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The Perceived Religiousness of the Repertoire of the Muslim Minority in France

Brian Mawyer
Graduate Center, City University of New York

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THE PERCEIVED RELIGIOUSNESS OF THE REPERTOIRE
OF THE MUSLIM MINORITY IN FRANCE

by

BRIAN MAWYER

A master’s thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

Cecelia Cutler

_________________________  _______________________
Date                        Thesis Advisor

Approved

Matthew K. Gold

_________________________  _______________________
Date                        Executive Officer

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Abstract

THE PERCEIVED RELIGIOUSNESS OF THE REPERTOIRE
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by
Brian Mawyer

Adviser: Professor Cecelia Cutler

France is a secular society with a deeply rooted Catholic tradition. This environment affects the acceptability of demonstrations of Muslim religious identity. Muslim immigrants to France are often ghettoized into rent controlled housing in suburbs around the cities. Rejected from French society, these immigrants cling to what links them together, which is their religion. By the third generation, fluency in heritage languages declines greatly, yet the youth of the banlieues re-appropriate Arabic words into their French speech, leading to the emergence of a Muslim repertoire that is not always accepted by speakers of standard French. This thesis surveys French people of diverse backgrounds as to how they rate elements from this repertoire in terms of religiousness and which they find acceptable in French shows the correspondence between perceived religiousness and social acceptability. Religious terms in Arabic can be interspersed in French. Uttering these words or phrases in the original Arabic instead of French translation demonstrates knowledge of religious Arabic and a connection to the religion.
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Introduction

In 2009, I taught as a language assistant at a high school in Luxeuil-les-bains, a town with a population of about 8,000 in the east of France, by Switzerland. The Ministry of Education recruits native speakers of foreign languages to give French students practice. No one there wore religious head coverings or discussed religion. It was a secular space where the only welcome ideology was that of the French Republic. This was true despite the fact that not all the students were named after Catholic saints like Pierre, Benoît, Marie, and Aurélie; some introduced themselves as Jaouad, Bilal, Leila, and Fatima. However many laws the government passes to keep public spaces free of religion, signs still leak through, differentiating French citizens.

Names are not the only bits of language that can be markers of religious difference. Clothing, cultural practices, and language are also important markers of identity. Words and phrases associated with the religion connect interlocutors within the religious group and exclude those who are not members of the group. This thesis seeks to show that many French people are as unreceptive to language associated with Islam in the public sphere as they are of physical signs like the hijab. The collection of words and phrases Muslims in France use that mark them as such are part of a Muslim repertoire. Benor (2010) defines an ethnolinguistic repertoire “as a fluid set of linguistic resources that members of an ethnic group may use variably as they index

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1 By connecting the present conception of France to the ideals of the revolution, namely Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, politicians and the public justify the call for conformity. This view of the nation was expanded in the constitution of 1958 to describe France as “indivisible, secular [emphasis added], democratic, and social Republic,” which politicians have used to limit religious expression in public places (Bowen, 2007, p. 29).

2 Here, the term hijab and headscarf refer one variety Muslim women can use to “veil” themselves, according to the Koranic injunction. While girls and women wear the scarf over their hair, some cover their hair completely, while some let various amounts of their hair showing (Alvi, Hoodfar, & McDonough, 2003).
their ethnic identities” (p. 160). A Muslim repertoire contains elements from Classical Arabic, usually with their origins in Islam itself. Words borrowed from the languages of Turkey and North African countries can also be associated with Islam because the immigrants from these countries are usually Muslim. More words become of a part of this repertoire in France as the immigrant population developed in the fix rent housing (Habitation à Loyer Modéré) of the suburbs (banlieues) of major French cities. The slang that resulted from modifying already existing French slang becomes associated with being a poor immigrant, who is likely also Muslim. Not all French Muslims make use of all the elements of this repertoire and not in all situations. While scholars have debated the degree of consciousness Muslim speakers have of choosing to use an element from the repertoire, speakers certainly use elements with different frequencies, in line with previous research on language accommodation (Giles, Williams, Mackie, & Rosselli, 1995) and identity construction (Bucholtz, 2001; Svendsen & Røyneland, 2008). In the present case, I would argue that piousness is a determining factor of that frequency. The more speakers wish to present themselves as pious Muslims, the more frequently they use elements from the Muslim repertoire. Additionally, certain kinds of elements index greater piety than others as rated by the participants. For the purpose of this study, I do not look at the intentionality of those who make use of the repertoire. More relevant is the perception of the speakers’ intentions. When the French population hears certain elements they recognize from the Muslim repertoire, they make judgments of the speakers’ piety. This study will measure the perceptions of piety by asking the participants to rate sentences containing elements of the Muslim repertoire, determining whether the use of Classical Arabic is perceived as a greater indication of piety than using the slang used by French Muslim youth. The degree of piety is then compared with the acceptability of hearing the same sentences in public or private to show
whether the more pious elements are a greater affront to the French population, especially when heard in a public space.

   Able to distinguish French from common French slang (including verlan) and from Arabic, participants will be able to make judgments when asked about the piety of the speaker. Looking at research on the Jewish repertoire in American English, we see that those who join the Orthodox communities over use the elements, reflecting their demonstration of piety (Benor, 2012, p. 28). For Muslims, there has been a strong tie between mastery of Arabic and piety since the Middle Ages (Osman, 2013). Therefore, using elements from Arabic projects the piety of the speakers even when they are speaking French. Recognizing this display of piety, the French can also perceive the Arabic elements as more pious.

   Dress as Marker of Piety

   While those outside of Islam speculating the intentions for wearing a headscarf can lead to many possible options, hearing explanations from the wearers provides more concrete information on their choice as agents. During his research on the subject, Bowen (2007) discovered that “[w]hen girls and women are asked why they choose to wear a headscarf, their response usually has to do with a greater consciousness of religious obligation, or to show their piety, or as part of declaring their independence from their parents. Their intention was to manifest their piety or maturity, not their Muslim identity” (p. 143). Religious obligation and piety are clearly religious reasons, stemming from a familiarity with the idea that the Koran in someway necessitates it. Even if these women are not aware of the exact verses, they still know
God requires it of them. In this way, they use their outer appearance to show an inner devotion to God and the laws of the Koran. This outer display is reflective of their degree of piety, which is different from simply identification as Muslim. Following this rationale, they are not trying to distinguish themselves from non-Muslims. In the case of wanting to demonstrate their maturity, the young women show themselves to be independent thinkers. If they do not come from a family where the women veil themselves, then making the conscious decision to put on a headscarf is evidence that they do not have to follow their parents’ views. The young women are part of a resurgence of piety among young Muslims.

