INSTITUT
MONTAIGNE

M

The Islamist Factory

*There is no desire more natural
than the desire for knowledge*

The author

An Ecole Normale graduate and with an agrégation in geography, **Hakim El Karoui** taught at the Lyon II University before joining the cabinet of the Prime Minister in 2002 as speech writer. After serving within the Ministry of Finance, in 2006 he integrated the Rothschild bank, where he led the Africa Practice together with Lionel Zinsou. In 2011, he joined the strategy consulting firm Roland Berger, where he was joint head of the Africa and French Government advisory sectors. In 2016, he founded his own strategy consulting firm, Volentia. Hakim El Karoui is also a writer and social entrepreneur (he created the Club du XXIe siècle - The 21st Century Club).

The Islamist Factory

SOMMAIRE

FOREWORD

WHY THIS REPORT?

Islam again! After the publication of a first report in 2016 on Islam in France and a second in 2017 on France's Arab policy, Institut Montaigne is publishing a third report edited by myself and focused not on Islam, but on Islamism. Why? Because the subject is still very much in the French and European spotlight – sometimes referred to by the euphemism "communitarianism" - and ironically, it remains poorly understood. Its concepts are complex, its the words are foreign, its the motivations are unclear, and the driving forces behind the development of this ideology are difficult to understand, both for the public and for the experts, who tear each other to pieces and who often see only one aspect of the issue.

The ambition of this work is simple: to demonstrate and explain the entire transmission mechanism that leads from the creation of this world view to the dynamics that enable its spread in France and in Europe. This is a holistic project: it aims to present the global nature of the phenomenon, the philosophical questions it raises, the places where it is produced, the men and women that implement it, and the political and social networks that disseminate it.

What is Islamism? That is a tricky question and one that is subject to controversy - first and foremost because the vast majority of those whom we qualify as Islamists do not recognize themselves as such. Those who come from or are close to the Muslim Brotherhood have long understood that it is dangerous to claim an affiliation to that movement. The Salafists explain that they only defend a religious vision and never a political doctrine. In this text, we consider all forms of Islamism that make up, in their diversity, what we have called Islamism: beyond religious belief and personal spirituality, an interpretation of the world, a vision of the organization of society, including the secular world, and a role given to religion in the exercise of power. By this triple definition (interpretation of the world, social organization, relationship to power), it is a contemporary political ideology. The Islamists supporting this vision largely draw from Islam religious principles that are derived from rigorist interpretations upheld for the last century by so-called Islamist militants.

While there are major ideological differences between the Wahhabis and the Muslim Brotherhood, both groups seek to turn Islam into a way of life and a program for

individuals and society. It is a comprehensive program aimed at codifying and normalizing social interaction: male-female relations (mixing genders is forbidden by the Wahhabis), dietary norms (Halal), economic principles (Islamic finance) or relationships with others (*al-wala' wa al-bara',* which defines among Wahhabis the separation between Muslims and non-Muslims). This desire for standardization is fundamentally political: it identifies the legitimate authority and organizes public life. It is therefore not only their relationship to politics that matters but their political impact. The impact is clear in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, who seek to negotiate with those in power and sometimes take over. Yet it is equally important for the Salafists, including those who want to build a wall of purity between themselves and society: this wall, this physical or symbolic separation, obviously has a major political impact.

Islamism, as we noted earlier, is poorly understood, and this report has the ambition of making it better known using numerous documentary sources. First, of course, the extensive academic literature. More than 200 books and scholarly reports in English, Arabic, French and German have been consulted as part of this report. 60 interviews with institutional, non of profit, penitentiary actors, religious leaders and citizens in eight Arab and European countries were also conducted. We carried out a pioneering analysis of "Saudi Leaks," a set of more than 122,000 Saudi Foreign Ministry documents uncovered by WikiLeaks in June 2015. We also analyzed and selected 275 fatwas that allowed us to go to the source of the normative Wahhabi guidelines necessary for the daily oversight of the Saudi population. Finally, we carried out a thorough analysis of a massive quantity of data collected by Twitter and Facebook on the origin and frequency of Islamist content on social networks.

The De-Westernization of the World and Islamism

The Islamist phenomenon is often depicted as the consequence of socioeconomic misery, of the abandoning of the suburbs by the state (Farhad Khosrokhavar), and of a form of nihilism that combines with the desire for radicalism (a theory defended by Olivier Roy). Others, on the other hand, see in it the radicalization of Islam (a theory defended by Gilles Kepel) or a Muslim reaction to the intrusions of the colonizing and imperialist West. These interpretations are all accurate and are not mutually exclusive.

However, we believe, and this work also aims to demonstrate, that all of these interpretations have one major flaw: they are Western-centered and see the West as

the origin of all things. Guilty of having imported disorder in the East and abused its Muslims; incapable, since the end of communism, of creating great utopias of transgression and radicalism; or, quite simply, the epicenter of a radicalization of Islam that cannot have escaped any observer of the situation in Europe, the West has played a central role in the development and spread of Islamism. According to this analysis, an Islamist who prefers Sharia law to civil law is necessarily a delinquent or a person caught in the throes of social deprivation. Why not simply imagine that he is viewing the world from a non-Western perspective?

This report shows the power of Islamist ideology and the progressive empowerment of Islamist thinking, as well as, incidentally, that of its centers of formation and dissemination. It is in Asia that this clearly manifests itself most forcefully: the majority of the world's Muslims live there - in democracies (Indonesia), in Islamic states (Pakistan), be they minorities (India) or majorities (Bangladesh). They think for themselves, and ideological and religious evolutions in these Muslim countries can be explained by phenomena that are independent of the West.

Hakim El Karoui

Part I

Islamism:
genealogy of
an ideology

In this report, we define an ideological system as a set of more or less coherent and systematic propositions, making value judgments on a social order and guiding action by identifying allies and enemies. The ideology's first characteristic is its role as justifying a certain social order, whether existing, past, future or utopian. To achieve this, it resorts to customs, religion, mythology, morality and science. Inevitably aiming for absolutes, an ideology is neither true, nor false: it is a mere assertion.

Islamist ideology can be included in the sweeping narratives of the Mediterranean people who are the source of contemporary Western ideology. The universality of human rights is the primary characteristic of the prevailing value system in the West, that of liberal democracy. The primacy of human rights and of the rule of law in a system where sovereignty is held by the nation; the representation of the people in parliament, the only body with the legitimacy to establish legislation that organizes economic liberalism, regulated to varying degrees by a state that protects the nation against a number of risks; the centrality of the individual; freedom of religion and the secularization of social and political relationships: its defining characteristics are well known. The contemporary Western world has constructed a great historical narrative whereby it sees itself as leading the world from Darkness to Light, from oppression to freedom, from confinement to openness, from superstition to critical thinking.

Previously contested by communism, this system is today contested by illiberal democracy, which is characterized by a strong nationalism, an overt xenophobia, a frank hostility to advocates of liberalism and openness, a moral and religious conservatism, as well as a return to Christian values as the basis for present-day Europe. Yet illiberal democracy remains a degraded version of political liberalism that grows out of the very framework established by it. With the emergence of Chinese and Islamist ideologies, the challenge for the West is no longer what it was: these two major competing ideologies are conceived in terms and principles that are alien to Western concepts. Deng Xiaoping's reforms and the establishment of "market socialism" enabled China to forge its own path to modernity with a few intangible principles: respect for authority, and awareness of the past and the political potency of its interests. The aim at the time was to provide a moral framework to its nascent form of capitalism and to shield it from democratization, its political corollary.

Having engaged in a violent confrontation with the West on September 11, 2001, Islamism is the other ideology that, in its own way, poses a challenge to the

Western liberal project. Born of the clash with the West, Islamism gradually became autonomous, and today, has developed a discourse that is independent of the West, a narrative and a set of myths that are coherent at their core. How did this great narrative establish itself? That is the focus of our research. The emergence of Islamic ideology is the result of an evolution, the process of which is rarely explained in the Western discourse. It is essential for us to track the genesis of Islamism, and to understand its mutations in an effort to understand how it was constructed and the historical events that triggered its development.

CHAPTER I

ISLAMISM AS A RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION OF MODERNITY RAISED BY THE WEST DURING THE COLONIAL ERA

Beginning with the industrial revolutions - from the late 18th century until the early 20th century - European colonization extended beyond the sole context of trading posts and settlements in the Americas and in Oceania to include the Asian mainland, the entire Muslim world with the exception of Persia, the African coast and later Africa as a whole. At that point, Europe imposed its norms on the entire world, whether it be the perception of what a state should be, of what is archaic or modern, or of what is just or unjust. This European "message" was violently received by the Muslim world throughout the period of its colonization in the 19th century. Through the opposition it incites in the Muslim world, European colonization is at the root of contemporary political Islam.

India offers an enlightening example of this dynamic. The country experienced an Islamic revivalist movement in the 18th century that developed as a reaction to British colonization, and that movement spread in the peninsula throughout the 19th century to give birth to a large number of Islamic movements and organizations sharing a common Islamic frame of reference but with differing or even opposing objectives. The Moghul Empire, unknown in the West even though it represented 22 percent of global GDP in 1700, was a powerful Muslim state of Persianized Mongol origin, established in India at the beginning of the 16th century and with Delhi as its capital. Its disappearance as early as 1763 was experienced as a disaster by many Muslims, who then became a minority, leading to a return of religious tensions, exacerbated by the British policy of divide-and-rule among Indians to tighten its control. In response, several movements emerged with Islamic and anti-colonial ideals. This period, which could be viewed as an Islamic Indian renewal, is the result of a process that begins with Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (1703-1762), an important scholar and Sufi who attempted to restore an authentic Islam and reconcile the different Sunni and Shia currents as well as promoting reason and tradition.

Ahl-e Hadith

In Shah Waliullah Dehlawi's tradition, the Ahl-e Hadith (people of hadith) political-religious movement was founded in the early 1870s by Siddique Hassan Khan and Maulana Sayyid Nazir Husain, with religious reform *(islah)* as its principal objective. In order to unite Muslims and to revive their faith, followers of the Ahl-e Hadith emphasize the return to the original roots of their faith, the Quran, and the *hadith*, which they use as a key marker of their identity.

The Deobandis

The Deobandi Indo-Pakistani reformist movement, founded in 1867 by scholars close to the doctrine of Syed Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi, aims to preserve education and faith during the period in which the country is led by a non-Islamic government.[1] In the face of colonialism, the Deobandis advocate a systematic return to all aspects of Islamic tradition in order to assert their identity and encourage spiritual transformation through an "understated" Sufism.[2]

The Tabligh

Founded in 1927 in British India by the scholar Maulana Mohammad Ilyas, the Jamaat-e Tabligh (Society for the Spread of Islam) is one of the principal Islamist movements worldwide. Mainly geared towards preaching and the re-Islamization of the masses, the Jamaat-e Tabligh adopts a *bottom-up* approach, promoting an Islam that is understandable by the greatest number of people. The Tablighis try to Islamize all aspects of everyday life by portraying the prophet as a model to emulate.

The Jamaat-e Islami

A religious party with the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in British India in 1941 by Maulana Abul A'la Maududi (1903-1979), the Jamaat-e Islami (Islamic Society) aims to reform society, which has to be aligned with the imperatives of the faith, through the creation of an Islamic State. It draws its inspiration from the Prophet and from the earliest Muslim communities, who are viewed as the closest to the divine message. The principal Islamist movement in South Asia, the Jamaat, has spread in the territories inhabited by the Indian diaspora, particularly in the United Kingdom, where it is very present.

---

[1] ZAMAN, Muhammad Qasim, The Ulama in in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics, 2007.

[2] ZAMAN, Muhammad Qasim, The Ulama in in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics, 2007.

In the 19th and early 20th century, Western colonization and more generally the dissemination of Western ideas sparked a powerful intellectual reaction in the Muslim world, which questioned why it was reduced to such a level of subservience and weakness. The rapid "modernization," that ensued, through the implementation of reforms, also had a religious equivalent. The transformations that affected Islam at the time were part of a homegrown response to the challenge posed by the Western approach to the Orient, between acculturation and self-loyalty, between break-up and continuity. Reformism had two components: on the one hand, the return to a literalist and rational Islam, stripped of its popular and superstitious attributes; and, on the other hand, an attempt to appropriate Western modernity. This was an interesting contradiction in terms: the Modernists' Islam was a reaction to the West's intellectual expansionism, yet adopted the very conceptual tools that made Western expansionism a great success. Thanks to the multiplicity of debates between reformists and traditionalists at the end of the 19th century, theological discussions spilled out of Quranic schools into the public sphere: newspaper articles replaced theological treatises, and conferences replaced sermons. These debates were conducted in the context of the West's technological superiority and the feeling of decline experienced by Muslim societies. Hence, islah (religious reform) was placed at the service of societies' renewal. Two elements characterized this reformist undertaking: the revisiting of the *Sunnah*, which was the basis of the renewed authority of the Prophet, the community's model and guide; and the assertion of the coherence and rationality of the revealed message. Reformist thinking's stumbling block was reason: because Islam is a rational religion, the coherence of its message is obvious. This vision was advocated by the reformist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), who paved the way for other thinkers like Mohamed Abdou and Rashid Rida. Islam's politicization in the 19th century was enhanced by concepts drawn from developments inside the Ottoman Empire, which today are among the pillars of Islamic fundamentalism, specifically the Caliphate as political objective and the Sharia as constitutional framework of the Islamic State.

CHAPTER II

WAHHABISM AND THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD: THE TWO MAIN ISLAMIST IDEOLOGIES

Wahhabi and Muslim Brotherhood ideologies share a common ideological framework: the importance of Sharia law, the mistrust if not hostility towards the West, and the return to a civilizational Islam, centered around practices that are considered to be those of Islam's origins. They also pursue common objectives aimed at preserving an Islamic civilization, creating an Islamic State and establishing a Universalist and proselytizing vision of Islam. Wahhabism and Muslim Brothers, however, use different methods: while the Muslim Brotherhood chooses education, political activism, collective action and the changing of systems from the inside, Wahhabism favors preaching, the training of Imams, the financing of places of worship and the promotion of a state-sponsored Salafism. In addition, the Wahhabis have a theological and Hanbalist vision of early Islam, whereas the Muslim Brotherhood emphasizes the social justice and good governance that would have prevailed during those ancient times.

The Muslim Brotherhood ideology

Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949) is regarded as the father of the Society of the Muslim Brothers. His thinking could be summed up as follows: to be a Muslim is to Islamize life, institutions, and structures. Islam was established as a comprehensive system of life. Only this vision of Islam as a "total system" can, in his view, restore the grandeur of the *Ummah* and prevent the implementation of a program of decadence that is methodically devised by the European elite and studiously imposed by that elite on the people of the Orient.

