Murcia, Spain.
In this article, employment inequalities and job discrimination for higher education graduates of different ethnic backgrounds in France are studied. This is done through statistical research on minority employment and difficulty in searching for jobs.

Laachir, K. (2007). France's 'ethnic' minorities and the question of exclusion. *Mediterranean Politics, 12*, 1, 101.
This source of information is important to my research, because it provides the history of North African migration to France. Is also discusses the life in the *banlieues* and political views that have developed in these areas.

Laurence, Jonathan, and Justin Vaisse. *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2006. Print.
Laurence and Vaisse cover all of the biggest topics in the discussion of Muslims in France. These range from the history of Muslims in France to Islamic organizations in France. He also covers the controversial ban of religious symbols and the response of Muslims to certain French policies.

Marlière, Eric. 2006. Le sentiment d'injustice chez les jeunes d'une cité hlm. Sociétés et jeunesses en difficulté 2.
This article gives the reader a look into the views of working class youth in the Paris suburbs on French institutions and society. It provides many interviews with people

living in these suburbs, which gives much more understanding of how this group feels about the state in which it lives.

"Moi, Khaled Kelkal." *Le Monde* 7 Oct. 1995. Print.
    This newspaper article is an interview that was published in the French newspaper *Le Monde*. In the interview, Khaled Kelkal, a known French Salafi terrorist of Algerian descent, gives his opinion on the situation of Muslims in France.

Peter, F. (2006) Leading the community of the middle way: a study of the Muslim field in France, Muslim World 96(4), pp. 707–736.
    This article analyzes the structure of authority of Islam in France. Peter states that the changes in Islam in France are the product of French state policies and gradual transformation of the religion through each new generation of French Muslims.

Roy, Olivier. *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
    Olivier Roy uses this book to describe the relationship between Muslims and their religion, which has been heavily influenced and shaped by globalization, westernization, and the effects of being a minority. This source will be particularly important in answering the question of how Islam has changed in Europe and what it has become.

Sageman, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004. Print.
    In this book, Sageman explores several aspects of pro-violence groups and the use of jihad. Though he gives much information about the entire global network of violent fundamental Islamic groups, I am most interested in his information about the profiles of terrorist and how they are recruited.

Stemmann, Juan Jose Escobar. "Middle East Salafism's influence and the radicalization of Muslim communities in Europe." *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*. Volume 10, No. 3. September 2006.
    This article defines Salafism and gives the history of the Salafi movement in Europe. It also explains its hand in the radicalization in some European Muslim communities.

Taarnby, M. (2005). Recruitment of Islamist terrorists in Europe: Trends and perspectives. Research Report Funded by the Danish Ministry of Justice. Retrieved October 26, 2006, from http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/testimony/58.pdf
    This subject of this report is the growing terrorist networks within Europe, but particularly Islamic terrorist groups. The researcher specifically tries to expose the process of recruitment that these networks use.

Viprey, Mouna. "Les discriminations raciales sur le marché du travail français." *CONFLUENCES Méditerranée* 48 (2003-2004): 47-59. Print.
    This article addresses difficulties that races, including Arab, face when searching for work. These minorities face discrimination often because they are still viewed

as minorities, although they are French citizens. It explores the roles that both employers and the French government play in this problem.