If the headscarf were a cultural marker, it would not interfere with laïcité but would be evidence of communalism. Joppke’s (2009) reading of Joan W. Scott addresses these alternative interpretations of the veil in relating, “the ‘polysemy’ of the veil entails ‘a deliberate obfuscation of meaning;’ and she surmises that the whole point of the French government’s legislating against it, in 2004, was to contain the veil’s ‘position as an unstable signifier’” (p. 13). Thus, when the courts as interpreters of law judged the intentions of the wearer and the effects on the other individuals in the school, they allowed for a flexibility that treated each case differently. Different treatment under the law goes against French republicanism. The problem for the government seems to be that the headscarf has so many meanings and not just one. If the intentions of the wearers are in line with the French ideals, then the principle of liberté should guarantee their right to do so. Therefore, the French government proclaiming that the headscarf is a religious symbol and counter to laïcité forces the same standards on everyone but does not take into account the multiple intentions of the wearer. Some may wear it for religious reasons but not to proselytize. Those who wear it as a reflection of their foreign origin may nonetheless feel French. Even with no intention to indicate their religion or culture, some young women wear
it to protect themselves from harassment. Any whom their family and neighbors pressure to wear it are part of that family and that neighborhood.

Without clear-cut motives for wearing headscarves or reactions to seeing it, the government would have difficulty regulating it. They chose to regulate the headscarf based on its religious significance. Bowen (2007) describes the reactions viewers of the veil have on religious grounds, with their impression that veiled women believe that they are religiously superior. Yet, he also mentions people’s dismay at the sexism of a woman hiding a part of her body and the fear that the veil is evidence of political extremism that breeds terrorism. The law banning ostensible religious signs does not explicitly legislate against headscarves worn for these purposes. To pass laws against the headscarf pertaining to every way one can interpret the headscarf would admit the symbol has multiple meanings depending on the intentions of the wearer and the interpretation of the viewer.

Creative options allow women to fit in while observing the tradition like Souad who relates, “When I am at work I wear the scarf not like I have it now but on top, swirled around like the Africans…That seems to work” (Bowen, 2007, p. 77). The scarf holding the hair up above the head does not resemble the Muslim headscarf style. Therefore, the style no longer matches Souad’s North African culture of origin. Since it can no longer be a cultural symbol, this version of the headscarf cannot be evidence of communalism. As she refers to the style as belonging to the Africans (meaning from sub-Saharan Africa), it is a marker of a culture besides French culture. Possibly, the style is tolerable because referencing the dress of another culture can be seen as a fashion statement and not as a manifestation of an identity other than French. Because her coworkers are not offended by this style, the objection to the headscarf in their case is not that Muslim women cover their hair. Instead the offence comes from the cultural or
religious difference of the Islamic character of the style. The scarf even when wrapped above the head retains an Islamic element because Souad wears it as a veil and not as a fashion statement. She devises this compromise to fit in, but she still considers it necessary to obey the religious prescription. Since her headscarf is foremost religious and only passes for cultural, it would accordingly be against the law for a student to wear it in that style in school. Souad’s style successfully disassociates hers from the North African scarf and allows for it to come across as a fashion statement, no longer ostensible.

Even if the courts take into account all the particularities of each case, the principle of laïcité makes it unconstitutional to rule on such decisions. According to Joppke, “with respect to the headscarf, ‘not the sign itself but its perception’ mattered, and ‘interpreting the place of this sign within Islam’ on the part of administration or judge would ‘seriously violate the principles of the laic state, of religious liberty, and of the respect for the freedom of conscience’” (p. 40). Many options open up for wearing the headscarf outside a cultural context. A woman can drape a scarf over her head without being Muslim. Muslim women do not need to use any particular fabric. If using a cotton bandana fulfills the requirement if worn on the head, Muslim girls can wear it without it being a cultural marker. Some schools compromised with their Muslim students, allowing bandanas (Bowen, 2007, p. 146). Since the bandana remains religious even without cultural significance, it could potentially be a breach of France’s 2004 law. The division would be up to the courts, having the power to make a ruling on a civil law. The civil law, however, depends on a religious ruling that the courts do not have the power to make. Perhaps even more controversial would be the courts’ impinging upon freedom of conscience. With all the arguments against the headscarf as evidence of patriarchal dominance over a woman’s
conscience, the courts’ making the decision to force young women not to wear head coverings in schools is arguably hypocritical.

Amnesty International (2012) reports on current discriminatory practices in France based on religious dress. Because of France’s understanding of secularism, however, France does not consider refusing employment based on the display of religion as discrimination, even when a “French candidate with a Senegalese Christian background was two and a half times more likely to receive positive feedback when applying for a job than a French candidate with a Senegalese Muslim background” (p. 41). Agreements for diversity in the workplace do not explicitly cover religious diversity. When a woman in Gennevilliers (near Paris) wore the headscarf only outside workplace, the mayor still did not allow her to be in charge of a youth club. After the 2011 ban on covering the face in public, the police would interrogate women on their motives for wearing a veil.

