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Political drivers of Muslim youth radicalisation in France: religious radicalism as a response to nativism

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ABSTRACT

A substantial literature has developed around the individual determinants of radical political preferences. Widely used to study electoral support for far-right parties, this perspective has rarely been mobilised to understand the dynamics of radicalisation, or the process of going back to the 'roots', among fractions of Western Muslim youth involved in political Islam. To address this, 37 semi-structured interviews were conducted between 2020 and 2021 as part of ongoing ERC Advanced Grant research with young (aged 18–30) self-identifying Muslims of Turkish and Moroccan descent based in the Paris or Lyon areas. Also drawing on the social movements literature, we uncovered two sets of factors influencing radicalisation, each based on two distinct *oppositional sets of attitudes*: (1) *a feeling of estrangement from mainstream societal values*, such as morality, secularism, and a perceived assimilationist trend emanating from the French national frame, and (2) a *sense of dissatisfaction towards the political-institutional system*, which appeared as latent criticisms of the current state of representative democracy, distrust of political and media actors, and discontent towards the current French party system.

KEYWORDS

Radicalisation; secularism; assimilation; securitisation; stigmatisation

Introduction

Much of the literature on radicalisation focuses on Islamist extremism and jihadist terrorism. Looking at the historical roots of radicalism, the subject is a relative one and has often been a force of progress. As such, its derivative, 'radicalisation' is not necessarily a synonym for violence or extremism (Bartlett and Miller 2012; Schmid 2013). The article proposes a distinction between non-violent and violent radicalisms. Policy-makers have also followed the same path that reduces radicalisation to violence and overlooks its non-violent, critical, relational, reactionary, and oppositional claims against the dominant regimes of representation that may frame some individuals and/or social groups in stereotypical and stigmatised ways. For instance, In response to the terrorist incidents that have occurred since 2014, France has developed and implemented several national plans to tackle and prevent violent radicalisation. The state's top-down approach has seen a raft of counter-radicalisation measures, coordinated at the central governmental and local prefectural levels. Three sets of measures have been taken: primary prevention to anticipate the risks of attack, secondary prevention to mitigate the risks from radicalised individuals, and tertiary prevention to monitor such individuals and prevent the recurrence of violent actions (Lahnait 2021).

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However, this political framing failed to pinpoint the root causes of the radicalisation of self-identified Muslim youth who, we found, expressed two distinct *oppositional sets of attitudes* towards mainstream society. We identified these attitudes by reviewing prior research into social movements and conducting 37 semi-structured interviews with young (aged 18–30), self-identifying Muslims of Turkish and Moroccan origins living in the vicinity of either Paris or Lyon, before analysing the resulting data. The first oppositional attitude was a tendency for our interlocutors to *distance themselves from mainstream societal values* such as morality, secularism, and a perceived 'assimilationist' trend in the French national context. The second attitude was a *feeling of dissatisfaction towards the political-institutional system*, manifested as latent criticisms of the current state of representative democracy, distrust towards political and media actors, and discontent with the current French party system. If such perceptions towards the ongoing functioning of French democracy tend to be shared in other segments of the population outside Muslim and/or immigrant-origin groups – as was exemplified by the case of Yellow Vests (Guerra, Alexandre, and Gonthier 2020; Gonthier and Guerra 2022), we notice nonetheless a singularity within this part of the public opinion, who express specific grievances against what is generally interpreted as a hostile framing from the media, as well as a perceived process of securitisation directed against their religious community. Thus, the above-mentioned categorisation represents our efforts to specify the individual political determinants of non-violent reactionary radicalisation among self-identified Muslim youths – processes alienating and distancing them from the state and mainstream society.

Following the major methodological aspects, this article first explains how the French authorities have framed the issue of Islam through a securitising viewpoint (Della Porta 2014; Kaya 2015, 2009) over the last few years, and how this discourse has structured this reductionist approach. After reviewing recent literature on French Muslims, we describe the individualisation of religiosity among Western Muslim populations. We then detail how our interlocutors perceived their Muslim identities in a secularised and traditionally assimilationist context, and how they responded to the tone of public discussions on secularism and assimilation. Lastly, we describe our interlocutors' evaluations of representative democracy and how the mainstream media represents Muslims.

Methodological approach

A range of methods was used in this study, from desk research to discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992) of secondary sources as well as the primary data obtained from semi-structured interviews held with our young adult French Muslim participants. Using snowball sampling, all interviews were conducted between early 2020 and late 2021 by the corresponding author of this article, supervised by his co-author, during the ERC-funded *PRIME Youth Project*. Our two research fields were the regions of Paris and Lyon, two areas that are well-known for their historical Muslim and/or immigrant presence. A majority of our 37 interlocutors are descendants of Moroccan ($n = 21$: 12 women and 9 men) and Turkish immigrants ($n = 16$: 9 women and 7 men), while a minority experienced a migration trajectory themselves. However, all our interlocutors were French citizens and expressed in various ways a politicized view of their religion – a minority of them were, for instance, committed in organisations ideologically close to what is generally labeled as 'political Islam'.[1] The interview data were collected in two rounds of field research in 2020 and 2021. Reaching potential participants required the co-author to overcome two difficulties: the first was initial contact itself, in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and lockdown, that was in effect during a part of our study's first year in 2020 (which consequently made necessary the conducting of the interviews through online and digital means). The second difficulty was for the co-author to integrate two groups from different cultural and religious backgrounds: the interviewer was neither a Muslim nor of Moroccan or Turkish origin – although his knowledge of the Turkish language and his life experiences in Turkey were sometimes helpful in building trust with especially some interlocutors of Turkish origin (See Table 1).

We opted to focus on the specific case of French citizens of Moroccan and Turkish origin due to the importance of these two diasporas' local presence: according to the data provided by INSEE

Table 1. The profile of our interlocutors.