Politically, Hassan al-Banna did not wish for the restoration of the Caliphate, but rather advocated a policy of Islamic legality *(siyasa shar'iya).* In his view, the onset of the Islamic State was connected less to an authority applying the teachings of Islam than to an Islamization that began with the individual, before spreading to the family and to society as a whole. Socially, al-Banna advocated principles of Islamic social justice that rested on the rejection of capitalism, socialism and communism, as "we [Muslims] possess, in our Islamic precepts, the perfect system that leads to total

reform."[3] By linking politics and culture, international relations and Islamic dresscode, the Muslim Brotherhood's discourse provided an ideological vision understandable by all social groups. While Hassan al-Banna never preached terrorist violence, his organization, as early as the 1930s, had a relationship to violence that remains ambiguous to this day.

Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), one of the movement's most prominent figures, developed a second ideological branch of the Frerist movement, which tended towards radicalization.

The failed attack against Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1954 provoked the imprisonment of numerous Brothers, leading to their divorce with Nasserism and contributing to the radicalization of the Muslim Brotherhood doctrine. Sayyid Qutb, who took advantage of his incarceration to develop and write down his ideas, emphasized the importance of the Islamic State as a response to Nasserism, and evoked the idea of Jihad in this context.

Wahhabism

Wahhabism, named after Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), is the official doctrine of religious institutions in Saudi Arabia, even though the Saudis do not use this term and prefer the less exclusive qualifier of Salafist. Three principal features characterize Wahhabism: the primacy of the *hadith,* the prophetic words that are the main source of legislation; the importance of the *ulama,* who play an important role in Saudi Arabia's traditional social structure; and the attachment to the Saudi homeland. This Saudi land was turned into a Wahhabi state in 1744 with the conclusion of the Najd pact between Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the al-Saud family, marking the beginning of the transformation of a small Bedouin principality into a legally instituted theocracy. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's theological obsession was the purification of religious beliefs. For him, belief *('aqîda)* had to comply with the requirements of one God *(tawhîd)* – the two terms being equivalent in Wahhabi literature.

Other theoreticians played an important role in the development of the Wahhabi doctrine. Yet despite doctrinal or strategic differences, all intellectual activists of the

---

[3] CARRE, Oliver, SEURAT, Michel, *Les Frères musulmans: Égypte, Syrie (1928-1982),* Gallimard, 1983 (rééd. l'Harmattan 2001).

1960s and 1970s "rediscovered" the personality and work of a thinker who lived in medieval times, Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah (1268-1328). Today, Wahhabi doctrine is certainly derived from the works of Abdel Wahhab, but also from the beliefs of Saudi ulamas, who issued legal rulings (fiqh) throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. They touch upon topics as varied as family, relations with those in power, taxes, etc.

CHAPTER III

CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS: ISLAMISM REASONS ALONE AND INDEPENDENTLY OF THE WEST

In 1979, the USSR intervened militarily in Afghanistan to back a communist government that was then highly disputed by conservative and Islamist circles, in a Soviet effort to control the spread of Iran's Islamic revolution. This event marked a new era in the growth and empowerment of Islamist movements that had been founded at the end of the 19th century. This empowerment took place in Afghanistan for four main reasons: the emergence of several Islamist groups united by the Afghan conflict; the Afghan *Mujahideen's* financial autonomy, thanks to American and Saudi funding; the effective implementation of Jihad for the first time since the end of the 19th century; and its theorization by the Muslim Brotherhood's Abdullah Azzam. The latter created the first *Mujahideen* camps and recruited what would become famous Jihadists like Osama Bin Laden. His vision was consistent with the medieval tradition as defined by such authors as Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah, for whom every believer was called upon to engage in Jihad, which was conceived as a personal obligation. The definition of the place and enemy targeted by the Jihad were also at the believer's discretion, the identification of a "land of Jihad" taking on, *de jure,* a proclamatory importance. In the early 1980s, transnational Islamic solidarity manifested itself mainly through financial transfers complementing American military support for the Afghan *Mujahideen*, which came from heterogeneous sources with a mix of different ideologies. Though the Muslim Brotherhood and Wahhabi influences were noticeable in the flow of fighters from all over the Arab world, Saudi funding and the Qutbist leanings of Afghan leaders, Pakistan and more generally the Indian Islamic School also played a role in the Mujahideen's moral and intellectual education. The Jihad in Afghanistan was launched by transnational Islamic networks located in all Islamic movements broadly speaking: from Wahhabi Salafists to the political Muslim Brotherhood, whose purpose, in addition to the liberation of Afghanistan, was the need to counteract the influence of the competing message communicated by Ayatollah Khomeini. This Jihadist movement enjoyed initial financial empowerment thanks to the millions sent by the United States and Saudi Arabia, which fostered the development of trafficking and the emergence of criminal gangs in the region.

The empowerment of Jihadism in Afghanistan and the expansion of Wahhabism in the 1970s were accompanied by the spread of Salafist discourse, particularly in European countries. With the rise of Wahhabism and the arrival of the first Tablighis in Europe in the 1970s, Salafism distanced itself from Western political theories in a movement of "autonomization," which amounted to establishing its own *(auto)* laws *(nomos)* in the language of Islamic civilization, Arabic. Islamic concepts were thus mobilized to define the relationship to self and to others, as well as to political institutions – be they condemned or desired. The nation – even the Islamic nation – was replaced by the *Ummah.* Considering that he was not Muslim, the other, became a *kafir* (impious), and *al-wala wal-bara* (aiming at the strict separation between the Muslim and pagan worlds), an old Islamic concept revived by the Wahhabis in the 19th century, was instituted to prevent a Muslim from entering into contact with an influence that could be harmful to his faith.

A new movement of radical thinking and practices related to Salafism appeared in France around 2009: conceived by third- or fourth-generation French citizens of North-African descent, it is the result of the empowerment of Salafist ideology, which was emerging at the time in the West without denying the significance of Islamic civilization as a frame of reference. It can be defined as a post-Salafism that does not belong to any theological current and that is inspired by different schools of Western modern social science, while referring to Ibn Taymiyyah's ancestral Salafism, which could be labeled as "revolutionary Sunnism" with a "post-Salafist" dynamic. Though this movement is not institutionalized, according to Mohammed Chirani, a consultant in the prevention of religious radicalization, it enjoys increasing popularity, which can be observed in the tens of thousands of views that it receives on YouTube. The movement's ideology is based on the creation of a new perspective on world history: a fundamentally Islamic perspective that would upturn Western frames of reference by inventing "Occidentalism," the counterpart to the "Orientalism" theorized by Edward Said. On the ground, the post-Salafist movement enjoys connections with various organizations in France and in Belgium. This new movement demonstrates that Islamism is an ideology that is capable of coming up with its own concepts, its own vision of the world and a new ideological horizon.

CHAPTER IV

WHY ISLAMISM BECOMES
A MASS IDEOLOGY IN THE 1980S

Islamism as a blueprint for society was conceptualized in the 19th century before taking a political form in the 1920s with the creation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Yet it only became a political force in the Muslim world from the early 1970s or even 1980s – Egypt being the exception, considering that the Brotherhood mattered in Egyptian society as early as in the 1930s.

The extremely rapid modernization of Arab societies partly explains the magnitude of this ideology. Theorized in the 19th century, disseminated in the Arab and Muslim worlds in the 1970s and 1980s, it reached Europe in the 1990s. Why? Because in a matter of decades, societies in Muslim countries and particularly in Arab countries experienced a "great transformation"[4] that shook up the anthropological foundations of their organization. In less than 50 years, the societies of the region reached a literacy rate of more than 70 percent among adults and close to 100 percent in all countries among the 15-24 year olds, including among women. This access to knowledge broadened the range of possibilities for an entire society and significantly altered its relationship to authority. It was compounded by a great openness to the world, the countries in the region now being widely urbanized (80 percent on average) and connected to the Internet. Other political futures became possible, particularly for women, whose position in these societies was reinforced, resulting in a radical change in the family structure and the system of authority. This rapid modernization changed the very foundation of societies. The success of Islamist protest movements – for which a return to the time of the Prophet represents the best way to preserve traditional social structures – at the very moment that this transformation occurs, can be interpreted as a response to this modernization process.

---

[4] Please see the report "A New Strategy for France in a New Arab World," Institut Montaigne, 2017.

Part II

At the Heart of Islamism's Production Centers

Before being disseminated in the rest of the world, Islamist ideologies were born in particular contexts and countries. They developed and evolved there, before transforming the societies from the inside, that witnessed their birth: Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and then in other countries of the Arab world, Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia, Turkish political Islam inspired by Muslim Brotherhood, or the Islamic revolution in Iran. In three of these countries, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey, the ideology in question is dominant and in power, either as an official ideology, which serves as the foundation for the state (such as in Saudi Arabia and in Iran), or as an ideology that transforms the state apparatus and society since taking power, as is the case in Turkey. These four socio-political examples will be studied separately, but their history, beyond fundamental ideological differences, proceeds at a similar pace, through common defining moments:

• The first is in the 1920s, a consequence of World War I and the end of the Ottoman Empire;

• A second break occurs at the very end of the 1970s; it enables the powerful comeback of religion in the face of nationalist ideologies (Turkish, Iranian, Arab), which alone, no longer have the power that they might have had in the preceding decades;

• A third break-up whose consequences are still uncertain, can be identified in 2011 with the Arab Spring.

CHAPTER I

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT AND IN THE ARAB WORLD

1. The Egyptian Headquarters

Created in 1928 in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna, the Society of the Muslim Brothers became, in barely 20 years, a key player of the political game.

From Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition in 1798 to the Treaty of London in 1841, which put Muhammed Ali in power, until the establishment of the British protectorate in 1914, Egypt experienced numerous regimes before obtaining its independence in 1922. In 1928, when Hassan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood, the country was officially no longer a colony, yet continued to be closely connected to United Kingdom. If the Brotherhood manages to attract so many members, it is because it is a transversal movement and it unites various categories of the Egyptian population, attracted by the idea of gradualist reform, which, in the founder's own words, means "development of the Muslim individual, then the Muslim family, then Muslim society, then government, state and Muslim community *(Ummah)*." The initial goal is simple: to promote a return to real Islam, an Islam that commands what is good and forbids evil in society, with perhaps, in the future, the ideal of an Islamic state in Egypt. The Brotherhood rapidly grew across Egypt, reaching a million members in 1945. One of its key reasons for success at the time was its meticulous organization, which generated a chain of command (also called *tanzim*) capable of supervising part of Egyptian society. The administration is divided between technical committees, which ensure the organization's proper functioning, and sections whose role is proselytism *(da'wa)*, meaning the development of the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood's social actions are aimed at reaching the entire population through mass mobilization to bring about a kind of "bottom-up Islamization" that echoes the organization's actual structure, which is centered around a supreme leader in a pyramidal setup.

As soon as they entered the Egyptian political sphere, the Muslim Brotherhood maintained paradoxical and ambiguous relations with the various powers that be. From the 1930s to 1949, the monarchy had to contend with their presence despite the many tensions caused by their great propensity for opposition and criticism. This disagreement reached its peak with the assassination of Hassan al-Banna.

Initially backing the 1952 revolution, the Brotherhood unintentionally entered into opposition in 1954 when Nasser, himself probably a former member of the Brotherhood, embarked on a brutal confrontation with the Brotherhood as he took over the State. This period of violent repression leads to the radicalization of the discourse, a radicalization embodied and turned into theory by Sayyid Qutb. Following this violent confrontation, two trends were reborn in the 1970s: one, as a continuation of al-Banna, stressed moderation; the other, an outcome of Sayyid Qutb's radical thinking, continued the confrontation with Nasser and his successors: Islam's enemy is no longer so much the West as it is the new Egyptian regime. It is during this period that a middle ground, claiming adherence to al-Banna's thinking re-emerged. Initially timid under Sadat (1970-1981), the movement of those whom Gilles Kepel[5] in his pioneering work calls the neo-Brothers gained momentum under Mubarak (1981-2011). The Brotherhood emerged in all areas of society, drawing on the weakening of the Arabism promoted by Nasser as a national ideology and on the political and social openness *(intifah)* practiced under Sadat. In 1971, Sadat amended the Constitution to specify that Sharia law was one of the sources of legislation; nine years later, following a new amendment, Sharia law was included in the Constitution as a primary source. The Brotherhood's social influence was increasingly widespread thanks to a network of more than 40,000 mosques throughout the country in 1981, a strong presence in universities through the *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* and the takeover of the country's main doctors', engineers' and lawyers' unions. This strong influence was accompanied by a growing success in the elections, which in the 2000s enabled them to establish themselves as the primary opposition force to Mubarak's regime. The status of the Muslim Brotherhood at the time was paradoxical. Marie Vannetzel qualifies this situation as "open clandestinity": the Brotherhood benefits from the intermittent tolerance of the authorities, who watches it constantly but restricts its room for maneuver when the Brotherhood becomes rigid, for example in the 1990s. Despite being the master of the game in theory, the regime did not prevent the Brotherhood's political empowerment and the endorsement of their demands by public opinion, as if an unspoken distribution of power had been established: to Mubarak and his regime, sovereign and economic power; to the Brotherhood, power over society.

---

[5] KEPEL Gilles, *Le Prophète et le pharaon,* Paris, Le Seuil, 1993.

2. Muslim Brotherhood subsidiaries in the Arab world

One of the Brotherhood's fundamental characteristics is its ability to spread and to find followers in the Arab world and more generally in the Muslim world, as well as, subsequently, in the West.

The Muslim Brotherhood organization benefits from the presence of subsidiaries in almost all Arab-Muslim countries, whose presence is never questioned, not even under Nasser. Starting in the 1940s, groups claiming to belong to the Brotherhood appear in the Mashreq, in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Maghreb. The history of these subsidiaries is similar from country to country; initially informal and small-scaled, they benefit in the 1950s and 1960s from the exile of numerous Egyptian Brothers who teach the organization's "best practices"; often recognized by the host state, they become important networks bringing together schools, associations and mosques. In the early 1990s, these groups enter the electoral game and become important actors on the political scene: the creation of Hamas in 1987, the Sahwa movement in Saudi Arabia after 1991, or even the establishment of a political party in Yemen after 1990 and in Kuwait after 1991 enable the Brotherhood to become key players on the various countries' political scene. The question then becomes that of the autonomy of these subsidiaries relative to the original Brotherhood, and that of the dilution of the Muslim Brotherhood identity in the specific setup of each country where the Brotherhood is established.