In November of 2013, an airport security guard called Monsieur M. was suspended from work by the local prefecture for greeting Muslim colleagues in Arabic. The prefecture claimed that saying “salam alikoum” attracted unfavorable attention and was indicative of radicalism. While Monsieur M. is a practicing Muslim, he does not pray during work hours. Even after a court ordered that the prefecture reconsider the suspension, the prefecture maintained it (Le Parisien, 2014). Thus, in addition to discrimination based on the dress of Muslim women, situations arise when Muslims are discriminated based on what they say.
Laïcité

The aversion the French have towards overt displays of religion in public stems from the conception of secularism that the French refer to as laïcité. Originally meaning that which is not in the religious sphere, the definition of laïcité now covers the freedom from religion, considered a Republic ideal. The secular as an idea originated in the Middle Ages to refer to those who lived ordinary time as opposed to those who “turned away from this in order to live closer to eternity” by joining a monastery (Taylor, 2007, p. 55). The beginnings of laïcité in France have been traced to the Edict of Nantes enacted by Henri IV in 1598, giving certain rights to Protestants. Louis XIV revoked the Edict in 1685, however, attempting to unify the kingdom under a single religion. The first French Revolution beginning in 1789 was largely anti-clerical, confiscedating Church property, and de-Christianizing the Republic (Astier, 2004). France became secular again temporarily during the Paris Commune of 1871, but the permanent legal separation of Church and state in France is oft credited to the Law of 1905, when the French government would no longer fund religious organizations (Bowen, 2007). The constitution of 1958 labeling the nation as secular, or laïque, enabled parliament to pass laws like the 2004 ban on religious signs in classrooms or the 2011 ban of wearing the niqab (face veil) in public.

Laïcité has developed as a part of modern France, and the French people consider their country to be a secular country. While the need for laïcité during the Revolution arose to remove the influence of the Catholic Church from the government and the lives of the French citizens, the current role it plays is to eliminate any religion from interfering with the citizens’ free conscience. Thus, politicians use the concept to promote agendas that limit the liberties of France’s Muslim citizens. The understanding is that the overt display of one’s religion is an affront on all who do not practice that religion or any religion in general.
The stated intent of the law to ban headscarves in 2004 was to eradicate the headscarf from the secular classroom. Therefore, the intent of removing them from the streets of this secular nation in 2011 would be to save Muslim women from oppressive veiling and the discrimination it attracts. These intentions are questionable, however, because it misattributes the cause of the discrimination. Regarding women who wear headscarves, Nicolas Sarkozy, the then ministre de l'intérieur, clarifies in expressing, “I was struck by the fact that many of them were at university, were born in France, and why then the need to caricature their identity?…It is because they see their identity caricaturized in the eyes of others” (as cited in Bowen, 2007, p. 120). The second part of Sarkozy’s comment is more original than the first. He realizes that the Muslim women who veil themselves even when integrated into French society are subject to society’s preconceived notions. Perhaps it is this ethnocentrism that prompts native French citizens to associate all things Muslim, including headscarves as foreign, and therefore threatening to francité. The headscarf controversy stems from the negative interpretation by observers who reduce it to merely a symbol of being Muslim and thus non-French. In a society that values unity as well as the elements of its culture that provide for this unity, purposely differentiating oneself can appear offensive. Whether people view the headscarf as oppressive to women, linked to terrorism, or identifying the wearer as different, the problem with the headscarves lies in the interpretations. By viewing the headscarf as irredeemably foreign, people impede on the integration of Muslims. So long as Islam has secondary status in French society, all Muslim elements will not be as welcome as their culturally Catholic alternatives. Banning Muslim elements does not promote equal status.

This negative impression of others practicing their religion publically can come from believing that religious people look down on others who do not agree with them. Perhaps the
French look back in their history to the religious wars that necessitated the Edict of Nantes. While they may not expect the bloodshed experienced during the years of fighting between Catholics and Protestants, they fear some sort of usurpation of French culture by Muslim culture. Politicians present customs such as polygamy, female circumcision, and headscarves as an indication that the immigrants cannot integrate into French society. The Far Right promote rhetoric that portray the immigrants as freeloaders and violent because of their religion (de Laforcade, 2006).

Current discriminatory policies are likely to further insulate the Muslim communities. Police have the power to check papers of people whom they suspect are in the country illegally. Limiting the reduced rent apartments available, has led to overcrowding in the banlieueus. The isolation leads to “crime, unemployment, and poor education,” and even when the immigrants are brought to schools with more experienced teachers, they are still faced with discrimination there (Haddad & Balz, 2006). Interior minister Sarkozy limited undocumented workers’ access to medical care. Immigrants’ ability to bring their family members into the country is based on the immigrants’ French fluency (de Laforcade, 2006).

Figure 1 Chronology of Policies and laws that Discriminate Against Muslim Immigrants

- **1917** Identification card required for foreign workers
- **1932** Law putting a quota on the number of foreign workers
- **1945** The National Office of Immigration offers 3 residency permits: temporary, ordinary, and privileged. The government can deport immigrants who posed a “threat to public order”
- **1955** Government officials have the ability to call curfews
- **1960s** North Africans seek asylum during and after the colonies gain independence from France
- **1974** Law halting labor migration. Muslim population rises from high birth rates.
- **1986** Anti-terrorism law permitting police to check papers and detain citizens suspected having connections to terrorism
- **1989** reduction of subsidized, *Habitation à loyer modéré* (rent controlled housing) apartments available in the suburbs
- **1993** Méhaignerie law proclaims that children born in France to foreign parents are considered foreign until they reach adulthood.
1993  Pasqua laws prevent French employers from hiring foreign graduates, denies residency to foreign graduates and to spouses who entered the country illegally before marriage, and increases the time before family members can immigrate.

1997  Debré law made it illegal for French citizens to protect undocumented foreigners and ended amnesty for long-term residents.

2002  the far-right party, le Front National receives 17% of the vote

2004  law banning ostensible religious signs from being working in public schools

2004  Government releases a report on the risks and lack of integration of the residents of the suburbs

2005  law mandating that history teachers teach “the positive role of France’s presence overseas” during its colonial period

2005  After the October riots in the banlieues, President Chirac institutes a state of emergency, expanding the powers of the police.

2006  law limiting unskilled immigration and increasing the prerequisites for family members to immigrate

2011  law banning concealing the face in public

(Collins, 2011; Haddad & Balz, 2006; de Laforcade, 2006)

In the above chronology, most policies when targeting immigrants are actually aimed at Muslims when the concern was foreign workers taking jobs from French citizens. By 1986, terrorism also became a concern of policy makers to keep the immigrants out of the country. Laws preventing them from becoming citizens became more frequent. The late 1980s is also when debates regarding the headscarves in public schools began (Bowen, 2007). These debates culminated in the passing of the law in 2004 and the 2011 ban on the niqab in public. By this time, enough Muslims were citizens that anti-immigration laws no longer affected them. A different strategy was needed to cope with the changing demographics of the country. Therefore, a new set of laws targeting religious dress with the goal of assimilating the Muslims into French culture.