Interview number	Birthplace	Age	Gender	Origin	Living area	Date of the interview	Professional situation
1	Turkey	27	Male	Turkish	Lyon	06-03-20	Shopkeeper
2	Turkey	21	Male	Turkish	Lyon	07-03-20	Student
3	France	21	Male	Moroccan	Lyon	18-05-20	Student
4	France	23	Male	Turkish	Lyon	31-05-20	Temp
5	France	25	Female	Turkish	Lyon	11-06-20	Housewife
6	France	26	Female	Moroccan	Paris	09-07-20	Student
7	France	29	Female	Moroccan	Paris	25-07-20	Business lawyer
8	Morocco	22	Female	Moroccan	Paris	27-08-20	Student
9	France	30	Male	Moroccan	Paris	06-09-20	Engineer
10	France	30	Female	Turkish	Lyon	08-09-20	HR manager
11	France	21	Male	Turkish	Paris	12-09-20	tore manager
12	France	22	Male	Turkish	Lyon	12-09-20	Student
13	Turkey	25	Female	Turkish	Lyon	18-11-20	Technical buyer
14	Italy	27	Female	Moroccan	Paris	08-02-21	Business Developer
15	France	26	Male	Moroccan	Lyon	09-02-21	Project Buyer
16	France	27	Male	Turkish	Lyon	10-02-21	Student
17	Morocco	27	Female	Moroccan	Lyon	17-02-21	Project manager
18	Morocco	28	Female	Moroccan	Lyon	18-02-21	Entrepreneur
19	Morocco	22	Female	Moroccan	Lyon	19-02-21	Student
20	France	30	Female	Turkish	Lyon	19-02-21	Teacher
21	France	27	Female	Moroccan	Lyon	24-02-21	Sector head in a private company
22	France	19	Male	Turkish	Lyon	26-02-21	Student
23	France	24	Male	Moroccan	Lyon	02-03-21	Data-driven marketer
24	France	26	Female	Moroccan	Paris	03-03-21	Clinical researcher
25	France	18	Female	Turkish	Lyon	08-03-21	Student
26	France	29	Female	Moroccan	Paris	19-03-21	Financial controller
27	Morocco	25	Female	Moroccan	Lyon	24-03-21	Graphic designer
28	Morocco	24	Male	Moroccan	Lyon	03-04-21	Technical-sales representative
29	France	28	Female	Turkish	Lyon	06-05-21	Housewife
30	France	30	Female	Turkish	Lyon	30-05-21	Executive Assistant
31	France	29	Female	Turkish	Lyon	03-06-21	Clinical research associate
32	France	27	Male	Moroccan	Paris	14-07-21	Student
33	France	28	Male	Moroccan	Lyon	15-07-21	Engineer
34	France	27	Male	Moroccan	Lyon	29-07-21	Engineer
35	France	30	Male	Moroccan	Paris	16-11-21	Teacher
36	Turkey	30	Female	Turkish	Paris	18-11-21	Transitional status
37	France	26	Female	Moroccan	Paris	18-11-21	Consultant

(*Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques* – National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies), respectively 802.000 and 251.000 immigrants living in France in 2019 originated from Morocco and Turkey. That same year, the number of Moroccan and Turkish immigrants' descendants living in France amounted to 964.000 and 313.000.[2] Furthermore, this choice was motivated by a common characteristic shared by the Turkish and Moroccan authorities towards their nationals living abroad: the use of religious diplomacy as a policy tool mobilised to manage their diasporas (Kaya and Drhimeur 2022). Nevertheless, we also considered it relevant to compare two countries that do not have the same historical relationship with France: while Morocco was a French protectorate that became independent in 1956, Turkey has never suffered a past status as a colonised country (Haynes 2021).

A reductionist approach: securitising Islam

This article argues that French state actors have failed to respond to the rise of radicalisation among self-identified Muslim youngsters, partly because they cannot distinguish between radicalism[3] and extremism.[4] In this article, we use the term, 'radical', in a different way from its conventional use in the contemporary world since the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York. We use the term to

refute the reductionist understandings that have become prevalent in policy-making processes, media, and even social sciences. We claim that such understandings are likely to postulate radical positionalities as threats to democracy. Referring to our self-identified young Muslim interlocutors' first-hand testimonies, beliefs, narratives, reasons, desires, goals, and religiosity, we argue the other way around and present them as different manifestations of struggle for democracy. Some young people become increasingly angry and radicalised due to various root causes such as socioeconomic, political, spatial, psychological, and nostalgic forms of deprivation that have become more recurrent in the age of globalisation. In the aftermath of September 11, the term radicalisation became intertwined with 'recruitment' by extremists, who try to persuade 'angry individuals' (Gurr 1969) to join their war (Coolsaet 2019). Nonetheless, it is obvious that there is an emerging scientific need to emphasise that being radical in socioeconomic, political, philosophical, ethno-cultural, religious, and ideational terms should not be necessarily translated into violent extremism and terrorism, and can also be interpreted as potential struggles for the deepening of democracy.

The term 'radical' has become 'floating' (Lévi Straus 1987), or 'empty signifier' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), that is to say, words that might not necessarily refer specifically to something existing in the real world. What is remarkable is the way in which the term 'radicalisation' has been through since the 19th century, especially since the 1970s. For instance, in the 1960s and 70s, the term 'radical' was the label given by violent organizations to those groups who occupied the middle ground between violent and non-violent methods. In those days, the experts' discourse tended to be more nuanced in using different terms to explain various phenomena. The TREVI group,[5] for instance, was created in 1976 and named ten years after by an acronym that specifically distinguished Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism, Violence, and Internationalism (Fadil and Koning 2019, 4).

Since September 11, the term 'radicalisation' has been used interchangeably with 'extremism', 'terrorism', 'fundamentalism', and 'violence' in media and political discourse. Indeed, radicalisation research originally arose from the need to organise the discourse and acts of public authorities (Marchal and Ahmed Salem 2018; Coolsaet 2029; Kaya and Bee in this Issue; Peels in this Issue). The discourse of politicians and experts in Western countries reveals a conception of radicalisation that is mostly individual, and (almost exclusively) Islamist (Maskaliunaite 2015; Coolsaet 2019). Most institutional and political radicalisation interventions are deeply rooted in psychological and religious considerations but exclude the structural analysis that might illuminate other aspects of this complex issue.

One problematic aspect of radicalisation, as used in public discourse, is its apparent use to legitimise and reinforce previously established systems of securitisation and police repression of migrant heritage populations (Rigouste 2012). However, paradoxically, this conception of radicalisation (whose sources tend to be limited – in mainstream public discourse – to religious and migration-related factors) has often been described as potentially fuelling radicalisation among the very same deprived social groups. Indeed, in an atmosphere marked by stigmatisation and alienation, the members of these groups may be driven towards more radical attitudes (e.g. increased prejudice against native populations) through increased feelings of disconnection from society in general, as well as socioeconomic, political, spatial and psychological deprivation (Gurr 1969; Doosje, Loseman, and Van Den Bos 2013).