Different phases can be distinguished in the Brotherhood's establishment in the Muslim world. First, the Muslim Brotherhood infiltrated the local scene thanks to specific individuals (students or exiles) who had travelled and often met Hassan al-Banna, who created associations or other welfare schemes. The organization developed according to a pattern comparable to the one observed in Egypt while adapting to the particular political context of each country. This method of implementation can be found in Jordan, where the Brotherhood has been present since 1946, thanks to Abd al-Latif Abu Qura who met al-Banna in Egypt. The Brotherhood was first social before being political: it developed a significant community presence on the ground, particularly in education, in order to promote an Islamic renaissance. After gaining an initial understanding of the social environment, the Muslim Brotherhood then generally invested in the political spectrum. This investment could range from the creation of political parties, as was the case in Iraq following the 1958 revolution and the fall of the monarchy, when the Brothers founded a party (Iraqi Islamic Party), which was banned and repressed shortly thereafter by Saddam Hussein's

regime. After a long clandestine period, the Brotherhood was drawn back into the spotlight following the first Gulf War. The Iraqi Islamic Party demanded the Americans' departure and took part in the country's political life. The Muslim Brotherhood presence in Syria, where the Brotherhood was present starting in the 1930s, is another example of political development. Their ranks grew in the 1950s, as Syria was one of the primary destinations of the Egyptian Brotherhood hunted down by Nasser. Hafez al-Assad's rise to power in 1970 and his reining in of religious discourse for the sake of the construction of a nation-state accentuated tensions. These confrontations with the authority led to the radicalization of the discourse under the influence of Sayyid Qutb. Because the protest could not express itself in a padlocked political system, it opted for violence and attacks, including the attack on a military school in Aleppo in 1979, which caused the death of 83 Alawite students. In retaliation, the government executed the imprisoned Brothers and ended up banning the Brotherhood in 1980. In 2011, the Brothers quietly joined the Syrian National Council, without attempting to Islamize it or to take the lead.

In Palestine

The Palestinian question, symbol of the fight against Western imperialism and the defense of Islam is, still today, a priority for the Muslim Brotherhood worldwide. In Palestine, the establishment of the Brotherhood followed the typical pattern of evolution from social welfare to political establishment by way of violence. Established in Palestine as of 1945, it was in the 1970s that the Brotherhood gained ground, thanks to a strong social base that was able to build, especially in the refugee camps, starting in 1948. The Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood movement gradually changed characteristics in the 1980s, in a context of constant tension with the Fatah. From 1993 to 2005, the Hamas (the local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood) entered a Jihadist phase characterized by numerous suicide attacks and the Intifada in 2000. This cycle of violence ended with the death of Sheikh Yassin – a Palestinian figure and Islamist rival of Yasser Arafat – who was killed by the Israeli army. What followed was an effective political strategy that led Hamas to win the 2006 legislative elections and to remain in power.

In Qatar

In Qatar, the Brotherhood's presence dates back to the 1950s: in 1954, an Egyptian named Abd al-Badi Saqr became advisor to the Emir and took over the country's educational system. The Muslim Brotherhood was very present in education and

civil society *via* an important social network, but they were also present in ministries, such as those of Education or Religious Affairs; they were at the heart of power, backed by members of the al-Thani family. Unlike other countries in the region, no politicization of the Brotherhood occurred in Qatar. This can be explained by the tacit agreement between the Brotherhood, which is influential within the Qatari state, and the authorities: in exchange for their loyalty to the regime, the al-Thani allow and encourage the Muslim Brotherhood to export their ideology from Qatar thanks to a media organization (the creation of Al-Jazeera in 1996) and thanks to financial and diplomatic support. More than a mere sphere of influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, Qatar is a base for Frerism in the Middle East, strengthened by the presence of Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the Muslim Brotherhood's most important ideological figure since al-Banna and Qutb, who calls for an (kind) of Islamic democracy based on Sharia law.

The Arab Spring

The Arab Spring marks a new phase in the history of the Muslim Brotherhood and of political Islam in the Middle East, including in Egypt, where the headquarters were. Their electoral success enabled them to come to power in Tunisia, in Egypt and, in a more ambiguous fashion, in Morocco, following decades of substantive work carried out among societies and with a tone of great moderation applied to the discourse to adapt it to the democratic context. Once in power, however, the Brotherhood was confronted with the reality of the management of a country, and failed to prove itself. In fact, in Egypt and Tunisia, they rapidly collapsed, either by way of arms and popular pressure, or through political pressure and the ballot box. Worse, the rise to power in certain countries led, in the Arab world, to a questioning of the Muslim Brotherhood's place within states. Since the Arab revolutions, the Brothers have been banned in several Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia. Since 2013, they have been perceived as a terrorist organization in Egypt, the country in which they were founded. Yet the experience of power and the failure to hang onto it in 2011 have not altered a primarily ideological more than directly political hold on public opinion. Finally, the Muslim Brotherhood is no longer the only one to mobilize populations through religious references. The Brothers are increasingly faced with Salafist competition coming from Saudi Arabia – competition on a social level but also, as of recently, on a political level.

CHAPTER II

SAUDI ARABIA

More than a religion, contemporary Wahhabism embodies an alliance of politics and religion. In Saudi Arabia, it is at once an Islamic way of thinking, a system of government and an omnipresent social framework.

Since the 18th century, power and religion have mutually supported each other and shared political authority and spiritual authority. Islam, in its Wahhabi interpretation, as influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, is the very foundation of the state, which may be called Islamic; religious law (Sharia) is the country's legal foundation. According to Wahhabi beliefs, leaders receive their sovereignty from God, and must therefore be obeyed as long as they do not violate Islamic morality. Since the 1950s, however, through a process of institutionalization, political power has gradually taken precedence over the religious sphere: religion remains necessary to power, but it is power that controls religion. The strength of Wahhabism and the Saudi dynasty, both inside and outside the kingdom, is maintained through a number of channels: significant economic power, fueled by oil and the Aramco corporation which provides jobs and a comfortable standard of living for Saudis; remarkable political stability, backed by the *Ulamas* in power and the prestige of having to manage Islam's Holy Sites, which makes the pilgrimage an effective sounding board for Wahhabism and a major tool of religious soft power for the Saudi authorities.

1. The alliance of the throne and the altar: the politico-theological construction of the Saudi State (1744-2018)

Both emerging in the 18th century in the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi power and Wahhabi preaching are inextricably linked. Their twin forces stemmed from an alliance unveiled as early as 1744 by the "Najd Pact". Consistently renewed ever since, this alliance can be summarized as follows: the Wahhabi *Ulamas* (scholars) provide an unwavering support to the power of the al-Saud, which therefore have a solid symbolic legitimacy; in exchange, the Emirs and subsequent kings (after 1932) leave religious authority up to the *Ulamas* and undertake to support Wahhabi preaching, if necessary through the use of arms. It is this alliance that has enabled Saudi Arabia to emerge, and Wahhabism to go, according to Nabil Mouline, "from counter-religion to State religion."

After two abortive initial attempts to build a Saudi State (in 1744 and later in 1824), the power of the al-Saud and, at the same time, the mobilizing power of Wahhabism, were restored at the beginning of the 20th century by Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Saud (known under the name of Ibn Saud, 1880-1953), who took over the Hejaz and established the kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1932). Saudi Arabia was born on religious foundations that are fundamentally inseparable from the State. Guarantors of the regime's official doctrine, the Wahhabi Ulamas are indebted to it and place themselves under its authority. Over time, a gradual nationalization of the religious system has taken place, increasingly controlled by the regime. Protests, though muzzled, are possible as evidenced by the Sahwa movement or by Daesh, which, by drawing on albeit similar ideological sources, violently contest Saudi power. Moreover, in addition to having played an important role in the construction of the Saudi state, the Muslim Brotherhood has influence over religious debates inside the country.[6]

This growing imbalance between the political and religious spheres does not call into question al-Saud's alliance with the Wahhabi *Ulamas*, but rather highlights inside the institutions that have slowly been put in place the sharing of roles between the royal family, which governs without any possible dissent, and the *Ulamas* which, while avoiding any interference in political affairs, govern society with a deliberately unambiguous discourse. It is the challenge of this monopoly that has led to the emergence of a political or Jihadist Islamic opposition movement.

2. The omnipresence of religion in society

Religion is at the heart of contemporary Saudi society. As a faith, as an official institution and as an instrument of social control rolled into one, it plays an important role in all sectors of daily life: law, education and morality. In this system, the *Ulamas* are the sole depositaries of the religious message; they ensure, with the approval of royal powers, the respect of what Nabil Mouline calls the three Os: Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy which are the conditions of social Order.

In Saudi Arabia, religious norms are generated by official institutions, which claim to issue valid religious opinions for Saudi society as a whole, and, in absolute terms, for the rest of the world. These norms, which sometimes take the shape of *fatwas*, concern both the judicial system (sentences) as well as the Saudis' daily life.

---

[6] LACROIX Stéphane, *Les islamistes saoudiens, une insurrection manqué,* Paris, PUF, 2010.

The supervision and monitoring of society are bedrocks of the kingdom. Religion is omnipresent in all areas of society, with 15 percent of Saudi students following a religious curriculum and 25 percent of the kingdom's public servants performing religious duties. The norms in question are often the response to the concerns of Saudis (or sometimes foreigners) who wish to hear the *Ulamas'* opinion on a particular topic in order to make a decision or dictate conduct. Religion, whether dogma, practice or morality, is therefore deeply internalized by the population from childhood thanks to an education system where teachers must contribute to the student's "development of loyalty to the Islamic religion" and invite him or her to remain loyal to the "Islamic faith."

3. Towards a reformed Wahhabism

Despite this religious control on daily life, the rare studies available show that the Saudis seem proportionately less religious than other Muslims in the region. The works of Mansoor Moaddel, a sociologist of religion specialized in the Middle East, shows that Saudis (1,526 individuals of both genders questioned in 2003) have a more nuanced relationship with religion and the religious authorities than it would appear at first.[7] By comparison, Egyptians appear much more religious and conservative, while Saudis have a profile that is closer to that of Iranians. For example, 99 percent of Egyptians consider themselves to be pious, versus only 62 percent of Saudis. Religious and everyday norms are not welcomed as a whole by the Saudi population.

There are conflicting voices in Saudi Arabia that, thanks to the Internet, have found an excellent platform, since Saudi Arabia is one of the most connected countries in the world (in 2015, 8 million Saudis were registered on Facebook, and 7 million on Twitter)[8]. Today, the Saudi religious sphere can be split into three categories: Wahhabism, the majority segment, tied to the institutions and the regime; the Sahwa movement, which prevails and fights Western influence (particularly on the question of women's rights); and a very small "enlightenment movement" which calls for a constitutional monarchy and a respect for public liberties.

33

---

[7] BENTHALL Jonathan, *Islamic Charities and Islamic Humanism in Troubled Times,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016.
[8] MERLEY Steven, *op. cit.*

The most followed Saudi clerics and intellectuals on the Internet (Twitter and Facebook) are neither part of the most hardline faction nor part of the religious elite close to the regime – and the latter, starting with the great Ulamas, is not very present and active digitally.[9] The reforms undertaken under the auspices of Mohammad bin Salman are not only political, but also affect the social sphere. Can Saudi Arabia evolve religiously? It is our firm belief. And that will not happen to please Westerners concerned by Saudi influence in Europe, but rather because Prince Mohammad bin Salman needs it to accompany the transformation of Saudi society and particularly that of the role of women.

Women's access to knowledge and ideas in Saudi Arabia has thus changed dramatically since the 1990s, at a very similar pace to what is observed in Iran. Whereas only 52 percent of Saudi adult females were literate in 1992, 92 percent of them were in 2015, and young Saudi women have been almost completely literate since the early 1990s.

---

[9] IGNATIUS David, "Are Saudi Arabia's reforms for real? A recent visit says yes", *The Washington Post,* 1 March 2018.

CHAPTER III

TURKISH-ISLAMISM:
POLITICAL ISLAM IN POWER

Turkey, a secular country, is governed since 2002 by an Islamist party, Erdogan's AKP. The secularism *(laiklik)* implemented by Mustafa Kemal in the 1920s is still in force, but it has gradually changed direction. Originally conceived as a tight control over religion by the authorities, more than a real separation between the two, it was used to actively promote Sunnism among the Turkish population (more than 80 million people, over 95 percent Muslim). The Turkish Islamic identity, which is influenced by the Hanafi school since the days of the Ottoman Empire, distinguishes itself from the rest of the Muslim world through the power of the Sufi brotherhoods and the influence of other religious currents (Muslim or not), which explains the existence of an important non-Sunni minority, the Alevis (15 to 20 percent of the population.) Since 2002, a party growing out of political Islam is in power, led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, democratically elected and re-elected since. It is the only country in the Middle East where an Islamist party, the AKP, has risen to power and retained it for 16 years without entering into a political alliance. Without being directly affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, the AKP can be treated as a "Muslim Brotherhood" party because it shares the same conservative ideology as the organization, founded on the religion that inspired it, and because the profile of its members, who are non-religious figures steeped in religion is similar. However, it distinguishes itself by its strong nationalistic nature, which is not a characteristic of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The fact that a form of political Islam stays in power does not mean that the clerics govern: quite the contrary. It is politics that governs religion in Turkey. The clerics are at the service of public policy, of which they are one of the main channels among the population. The question therefore is to what degree religion can be utilized, and at what point it overtakes politics, to the extent that the Islamization of society becomes the state's objective.

The AKP's ideological position cannot be summarized simply as political Islam. Islamism has not eliminated Kemalism, but it has incorporated one of its main characteristics, Turkish nationalism, to form a Turkish Islamism. This is a new concept that is perhaps the prelude to a mutation on both fronts, that of nationalism and that of Islamism. Inseparable, they work together, without one ever overtaking the other. For Islamism, nationalism provides a strong historical foundation in the

country. For nationalism, Islamism is an instrument of power that allows a reach beyond Turkey's borders, as in the deployment of a neo-Ottoman diplomacy.

1. From secularism to authoritarian Islamism

Retracing Turkey's political history in the 20th century provides an understanding of how political Islam, represented by the AKP, is able to access and stay in power, in a political system of which secularism is one of the main pillars. The end of the Caliphate (1924) and the establishment of secularism caused a rift between the political sphere and the religious sphere, leading to a politicization of religion that initially had the backing of a minority but which, in the form of Islamism, returned to power at the end of a dialectical process.