Islam is a different kind of religion than Catholicism or even Protestantism, which have a predominant place in French history. Whereas Catholicism no longer prescribes acceptable appearance for the layperson, modesty and piety in Islam materialize in the way Muslims dress. Wearing long beards, head coverings, and concealing clothing shows an adherence to the
religion. Similar manifestations appear among the Jews and the Sikhs (or even the Amish in the United States). Although Catholic nuns certainly dress conservatively with covered heads, no one expects such an appearance from Catholic laypeople who do not take religious vows. Observant Catholics can practice their religion fully and appear secular in public. However, the observant Muslims’ appearance keeps them from blending in with the secular French. Not all Muslims in France face this difficulty, because they are in fact a heterogeneous group and many do not practice at all. French Muslims have diverse national origins as well, which gives rise to different forms and degrees of religious observance and practice.

If a woman’s intention is to demonstrate her piety, the sentiment is that her piety will be evident in ways besides just her headscarf, or bandana, or whatever method of veiling. Mahmood (2005) explains one “cannot simply assume that resignifying Islamic practices and virtues (like modesty or donning the veil) would change the meaning of these practices…rather, what is required is a much deeper engagement with the architecture of the self that undergirds a particular mode of living and attachment, of which modesty/veiling are a part” (p.166). According to Mahmood, some women see the veil as more profound than just a sign of a religious or cultural identity. For them, the headscarf is a tool to achieve greater modesty. The perceptions and interpretations of the headscarf are not relevant to it being a tool, because the act of wearing it is personal. Their idea is to feel covered by the scarf and not necessarily for others to see them wearing it. The intention is not for the headscarf to be a symbol of piety. By wearing it, these women feel like they are working towards modesty and piety. Their action is physical, and leaving a visible marker in the form of a headscarf wrapped around the hair is merely a side effect. Because the headscarf is visible, others may interpret it as a symbol and instill it with meaning.
Although other people have different interpretations of the motivations for Muslim women wearing the headscarf, Mahmood indicates that these interpretations do not affect the women’s use of the headscarf. Even if others do not associate the headscarf with modesty, it still serves its purpose if wearing it makes the women feel modest. If the young women who wish to veil themselves feel this way, then they are not displaying their religion. Instead, they are practicing it. Preventing them from wearing a headscarf in school would be to prevent the free practice of their religion. Regardless of whether they use a headscarf or a bandana, the appearance does not matter as much as what the women gain from the experience. Only in juxtaposition with the young women who do not veil themselves do the headscarves take on the meanings of identity and piety. As the difference is visible, who is in or out of the Muslim identity or the level of piety is apparent to all. By a side effect of a religious practice, these women cause offence to some observers (Bowen, 2007, p. 211-2). To protect the observers, politicians regulate this practice that many consider optional.

While the debatable optionality of the headscarf can allow politicians to feel they can ban it without encroaching on the rules of the religion, it also puts the headscarf in the realm of Catholic practices that the French citizens consider optional. Roy (2004) points out that this comparison also exists for people who believe that veiling is compulsory like Tariq Ramadan who “speaks of it in terms of personal achievement, which should not be imposed but discovered through a process of deepening of the faith. Such an approach is more in line with Christian spirituality than with the classic legalistic approach of Islam” (p. 132). Not only is the headscarf compulsory, but also the modesty that comes with it is also. Thus according to Ramadan, veiling should be a goal. For Catholics, goals can be going to confession, attending mass, or giving up something for Lent. Failure to perform these religious acts does not bar a person from being
Catholic, yet these acts are integral parts to what a Catholic does. Seeing wearing the headscarf in this light may be a spiritualization of the concept, which is more conducive to the French sensibility of what a religion is. After all, diverse religious beliefs are accepted in France. The display of such beliefs is the controversial aspect. Attached to the pursuit of modesty, the headscarf is a means towards an end. Roy mentions that Islam is not the only religion that values modesty. Wearing a headscarf, though, is a means of achieving modesty characteristic of Islam. Thus, the two aspects of the headscarf are its role in making its wearer feel modest and its appearance as culturally Muslim.

The outcome of the headscarf ban once implemented had mixed results. Principles were able to resolve 550 cases through a dialogue with the girls and their parents. 96 girls left the public schools voluntarily to study in private schools or even outside the country. 47 girls were expelled. One group estimates that several hundred girls never showed up to school and were thus left out of the official statistics (Bowen, 2007). The French government’s goal is for the young women to stop veiling. The statistics show that legislatures have been successful in many cases. The dialogue period after the law was implemented during which teachers and administrators discussed the issue with students and parents who refused to comply proved successful as well. While Bowen does not provide examples of what school officials said to students, they convinced over 500 of them to give up their religious observance for the sake of being able to attend school like the other students. Unfortunately, the law did force away the hundreds of students who did not return to school in order to convince the few who changed their ways. These students who refused to cease their religious practice can no longer interact with classmates from other backgrounds in the secular space of a public school classroom. They cannot experience the laic environment the law was supposed to guarantee for them. Instead,
they find alternative locations for education—many of which are private religious schools. These schools likely attract more traditional families. Thus, a more homogeneous group of students found in private schools leads to greater communalism.

However, the identification with Islam compensates for the rejection from French society. Cesari (1995) describes how the religion provides the possibility to feel a part of something dignified. Forming an in-group also creates an out-group, strengthening the divide between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in the nation. During the first few decades of the North African immigration to France in the middle of the 20th century, Islam was invisible in public. The situation changed when the immigrants clearly were not only temporary. Settling in France permanently, they needed mosques, halal meat suppliers, and graveyards. The French state, limited by the law of 1905 and the continued association of the immigrants with their country of origin often relied on foreign governments to supply the Muslim communities with these needs. Currently, Muslim communities are often divided among the countries of origin. Besides providing a sense of belonging, these communities also allow for a reestablishment of the gender norms of the home countries.