Social Movements Theory provides us with a few conceptualisations to understand how stigmatised and alienated young Muslims in France and elsewhere in Europe become radicalised through socioeconomic and political forms of deprivation as well as feelings of disconnection from society in general. Donatella Della Porta's (2018) notion of 'relational radicalisation' develops within the contentious politics paradigm, that is, individuals generate their sociopolitical positions in relation to how they are treated by others as the members of society in general and/or state actors. According to Charles Tilly (2003, 5), scholars working on political radicalisation can be categorized as 'idea people', who look at ideologies; 'behavior people', who stress human heritage; or 'relational people', who make transactions among persons and groups much more central than do idea or behavior people. In this regard, relational perspective focuses on interpersonal processes that

promote, inhibit, or channel violent and/or non-violent politics (Tilly 2003). In other words, radicalisation follows a gradual process, defined as actions of some kind associated with other actions and reactions, often expressed in some kind of dialogical, dialectical and reciprocal relationship (Della Porta 2018).

This line of thinking is also reciprocated by Craig Calhoun (2011) who made a three-fold classification of radicalism: philosophical radicalism, tactical radicalism and reactionary radicalism. Accordingly, *philosophical radicalism* of theorists was about penetrating the roots of society with rational and analytical programs to understand the structural transformation of the public sphere. *Tactical radicalism* of activists was mainly about their search for immediate change that required violence and other extreme actions to achieve it. Finally, *reactionary radicalism* of those suffering from the destabilising effects of modernization and globalisation was more about their quest for saving what they valued in communities and cultural traditions from eradication by capitalism (Calhoun 2011). Young Muslims in France, at least our interlocutors, have demonstrated that they have become more associated with Islamic values and thought as a response to the ways in which majority society and the state have stereotypically framed Islam and Muslims in general. What one could see here is a relational and reactionary form of radicalisation that is the symptom of increased feelings of disconnection from society resulting from the prevalence of anti-Muslim racism as well as socioeconomic, political, spatial and psychological deprivation. Our working definition of reactionary radicalism is that it is a backward-looking political orientation characterised by anti-stances and dogmatic thinking associated with values of security, tradition and aversion to stimulation and new experiences that foster intolerance towards out-groups (Capelos and Katsanidou 2018; Capelos and Demertzis 2018). Relational and reactionary forms of radicalism are expressed by young self-identified Muslims in France through what their 'cultural repertoire' (Tilly 1978) offers them. In the case of Muslim youth, cultural repertoire might include religion, ethnicity, culture, tradition, heritage, past, and patriarchy, depending on the country of origin.

The feelings of disconnection from society as well as socioeconomic and political deprivation, as mentioned before, are known predictors of ethno-cultural and religious radicalisation and essentialism: indeed, radicalism sometimes operates as a *tactic* (De Certeau 1984) used by individuals to restore significance to their lives and a feeling of personal control after experiencing various ambiguities, instabilities, and insecurities (Tilly 1978; Kay et al. 2010). Ethno-cultural and religious resurgence may be interpreted as a symptom of existing structural social, economic, political and psychological problems such as unemployment, racism, xenophobia, exclusion, assimilation, alienation, and anomie. Scientific data uncover that migrant-origin groups tend to affiliate themselves with politics of identity, ethnicity, religiosity, and sometimes violence in order to tackle such structural constraints and dominant regimes of representation (Clifford 1987; Gilroy et al. 1995). This is actually a form of politics initiated by outsider groups as opposed to the kind of politics generated by 'those within' as Alistair MacIntyre (1971) decoded much earlier. According to MacIntyre (1971) there are two forms of politics: *politics of those within* and *politics of those excluded*. Those *within* tend to employ legitimate political institutions (parliament, political parties, the media) in pursuing their goals, and those *excluded* resort to honour, culture, ethnicity, religion, roots and tradition in doing the same. It should be noted here that MacIntyre does not place culture and religion in the private space; they are rather inherently located in the public space. Therefore, the main motive behind the development of ethno-cultural and religious essentialism by migrant and minority groups may be perceived as a concern to be attached to the political-public sphere. It is then unsurprising for individuals with a gloomy outlook on the present and the future, who are exposed to anti-Muslim racism and intersectional forms of discrimination in everyday life to resort to heritage, honour, religion, ethnicity, language, tradition and myths, all of which they believe cannot be pried from their hands, and to define themselves in those terms (Eliade 1991; Clifford 1994). To that effect, we want to use the very literal meanings of the terms 'radical' and 'radicalisation' in this work. The word 'radical' comes from the Latin word '*radix*' (root), and the term 'radicalisation' then literally means the process of 'going back to the roots' (Calhoun 2011).

Essentialising conceptions of specific social groups such as youth who identify as Muslim often carry harmful sociopolitical consequences (McDonald 2011; Brown and Saeed 2015; Coolsaet 2019). Neoliberal governance coupled with the securitisation of Islam might paradoxically be used to culturalise (or 'religionise') the consequences of policy decisions, masking their socioeconomic and political underpinnings (Kaya 2015; Kaya and Adam-Troian 2021). This may fuel sociopolitical tensions and trigger threat perception processes among migrant-origin minorities and majority societies, causing co-radicalisation among self-identifying Muslims and the nativist segments of majority societies (Kaya and Adam-Troian 2021; Kaya 2021).

When neoliberalism conceals the structural causes of radicalisation, countermeasures are reduced to security-related policing responses. Accordingly, the neoliberal parties' response to radicalisation has been to implement cautionary policing measures (Della Porta 2014). This redoubled sense of threat could lead to radicalisation – and even extremisation – among some deprived social groups, such as ethnocultural minorities (Orehek and Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis 2014).

Current research on Muslims in France

Sociological research examining the religiosity of immigrant-origin French Muslims notes their higher levels of religious commitment compared with the majority population (Galland 2019), which is becoming increasingly secularised (Dargent 2019). Furthermore, the religiosity gap between younger generations from Christian and Muslim backgrounds seems to be widening (Tiberj 2020). Thus, while French Muslims appear to be maintaining their beliefs, the religious identity of their Christian counterparts is becoming increasingly culturalised (Brubaker 2017). These differentiated relationships to religion illuminate the specificities of Muslim public opinion in France, which views moral liberalism less favourably than the overall population (Galland 2019).