Following the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, a refocus on Anatolia and Turkish identity[10] took place, accelerated by Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938). The fall of the Ottoman Empire in favor of the Turkish Republic, a new nation-state, results in a process of political, ethnic and religious homogenization. Mustafa Kemal deconstructs the Empire's political-religious system by abolishing the former political power, the Sultanate, in 1922, and later by dissociating political power from religious authority, and finally, by abolishing the Caliphate to replace it with the Turkish Republic.

The 1980 coup is a first turning point in Turkish political history; the relationship between secular power and religion was reinterpreted. While the former always supervised the latter, the latter was not only perceived as a simple instrument of social control, but now constituted a kind of necessity, beneficial to the Turkish nation. Islam's institutions of control, primarily the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) became channels of proselytism in society and among the diaspora.[11] New mosques were built and the number of students of theology increased. This turnaround constituted a response to a certain social need driven by the devout middle classes, as well as by a part of the military.

Turkish political Islam's first successes date back to the 1970s. As a political force, Islamism's founding act occurred in 1969, with the creation by Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011) of the Millî Görüş ("National Vision") movement, which gave birth to several consecutive political parties. The Turkish Islamist parties, initially

---

[10] BOZARSLAN Hamit, *Histoire de la Turquie, de l'Empire à nos jours,* Paris, Tallandier, 2015.
[11] GöZAYDIN Istar, OZTURK Ahmet Erdi, "The Management of Religion in Turkey", Turkey Institute, 2014.

marginalized because of their radicalism, were able to establish themselves in the political landscape by moderating their rhetoric to fit the democratic framework. The autocratic turning point of Erdogan, who was merely conservative in his first years in power, was however characterized by a strong return of religious discourse, which acted as a political lever for him. Founded in 2001 by Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Abdullah Gül, the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*, AKP) proposed a new interpretation of political Islam. Distancing itself from the Millî Görüş hard line, the new party moderated its discourse to become a part of the democratic system and not appear to be in contradiction with the *laikik,* thus avoiding dissolution or military intervention. The party declared that it would accept parliamentary democracy and the secular system (advocating a non-coercive secularism). The assimilation of Islamists in political life therefore requires ideological concessions, and a new conservative-democratic political line.

Politically, authoritarianism is characterized by the concentration of power in the hands of Erdogan and the AKP.[12] Elected president in 2014 with 52 percent of the votes (for the first time by universal suffrage) after serving as Prime Minister, Erdogan has seen his powers reinforced by the 2017 referendum on constitutional reform, allowing him to potentially stay in power until 2029. The failed coup of July 15, 2016, carried out by a portion of the military, and the subsequent purge, have highlighted the re-composition of the Turkish political spectrum.[13] After July 2016, the AKP government did not so much accuse Kemalism as much as it did Gülenism within the army; the fault line no longer opposes the proponents of *laiklik* to the conservatives, but is now situated between two conservative Islamic camps, Erdogan's supporters against those of Gülen, which clash over power. In all, since 2016, between 110,000 (according to official numbers) and 150,000 public servants (according to the opposition) have been laid off, and 65,000 citizens have been imprisoned; more than 3,000 schools have been closed, and close to 200 media outlets have been shut down.[14]

Ideologically, authoritarianism is characterized by a quest for identity, national and Islamic, that is expressed through the stigmatization of non-Turks (Kurds) and non-Sunnis (Alevis, Jews, Christians). Turning its back on the Kemalist ideology while diplomatically reconnecting with the Sunni powers in the Middle East, the regime

---

[12] MASSICARD Elise, « Une décennie de pouvoir AKP en Turquie: vers une reconfiguration des modes de gouvernement? », rapport CERI, SciencesPo, 2014.

[13] DORRONSORO Gilles. « L'État-AKP et le gouvernement par la crise », *Mouvements,* vol. 90, no2, 2017, p. 11-18.

[14] PIERINI Marc, "The 2018 Turkey regress report", Carnegie Europe, 14 March 2018.

advocates a de-Westernization and a neo-Islamization of the country. The Republic's early days are no longer the regime's main ideological reference, which partially bypass Mustafa Kemal to hark back to more ancient times, considered more glorious, of the Ottoman Empire, the conquests, the Sultanate and the Caliphate: the republic, *laiklik* and the West are no longer absolute models, supplanted by a neo-Ottomanist propaganda.

2. The neo-Islamization of Turkish society

In three instances, the Turkish population has experienced a neo-Islamization: in the 1950s with the end of mighty Kemalism, then in the 1980s with the Turkish-Islamic merger, and, even more, since 2002. The Islam in question here is not exactly the one inherited from the Ottoman Empire, as the religious discourse is at present integrated into the system of a modern state that allows a better supervision of the population. In fact, the AKP in power has gradually transformed, from the inside, the functioning of the state and society. The powerful comeback of religion in politics must however not give rise to any illusions: despite the Kemalist reforms, Turkish society, particularly in Anatolia has remained very conservative and attached to religion. Successive surveys led by the Pew Research Center since 2002 among the Turkish population show that the AKP's rise to power had little effect on Turkish religiosity, because it was already very significant,[15] and that markers such as the wearing of the veil or religious education participated in a bottom-up ideological transformation. Since its creation in 1920, the Diyanet – an institution that issues official Islam – has changed considerably. Principal instrument of control of religion by political power, it equates religion to a public service, in the same way as education (whose curriculum is gradually remodeled to better correspond to the conservative morality desired by Erdogan). Initially created by Mustafa Kemal to contain religion and keep it out of the political sphere, it has gradually become an organ of proselytism and mobilization of religion at the service of the regime – the opposite of the purpose for which it was originally founded.

---

[15] "Americans are in the middle of the pack globally when it comes to importance of religion", "top results", Pew Research Center, 2015, online.

3. An Islamist diplomacy?

Turkey has a deeply rooted desire to become a regional, if not an international, power. In this context, religion can therefore be an effective lever. Turkish diplomacy is frequently qualified as neo-Ottoman, reflecting a willingness for expansion in the Turkish (Central Asia) and Arab worlds as well as in the Balkans, and an important religious, perhaps caliphal component, in the country's geopolitical emergence.[16] Turkey, traditionally Western-oriented, is gradually turning to the Middle East while a neo-Ottoman rhetoric emerges. For Jana Jabbour, Erdogan's goal is not so much to re-establish a Sultanate or a Caliphate, but to more pragmatically extend Turkish influence in the Middle East. The idea of a pan-Islamic diplomacy relates to the fact that the AKP is the product of political Islam as well as of the neo-Ottoman nature of its action in the Middle East. It implies a desire for unity and mobilization of Muslims worldwide, at the service of the Turkish regime. The religious component of Turkish diplomacy takes two forms: support for the Brotherhood parties, only after the Arab Spring, and support for Muslim minorities, including the Palestinians.

The AKP's Turkey, assisted by Qatar, has since 2011 backed young regimes in Egypt and Tunisia that were ideologically related to it, and has deployed a religious discourse in the Arab world, at times qualified as pan-Islamic, which in particular extends support to the Palestinian cause. However, Neo-Ottomanism is closer to a discourse intended for Turks than a diplomatic reality.[17]

---

[16] SCHMID Dorothée, « Turquie: du kémalisme au néo-ottomanisme », *Questions internationales, no 87,* February 2017.
[17] JABBOUR Jana, *La Turquie, l'invention d'une diplomatie émergente*, Paris CNRS éditions, 2017.

CHAPTER IV

IRAN: A MARGINAL SYSTEM
OF PRODUCTION?

Iran, a majority Shia (90 percent) country, is presented as Saudi Arabia's main competing Muslim model in the region. The history and means of action of Iranian-style political Shi'ism are worth exploring as a competitive model of Sunni Islamism as well as in the ties they maintain with it. Retrospectively, 1979 appears as Islamism's triumphant year: the teleological temptation would be to see in the Iranian revolution an event intended from the outset to promote religion as the foundation of society. Yet by taking an in-depth look at the events, it is clear that the revolution was born of social demands gradually supervised by the clerics, who succeeded in turning it into an "Islamic revolution" with the establishment of a regime that places religion at the forefront.

Iran implemented a very special political system; Article 2 of the Constitution sets out that "God exercises an absolute sovereignty in Iran and oversees the development of laws."[18] It is therefore undoubtedly a theocracy. It is also a hierocracy: temporary power is always placed as a last resort under the clergy's religious authority. All state machinery is under the direct or indirect control of an ayatollah, the Leader of the Revolution (also called "Supreme Leader") – a position occupied by two people, Ruhollah Khomeini and Ali Khamenei. However, though the candidates are subject to censorship by the religious authorities, lively political debates take place in Iran, particularly to elect the President and the *Majles* – the parliament. There is therefore a real democratic debate in an otherwise constrained and supervised political system.

Though the Iranian Islamic revolution is the only successful example of the political triumph of Muslim clergy, it has not succeeded in being exported. This failure is due to the war against Iraq that started shortly after the revolution. Yet it has deeper causes: the religious heterogeneity within Shi'ism, on the one hand, and the management of economic and social protests inside the country, on the other. In addition, to make up for the limited history of the Iranian political structure, the regime's officials alternate between religious and nationalist roles, the latter also constituting an obstacle to the possibility of exporting the Iranian model.

---

[18] FOURNIER Lilas-Appolina, « En Iran, c'est Dieu qui gouverne le pays », *La Croix,* 19 May 2017.

1. History of the Islamic revolution

Iran is the first Shia country in the world. The organization of Twelver Shiism (11 percent of the world's Muslims are Twelver Shi'ites) differs from that of Sunnism: there is a clergy, with a complex hierarchy, legitimized by university studies, and often reinforced through affiliation with the descendants of the Prophet[19]. As in Turkey, a traditional union of politics and religion was observed until the 20th century. In the 20th century, successive Shahs tried to address these competitive powers; the rise to power of General Reza Khan (Pahlavi) who overthrew the Qajar dynasty in 1925 marked a clear setback for the clerical powers, leading to authoritarian and modernizing reforms. R. Khomeini drew on the challenges to these reforms when he developed, in the 1960s, his theory of *Velayat-e faqih* ("governance of the jurists"), explaining that temporal power, though imperfect without the visible presence of the Imam, must be under the authority of theologian jurists, thus laying the foundations of the Islamic Republic. This gradual politicization of the clergy led to the reclaiming of the revolution at the fall of the "secular" regime in 1979.

2. Inner workings of the Islamic Republic's system

Iran is based on a theocracy, having implemented a very particular political system, based on God's sovereignty over the country and the laws (Article 2 of the Constitution). Iran can also be qualified as a hierocracy: temporal power is always placed as a last resort under the clergy's religious authority. All state structures are under the direct or indirect control of an *ayatollah*, the Leader of the Revolution (also called "Supreme Leader") and power structures are split between governmental institutions and revolutionary institutions.

This organization leads to a dual control of the Iranian population with a strong religious dimension: governmental institutions base their legitimacy on a Constitution and laws are formally derived from the Islamic body of law. It is particularly in the name of this religious morality that the state exercises an overt and increasing control over opinion thanks to today's new technologies and social networks. This control can manifest itself both through little green feathers in the strands of hair sticking out of a Chador at the entrance to a mosque as well as through the automatic death sentence handed down to drug dealers. Iran is the country that executes the most per capita.

---

[19] LUIZARD, Pierre-Jean, *Histoire politique du clergé chiite, XVIIIe-XXIe siècle,* Fayard, Paris, 2014, 290 p.

41

The challenge to power is predominantly linked to the country's economic situation. The discontent generated by the difficulty of finding a place in a closed economic world is compounded by protests on the moral standards imposed by the regime. Certain cases have struck public opinion, generating an impression of widespread hypocrisy, as described by Mohammad-Reza Djalili and Thierry Kellner: "the arrest in 2008 of General Reza Zarei, Tehran's Chief of Police in charge of moralization and the application of Islamic values, found in the company of six naked women in a brothel of the capital city, did not help improve the image of the fight the authorities are supposed to lead against prostitution…"[20].

3. A limited external development

In 1979, the revolution was Islamic, not Shia. The revolutionary model sought to export itself, yet the task proved somewhat difficult with the rapid outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War. However, the revolution was frightening, particularly to the Sunni countries where there is a Shia community. This situation led to a strengthened emphasis on religious differences and to a limited expansion of the Iranian model, perceived not as Islamic but as Shia. The Iranian aspiration rested not only on a desire to explore Shia proselytism but also on the Islamic revolution's influence even outside the Shia world. Indeed, Iran's desire for the expansion of its model was significantly hampered by the war against Iraq, which forced it to go from pan-Islamism (which the regime aspired to) to pan-Shi'ism (which they were forced to carry out.)

Iran's influence was therefore especially concentrated on Shiite organizations. As early as in the 1980s, the Sunni powers, particularly those of the Gulf countries, spoke of the "Shia arch" or the "Shia crescent" to denounce this influence. According to Laurence Louër, "the Shia crescent" went from a scarecrow brandished by some Sunnis to a reality.[21]" Indeed, the rise to power of a Shia president in Iraq in 2005 seemed to create a junction between Iran and its allies in Palestine (Hamas), in Lebanon (Hezbollah) and in Syria (Bashar al-Assad.) The current support provided to the Houthis in Yemen[22] against Saudi Arabia is also part of a campaign, backing a Shia religious minority, even if it is a Zaydi population and not a Twelver Shia. Yet all Shia are not subservient to Tehran, and the Iranian sphere of influence is far from being only Shia. Hamas, for example, a movement mainly made up of Sunnis

---

[20] DJALILI Mohammad-Reza, KELLNER Thierry, *L'Iran en 100 questions,* Paris, Tallandier, 2016.
[21] LOUËR, Laurence, *Sunnites et chiites, histoire politique d'une discorde,* Paris, Seuil, 2017
[22] BONNEFOY, Laurent, « Retour des chiites sur la scène internationale », *Le Monde diplomatique,* November 2014

and born of the Muslim Brotherhood, has been funded in large part by Iran since the 1990s. The support for the Palestinian cause allows Iran to impose itself as the defender of Muslims.

The Iranian revolution was attractive. It inspired movements in many countries, particularly among Sunni groups. The Iranian revolution also frightened neighboring countries, especially those who feared a revolt of their Shia population (Pakistan, Kuwait…). However, organizations that claim Iranian inspiration are in their vast majority Shia. Iran is not in a position to lead an organized campaign of support that can go beyond those circles and the country has in reality often "primarily responded to the demands of pre-existing Shia Islamist movements that counted on its support to consolidate their positions.[23]"

---

[23] LOUËR, Laurence, *op.cit.*

Part III

People, Organizations, and Media: How Islamism Spreads

Islamism is a globalized ideology. Confined, until the 1960s, to the regions of the Arab world where it was born and where it continues to grow today, it later spread to the rest of the Muslim world, and to all territories where Muslims are present, including in the West. Several channels, which we have grouped into three categories, formed the basis of the expansion of Islamist ideologies: the organizations, the people and the media. Dissemination, an essential factor for understanding the phenomenon, was for a long time the missing explanatory link – due to a lack of adequately developed studies – between the well-known history of the production of these ideologies and the description of their consequences in the places where they take root.