Besides the linguistic tension between the immigrant and native languages, religious tension is also a factor in France. Cesari (1995) discusses Islam entering the public sphere in the Parisian banlieues. With the impression of fundamentalism that any practice of Islam gives to many French, the inclusion of the religion within French society seems impossible. Generally, the youth are still only marginally associated with Islam and a secular brand at that. Nevertheless living in a secular country is not an issue for the immigrants from North African countries where secular governments established themselves after independence. Furthermore, the privatization of religion allows religious observance to persist without conflicting with French society. The yet
unresolved question is whether Islam can fit the French conception of *laïcité* or French society will change its stance towards Islam and/or *laïcité*. Another consideration of the dissociation of religion from the public sphere lessens its possible contributions to society like education, healthcare, and social services. According to Miller and Haeri (2008), the separation of the religious sphere from the public sphere brought about by Protestantism in Europe may not be an appropriate model for Muslim countries, but a different kind of modernization may exist there.

Most Muslims in France have their origins in North Africa, what the French call the Maghreb. Workers came to France in the mid-twentieth century, supplying the need for labor. Especially after Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria gained their independence, the families of these laborers also immigrated. At first, France seemed welcoming. However, French schools only taught Arabic classes so that the children could easily re-integrate in their home countries when their families moved back. Another group in France are the Muslims from Turkey. They bring with them the tension between being religious and secular that their home country faces. Some nonimmigrant French people have also converted to Islam. These groups all have a religion in common—a religion that is discriminated against in France. Already within Islam the concept of the *ummah* is a unifying factor. The *ummah* is the transnational community of Muslims. Because Islam accepts conversion so readily, it must emphasize unity regardless of ethnicity, similar to the Universal Church in Catholicism. Thus, when Muslims use language that shows their piety, they also demonstrate their adherence to the collective Muslim community, strengthening these ties.

Those who use the French language form a community as well. French speaking countries (*la francophonie*) are located on five continents, mostly from France’s colonizing period (1534-1980). Having spread over such diverse areas and in contact with different
languages, various dialects have formed. These dialects create smaller speech communities. In France, where the Parisian dialect was imposed as the national standard ever since the country was unified, keeping the language cohesive has been an ongoing project to preserve the nation’s French character (Lodge, 2004). In 1634, Cardinal Richelieu established *l’Académie française* to do the language policing. Continuously working their way through the alphabet, this group of experts in the French language invents new words for new concepts and decides which words are foreign and not officially part of the language. Having a mentality that the language should remain unspoiled by foreign influence carries over to believing that the nation’s culture should also be without foreign influence (Asad, 2003, p.176).

In 2005, Assia Djebar was elected the first Muslim member of *l’Académie* (Saoudi, 2006). She does not wear a headscarf, so she does not display her religion. When she grew up in Algeria, it was a département of France. Her inclusion in the *Académie*, which gives her a role in deciding which Arabic words can enter the French dictionary, seems to reinforce the perception of Algeria as formerly a part of France. Djebar Evidence that France can be welcoming of Muslims who can pass for being a non-Muslim French.

In France, speaking French is considered to be an important means of uniting the French and immigrants. Two paragraphs of the *Contrat d’accueil et d’intégration* (Reception and Integration Contract) that the government requires new immigrants to sign have the titles “La France, un pays laïque” (France, a secular country) and “Apprendre le Français” (Learn French). Failure to adhere to this contract disqualifies the renewal of the French residency card. The expectation when immigrants join French society is that they will assimilate by learning

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3 Not long before Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes (1685), seeking to unify the country religiously, Richelieu established *l’Académie française*. The *Académie* codified the language of the court and eliminated popular expressions for the purpose of French overtaking Latin as the language of the arts and sciences (Ager, 1990, p. 15, 219). Therefore before Catholicism was reestablished as the religion of France, French was proclaimed as the kingdom’s language.
French and by adhering to French secular values. Refusing to assimilate can result in ostracization and difficulty finding work. While the French government is undoubtedly concerned about the immigrants’ ability to gain employment, another intention is to preserve the French language as the language of France. Unlike the United States, which lacks an official language, French is the official language of France.

Since the North African countries are former colonies of France, they have a history of French in their education systems. Therefore, even in the countries where schools have been Arabicized, many subjects are still taught in French. Many immigrants from these countries come to France already familiar with the language if they are not fluent. Thus, the Muslim repertoire is not the result of an inability to speak French. Instead, it is a projection of Muslim identity. Some elements of the repertoire can achieve widespread usage among the French, including non-Muslims. Most French are at least aware of the syllable-transposing slang known as **verlan**, with its current form originating in the **banlieues**. The transformations **beur** and **meuf** from **Arabe** (Arab) and **femme** (woman) have become more commonly used than their originals in casual conversation among young people in France. This phenomenon further shows that Muslim youth slang can be a part of the mainstream language.

Much research has explored the reaction of the French population to the dress of Muslim women. Examining the perceptions of the Muslim repertoire within the context of our understanding of controversy of Muslim dress in France elucidates the representational quality of the elements of the repertoire. Like the headscarf within the context of French fashion, the words

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4 Verlan is the slang of the suburbs. The technique of reversing the syllables of French words dates back to the Middle Ages, but using these words as a secret language started during the World War II occupation. Resistance fighters could use this code to communicate and not be understood by outsiders. During the late 1960s and 1970s when North African immigrants arrived from France’s newly independent former colonies, they discovered **verlan** as a premade anti-language they could adopt. By the nature of Arabic as a language with flexible vowels, the immigrant variety of **verlan** alters the vowels of the reversed syllables. (Mela 1988)
and phrases that make up the Muslim repertoire conflict with the French language so valued in France. The issue of the headscarf has lately been controversial in France in the context of ID photos and places managed by the state. Even women and girls who have made the choice to wear headscarves for religious reasons must remove them when working for the government or attending school. By wearing the hijab, women emphasize their Muslim identity. Since French law deems this identity improper for the secular state, these women must hide this identity to represent the identity of the larger society. The problem arises when the refusal to shed the visibility of their identity results in their marginalization from French society at large. If they cannot practice their religion within secular society, then they immerse themselves in a society absent of secularism.