The greater conservatism of Western Muslim values compared to the social majority has been confirmed by research from other countries. This conservatism is usually more pronounced around issues linked to sexual morals and gender roles (Beekers and Schrijvers 2020). However, in the French case, the moral conservatism of Muslim citizens does not translate into electoral support for right-wing parties, with parties of the left supported far more widely (Brouard and Tiberj 2005). This phenomenon is reported elsewhere in case studies on Muslim populations of other Western countries (Azabar and Thijssen 2020).

Moreover, ideological divergences from the majority do not imply that European Muslims were more inclined to take up protest activities. For example, Hadjar et al. found that the level of religious practice among young Muslims in Germany did not correlate with their justifications for violent activism, which were influenced by other socioeconomic and political factors (Hadjar et al. 2019). Likewise, in Denmark and Sweden, the main factor in Muslim endorsement of violent protest was the phenomenon of meta-cultural threat or 'victimization-by-proxy' (Obaidi et al. 2018), rather than levels of religious observance. A pan-European study, however, noted that levels of religious activity and justifications for terrorism were strongly associated (Egger and Magni-Berton 2021).

In his comparative study of the public incorporation of Muslim immigrants in Britain, France, and Germany between 1973 and 2001, Koenig (2005) showed how integration followed specific patterns shaped by the legally institutionalised logic of traditional religious politics that emerged from historically specific trajectories of state formation and nation-building. A first crucial factor is a degree to which the idea of the 'individual' in each polity is institutionalised since this affects how 'religion' itself is defined. In corporatist polities, where rights are ascribed to corporate bodies, religion is regarded as a formal membership organisation that can be incorporated directly into the state's rationalising project. However, in statist and liberal polities, where the individual is the primary bearer of rights, 'religion' is perceived as an individual orientation organised via voluntary associations. A second factor is the degree of 'stateness': in nation-states oriented toward statist or corporatist polity models, such as France, Germany, and the Netherlands, the incorporation of Muslim minorities is coordinated by the state, while in liberal polities, such as Great Britain, it takes

the form of civil negotiations, mostly at the local level (Koenig 2005). The third factor is the relationship of national symbols to the metanarratives of 'secularisation'. Universalistic symbols of national identity may be linked to ideologies of secularism, such as French *laïcité* (state secularism). In these cases, explicitly religious claims for recognition are conceived as transgressing the symbolic boundary between the 'religious' and the 'secular' (Zolberg 2004).

Beyond essentialisation: the growing individualisation of Islam by young western Muslims

Previous research suggests that French Muslims increasingly support the public visibility of religiosity while expressing latent criticism of the idea of a 'neutral' public space (Del Grosso 2015; Villechaise and Bucaille 2020). Nevertheless, such demands for greater expressive possibilities among Muslims are not only directed 'against' the political frame and the dominant cultural referential: case studies of other Western Muslim populations have shown that more individualized readings of Islam may also be mobilised in a discourse of disruption directed at practices inherited from their families and/or communities of origin (O'Brien 2018).

Consequently, the youngest Muslim generations may articulate an emerging dichotomy between what they consider as 'cultural' Islam on the one hand and 'pure/true' Islam (Ali 2018) on the other. This individualisation of the relationship to Islam (Kaya 2009, 184) and the self-empowerment linked to inherited traditions are often part of a process of self-learning (Seurat 2020), and are particularly mobilised by young Muslim women as a tool of enfranchisement from family standards (Kaya 2009, 187). The Islamic allegiance of these youths could also be interpreted as a quest for emancipation from the parental culture (Kaya 2009, 186). For converts to Salafism, the legitimisation conferred by religious knowledge is combined with the search for moral superiority over the family environment (Zegnani 2018).

These strands of religious individualisation are redefining the very meaning of faith in a personalized form that challenges older definitions in which religion and culture are not distinguished (Kaya 2009: 192–193). In this context, such acts of opposition may be interpreted as expressing the need to belong to a legitimate counter-hegemonic global discourse such as that of Islam, from which symbolic power is derived (Kaya 2009, 180). Identifying with counter-hegemonic global discourses may be associated with processes of transnational identification, as highlighted in some studies of Muslim populations in various Western countries (Edmunds 2010), and may be linked to specific forms and drivers of social identification (Kranendonk, Vermeulen, and van Heelsum 2018), and dual identities (Cardenas 2019).

A significant body of work has questioned the 'identity crises' supposedly experienced by Westerners with Muslim backgrounds (Kabir 2012; Ali 2018). Some of this work underlines the dynamics of Muslim integration into the majority society (Beaman 2017; Manning and Akhtar 2020) while other researchers investigate how this new generation has forged a distinct popular culture (Kabir 2012; Nilan 2017; Ali 2018; O'Brien 2018). The individualisation of identity assertion has frequently been highlighted (Kaya 2012), as well as how young Muslim Westerners have negotiated their integration into the host society (Frisina 2010).

However, in spite of this negotiated integration, the conclusions of empirical research into national identification tend to concur that religious and/or ethnic identifications may weaken the sense of national belonging expressed by members of Muslim diasporic communities in Western countries (Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007; Bisin et al. 2008). This distancing from national identity may be a reaction to what is perceived as a spreading securitisation discourse produced by political and media representations of migration and Islam (Calhoun, 2011; Kaya 2012). This is what Craig Calhoun (2011) calls reactionary radicalism, a stance developed by young pious Muslim youths to refute the essentialist and orientalist approach that perceives Islam with a single outlook, a stance that does not recognise the plurality of outlooks in Islam (Ciftci, Wuthrich, and Shamaileh 2022, 197–199).

Research on Islamophobia points to the common misperceptions about Islam or Muslims as the root cause of anti-Muslim sentiment in the West (Allen 2010; Halliday 1999; Ciftci, Wuthrich, and Shamaileh 2022). The assumption underlying such perceptions reduces Islam to a uniform and homogenous faith, or in other words, pious Muslims to single-minded actors or agents irrespective of their ethno-cultural, societal, educational, gendered, and historical differences (Ciftci, Wuthrich, and Shamaileh 2022). The failure of multicultural policies in Western European democracies to facilitate the integration of Muslim-origin people and reduce social tensions, usually results from the misleading assumption that all Muslims conform to a single outlook and that Muslim religiosity leads to uniform attitudes and behavior (Ciftci, Wuthrich, and Shamaileh 2022, 199). Our selection of both Moroccan and Turkish-origin Muslim youths is also a conscious choice to challenge the conventional wisdom in European societies that portrays Islam as a uniform religion. Some of our interlocutors rather depicted Islam as a phenomenon with diverse implications, practices, conventions, and traditions grounded in historical, social, and local contexts (Ahmed 2017).