CHAPTER I

THE SAUDI STATE-SPONSORED SALAFISM

Saudi Arabia has been officially exporting Wahhabism since the 1960s. It does so through theoretically autonomous institutions, but which actually operate at the heart of Saudi state structures. These organizations, founded between 1961 and 1978, work in cooperation and share the religious realm: the Muslim World League acts as central body, the Islamic University of Madinah is the center for theological education, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) is responsible for transmission among young generations, while the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) represents the charitable arm of Wahhabism. For all of these organizations, *da'wa* (preaching) is the common objective. Thus, Saudi Arabia's expansionist aspirations, backed by the funding generated by the oil industry, reflects the Saudi government's pan-Islamist ideal, which seeks to have a monopoly on Islam: on the discourse as well as on Muslims. At the same time, it has been fighting against other ideologies like Nasserism or Khomeinism, both strategically and geopolitically.

Wahhabism, as soft power, is therefore a diplomatic lever that enables Saudi Arabia to have influence on the international scene, primarily in the Middle East. However, as illustrated by Saudi actions in the Arab world, in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, which are the frontiers of its influence, it is difficult to differentiate religious objectives and diplomatic objectives: they are two inseparable elements that, outside, replicate the close collaboration between the regime and the clerics inside.

The results of state proselytism are felt today in different parts of the world. The West is not a priority for Wahhabism, as an official religion. It is more interested in developing African and Asian countries, which are rapidly growing demographically, in which it knows it has significant potential, because the populations are mainly Muslim: Nigeria, Somalia, Indonesia and Malaysia.

1. Complementarity of proselytism and diplomacy

To finalize this unity, Islamic discourse must gradually be unified, and the League has established a legislative production body, which must issue fatwas common to all movements. The aim is also to fight what could undermine Islam from the outside: European ideologies, which, because they divide the Muslim world, are targeted. To combat them, Muslim states must be encouraged to establish Sharia as the source of law, and to promote social justice (neo-Salafist influence deriving from the Muslim

Brotherhood.) Like all the institutions that surround it, the Muslim World League must be viewed as an instrument that is as much diplomatic as it is religious, if not more so. Nasserism and Khomeinism are regarded as enemies of the League by virtue of their secular ideologies or their alternative Islamic discourse.

For this report, we studied 15,000 Saudi Cables (and thoroughly analyzed 200 of them) from a set of 122,619 documents from the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs which were revealed by WikiLeaks in June 2015. The database contains, among others, secret strategic documents, correspondence between the Saudi government and its embassies abroad, and correspondence with organizations like the Muslim World League. The documents that we have focused on reveal a strategy of global financing by Saudi Arabia, as well as a willingness to counter Shia influence in the countries where Muslim communities reside. The *leaks* also illustrate the kingdom's determination to maintain a good reputation and to combat hostility towards Wahhabi thinking. To that end, any means will do, including the bribing of journalists.

2. The four inner workings of Wahhabi preaching

• The Muslim World League (MWL), the Saudi royal family's diplomatic toor, whose purpose is to "organize the cooperation between the Islamic states in the different political, economic and cultural areas;"

• The Islamic University of Madinah (IUM), a training institute for imams, preachers, and missionaries in which 80 percent of students are of foreign origin;

• The World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), an assembly whose purpose is to defend Muslim identity by educating a new generation;

• The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), a charity organization dedicated to the defense and the protection of Muslims.

Added to this is the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) whose purpose is to strengthen cohesion in the Muslim world, mainly around diplomatic, economic or scientific questions.

Saudi Arabia's religious foreign policy works thanks to these principal institutions or organizations, all based in the country but reaching out to the rest of the world, and

which are responsible for the spread of Wahhabism. Often inspired or established by the Muslim Brotherhood, they each possess a particular field of action: representation and dissemination of the Muslim World League (1962), training of religious scholars for the Islamic University of Madinah (1961), supervision of youth for the WAMY (1972), and distribution of religious-leaning humanitarian aid for the IIRO (1978). Until the 2000s, these four workings benefited from strong Saudi funding and were active relays of Wahhabism, particularly in some regions of the world like sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. They are less powerful today than they were in the past.

The Islamic University of Madinah is the main training institution for the imams of the Muslim World League. From the outset, the university has been outward-looking, welcoming more than 80 percent of foreign students, contrary to the more strictly Saudi universities, such as the Imam Saud University in Riyadh[24]. Young men are trained to become missionaries in their countries of origin. The recruitment of students is also less international than before. In 2017, the exclusively religious university welcomed 21,120 students, including 4,000 new entrants, and awarded 2,453 diplomas[25]. International students are attracted by the benefits offered by the University: proximity to the Islamic holy sites, the atmosphere of a completely religious university and the convenience of study (an ultra-modern campus, free housing but a monthly scholarship of only 250 Euros). At the end of their studies in religious sciences, Quranic studies or Arabic, the students return to their countries and in some cases receive subsidies to finance religious projects. Some choose to become public servants of the Muslim World League and join its training institute.

3. The distinctive modes of expansion of Wahhabism in the world

The combined list of the MWL, WAMY and IIRO's outposts around the world helps to understand the religious strategy of the institutions connected with Saudi Wahhabism. Assessing Saudi religious activities since the 1960s, the country, according to unverifiable figures, has perhaps spent more than 85 billion dollars[26], and has built 1,359 mosques and more than 2,000 schools[27]. Yet this effort is not uniform. It is possible to distinguish zones of influence that are more important than others,

49

---

[24] FARQUHAR Michael, *Circuits of Faith, Migration, Education and the Wahhabi mission,* Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2017.

[25] Official statistics of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

[26] "The global spread of Wahhabi Islam: how great a threat?" Pew Research Center, 3 May 2005.

[27] SHANE Scott, "Saudis and extremism: 'Both the Arsonists and the Firefighters'", *New York Times,* 25 August 2016.

where Wahhabi investments are more significant than elsewhere, and where Salafism is developing more easily. The two regions in the world where official institutions of Wahhabism are the most active since their creation are Sub-Saharan Africa (the Horn of Africa and West Africa) and Southeast Asia (the Indian sub-continent and Southeast Asia); and the Balkans, to some extent. These are also the regions where the progression of Salafism is the strongest. The majority of Saudi Arabia's religious funding is intended for these regions. The efforts of official Wahhabism in certain countries are evident in the deployment of all the organizations that depend on it: in Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Mauritania, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bosnia, the MWL, WAMY and IIRO have all opened offices, and sometimes cultural centers or training centers.

Conversely, Europe is not at the core of proselytism activities: the religious establishments associated with Saudi Arabia have more of a diplomatic role among Muslim communities and governments.

CHAPTER II

THE BROTHERS OF THE WEST,
THE SECOND BROTHERHOOD

While Saudi Arabia favors proselytism, the European Muslim Brotherhood defends political and social positions that must transcend original national identities. The Muslim Brotherhood is well established in Europe, thanks to its local, national and European institutions. After Arab countries, Europe is the second region in the world with the most important Brotherhood presence. Yet its European organizations rarely refer to the Muslim Brotherhood, and many of them actually deny being associated with it. The connections between the European Brotherhood and its Middle Eastern counterparts are undeniable, but not systematic. These connections do not imply any kind of dependence, and the Brotherhood in Europe does not take its orders from Egypt, but rather rests on identical references and objectives: it is therefore necessary to speak of the European Brotherhood as a new Brotherhood established on the continent and an essential player of European Islam. There is in Europe what there was in the Arab world, namely the reproducibility of the Muslim Brotherhood model, which once again, shows its adaptability.

1. The Muslim Brotherhood and European Muslims: the assertion of authority

The Muslim Brotherhood's ultimate objective is rooted in a program of expansion. It indicates the desire for power of a Brotherhood, which, because it is semi-covert and was for a long time forced into some form of clandestinity, gives rise to fantasies. However, their establishment in Europe is primarily a response to individual initiatives. Initially oriented towards their country of origin, which they often fled, their settlement in a new environment is gradual, and from the 1980s onwards, takes on the problems of Europe's Muslim communities, such as identity, education and Islamophobia. The establishment of their networks, associations, and general or sector-specific federations at different levels follows a bottom-up (local to European) pattern.

The European Brotherhood's militancy is the cornerstone of its work. Mobilizing the Muslim community must enable it to establish a form of hegemony over it. The Brotherhood thus intends to represent them within municipalities, European states, or the European Union. Yet this desire to establish an intermediary body and community

between the faithful as a whole and the authorities faces a paradox, particularly in France. The proximity with public authorities implies a moderate discourse, and therefore a loss of radicalism that is hard to reconcile with the activism that is the basis of the Brotherhood's legitimacy in the community.

The European Muslim Brotherhood draws on an identity-based discourse and does not propose a complete retrenchment of the community, but rather a form of Muslim citizenship: it is not a question of assimilation but rather of integration to preserve the Muslims' identity and to be a Muslim in society, while developing a denunciation of Islamophobia. The assertion of Muslim identity, as intended by the European Muslim Brotherhood, has to help increase the community's visibility through a number of demands, such as the right to wear the veil or the consumption of Halal products[28].

2. The Brotherhood's activism in Europe

In France

In France, the *Union des organisations islamiques de France* (UOIF) [Union of Islamic Organizations of France] – created in 1983 and recently renamed *Musulmans de France* [French Muslims] – gradually emerged as a major player of Islam. In 35 years of existence, UOIF's policy line has evolved: in the 1980s, and especially in the following decade, the organization became known for its militant rhetoric[29]. The end of the 1990s saw the start of a normalization phase, which led to a formal recognition of the UOIF, with its entry into the *Conseil Français de Culte Musulma*n (CFCM) [French Council of the Muslim Faith], and stronger representation beginning in 2003. At the same time, a weakening of the militant discourse has been observed, combined with a certain loss of contact with the militant base and with sympathizers. As is the case with all Muslim Brotherhood organizations in Europe, two themes are omnipresent in the UOIF's speeches, feeding a victim narrative: the fight against Islamophobia and the Palestinian question. However, the UOIF has been losing momentum since the 2000s. This is due to internal factors – the institution's rigidity and elitism, its inability to change leaders, the weakening of activism – as well as external factors – competition from Salafism and the loss of connection with the field. This loss of influence is also explained by an erosion of local support for the UOIF, particularly among youth moving towards more radical Salafist movements.

---

[28] BERGEAUD-BLACKER Florence, *Le marché halal, ou l'invention d'une tradition,* Paris, le Seuil, 2017.

[29] AMGHAR Samir, "Les mutations de l'islam politique: l'Union des organisations islamiques en France", *op. cit.*

In the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, there is a large number of organizations closely or remotely related to the Muslim Brotherhood. This diversity is attributed to both the communitarian system, which gives greater attention to minorities and minority initiatives, as well as to the actual diversity of British Muslims. The main organization linked to the Muslim Brotherhood is the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), founded in 1997, which only recognizes an ideological influence with no direct link and is close to the proponents of the Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami. The latter are represented by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), also founded in 1997, which considers itself to be a federation of all of United Kingdom's Islamic organizations (the MCB brings together 500 organizations and mosques throughout the country including the MAC). The British Muslim Brotherhoods' objectives are fourfold, similar to those of their French and German counterparts, and relies on international Islamic charity organizations.

In Germany

In Germany, the *Islamische Gemeinschaft Deutschland* is less powerful than the UOIF in France or the MAB and the MCB in the United Kingdom. The German Muslim community is predominantly of Turkish origin and therefore more influenced by the Diyanet or Millî Görüş.

3. The European Muslim Brotherhood institutions

The Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE) brings together the federations of close to 30 European countries (including Turkey and Russia), and through them, all of the organizations that they federate. The FIOE aims to become the main representative of European Muslims, by asserting its legitimacy among them and among European officials, as well as being identified as the main interlocutor on Islamic questions at the European level.

The source of financing of the European Frerist organizations is not clear, but several elements highlight its diversity. This funding is used to remunerate imams, build mosques or organize events and meetings, such as the Salon du Bourget for the UOIF. The funds come from the Gulf countries and from an Islamic finance network widely present in Europe: the first Islamic holding was created in 1977 in Luxembourg; in 1994, an institution channeling the funding of other bodies at a European level was then created.

The European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) was founded in 1997 as a theological body. It is focused on religious questions and the issuing of Fatwas. In theory, it is not a Muslim Brotherhood institution. Yet in reality, as Brigitte Maréchal notes, the cooptation of its members produces ideological uniformity, and most of them are either closely or remotely related to the Muslim Brotherhood[30]. However, the ECFR's impact is small in Europe; its *fatwas*, in Arabic and sometimes translated into English, are poorly enforced, and it is more a simple vitrine than anything else.

While in Europe the Muslim Brotherhood was able to grow adeptly in the 1980s and 1990s, it has had difficulties since renewing its leadership, and accepting the promotion of the new generations born in France, particularly the non-Arab-speaking ones, alongside the various movements' founding executives, who were often born in the Arab and Turkish worlds. Above all, they have been caught off guard by the rise of Salafism, which has benefited from European youth's strong religious needs and from young people's attraction for this simplified version of Islam.

---

[30] Official website of the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR).

CHAPTER III

THE TURKISH DIASPORA'S SUPERVISION THROUGH RELIGION

The objective of Turkish religious organizations in Europe is not proselytism, but rather the maintenance of links between the diaspora and the community of origin, in a pure spirit of Turkish-Islamism. The consular supervision of religion is the direct extension of official Turkish Islam among the diaspora, which represents close to 5 million people in Europe, including 3 million in Germany, 500,000 in France[31] and 325,000 in the Netherlands[32].

1. Turkish Consular Islam

The religious link between Turkey and its diaspora is ensured by the Foreign Affairs department of the Diyanet (DITIB), created in 1984 and responsible for monitoring Turkish mosques abroad[33] - *de facto* establishing a consular Islam. The Diyanet maintains tight control over the imams it sends to Europe, both to ensure that they are loyal to the government and to avoid the dissemination of an extremist discourse among the faithful. Bilateral agreements have been established with host countries, as in 2010, when an agreement was signed to send 151 Turkish imams to France[34]. Turkey is the foreign power most engaged in the management of the Muslim religion in France, since it is responsible for sending half of the 300 imams dispatched to France by foreign countries. The sending of imams and their education, the management of mosques, and the tone of religious discourse, particularly sermons, are thus decided in Ankara, which aims to supervise all aspects of the diaspora's religious life.