Muslims communities being segregated from France in general is exactly the sort of communalism the French fear will lead to animosity among its citizens (Bowen 2007, p.158). Nevertheless, Islam can exist within a secular France. The country currently has a secularism based in Catholicism, which is why it does not recognize the acceptability of Islamic elements. This thesis will show how linguistic elements are treated like visual markers of identity like the hijab, unwelcome when audible in the wrong environment. The lexical elements of the Muslim repertoire have the potential to be the subject of further discriminatory policies. If the concept of laïcité in the minds of French citizens could expand to allow for Islamic elements, Muslim citizens would have an easier path to integrate fully into French society.
**Muslim Repertoire in France**

Classical Arabic is the holy language of Islam, the language of the Quran and of prayer. Various Arabic dialects evolved after the Arabs conquered North Africa, spreading Islam. Not all Muslims speak a variety of Arabic; likewise, not all Arabic speakers are Muslims. Christians and Jews who have lived in Arab countries developed their own varieties of Arabic. South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Turkish immigrants—to name a few—though Muslim, generally do not speak Arabic. The majority of Arab speaking immigrants to France come from North Africa. Therefore, Classical Arabic and local dialects are part of the local Muslim repertoire.

Figure 2 Posting on a Muslim Internet Forum

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Peace be unto you. God’s blessing upon you. My young sister Mousliha; as God willed for what a beautiful declaration of permissible love. Glory to God. Sister, is it yours? God willing that the man who declares this to his wife prove that they are not only words and promises but acts, thus proofs. In the name of God the most gracious the most merciful. Peace be unto you and so may the mercy of God and His blessing. (Words in bold are in Arabic)
My own observation of French Muslims writing on Islam-specific Internet forums (in French) is that they use some key phrases of Classical Arabic (see Figure 2). Some form of *salam alikoum* is a common greeting, whether or not the writers are religious. Writing *akhi* or *oukhty* (Arabic for my brother and my sister) indexes more Muslim identification than *mon frère* or *ma sœur* would. The Arabic word calls attention to itself as non-French, stressing that it is the Muslim use of “brother” and not simply a youth culture use of the term. Those who identify more as Muslim seem to favor *masjid* (mosque), whereas those who identify more as French seem to favor *mosquée*. When expressing hope for the future, writing *inchallah* (God willing) has a religious aspect by mentioning God, and by doing so in the holy tongue. Similarly, blessings show the speaker to be more religious if pronounced in Arabic. Even more everyday forms like *choukrane* (thank you) instead of *merci*, or *kitab* (book) instead of *livre* reveal significant differences in terms of the speaker’s or writer’s self-presentation—even if the interlocutor makes the choice unconsciously. Arabic words are just one sort of element that can be part of a Muslim repertoire in French.

Another category in the repertoire contains words in *verlan*. Although *verlan*’s origins predate the postcolonial immigration of the North Africans to the Paris suburbs and has since been borrowed by many native French, it is a marker of immigrant identity (Sourdot 1991). The immigrants used the form of *verlan* that existed during World War II in creating their own anti-language. The reversing of the syllables gives *verlan* its “metaphorical character” in opposition to French society (Halliday, 1976). The current usage of *verlan* outside of the immigrant population appropriates an identity of a group that is counter to society (see Cutler, 2008). Unlike the Arabic, which is a historically holy language, words in *verlan* are not holy. Nevertheless, religion separates the immigrant population that appropriated *verlan* from French
society. Other immigrant groups who have come to France like the Belgians, Italians, and Polish also experienced French xenophobia, but they shared the Catholic religion with the French (Haddad & Balz, 2006, p. 26). Since the Muslim immigrants find themselves ghettoized in the suburbs, they are the ones who made use of the anti-language. If the French perceive the immigrants speaking verlan as Muslim, the anti-language will also be a marker of their religion.

**Literature Review**

Studies of language and religion have focused mainly on religious texts and the religious power of words and speech. A sociolinguistic approach is also possible as Darquennes and Vandenbussche (2011) suggest. The connection put forth between language attitudes and class or level of education can extend to religious diversity. These new questions include exploring religious language used outside of religion. In the early 2000s, surveys by lexicographer Piet Van Sterkenburg found that Dutch speakers began using religious swear words less as people became more secular.

Previous research on language and religion considered the importance of a particular language to a religion, translations of a sacred text into other languages, the significance of writing systems to religions, the pragmatic uses of language in religion (like prayer, mantras, and cursing), and religious explanations of language and its origins (Sawyer & Simpson, 2001). Within sociolinguistics, studies of language and religion have included questions like how religion affects language, how religious communities use languages in a multilingual environment, how a language builds a religious community, how religion influences language
policy, and how a religion affects the literacy of its members (Omoniyi & Fishman, 2006). The study of perceptions of the Muslim repertoire fits into these categories in that Arabic in France makes the environment multilingual and exists within the Muslim religious community. The new sort of question to ask about language and religion is language as forming religious identity (Darquennes & Vandenbussche, 2011). In Van Sterkenburg’s study, as the Dutch identified less as religious, their use of religious swearwords decreased. Looking at language’s influence on religious identity in a minority culture within a multilingual environment puts this new question within the context of the previous questions.

A crucial measurement to obtain is the attitudes of the minority culture toward themselves. Achugar and Pessoa (2009) determine that Spanish has a role in preserving the ethnic identity of the minority culture. The Muslim minority in France also negotiates the preservation of their identity within the majority culture. Croucher (2009) describes the three stages of cultural adaption, as immigrants tend to integrate more as they are exposed more to the host society’s media and interact with its members. Enculturation is adopting the host society’s behavior. Deculturation is the loss of their previous “socialized cultural identity” when it contradicts with the new identity (p. 304). Acculturation is the acceptance of the host society’s values. In different stages, the immigrants demonstrate their changing attitudes towards their culture of origin and the culture of their new country.

One study of the minority cultures’ attitudes in France was Akinci and Yağmur (2011), exploring how Turkish immigrants in France identify over two generations. Western European countries often associate Muslim immigrants with problems. The male children of the Turkish immigrants will often take over the businesses their families have established and marry a woman from the country of origin. These tendencies strengthen the tie between the young men
and Turkey. The results of the study indicate that 85% of the first generation and 65.5% of the second generation consider themselves to be Turkish. Being a minority population, they foreground their identity, but some try to assimilate to avoid negative perceptions.