Estrangement from mainstream values

Being a traditionalist minority in a secularised society

Vincent Tiberj (2020) noticed that in the French Muslim population, frequent mosque attendance was associated with more traditionalist views on gender relations, women's sexuality, and homosexuality. Within our sample of youngsters of Moroccan and Turkish descent, morality was indeed a core factor in their estrangement from the mainstream French society, with their values differing from those of the majority. This discrepancy was exemplified by the following remarks from a 22-year-old French-Moroccan female student:

> Due to your religion, you're often in a confrontation with an environment that goes against what you are. So as not to hide anything from you, and to speak bluntly, when you are in a business school, what do you see? It drinks, it fucks, it smokes – things that are all prohibited by Islam. So, at first, I couldn't find my place. When you're a Muslim, you find yourself in an ecosystem where you question yourself, which sometimes clashes with your deep values. (22, F, Moroccan origin, Paris area, 27.08.2020).

This attachment to traditional values was often expressed when our interlocutors described their general social environment, such as non-Muslim friendly circles. A 23-year-old French-Turkish man stated the following when asked about his friendships:

> However, with my friends, we talk about it a lot more. And there, people are divided into two groups: there are my Turkish friends – and with them, we think the same – and my French friends – whom we never really agree with. With my French friends, we never have the same ideas, especially when it comes to religion and culture. And politically, I am more conservative than they are. As for them, they're not conservative at all (23, M, Turkish origin, Lyon area, 31.05.2020).

Independent from their social relationships, many of our interlocutors seemed disturbed by what they viewed as a trend towards greater moral and sexual liberalism. The divergence between their ideals and a perceived wider rise in progressivism was encapsulated by the following statements from a 30-year-old male teacher of Moroccan origin:

> There are also a lot of gay-friendly bars [in Paris]: as far as this population is concerned, Parisians have a very favourable view. They have not a neutral, but a positive view. I even think it's frowned upon to be heterosexual, in Paris ... (30, M, Moroccan origin, Paris area, 16.11.2021).

The latent rejection of cultural liberalism also manifested itself through negative judgements of the ongoing evolution of the French Muslim community, centring on what is interpreted as increasing secularisation among young people who identify as Muslims:

> For example, I once got angry with an old North-African friend because I told her that the way she dressed was not worthy of a good Muslim. I told her it'd be better for her if she dressed more modestly. That provoked an argument between us, and since then we haven't spoken to each other (23, M, Turkish origin, Lyon area, 31.05.2020).

This perceived gap in moral values was most expressed – particularly by females – concerning gender issues, differentiating them from the members of majority society. Indeed, Fabien Truong noticed the prevalence of clear gender-related social roles in the specific case of the suburban Muslim youth – through hints of what 'real men' and 'real women' should be like (Truong 2017). Some testimonies from the interviews illustrated how speakers had internalised the 'knowing-how-to-behave' discourse, especially in a family context:

> For example, as a girl, I know that I shouldn't talk too much with the boys in high school. It's something that's improper, that's inappropriate. And it's the same at home: in Islam, you should have a certain posture in front of your parents. For instance, when a grown-up comes into a room and you're there, you shouldn't lie down, but you should sit down (18, F, Turkish origin, Lyon area, 08.03.2021).

Such gender-based moral positionings occasionally aroused incomprehension from members of the social majority. Thus, female interlocutors might mention past experiences of difficult conversations on topics related to feminism or women's rights, such as this 25-year-old interlocutor, who wore a headscarf:

> One day I was waiting at the tram station, and a woman, who was probably of North African descent, yelled at me: "Our mothers fought against this". Sometimes you can even get insults too, in a gratuitous way. [. . .] Sometimes people comfort you like you're sick, or sometimes they remind you of things like, "This is old, this is archaic: you have to evolve now". For example, a friend's mom is a feminist, and she told me once that I should take it off because symbolically it's violent for her. It's like an aggressive act to her, she told me. She also told me that it's a sign of submission to men. From her viewpoint, it is a symbol of oppression. I can understand her vision, but I live very well with the fact of being veiled (25, F, Moroccan origin, Lyon area, 24.03.2021).

The young people we interviewed thus expressed their estrangement from the values of mainstream society. This moral differentiation shaped various aspects of their identities: their perception that they were out of step with the majority and their sense of extraneousness in the social environment, which could occasionally generate mutual misunderstanding during everyday interactions. Furthermore, several youngsters criticised what they perceived as the growth of cultural liberalism which they also claimed to have witnessed within the French Muslim community itself. Independent of this social criticism, this point of view also surfaced in their interpretations of the political-institutional framing of religion-state relationships and descriptions of French-style *laïcité*.

Young Muslims and French-style laïcité

On 15 March 2004, a law was passed restricting the use of religious symbols in public schools,[6] while public use of the full-face veil (*niqab*) was banned from all public spaces after 11 October 2010.[7] These successive restrictions have been viewed with suspicion by French Muslims, particularly because the headscarf issue is widely featured in French media and political debates. For example, the recent authorisation of the *burkini* in the public swimming pools of Grenoble has caused controversy among French politicians, with a dispute between the city's ecologist mayor (Eric Piolle) and the conservative president of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region (Laurent Wauquiez) breaking out in May 2022.[8] Furthermore, in her 2022 presidential platform, Marine Le Pen even suggested fining Muslim women wearing headscarves in public areas. French-style secularism (*laïcité*) is somewhat maligned by the French-Muslim population, which would prefer the authorities to turn a blind eye to public expressions of religiosity. The following discussion with a 21-year-old student of Moroccan origin demonstrates this widespread perception:

> Theoretically, [*laïcité*] is a divide between the state and religion, and religions can live and express themselves freely. Today, we are told that no religion should exist publicly in France. But religions raise human and universal questions. I think that religion should be more visible in society and at school – but it's currently taking a back seat. For example, the headscarf cannot be worn in public. We are facing a modified version of *laïcité*. The headscarf is interpreted as a sign of radicalisation, of subjugation. But if we make religion more visible at school,

> if we develop exchanges with religious communities, it will be obvious that veiled women should be seen in public (21, M, Moroccan origin, Lyon area, 18.05.2020).

However, several interlocutors spontaneously recounted experiences of conflict with non-Muslim people regarding external manifestations of religiosity. These narratives mostly focused on headscarf-related issues, and illustrated an area of misunderstanding between the majority population and the Muslim minority.