---

[31] GODARD Bernard, *La Question musulmane, op. cit.*

[32] YÜKLEYEN Ahmet, *Localizing Islam in Europe: Turkish Islamic Communities in Germany and the Netherlands,* Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2012.

[33] BRUCE Benjamin, « Les imams « exportés » de la Diyanet en France : enjeu de politique étrangère, enjeu de politique intérieure », *in La Présidence des Affaires religieuses (Diyanet), au carrefour de l'islam, de l'action étatique et de la politique étrangère,* Cahier de l'OBTIC (Observatoire de recherche interdisciplinaire sur la Turquie contemporaine), no 2, 2012.

[34] BRUCE Benjamin, *op. cit.*

2. The power of the Millî Görüş network

Founded in Germany shortly after the creation of the movement in Turkey, the European branch of Millî Görüş (IGMG) was for a long time stronger than the DITIB's official Turkish Islamic networks, which only appeared later. It has a tightly knit network of mosques and associations in Europe and currently has a more moderate discourse than in the past, with similar political objectives to those of the Muslim Brotherhood: the development of a political Islam (close to that of the AKP), which justifies a sharing of networks as much as possible with the Brotherhood's European structures.

3. The AKP's growing hegemony over Turkish Islam in Europe

Millî Görüş is today overtaken by the official Islam embodied by DITIB, meaning the AKP in power, strengthening the control over the European diaspora. A competition is also evident between the Gülen (Hizmet) community, opposed to the AKP, and the official Turkish Islam, whose Hizmet position within the European Turkish community has nonetheless abruptly changed following the failed putsch of July 2016. The purges and repressions carried out by the AKP in Turkey spilled over to the diaspora. In a community well controlled by the AKP thanks to the Diyanet, Gülen's advocates are, sometimes violently, sidelined.

CHAPTER IV

SALAFIST PREACHING IN EUROPE

Salafism, though not predominant, is the most dynamic Islamic movement in Europe, to the point of having "gradually imposed itself as the orthodoxy from which the European Muslim must today judge his religious practice.[35]" Over the past decade, it has gained momentum, and the number of mosques and faithful has probably tripled, in France and Germany as well as in the United Kingdom. This is a primarily quietist Salafism, rather than a Jihadist or political one, if we go by the categorization of Salafism into three major movements that most scholars use. Quietist Salafism is focused on the religious discourse and is dedicated to the correction of Muslim beliefs and behaviors; protesting political Salafism (very close to political Islam) seek to mix political and religious commitments. As for revolutionary Salafism (also called Jihadist Salafism), it is compounded by violence, as it considers that neither preaching nor political action are sufficient to lead the right path to victory. Though revolutionary Salafism (Jihadism) is the one that attracts the most attention, it is not predominant: quietist Salafism is actually the dominant form. This Salafi domination is not the result of a development organized and held by Saudi Arabia alone. It is much more the result of an accumulation of spontaneous initiatives that certainly emanate from what the Saudis created, but which no longer belongs to them, so decisively has this movement broken away.

1. *Tabligh*, precursor to the re-Islamization of European Muslims

Tabligh, a movement of Indian origin almost unknown in Europe though very active, is not a Salafist movement but paved the way for it. Neo-fundamentalist just like Salafism is, it is however much more proselytizing, as preaching (the meaning of the world Tabligh in Urdu and Arabic) is why it exists and is the engine of the movement. It uses a lot of itinerant preaching. To the targeted Muslim, the Tablighis insist on the importance of religious practice and play on the sense of guilt over a lack of religiosity[36]. These missions have a dual objective: to ensure the cohesion of the few members that they have; and to expand the community by recruiting new followers. Their effectiveness lies in their message: "easy to understand and practice, yet demanding a significant personal investment on the part of the believer."[37]

---

[35] AMGHAR Samir, « Le salafisme en France: acteurs, enjeux et discours », *Sens-Dessous,* vol. 9, 2011, p. 35-48
[36] BOWEN Innes, *Medina in Birmingham, Najaf in Brent, Inside British Islam, op. cit.*
[37] KEPEL Gilles, *Les banlieues de l'islam, op. cit.*

Tabligh plays a key role in understanding the re-Islamization of European Muslims[38] from the 1970s to the 1990s. Having lost momentum since the 1990s, its internal model has faltered (due to periods of intense asceticism and preaching and the repetitive nature of activities), and it has been overtaken by the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as, presently, by the progression of Salafism, which operates on its geographic and religious breeding grounds. However, they have much in common, such as their prophetic way of life or their rejection of Western values. Tabligh is particularly established in the United Kingdom, due to the Indian and Pakistani immigration there.

2. Establishment of Salafism in Europe: From revolutionary Salafism to quietist Salafism

The Salafist presence in Europe is recent and far from monolithic. The Quietist movement, significantly influenced by Saudi Arabia, is responsible for the expansion of Salafism in Europe. Of Saudi influence, it emerged from revolutionary Salafism with more diverse references, through a process of moderation and refocusing of the discourse on religious questions and on the believers' daily life, which has been central to its success.

Though the so-called "political" Salafism has been present in Europe since the 1970s, via institutions linked to the Muslim World League, its impact has remained weak on the Muslim populations. That is also the case for revolutionary (or jihadist) Salafism, which saw Europe, and London in particular, as a rear base for Jihadist activity in the 1990s. Its followers are, quantitatively speaking few in number, but their impact is very important. Besides the question of determining if quietist Salafism can lead to a Jihadist radicalization, it is interesting to note that it is the opposite movement that occurred in Europe: the quietist Salafism of Saudi influence emerged from revolutionary Salafism with more diverse references, through a process of moderation and refocus of the discourse on religious questions and on the daily life of believers.

Europe is a refuge for revolutionary Salafism in the 1990s. In England, the implementation of an Afghani Jihad in the 1990s is followed by the creation of "Londonistan" in the early 2000s, where the capital city becomes the breeding ground for jihadist Salafism. In France, the origin of the Salafist presence is also linked to the development of revolutionary Salafism in Arab-Muslim countries at war. Until the end

---

38 "France and its Muslims: Riots, Jihadism and Depoliticisation", International Crisis Group, March 2006.

of the 1990s, the Salafism present in Europe is oriented towards the countries of origin of their representatives: this is the case in France with the Algerian Salafist political refugees, fleeing the civil war that started in the early 1990s. Yet gradually, with the arrival of a second generation of preachers trained in Saudi Arabia, Salafism lost its political and revolutionary aspect, and refocused on European Muslim populations. The quietist Salafism advocated by Saudi Arabia is a means of combating revolutionary Salafism, as Saudi Arabia sees this apolitical Salafism as a factor of stability in the Arab-Muslim world, and thus ensures its promotion. This path to quietism has led to a much more pronounced conservatism than before, since the discourse now focuses on standards and values. This enhanced and recent conservatism is capable of attracting a greater number of Muslims, who become Salafists because the main subject is the faithful's daily life.

3. Salafism today

Contrary to the Muslim Brotherhood or to state-instituted Salafism (the Muslim World League), there is no large-scale Salafist organization that could ensure the movement's unity. There are many small structures that do not require significant financial means to exist, such as places of worship, which are very often small associations, and a growing number of schools, but they remain local. Salafism has no regional, national or European federation. It is structured on two levels: the strictly local level, that of isolation, and that of ideological connections with the rest of the Muslim world, particularly with Saudi Arabia: "Ironically, Salafism falls both within globalization, through its use of the Internet and its contacts with Saudi theologians […], and within the local micro-network (the gang), but shows little interest for the national space."[39] That is why there is no quietist Salafist unity in Europe, beyond a certain ideological coherence: it is a sphere of influence whose boundaries are hard to discern, which does not mean that there are no networks within it. The consequence of this organization, or rather of this non-organization is that Salafism cannot be "banned", any more than it can be made into a cult.

The Salafist presence in Europe has experienced, over the past 10 years, a new phase in its development. After the revolutionary Salafism of the end of the 1980s and the 1990s, and the transition to quietist Salafism under the influence of Saudi Arabia, a form of sedentarization and expansion of the movement can be observed, in

---

[39] *Ibid.*

France and in Germany as well as the United Kingdom, asserting an illusory apolitical position. Sedentarization may be explained by, among other factors, the weakening of the principle of hijra (the obligation to temporarily or permanently return to a country where Islamic laws are respected was an objective that all the French Salafists regarded until recently as inevitable). This can be explained with economic arguments (cost of expatriation), but also by a sedentarization of Salafist preaching and by a change in mentality regarding the relationship with the rest of society. The war in Yemen and the hunt for Islamists led by Marshall Sissi also explains this phenomenon: Yemen and Egypt were the French Salafists' favorite countries for *hijra.*

Expansion is observed in all European countries, as well as in most Arab countries. The number of Salafists and Salafist mosques is constantly growing, even if it is far from representing the majority of European Islam. In France, the number of followers has gone from a few hundred in the 1990s to 5,000 sympathizers in 2004[40], and 15,000 or 20,000 in 2015[41]. We are referring to militant Salafists, the number of supporters being much greater. The ideology is more and more strongly anchored within Muslim communities, even if Salafists only represent a tiny minority. Finally, ideological evolutions are being observed: though marginal, they seem to indicate that a part of Salafism could be on the path of conciliation with the environment in which it lives. A more moderate movement, less radical than the others towards non-Salafist Muslims and non-Muslims, is emerging among the various forms of Salafism in France, called "non-exclusivist quietist Salafism" by Samir Amghar.

The Salafist message is conveyed through sermons, through tangible means, such as books, or intangible means, such as television or the Internet. They aim to lead Muslims to the right path by calling them to order (with or without violence) or converting non-Muslims, even if conversion is less systematic than with the Tabligh.

Salafism has therefore developed in two ways in France: state Islamism on the one hand, and individualistic, autonomous and decentralized Islamism on the other. These two Islamisms - in this case, two Salafisms - generally overlap little, but complement each other very effectively. State Salafism, advocated by Saudi Arabia, initially aimed at Africa and Asia, and later at the most fragile European countries (Belgium and Bosnia in particular) has invested little in France, where Salafism arrived via individuals, particularly Algerians, driven out by the civil war that was starting in

---

[40] SMOLAR Piotr, "Mouvance éclatée, le salafisme s'est étendu aux villes moyennes", *Le Monde,* 21 February 2005.
[41] "Pourquoi le salafisme se développe en France", interview with Bernard Godard, *Le Progrès,* le 27 June 2015.

Algeria. Today, these two Salafisms have come together via European preachers' theological references on social networks, who all claim to be inspired by the great Saudi *Ulamas.*

CHAPTER V

THE MEDIA

People and Saudi television channels, particularly developed in the Maghreb, have contributed to the theological and religious impregnation of French Muslim populations of North-African origin. Through their family and friends, these populations have been gradually exposed to this particularly rigorist interpretation of Islam.

Salafism's example therefore shows the increasing importance of the media in addition to those organizations and people. First, books, which today play a major role in the spread of Salafism. Secondly, tapes, which throughout the 1980s and 1990s were disseminated in the Maghreb and in Western Europe to spread the Islamist message. Then satellite television channels: Al Jazeera initially, which was able to offer an unprecedented political debate in the Arab world coupled with the construction of a propaganda system intended to promote the Muslim Brotherhood and their religious leader, Youssef al-Qaradawi; then Saudi religious television channels (Iqraa in particular), which contributed to the Islamization of Muslims throughout the world. Today, the Internet and social networks have taken over with impressive force, like the export scheme used by the different Islamisms to convince Muslims of the soundness of their cause and their religious interpretations.

Part IV

The State of Islamism in the West

What is the impact of this ideology and its propaganda system in France and in Western Europe? The answer is mixed with ambivalence. Muslims sensitive to Islamist arguments today constitute a minority in France, and a majority is clearly in the process of integrating the predominant ideological system.

In the European context, the Islamist discourse has no choice but to adapt and develop a particular system of beliefs. The themes emphasized by the European Muslim Brotherhood, as well as the continent's Salafists, differ from those highlighted in Middle Eastern countries. In democracies where religion is less vibrant than elsewhere, and where the populations are not predominantly Muslim, the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam is by no means a direct objective of Islamism. The challenge is instead to distinguish itself from non-Muslim populations; that is to appear as a separate group. To influence societies, certainly, but especially to influence other Muslims, and in the case of the most radical, to create a disconnect between them and those that do not resemble them.

There is a gradation in the desire to stand out from the rest of the population. The European Muslim Brotherhood ideology is thus less radical than the Salafist ideology. The model proposed by the European Brotherhood is that of a community: the aim is to allow Muslims to differentiate themselves from the society that surrounds them in a manner that does not result in a disconnect with it. This community strives for recognition; the challenge is therefore more political than religious, even if it is rooted in a religious identity and religious references. For Salafists, the reference is instead purely religious: the differentiation, which would be more accurately qualified here, as "disconnect" is much more pronounced. The aim is to unite a small community and only extend it through adherence to a demanding orthodoxy and orthopraxy. For a Salafist, to live in Europe, where Muslims are a minority, is normally a contradiction, as his ideal is to live in a (perfectly) Muslim society.

Beyond the different theological positions and objectives, Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist ideologies in Europe share a common symbol, such as the question of halal or that of the veil. These particularities of everyday life, based on religious references, are distinctive markers that can be used as identity-based levers, as they imply increased visibility. They are therefore more than religious obligations or practices, as they are often described, because they simultaneously cover religious, communitarian and sometimes economic interests. This convergence of interests makes for the strength of the Islamist discourse and helps understand its influence in the daily life of European Muslim populations. These discourses and their daily implementation create standards and models that transcend the narrow boundaries of Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist circles.

CHAPTER I

ISLAMISM IN FRANCE: FROM COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITARIANISM

1. Islamists in France are largely a minority among French Muslims

Based on a survey conducted by Institut Montaigne in 2016 on France's Muslims, a single figure has often been the focus of attention: that of the 28 percent of Muslims interviewed who were in the "secessionist and authoritarian" category. The aim here is to explain the process of differentiation of this French Muslim population, to trace the ideological path it has followed and to understand the emergence of parallel societies, of communitarian isolation, or even established communitarianism.

The Muslim population places greater importance on religion than the French population, on average. Above all, contrary to the prevailing tendency in French society, Muslims are increasingly practicing Muslims: thus, 32 percent of those referring to themselves as Muslims in 1989 had never fasted during Ramadan, and the percentage was only 20 percent in 2011[42].