While it is beneficial to be part of a religion that unites people with their cultures of origin, religion also divides people. The argument is that when one religious group feels threatened by another, they will either passively retreat or they will fight. Technology has permitted people from around the world to come into contact with each other and to immigrate to countries where they are a minority. Oftentimes, when a person arrives in a new country to live, he or she will try to adapt to the culture and blend in. If the xenophobia is too pronounced or the culture inadaptable, the immigrant may exhibit his or her native culture and emphasize the differences. These differences could become so emphasized that the autochthonous population would view them as a threat, which is the potential for violence (Maalouf, 1998). The description of the interaction of different religious cultures is important for understanding the responses of the Muslim immigrants to the secular, Catholic culture of France and the responses of the autochthonous, secular Catholics to the observant, Muslim immigrant. Darquennes and Vandenbussche (2011) agree that people form their identities based on being inside or outside the group. Language groups and religion groups correlate when their membership overlaps. Rejection of the religion from the public sphere, therefore, extends to rejection of the linguistic aspects of that religion.

As far as the role of language in the formation of the minority’s identity, Achugar and Pessoa (2009) found an array of judgments of Spanish from in-group and out of group that affect the perceptions of in-group speakers. Some put the minority language in an inferior position vis-à-vis the majority language. Others saw Spanish as a language of the home. The students value
bilingualism and criticize monolingualism. Bilingual speakers experience isolation from monolingual communities with strong ties to one particular language. Among other bilinguals, however, they have the freedom to mix the languages comfortably knowing that everyone will understand. Regardless of the dominant language, the speakers are familiar with the language learning experience of those dominant in the other language. Bilingual speakers accept code-switching, but local varieties of English-Spanish hybrids are considered to be spoken by the less educated. Yet, others praise local varieties as a reflection of the community, bonding the in-group members to a common language. The combination of French and Arabic produced from use of the Muslim repertoire is equally subject to judgments from outside and from inside the Muslim community in France.

These diverse judgments parallel the position of Muslim languages within France. In 1987, the Nationality Commission planned to accelerate Turkish immigrants’ assimilation into French society. These plans included insisting that they master the French language. Akinci and Yağmur (2011) describe how past studies have shown that the Commission’s plans have been ineffective. Statistics show that most Turkish bilinguals speak Turkish with their immigrant parents and a combination of the two languages with their peers. Using Turkish serves to maintain their culture. Croucher (2009) shows the influence that forced linguistic assimilation has on an immigrant population’s willingness to assimilate. The immigrants face linguistic discrimination from the impurity of their French in their accent and diction. Languages other than French are not permitted in schools. A survey measuring discrimination faced and levels of acculturation reveals that the Muslim minority resents the perceived restrictions on linguistic freedom. Yet, Cesari (1995) points out that by acquiring French cultural capital, the immigrants and their decedents can have a smoother path to integration.
Moreover, identifying as Muslim does not require observance. Responses to surveys in Akinci and Yağmur (2011) reveal that the second generation is less religiously observant than the first. They notice a difference between religious identity and religious observance. Both generations consider religious faith to be a private matter, indicating an adherence to French secularism. Thus, the identity reported by the second generation resembles that of the first generation. The present laws in France require immigrants to not only master the language but also be familiar with the nation’s values like laïcité, pressuring for less observance.

The linguistic and religious aspects of culture are linked. Miller and Haeri (2008) address the connection between Islam and its languages, particularly within the modern era. Prayer in Islam is exclusively recited in Classical Arabic. The connection between Classical Arabic and the revealed word of God freezes the language to avoid altering the words perceived as non-arbitrary. On the other hand, vernacular dialects of Arabic have changed over hundreds of years, and they thus belong to their speakers instead of to God. Even North African varieties of Arabic and Urdu have too close an association with tradition to be a vehicle for modernity. French serves as lingua franca in francophone Africa, and globally, Muslims can communicate in English to reach a mass audience. Sacred and secular languages influence each other, and religious repertoires form. Such an interaction is greater in Muslim countries where Arabic infused itself along with the religion.

In studying the language of 17th century Quakers, Bauman (1970) describes their use of plain speech to be self-conscious. The focus is on one feature of plain speech that they use: thou instead of you for the second person singular. Because of its history in marking social rank, the use of thou was a tool to level the hierarchy. Believing in needing to relinquish the honors of the world, the members of the Society of Friends used thou in order to debase. This usage of
language goes beyond selecting features to distinguish themselves from people outside the group. Although the Quakers saw themselves as particular in being the followers of the Truth, they sought to interact with nonmembers in order to be examples to them. As tools beyond communication, the use of *thou* indicates more than the second person singular pronoun. It was a way of insisting on the humility of the community. Unlike the Muslims, the Quakers do not see language as holy. Language use is practical and serves to humble instead of elevate. The manner of speech that the 17th century Quakers developed was nonetheless an aspect of their community. While they may not have sought to distinguish themselves linguistically, they spoke differently from others. Seeing themselves as knowing the true Christianity, they still used language to lower themselves.

More recent research on the language of religious communities looks at the vowel mergers of Mormons in Utah compared with the non-Mormon Utahans. Baker and Bowie (2010) present religion as a worthwhile variable to consider when explaining linguistic behavior. The difficulty that religion presents is isolating it because of its overlap with ethnicity and geographic location. Another complexity is the degrees of affiliation that religion allows, which correlates with degrees of usage of the linguistic behaviors. Baker and Bowie had the expert participants rate which vowel they heard from Mormon and non-Mormon speakers. The ratings were averaged together to provide a score. After accounting for other variables like education level and being from heterogeneous communities, the statistical analysis revealed significantly large differences in the pronunciation of the vowels, with the Mormon versions being “further away from the historical form” (p.6). Even when both groups had merged vowels, the mergers differed. One possible interpretation given is that the social networks that develop from sharing a

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6 Pre-nasal /ɪ/ as [ɪ] or [ɛ]. Prelateral /e/ as [ɛ] or [ɛ]. Pre-obstruant /æ/ as [ɛ] or [æ]. Pre-lateral /u/ as [u] or [o]. Pre-lateral /o/ as [o], [ʌ], or [o]. Pre-obstruent /a/ as [a] or [ɔ]. Pre-obstruent /ɔ/ as [a] or [ɔ] (p. 5).
religion. Since the non-Mormons produced similar vowels to each other, they may have altered their speech to distinguish themselves from the Mormons who outnumber them. The study seems to reveal a sharp contrast between the majority and minority groups where Mormons pronounce the vowel one way and non-Mormons pronounce it another way. The fact that both groups living in the same community shows that the distinction is not from geographic isolation, but rather a means of distinguishing themselves.