When our interlocutors tried to identify possible reasons for these latent tensions around visible religiosity, many alluded to the terrorist attacks which had recently shaken French society. Indeed, the following extracts indicate that these events contributed to the public affirmation of anti-Muslim resentment:

> I don't like the way *laïcité* is defined today. The state tends to harden itself against Islam, from my viewpoint. But at the same time, we must remember all the tragic events that have happened to us. Since the terrorist attacks, everything has changed. We are not in the same context today. So even if the way that *laïcité* is presented today deeply annoys me, I can understand why we are in this situation now, because of all that has happened (27, F, Moroccan origin, Lyon area, 24.02.2021).

Beyond institutional measures and daily interactions with the social majority, some of our interlocutors were apprehensive of the threat that secularisation posed to their cultural identity. This latent fear was apparent in the following remarks from a 25-year-old French-Moroccan interlocutor:

> Yet I feel good in France, and I feel at home, but I don't feel French. Being French, for me, is associated with … I know it's weird, but for me, being French means eating pork and drinking alcohol, and I can't accept that, because of my religion (25, F, Moroccan origin, Lyon area, 24.03.2021).

Similar rejections of assimilation distanced our participants from the social majority. The above-mentioned rejection encapsulates our participants' widespread distrust of French-style *laïcité*, which they viewed as a potential tool of cultural assimilation. In a similar vein, our interlocutors saw *laïcité*'s attempt to make the public sphere 'neutral' as opposing public expressions of religiosity. Yet beyond such legal and political aspects, several interlocutors mentioned disagreements with non-Muslims on visible aspects of their religiosity – especially headscarf-wearing. In addition, most highlighted how terrorist attacks had tarnished the majority's image of Muslims and contributed to frame Islam as a problem in mainstream political discourse. Overall, our interlocutors rejected the dominant discourse of *laïcité* as they thought it was rather an assimilationist and politically motivated ideology imposing the majority society's moral codes on the Muslims.

No to assimilation, yes to integration

According to Roché, Astor, and Bilen (2020), devout French Muslim teenagers tend to express lesser levels of national identification than irreligious ones. These findings echo some observations raised by our sample: among the Muslims of Moroccan and Turkish descent we interviewed, religious practice and assimilation to the 'national' culture were strongly and negatively correlated: nobody could assimilate into French society without shedding their Muslim identity. Faced with what is perceived as a latent assimilationist injunction from the mainstream society, Islam can therefore be relationally mobilised through three functionalities: as a 'guarantee of loyalty', a 'certification of singularity', and a 'floating political imagery' (Truong 2017, 120). This perceived incompatibility between being a practicing Muslim and being 'fully French' is exemplified by the following remarks:

> I wouldn't be the person I am today if I weren't Muslim. I'd still be integrated into France, but because of my religion, I'd never be assimilated into French culture because I can't do everything the French do. There are things I can't eat and drink, for example (28, F, Turkish origin, Lyon area, 06.05.2021).

Although most participants rejected the authoritarian and homogenising nature of assimilation, they regarded integration as a fundamental part of adapting to the host society. This distinction between the two notions was explicitly mentioned by several interlocutors:

> Assimilation means no longer practicing one's culture, and no longer speaking one's language. It is when you live like a French person. I'm against it because I think you lose your identity when you assimilate. As a Turk and a Muslim, I want to keep some deep values and a particular way of living. And I want to pass these on to my children. Integration is something different: it's keeping your language, your religion, and your culture, but integrating into French society (22, M, Turkish origin, Lyon area, 12.09.2020).

Thus, several members of our Muslim sample clearly distinguished between assimilation and integration. The former was interpreted as an existential cultural threat, while the latter was perceived as a necessity. Many interlocutors also expressed their views on the accusation of '*communautarisme*' (communitarianism) often made by right-wing political actors against the Muslim population. Without necessarily denying this phenomenon (and even while deploring it), most of our interlocutors interpreted it as a hidden racism emanating from conservative and/or nativist politicians:

> Today, Muslims are criticized for not mixing with French society: but if mixing means abandoning one's religion and culture, then it is normal that Muslims refuse this. But if we aren't asked to erase our identity, I don't understand why mixing would be impossible. [...] But the mixing must be done naturally: it must not be imposed by the state (27, F, Moroccan origin, Lyon area, 24.02.2021).

Thus, our sample of young Muslim people largely rejected assimilation, which they viewed as a harmful and unattainable policy objective, both due to religious strictures on behaviour and the latent association of 'Frenchness' with secularisation, as expressed in the declarations of several interlocutors. Faced with what is interpreted as a latent assimilationist injunction from the mainstream society, claiming their immigrant-origin and/or Muslim identity can be interpreted as the wish to mobilise 'the about-face gesture and the breakup show' (Truong 2017, 167). As a response to this perceived pressure, Islam can therefore be relationally mobilised through three functionalities: as a 'guarantee of loyalty', a 'certification of singularity', and a 'floating political imagery' (Truong 2017, 120). However, growing levels of religiosity and piety among our interlocutors do not necessarily mean that their religious identity becomes an impediment before their civic identity. On the contrary, our findings also reveal that our interlocutors have a general tendency to underline their Frenchness when asked about their value orientation. Besides, several scientific research also demonstrate that absolute levels of piety are generally associated with higher rather than lower levels of support for democracy (Ciftci, Wuthrich, and Shamaileh 2022).

Yet despite their outright rejection of assimilation, many of our interlocutors valued integration as an achievable (and desirable) goal and a 'third way' that could make their faith compatible with their respect for civic values. Furthermore, the reproach of 'communitarianism' is widely understood as a discursive tool used by political and media actors to stigmatise Islam and exclude the Muslim population. This blame exemplified a broader and more prevalent critical stance against the media-political sphere within our sample of French Muslims.

Distrust towards representative democracy and the media

An unsatisfactory institutional system, a frustrating political offer

Western Muslims tend to trust public institutions independently of their political behaviour (Maxwell 2010) and their level of religiosity (Doerschler and Irving Jackson 2012). However, many of our French-Muslim interlocutors maintained a certain scepticism towards the current functioning of representative democracy: while only a minority rejected the democratic model outright, most of our interlocutors deplored how the model is currently enforced, viewing it as unsatisfactory and inadequate. For instance, several interlocutors were sceptical about voting and whether elected officials could implement actions that would impart concrete effects on their daily lives:

> We have the right to vote, and that's a very good thing. It's an important right. But whomever we vote for, do they have any real power? Can we really change things by voting, or isn't everything already decided beforehand? I don't know, but I'm sceptical that we're the ones who really decide. [...] Anyway, to give you an answer,

> I'd say "yes and no": voting changes some things. But it doesn't change life at all (28, F, Turkish origin, Lyon area, 06.05.2021).