Examining the profile of Muslims in France most influenced by Islamism, the main division within the group is generational. Young Muslims, children of Muslim families or converted, women or men, are by far the most influenced. In addition, converts, who only represent 7.5 percent of Muslims - though they do not seem to more frequently have authoritarian profiles than the average Muslim population - are over-represented in an Islamist minority, that of Salafists. Finally, hardship, particularly on the employment front, seems to favor the propensity for religious authoritarianism. The sociology of those who can be attracted by some form of Islamism must not, however, be oversimplified, even among Salafist militants, the group that is the most clearly disconnected from society. According to Samir Amghar, the majority of Salafists have completed secondary education and some have gone on to college[43].

---

[42] GAULMYN (de) Isabelle, "Les musulmans pratiquent plus qu'il y a vingt ans", *La Croix,* 31 July 2011.
[43] AMGHAR Amir, *Le Salafisme d'aujourd'hui, mouvements sectaires en Occident,* Paris, Michalon Editions, 2011.

2. Genealogy of the Islamist presence in France

How does one arrive at this number of 28 percent of Muslims feeling close to a value system opposed to the values of the Republic? Islamism in France is the result of a superposition of different realities that succeeded each other over time since the 1970s without ever disappearing completely. Each city or neighborhood has a unique history, yet follows the same dynamic: a deep ideological effort is led by successive movements. Socio-economic factors, though prevalent, are not the most decisive, and do not explain anything on their own. This dynamic may be understood as a dialectic. The Tabligh movement, the European Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists followed each other over time. Three forms of Islamism that explain three successive periods. One movement focalized on preaching (Tabligh) in the 1980s, another movement dedicated to an identity-based mobilization (Muslim Brotherhood) between 1989 and 2005, and a final movement obsessed with religious practice (Salafism) since that date. In a broader perspective, the territories cultivated by these ideologies are those which have been most affected by the Jihadist phenomenon, and which account for the greater number of departures to join the Islamic State.

Among populations that may question their identity, particularly when they are unable to be integrated, these Islamic ideologies propose a single solution: Muslim identity. High-visibility events have generated a nationwide questioning of the place of Islam in France. The wearing of the veil in schools in 1989 and 2004 or the 2005 riots may be regarded as catalysts or indicators more than actual causes of the rise of Islamism.

3. The internal logic of Salafist discourse: Preservation of the community

Various kinds of Islamic discourse present themselves as fundamentally rational, since they are based on the study of texts, the literal interpretation of the Quran and the *Sunnah.* Preachers encourage the faithful to broaden their scriptural knowledge.

The Salafist discourse rests on the idea of Western decadence embodied by behaviors viewed as abnormal (particularly among women) and the acceptance of homosexuality. This leads to an injunction to scrupulously follow a magnified tradition, viewed as the only safeguard against this decadence. Any criticism coming from the outside is impossible, since it is emanating from a perverted world. It is on the contrary a sign of the faithful being singled out, since God tests those he loves.

Salafism is today in a state of dual hegemony. The most dynamic ideology on the ground as well as on the Internet, it has managed to impose itself as the religious reference from which Muslims, whether sympathizers or critics, must derive their understanding of religion and their religious practice. On the other hand, in the eyes of non-Muslim public opinion and in numerous debates, Salafism has imposed itself as the very image of what Islam would be, which is frequently impaired. Eric Zemmour, among other French commentators, blatantly falls into this trap, declaring: "all Muslims are Salafists."

Salafists are, among Islamists, those who mobilize the religion the most. In opposition to the overall decadence of the world from which they must be freed, they propose a solution to escape the divine punishments that are likely to come down on sinners before or after death. This can only be achieved through physical separation and a separation from all daily practices of a population that are viewed as non-believers, through the strict application of tradition – any interpretation likely to be a *bid'a*, which is a blameworthy innovation.

Salafists' strength is their integration in the daily life of the believer. The questions raised by the Salafist preachers on the Internet almost all pertain to daily life. Preachers are therefore not part of a theoretical belief process of the faithful, but rather part of a response to questions related to family, sexual relations, social practices or appearance. Positions sometimes vary in the responses' details, but the justification is always provided simply, using excerpts from the Quran or *hadiths*. By regulating all areas of daily life, the preachers establish a rhythm and symbols that unite a community, the *Ummah*, whose importance transcends blood ties. A dichotomy then emerges between the community, made up of the pure, and the impure exterior from which they need to clearly distinguish themselves.

The literalist interpretation of texts allows an avoidance of debate by presenting a unique solution for each of the problems. In addition, any criticism or attack against the *Ummah* made up of "real" believers is seen as further proof of the election of its members. Salafists are "elected representatives": it is only normal for them to have adversaries. This system is finally replicated through women, regarded as guardians of the tradition, which they pass on to their children, making them pillars of morality in their family.

4. To experience difference: When separation becomes viable

On a daily basis, these discourses turn into moral standards, dress codes or dietary codes, making their followers stand out from the rest of the population. The level of implementation of these standards is highly variable, from the more discrete and conciliatory to the more rigorist. In the case of the latter, the aim is total differentiation; meaning to disconnect, in order to create another society living according to its own codes, in which daily life as a whole, down to the smallest detail, would be Islamized.

These standards help assert an Islamic identity while respecting what is presented as a set of religious obligations. They are as much signs of religiosity as symbols of identity, which explains why they are driven by converging interests from which they draw their strength: theological interests (especially Salafist) and communitarian interests (Frerist for example), as well as economic interests. The best example is probably halal, whose market, which has developed in Europe, brings together religious figures and economic players who sometimes merge. This pioneering market has served as a model for new markets that make up the Islamic economy today, an economy that extends far beyond the dietary question.

Within a few years, these standards have created a new way of life, increasingly self-sufficient and communitarian. Together, they make up a new normal, which presents itself as the only possible normality, though it has mostly been constructed recently. Produced by and within an inner circle of Islamist actors, these standards are used outside, and have been able to establish themselves within significant segments of the European Muslim populations, as Islamic principles and truths that cannot and must not be questioned.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL MEDIA, POWERFUL SOUNDING BOARDS FOR ISLAMIST PREACHING

Islamism, be it political or purely theological, makes massive use of the Internet and social networks to disseminate its ideology and mobilize its sympathizers. On the Internet, Islamists, and more particularly Salafists, have a monopoly in all matters relating to the Muslim faith.

1. Islamists have a monopoly on the religious discourse on the Internet, both globally and in France

Islamist discourse is ubiquitous on social media, when it comes to the Muslim religion. The Wahhabis are the leading religious influencers on Twitter worldwide. They are so strong that they compete with high-profile *mainstream* personalities[44]. They also dominate –by far! – the other movements associated with Islam.

The same can be said at the French level: Islamist discourse is at the center of Islamist content on French-speaking pages. And sharing is evident between politicized Muslim actors and religious discourse, which is a near-monopoly of the Salafists. Accounts whose targeted audience is *a priori* Muslim compete with general accounts. Analysis of the targeted audience of these accounts makes Islam the religion most represented on social networks. Furthermore, when you compare the different positions within Islam, the moderates are struggling to be heard. In France, Facebook brings together the greatest number of people influenced by Islamist discourse, since it is the most used social media with 32 million users per month[45]. As far as the other social media are concerned, YouTube acts as a television alternative for those who are most "motivated"; Twitter remains the preferred social network of Islamic community media as it is a real news feed on a large scale; Instagram is used to reach a more feminine audience; finally, Telegram is centered on the Islamist hard core.

---

[44] Aimed at the general public.
[45] Médiamétrie, September 2017.

Facebook fans comparison

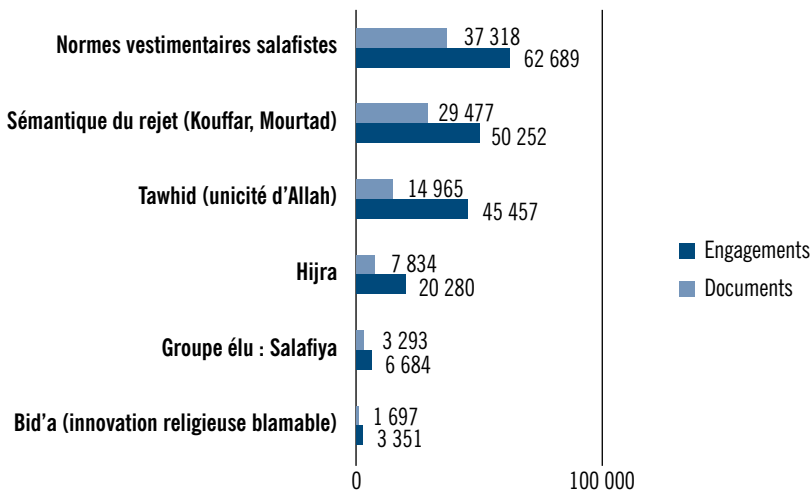|					
2 068 384	2 160 791	784 455	459 239	411 458	364 752
1 085 869	614 702	747 622	566 160	642 467	671 052

2. Salafist online communitarianism

Islamist networks are very powerful on various digital platforms, both internationally and nationally. The strength of Saudi preachers and their audience, particularly on major French accounts, confirms that. The dissemination of digital Salafism in France is moreover carefully organized. There is a hierarchy between players, with specific criteria promoting the preachers' legitimacy. It should be noted in passing that it is not Saudi Arabia that organizes this dissemination but individuals grouped in reticular networks.

Major French accounts are often linked to various countries around the world, which validates the premise of a globalized yet informal and non-state organization. That is particularly the case for the French quietist Salafist network: though it has few exchanges with the Belgian network, it is in close contact with Saudi, Algerian and even Quebecois players. Saudi preachers are thus references for French-speaking activists. British and American Salafists, unlike their French-speaking counterparts, widely benefit from the English language to build relationships. Several Twitter account publications assert the unity and cooperation between the two countries' faithful members.

The quest for separation appears to be the Islamists' main objective. The Internet and social networks enabled religious preachers to codify the practice of Islam by offering a real theological model to follow on a daily basis. Religious themes are dominated by Salafists who have proclaimed and maintained legitimacy on these themes.

Documents and commitments around Salafist themes

	Engagements	Documents
Normes vestimentaires salafistes	62 689	37 318
Sémantique du rejet (Kouffar, Mourtad)	50 252	29 477
Tawhid (unicité d'Allah)	45 457	14 965
Hijra	20 280	7 834
Groupe élu : Salafiya	6 684	3 293
Bid'a (innovation religieuse blamable)	3 351	1 697

3. The Muslim Brotherhood networks: controversy and mobilization

In the case of Muslim Brotherhood networks, the momentum is more national than global. In France, accounts have few connections with foreign networks, but are perfectly organized at the local level. A setup that justifies the social issues raised by such actors as the CCIF, anchored in a well-defined territory, contrary to the themes evoked by the Salafists, which are universal. The CCIF – which denies any proximity with the Muslim Brotherhood, but whose positioning and discourse likens it to this school of thought – positions itself on such subjects as job discrimination or racial profiling, which are then held up as a form of generalized Islamophobia. These actions are very skillfully carried out on the Internet, with a capacity to disseminate alternative or even conspiratorial information and a large volume of publications that produce significant virality.

In France, when news stories or a societal issue closely or remotely affects a Muslim, there is a massive and consistent reaction by Internet stakeholders, who seize on the episode in question to condone it as an ideological struggle. That was the case during the "Free Tariq Ramadan" digital campaign, or the controversy around the young singer Mennel Ibtissem, episodes that played a key role in identity-driven discourse on the Internet.

Overall, the general audience for rigorist content on the "French-speaking Muslim web" represents approximately 1.2 million accounts, or 30 percent of potentially influenced Muslims. This number recalls what was suggested in the previous report "A French Islam is possible," on the rigorist faithful amounting to 28 percent. For the Salafists and the Muslim Brotherhood, there are several levels of organization: major original influencers at the root of the disseminated ideology, activists responsible for formalizing the dissemination, and sympathizers sharing content on a large scale to influence several hundred thousand users.

CHAPITRE III

ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE

The report concludes with an analysis of the sociological and spatial organization of Islamist movements in three European countries: Belgium, Germany and United Kingdom. Analysis of their organization and their deployment indicates common dynamics. Emerging in the 1970s, their establishment marks a movement of re-Islamization of Muslim individuals and their descendants living in Europe. This re-Islamization can be linked to Tabligh, as in France, Belgium or United Kingdom, or to Turkish Islamic networks, as in Germany. In parallel, the Muslim Brotherhood movement developed in Europe, particularly in the 1980s, and in all the surveyed countries. In the 2000s, Belgium, Germany and United Kingdom saw the dynamic establishment of Salafist movements. The magnitude of this movement varied depending on the country, its legislative framework and the Muslims' history in different societies. The significance of Turkish Islamism is related to the presence of populations of Turkish origin in Germany or Belgium, while the Deobandis are very important in the United Kingdom, due to the country's historical ties with India and Pakistan.

1. Belgium

As in France, there is no formal survey on people's religious beliefs in Belgium. However, certain surveys help identify major trends: according to Jan Hertogen, there were approximately 780,000 Muslims in Belgium in 2016, mainly residing in urban areas[46]. In Belgium, religions and philosophical movements can be recognized and funded by the state, which does not control religious content but ensures that comments made by ministers of Religion do not question the state or its laws. Though the Muslim religion is recognized since 1974 and subsidized since 1996, most mosques are not recognized and rely on private funding, often of foreign origin. In a country that does not enforce secularism *"à la française",* religious expression in the public space and communitarianism do not challenge the citizen, nor does it shock them. The question of Islamism and communitarianism only actually emerged in the 2010s, in connection with Jihadism.

---

[46] HERTOGEN Jan, "781.887 musulmans vivent en Belgique: découvrez la carte, commune par commune", cartes sur sudinfo.be, 25 May 2016.

The establishment of Islamist movements in Belgium followed the French model and began in the 1960s and 1970s when Islam began to organize itself and ceased to be affiliated with the structures of the countries of origin. The apolitical Tabligh movement emerged in the 1970s, as in many other European countries, drawing on the economic challenges related to the oil crises. The movement dominated in the 1980s in parallel with the Muslim Brotherhood, which gradually gained ground, to promote the politicization of the identity-based struggle. In Belgium, movements tied to the Muslim Brotherhood remained weak, experiencing difficulties (as elsewhere) in recruiting from the young generation. From the 1990s onwards and particularly in the 2000s, Salafism established itself and, according to F. Dassetto, "the *Salaf's* universe is certainly, actually, the most structured assembly of the Islamic scene in Brussels," because of Salafism's early organization around Saudi Wahhabi centers. In parallel, a genuine support for Turkish Islamism is evident, and can be observed in the 2017 constitutional referendum among people of Turkish origin.