The political ideology that the Muslim young people alluded to most frequently in the interviews – as a source of concern – was that of the radical right. Indeed, the anti-immigration stance of Marine Le Pen's National Rally (*Rassemblement national* – RN) and Eric Zemmour's Reconquest (*Reconquête*) was considered an outright threat by these young citizens. Additionally, the growing politicisation of Islam by the Western far-right (Berntzen 2020) tends to accentuate this concern within local Muslim minorities, and explains why our interlocutors rejected Marine Le Pen's party:

> I think the RN programme would accentuate inequalities based on origin because they defend a Zemmourian[9] vision of French society. They want everyone to have a French first name, for example.[. . .] Their dogma is to francise everyone. They are strongly Islamophobic, too (22, M, Turkish origin, Lyon area, 12.09.2020).

Our young Moroccan and Turkish-heritage interlocutors appeared more determined to reject the far-right which was featuring more prominently in political debates. Many participants justified their voting decisions in terms of blocking the RN from accessing power. This political objective, indeed, was often described as the main determinant of their voting choice.

While our interlocutors mentioned supporting Emmanuel Macron in the runoff against Marine Le Pen in the 2017 presidential election, they also criticized him heavily. Many accused Macron of moving away from the pro-multiculturalism and pro-immigration centrist discourse he had espoused in his 2017 campaign. They emphasised that a clear discursive shift away from this had occurred in the areas of Islam, migration, and diversity during Macron's first term. For example, this French-Moroccan participant mentioned the controversy around 'Islamo-leftism' ('*islamo-gauchisme* ') initiated by some ministers and Macronist political figures against what they presented as academic 'complacency' towards Islamist activism[10]:

I think Macron kind of betrayed what he said during his 2017 campaign. [In] *The Republic on the Move*, they were saying they were neither left nor right, even though, in my opinion, they had a more left-wing discourse during the elections. And so, a lot of left-wing people voted for them, including me. But now, this party talks about Islamo-leftism, these kinds of things. . . They are far from the ideas they advocated during the campaign. And then, it's so ridiculous, this polemic around Islamo-leftism: it doesn't exist, and it's stigmatising to talk like that. It's a discourse of exclusion (26, F, Moroccan origin, Paris, area, 03.03.2021).

Another trope that occasionally occurred in some interviews was dissatisfaction with the General Security Law (*Loi sécurité globale*), enacted during Macron's first term: several participants seemed to interpret this measure as particularly targeting the Muslim population, and as contributing to what could be described as a 'suspicion of the uprising' (Truong 2017). Indeed, aside from issues linked to multiculturalism, some of our interlocutors also referred to the law's security implications, presented as securitarian and repressive:

> The last time I demonstrated was against the Global Security Law. This law is to the detriment of Black youngsters, Arab youngsters, or youngsters of other origins. It's going to make racial profiling worse (27, F, Moroccan origin, Lyon area, 17.02.2021).

Lastly, after Samuel Paty (a teacher who had shown *Charlie Hebdo*'s caricatures of the prophet Muhammed to his pupils, during a course on free speech) was assassinated by a radical Islamist, Emmanuel Macron's reaction was interpreted as a provocation by some of our interlocutors.[11] Indeed, his statements on free speech and the right to blaspheme were sometimes described as an attempt to stoke Islamophobia, as the following statements from a 27-year-old French-Moroccan woman exemplify:

> Macron has done other uncool things, as well: for example, when the professor – may he rest in peace – was killed, Macron's reaction was to say: "We have the right to make fun of Islam, and we have to do it". For me, attacking my religion is unacceptable. (27, F, Moroccan origin, Lyon area, 17.02.2021).

Most participants expressed scepticism about the ability of politicians to improve their situation, and their doubts about voting were an important theme within the sample. Our Muslim interlocutors described themselves as deeply opposed to radical right parties due to their anti-Islam stance and hostility towards immigration. Some also remarked – more or less explicitly – that Emmanuel Macron and *The Republic on the Move* had deceived them by shifting to the right on cultural issues. This critical stance extended to the media, particularly to journalistic framings of Islam.

A weapon of mass stigmatisation? French Muslims' perceptions of the media

The widespread resentment of Western Muslim minorities towards the mainstream media in the US and several European countries has been widely reported (Kaya 2012). This latent distrust may constitute a reaction to its perceived essentialist and orientalist framing of Islam. In the US, for instance, Powell (2018) showed how the media coverage of attacks committed by Muslim and non-Muslim terrorists contrasted. Similar tendencies appear to have manifested themselves in France (Deltombe 2007)

As expected, our young French-Turkish and French-Moroccan interlocutors were often critical of the media, which they viewed as spreading negative images of Islam and Muslims:

> There have been events that have made headlines in the media, such as the terrorist attacks. The riots in the suburbs, too: this event finally turned against youngsters of immigrant origin. And then, all the problems in Syria, Afghanistan, or Iraq, degraded the image of Arabs and Muslims (27, F, Moroccan origin, Lyon area, 24.02.2021).

More specifically, French media attitudes were perceived as setting an anti-immigration and anti-Islamic agenda, fomenting racism and intolerance in society. The following statements exemplify this frequent reproach:

> It's not very fashionable to be a *rebeu*,[12] these days. Just listen to the media, these days. Just listen *CNews*[13] . . . We are not very well seen, with all these polemics. . . (24, M, Moroccan origin, Lyon area, 03-04-2021)

Many of our Muslim interlocutors expressed distrust of the mainstream media and had consequently shifted to the social media, which some found a supposedly more reliable source of information:

> I like to use *Twitter* because they are faster in terms of news: they have more information in real-time, it's less censored. Compared to the TV, it's freer. The French media often distort reality. They put on TV what they want, we know that. They distort certain things, like on Muslims. It's the opposite on *Twitter*, where the points of view are more diverse, where there is less distortion. (21, M, Turkish origin, Paris area, 12.09.2020).

While holding generally negative views of French politics, the interlocutors were even more critical of what they viewed as the dominant media discourse. Indeed, many described this discourse as hostile to Islam and marked by nativist stances, which explained why they had turned to social media as an alternative source of information. Yet despite the perceived rise of anti-Muslim sentiment in the mainstream media, the majority of participants explained that this agenda-setting did not visibly harm their everyday social interactions with their non-Muslim fellow citizens. Several of our interlocutors stated that their daily relations with the majority population remained peaceful, although mutual misunderstandings of the visible aspects of religiosity remained an issue, as mentioned previously.

Conclusion

The qualitative research presented in this article has provided insight into how young Turkish- and Moroccan-origin French Muslims experience their religiosity in everyday life. It highlights the estrangement of young French Muslim people from the cultural norms of the social majority in terms of moral liberalism, secularisation, and gender roles. Our interlocutors opposed both French-style secularism and assimilation by perceiving the former as a road to the latter. Indeed, *laïcité* was often interpreted as an official quest to invisibilise public expressions of religiosity. Most participants reported that the ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) attacks had insidiously instilled anti-Muslim sentiment and honed a securitising approach towards Islam in the French political circles.

While often depicting assimilation as undesirable and unattainable, our interlocutors perceived civic integration as a 'realistic' – but also necessary – aim for young people with an immigrant background.

The participants were broadly critical of mainstream politics. In addition to dissatisfaction with the functioning of current state of democracy and scepticism about the empowerment of citizens in the French institutional context, the young Muslim interlocutors were weary and frustrated with the current political order: most mentioned the rise of the radical populist right, anti-Muslim racism, and the rightward shift of Emmanuel Macron's *The Republic on the Move* – but they were even more critical of the media. They felt that the dominant media discourse was characterized by securitisation and nativist positions, and accused the French media of imposing an anti-Muslim agenda. Several interlocutors therefore prefer to follow current affairs on the social media. Consequently, the 'radicalisation' affecting a minority of Muslim youth seems to have been fuelled by two distinct factors: alienation from the majority values of French society on the one hand, and reaction against what they perceived as hostility to Islam and Muslims in public discourse on the other hand. As already discussed in Social Movements Theory, this is what Craig Calhoun (2011) calls 'reactionary radicalism' and what Donatella Della Porta's (2018) defines as relational radicalism, which can be translated as a process of 'going back to the basics' to express one's protest and discontent against the prevalent forms of essentialist and orientalist depiction of Islam in France. This article eventually challenged the conventional wisdom in European societies that presents Islam as a uniform religion. Instead, we tried to depict Islam as a phenomenon in minority contexts with diverse implications, practices, conventions, and traditions grounded in historical, social, and local settings.

Notes

1. Quinn Mecham (2014) proposed a definition of Islamist organisations in accordance with their political goals: 'they seek to transform society', and 'want to change both individual and collective behaviour within society, which will lead to social change in key areas'. Accordingly, society 'should be more moral' in Islamic terms, 'meaning that people within society are more likely to live Islamic precepts in their daily lives and social interactions' (Mecham 2014, 24).
2. Data available on: https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4797578?sommaire=4928952.
3. In this study, we take the notion of radicalisation as a process that starts as the expression of socioeconomic, political, spatial and psychological deprivation in a similar vein to the ways in which it is explained in social movements literature (Calhoun 2011; Della Porta 2014, 2018; Kaya and Bee, in this special Issue). Independently from its causes, McCauley and Moskalenko (2008, 428) conceptualise radicalisation as a set of 'change in beliefs, feelings, and action toward support and sacrifice for intergroup conflict'. Such a definitional effort is necessary to avoid an understanding of radicalisation as a 'magical approach of religious beliefs' in the case of self-identified Muslim youths in general (Truong 2017, 16).
4. In a part of the literature, extremism was conceptualised in relationship with the potentiality of violence (Kazmi 2022, 741; Adam-Troian, Tecmen, and Kaya 2021). Astrid Bötticher (2017, 74) also defines extremism by highlighting its violent dimension, and argues that extremists glorify violence as a conflict resolution mechanism and are opposed to the constitutional state, majority-based democracy, the rule of law, and human rights for all. Through this perspective, radicals are distinguished from extremists because they are not necessarily extreme and violent in their choice of means to achieve their goals (Bötticher 2017, 75). In this article, the notions of radicalism and extremism are being used as two different terms. The former is used in a way that does not necessarily correspond to violence, while the latter is used as a term that is linked to violence.
5. Trevi Group is known to be the origin of the police cooperation among the Member States of the EU, which began in 1976. 'Trevi' stands for Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism, Violence, and Internationalism, and operated as an intergovernmental network of representatives from justice and home affairs ministries (König and Trauner 2021).
6. According to the 1st article of the above-mentioned law, 'In public schools, middle schools and high schools, the wearing of signs or clothing by which students ostensibly manifest a religious affiliation is prohibited'.
7. The 1st article of this law states 'No one may, in the public space, wear clothing intended to conceal his or her face'.
8. 'Burkini à Grenoble: Wauquiez déclare la guerre à Piolle', *Le Point*, 3 May 2022. https://www.lepoint.fr/politique/burkini-wauquiez-menace-de-couper-les-subventions-de-grenoble-03-05-2022–2474171_20.php. Accessed 18 July 2022.
9. When this interview was conducted (September 2020), Eric Zemmour had not yet entered the electoral field and therefore was not competing against the RN.

10. Zappi, S., D. Mariama, Olivier, F., and Soazig, Le Neve. 2021. 'Islamo-gauchisme: Frédérique Vidal suscite un tollé dans le monde universitaire et un malaise au sein de la majorité', *Le Monde*, 18 February 2021. https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2021/02/18/polemique-sur-l-islamo-gauchisme-la-ministre-de-l-enseignement-superieur-recadree-par-l-executif-et-les-chercheurs_6070388_823448.html. Accessed 18 July 2022.
11. For more information about the murder of Samuel Paty, see 'Assassinat de Samuel Paty', *France Info*. Available on: https://www.francetvinfo.fr/faits-divers/terrorisme/enseignant-decapite-dans-les-yvelines/. Accessed 18 July 2022.
12. *Rebeu*: Arab/North African person in verlan slang.
13. *CNews*: private TV channel, ideologically close to the conservative and identitarian right. Sometimes described as a 'French-style *Fox News*', this channel is also accused of having promoted the ideological line of Eric Zemmour, who had a daily program on *CNews* before running for president in 2022.

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