There are several hotspots of Islamism in Belgium, the best known of which is certainly the Molenbeek neighborhood in Brussels. In itself, it seems to concentrate all of the dynamics typically mentioned as causes of radicalization. Although Molenbeek is very much watched, it is not an isolated case, and it is important to view it in a more global context. The quarantining of the area is far from solving all problems. The Antwerp-Vilvoorde-Brussels axes also constitute a major hotspot of Belgian Islamism.

2. Germany

According to the Pew Research Center, Germany's Muslim population is 4.9 million, versus 82.2 million Germans in 2017[47]. The German Muslim population is notable for the size of its community of Turkish origin (51 percent of Muslims)[48], who arrived in Germany following the deterioration of the economic and social situation in Turkey in the 1970s. It is after World War II that the first Islamists settled in Germany, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood who were fleeing Nasser's Egypt in the 1960s. In parallel, during the 1960s and 1970s, Turkish immigration introduced another form of Islam in Germany: a moderate Kemalist Islam. In the 1990s, the Salafism inspired by the Gulf countries was introduced in Germany

---

[47] Pew Research Center. 2017. "Europe's Growing Muslim Population," Pew Research Center, November 29. http://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/29/europes-growing-muslim-population/.
[48] Stichs, Anja. *Op. cit.*

through immigrant preachers who organized seminars in prayer rooms. German-born nationals (converts or sons of immigrants) then took over Salafist preaching in the 2000s.

Islamists are mainly concentrated in Western Germany (ex-FRG), as in North Rhine Westphalia, where they have started to emerge. They are also found in such centers as Bonn, Hamburg and especially Berlin in the case of the Salafists and Munich and Aachen in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood. Today, the countries with the most influence on the German Muslim communities are Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

The German government long ignored the rise of Islamism and finds itself today facing an increasing number of Salafists (11,000[49] in 2018). Germany is now the Muslim Brotherhood's European center without their having an actual influence on the German scene. Salafism especially is growing within Germany's Muslim communities.

3. United Kingdom

The United Kingdom had more than 4 million Muslims in 2016[50], or approximately 6 percent of the total population. British Muslims are mainly from the Indian sub-continent[51]. The United Kingdom is characterized by a communitarian model: contrary to the republican model, which aims to have foreign populations melt into the collective pot, immigrants in the United Kingdom have enjoyed a "parallel status to that of already established nations."[52] The status of the various communities differs, and some Islamic practices are accepted in the country that would not be accepted in France. That is why few studies tracing the history and mechanisms of dissemination of Islamist ideology, under its various forms, have been produced in the United Kingdom.

---

[49] BURACK Cristina, 2018, "Number of Salafists in Germany has doubled in past five years." *Deutsche Welle,* April 4. http://www.dw.com/en/number-of-salafists-in-germany-has-doubled-in-past-five-years/a-43243111.

[50] RUDGARD Olivia, "Muslim population of the UK could triple to 13m following 'record' influx" *The Telegraph,* 29 November 2017. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/11/29/muslim-population-uk-could-triple-13m-following-record-influx/

[51] "British Muslims in Numbers" (MCB, drawing on the 2011 census) http://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCB-Muslims-in-Numbers-infographic-final.jpg

[52] KEPEL Gilles, A l'ouest d'Allah. Editions du Seuil, 1994.

The publication by Salman Rushdie of the Satanic Verses in 1989, a satirical novel inspired by the life of the Prophet Muhammad, prompted a harsh reaction by Muslims worldwide, and marks a true turning point in Islam's organization in the United Kingdom. Before the Rushdie affair, Islam in Britain was structured around various Muslim communities present across the country, led by community leaders[53]. After the Rushdie affair, Islam gradually organized itself at the national level, with the creation of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in 1997. For the first time, via the MCB, a significant number of Muslims are represented by a "front" organization, which aims to be a federation of all of the United Kingdom's Islamic organizations, which looks beyond ethnic differences and aims to present a unified Muslim voice . Its management is traditionally entrusted to individuals from the Mawdudist network, named after the thinker who in 1941 created the Jamaat-e-Islami, the ideological correspondent of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Indian sub-continent[54]. Nevertheless, the relationship between the British government and the MCB gradually deteriorated after the July 7, 2005 attacks in London, which marked the beginning of the return to Islam's management at a local level.

Though Salafism has been present in the United Kingdom since the 1960s, it is from the 1990s that it finds itself at a real turning point and starts to escalate in the country. After the wars in Afghanistan and Bosnia, European countries, including the United Kingdom, are faced with the arrival of Salafist preachers from North Africa and the Indian sub-continent, and Mujahideen veterans[55], who encourage the dissemination of Salafist theories in the country. Through mosques and libraries, these preachers, especially attract the children of first-generation immigrants and converts to Islam, who see a pure interpretation of the religion in this movement. As a result, Salafism is today one of the most important schools of Islam in the United Kingdom and continues to experience a surge in influence, producing a new Salafist landscape.

---

[53] VIDINO Lorenzo, *The new Muslim Brotherhood in the West.* Columbia University Press, 2010.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] DAY Meagan. "How the Bosnian War paved the way for ISI in Europe", *Timeline,* 12/04/2016 https://timeline.com/how-the-bosnian-war-paved-the-way-for-isis-in-europe-53c023c3bd7e

Conclusion

At the end of this journey, one thing is very clear: Islamism is not the by-product of an imperfect West, but rather an ideology, a global narrative that aims to provide an explanation to the world, a meaning to life, and a common destiny to Muslims. That largely explains the discomfort that it has created in the West: Islamism highlights the flaws of Western liberal ideology, its unfulfilled promises, and its responsibilities in the Arab world's geopolitical disorder. However, we often forget that it also paints in a negative light all the strengths of this very same West: the freedom of the individual in the face of religious destiny, equality between men and women, and fraternity in the Republic, which allows the individual to escape predetermined paths.

Islamism therefore has its place among contemporary ideologies; it thinks independently, with its own concepts, analytical framework and vision of the world. The problem that arises in understanding it is that we have largely forgotten what it is to believe in God, and imagine our life governed by texts, traditions and behaviors inspired by religion. In fact, Islam and Islamism are extremely poorly understood, despite a few centuries of living together and the constant stream of news.

The values embodied by Islamism are very often understood as being orthogonal to Western values (group versus individual, religious norms versus individual liberty, inequality between men and women versus the pursuit of equality…). The problem is that instead of trying to understand what was happening, it seemed easier to either deny the phenomenon, or to resort to a gloomy emotion, fear, as sole response. It is not fear that must guide us to think of an answer to Islamism. It is, rather, reason. Reason must help us understand what the development of Islamism in France and in Europe says about our societies. To understand the ideological, organizational and militant apparatus that has been mobilized to disseminate this ideology. To remember that France and Europe must more than ever find a way for a calm and peaceful integration of Muslims in their societies. Finally, to imagine a multi-dimensional strategy: a new organization of Islam, in France and in Europe, and an inclusion of the subject in our diplomatic relations, an introduction of the subject on the European agenda, the adoption of an alternative discourse by European Muslims, and a new organization of the state on the subject.

In France, a reorganization of the state to combat Islamism is essential, and would result in the creation of an institution responsible for organizing and funding the Muslim faith (training and remuneration of imams, construction of places of worship, theological work and fight against Islamophobia and anti-Semitism):

the *Association musulmane pour l'islam de France* (AMIF)[56] [Muslim Association for Islam in France]. This association would come to remedy the current bodies' organizational shortcomings and conflicts of interests. Indeed, the prominent place left to the countries of origin of Muslim families and the poor management of the funds associated with the halal trade, pilgrimage and individual donations prevent the emergence of an Islam managed in France by French people and based on the interests of the Muslims of France. French Islam, contrary to what is said, is not poor. It merely needs for those who are impoverishing it to move away from the management of financial flows linked to it and for a healthy management to regulate the market of Islamic consumption while allowing the establishment of a central fund to serve public interest: finance the theological work that is required, enable the training of religious managers, remunerate imams, combat anti-Muslim xenophobia, and combat the anti-Semitism shown by some Muslims.

Moreover, it is essential to have an alternative Muslim religious discourse in French that is parallel to the mainstream discourse prevalent on social networks today, meaning the Salafist discourse. Like the PREVENT campaign implemented by the British, France must equip itself with the means and important networks to disseminate this counter-narrative. Who can do that? Muslims. Those of France and Europe, who must mobilize despite their numerous reservations (the refusal to be defined according to their religious identity, a tendency to trivialize their Islamity, fatigue in the face of the acrimonious wrangling between religious officials, fear of radical Islamists… reasons for inaction are many.) As the solution will come from them: if non-Islamists leave their religion to Islamists, they will share the blame in the degradation of the situation. As for the state, which is responsible for national cohesion, it cannot remain indifferent in the face of the separatism advocated by certain Islamist groups. However, from the religious standpoint, it could at best play a role of facilitator given the French Republic's secularism.

This should be coupled with the reinvention of the promotion of the Republican narrative. Islamism is successful in many domains, including the duly relayed feeling of a void in the public discourse, which extends beyond mere political discourse. Yet the Republic is an alternative model to the merger of temporal and spiritual power that is wanted by Islamism, while providing a shared national cause. It must assert itself as an open model yet one that is based on values, principles and rules whose normativity is not in dispute: is it capable today of asserting openness

---

[56] Please see the report "A French Islam is Possible", Institut Montaigne, 2016.

and firmness at the same time? In the event of a conflict of norms, the civil and Republican norm must reassert its primacy and more broadly disseminate what it is based on, so that any French person is capable of describing the Republican project and appreciating its practical implementation: are legislative actions necessary to reassert it? The Republican communion after France's victory at the 2018 Soccer World Cup will not be enough.

It is necessary to rethink the state's communication on republican values, particularly on social networks. After that, it is essential to mobilize the Ministry of Education: training schools' management and educators on secularism, which they are not always familiar with, is essential. Teach them to interpret the manifestations of religious extremism, as well. Understand what is permissible in the name of freedom of religion, and what is not because it violates this same freedom of religion (which is also that of not believing) is crucial. To revive the learning of the Arabic language is key, especially since Arabic courses have become for Islamists the best means of attracting youth in their mosques and schools.

Beyond school and the Ministry of Education, the state must improve its organization to initially know precisely what is going on, beyond issues directly related to security and public order. While strong and useful measures have been taken to manage the most violent individuals, anything that falls ahead of the phenomenon is unknown and scarcely dealt with. The state must ensure greater awareness of ideological proponents and Islamism's political and social outcomes; it must help those who wish to fund counter-narrative initiatives in French, conduct a full-scale diplomatic mission, implement inter-ministerial measures and action plans of republican persuasion in the neighborhoods where it is necessary. Finally, it must provide intensive outreach. This outreach must also encourage moderate Muslims, who have until now been much too silent, to take over debates that affect Islam.

The diplomatic question is also crucial in the resistance campaign against Islamism. First, an explanatory work must be undertaken vis-à-vis the countries that fund and control their communities of origin while exercising political leverage over France. It is necessary to ensure with Saudi Arabia that the AMIF has the central role in the organization of the pilgrimage. Finally, the Muslims of France must communicate with Muslim states on theological questions: what is valid in Turkey or in Saudi Arabia must not be taken at face value in France.

More generally, religious cooperation with the Maghreb and the Gulf countries is to be seriously considered. As part of this report, we carried out a visit to Saudi Arabia, having previously met in Paris Adel al-Joubeir, the Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mohammed al-Issa, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League. At the end of this trip, we believe that Mohammad bin Salman cannot guarantee the success of the social transformation he has undertaken without the cooperation of the Saudi religious authorities. He needs to renew the political-religious personnel so that a new generation of *Ulamas* asserts itself and a new discourse emerges. At the same time, the influence of the great Saudi *Ulamas*, who are little known but significant in France, and probably in Europe, where they are figures of theological reference, must be taken into account. We have therefore common interests in the religious domain. Therefore, in addition to the development of a counter-narrative against the terrorists and the organization of the pilgrimage, cooperation should focus on a theological program whose objective is to find the right answers to concepts issued by the Saudis, which pose so many problems in France.

Finally, the rise of Islamism is also a European issue. It deserves the mobilization of institutions, in particular the European External Action Service (EEAS), to change their way of dealing with the problem and to agree on sharing each member's lessons and good practices. The European Union has a duty to look closer at the Islamist reality and not concentrate only on the sharing of information and the coordination of the terrorist threat in its member countries. It is also at the European level that a diplomatic and theological program bringing together religious leaders, Islamicists and theologians must be embarked upon to enable the emergence of a debate on conflicting theological issues. It is at the European level that a training of religious executives can be conducted. Europe must take hold of the question of Islam, without passion or hatred, but with attention and reason: it is in the interests of European Muslims to escape the grip of countries of origin and escape Islamist control, and it is also in Europe's interest, given how common and central the question of Islam and the fear created by this religion have become in the continental political debate.

INSTITUT MONTAIGNE

Photo couverture © Istock

INSTITUT MONTAIGNE

THERE IS NO DESIRE MORE NATURAL THAN THE DESIRE FOR KNOWLEDGE

The Islamist Factory

Islamism is a true contemporary ideology, powerful, organized, resolute. It constantly makes the headline of the press but it remains very poorly known in the West. Its goal is clear: to create a global project with religion as a framework for life and as a project for the individual and society. By targeting Muslims first and foremost.

Before being disseminated in the rest of the world, Islamist ideologies were born and developed in three major ideological centers: the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia and Turkish-Islamism in Turkey. Confined until the 1960s to the regions of the Arab world, it later spread to all territories where Muslims are present, including in the West, through several channels: organizations, people and media. Nowadays, social media constitute a very effective sounding board for Islamist preaching, including in France where we see through them the influence of Salafists on the Muslim religious discourse in French. In Europe, the organization and deployment of Islamism, although they vary according to the legislative framework and the history of Muslims in different societies, follow similar dynamics.

The response to the rise of Islamism in France and Europe must not be guided by fear, but by reason. Reason to understand the mechanism of creation and dissemination of this ideology, to conceptualize a new organization of Islam in France and Europe, to foster, finally, an alternative discourse compatible with our societies by European Muslims.

Join us on:

Sign up for our weekly
newsletter on:
www.institutmontaigne.org

Institut Montaigne
59, rue La Boétie - 75008 Paris
Tel. +33 (0)1 53 89 05 60
www.institutmontaigne.org

September 2018