Use of Arabic words and phrases when speaking French situates Muslims in contrast with those in France who refrain from using those elements. Rejection of the religion from the public sphere, therefore, extends to rejection of the linguistic aspects of that religion. This thesis draws from the understanding of a religious repertoire of Benor (2012). Studying the use of Hebrew and Yiddish elements of Jews in the United States, defines the Jewish repertoire in English as “distinctive linguistic features that Orthodox Jews may (or may not) use as they construct their complex identities.” The more observant a person was, the more elements of the Jewish repertoire he or she would use when speaking English. When less observant Jews join an Orthodox community, they must learn these elements in order to fit in. The function of the repertoire is to “align themselves with some people and distinguish themselves from others” (p. 86). Familiarity with the religious repertoire permits newcomers to the community to understand the other members of the community and legitimizes their belonging. By demonstrating knowledge of these elements, they demonstrate their willingness and ability to be a part of the group. Jews not part of an ultra-Orthodox community possess a limited knowledge of the repertoire when they use Hebrew words for religious objects or holidays, or even secular, Yiddish phrases. These less observant Jews also indicate their belonging to Judaism, though to a
lesser degree. The more elements used from the repertoire correlates with a greater level of observance.

Muslims in France also find themselves in a group within a larger society. They live in a country where the national language does not have religious significance to them, and they insert certain linguistic features that are associated with their religion. Using these features sets them apart from the general population and helps them form bonds with their fellow users of the repertoire. This repertoire differs from speaking strictly in Turkish, Arabic, or another language from a country of origin. The Muslim repertoire consists of loanwords, grammatical, and phonological elements all inserted into the primary language (French). In the case of French Muslims, the elements derive from Classical Arabic and the local dialects of Arabic, rather than Hebrew and Yiddish. See Appendix A.

Methodology

The methodology for this study consists of survey of people living in France about their attitudes towards the Muslim repertoire and their perceptions of the piousness of speakers who use particular elements of this repertoire. Data from the survey will be used to test whether subjects will rate the sentences said by the most pious speakers as least acceptable in public. From the three occasions I visited France between 2003 and 2010, I made numerous personal contacts with French people around the country, on the west coast, in the south, in the east, and in Paris. Researching the perceptions of French people, I recognized the potential of obtaining a small sample from these contacts. Reaching out to them via Facebook and email, I sent them an
explanation of my project and a link to the survey on Qualtrics. Besides instructing my contacts to take the survey themselves, I encouraged them to forward it to their contacts in France.

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the French people beyond my direct contacts were reluctant to fill out the survey. The subject matter relates to their personal perceptions, and they are likely suspicious of a survey from an unfamiliar source. Thus out of the 21 participants who began the survey, only eight participants completed it. In an attempt to widen my sample, I asked my Anglophone friends who had contacts in France to send it to their network. Consequently, one of the eight identified as from the United States, and another identified as from Canada. This study is on the perceptions of the French, so these last two are not the subject of the study. With such a limited sample size, this study does is in no way statistically representative of the French population. Nevertheless, the data provides some important insights into the perceptions of individuals that can be further explored in future studies.

In developing the survey, the goal was to create a way of measuring the perceived piety and acceptability of elements of the Muslim repertoire to see if there is a correlation. To identify these elements and devise the repertoire, I combed research on the speech of Muslim immigrants in France (Abu-Haidar, 1994; Aprile & Dufoix, 2009; Archibald & Chiss, 2007; El Kilani, 1983; Lepoutre, 2001; Tengour, 2013). Once over 30 elements were amassed, sentences containing the elements were selected from either the research or gathered from web forums based on searches for the Muslim repertoire elements. An additional eight sentences were pulled from French Muslim web forums that contained no elements of the repertoire to serve as a baseline. The participants should rate the sentences containing elements of the repertoire as more pious than the sentences that are part of the baseline. Additionally, they should rate the baseline sentences as acceptable in any of the possible locations. Once completed, the survey questions were
translated into French. The questions were then uploaded onto Qualtrics, which is a survey software website.

The total sample for this study was 14 French subjects. This number was reached by snowball sampling minus the two participants from outside of France. Six participants live in the east of the country (2 from Alsace and 4 from Haute Saone), where Turkish immigrants enter from Germany. Three participants are in the north, including 1 from Aisne and 2 living in Paris, where immigrants have settled, especially in the banlieues. There are 2 participants from Charente Maritime and 1 from La Mayenne in the east. Two participants hail from Haute Loire in the south. The data collected from a survey of a mixed sample of French people was to determine whether the language they find to be most religious, they also find least acceptable to be uttered in public. Rating sentences based on perceptions of religiousness (in the context of Islam) of lexical items and acceptability in various locations, participants demonstrate the correlation between the two factors. This perception may not be the same for all participants. The younger generations may be more tolerant, being exposed to newer additions to the French language for a greater percentage of their lives. The general trend against divergent ways of speaking, however, stems from a conception of France as a single culture from its Catholic history, with a single way of thinking. Anything that does not fit this culture or way of thinking seems foreign. Therefore, Muslim culture and language associated with Islam appear marked in mainstream French culture.

In order to do a sociolinguistic study fitting this framework, Agheyisi and Fishman (1970) suggest taking attitudinal measures. Attitude scales only reflect how people apply their attitudes to evaluate concepts. This measure is still useful for stereotyped impressions of language varieties. Thus, the studies that make use of this purpose are interested in the varieties’

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7 A French professor at the CUNY Graduate Center verified the translation.
social significance and in the connection between the attitudes towards the varieties and those towards the speakers of the varieties. The questionnaire is “the most popular instrument for eliciting data” for these attitudinal studies (p. 144). The questionnaire can include open questions, which allow the subject to express their views, minimizing suggestions from the researcher. However, this form of question also allows the subject to provide irrelevant information that may be useless or not provide as much information from needing to write it all out. Likert scale questions require less effort to answer but require more care on the part of the researcher not to lead the subject to respond a certain way. The right balance of complexity for these questions is necessary to neither bore nor confuse the subjects. Lambert’s matched guise technique is another tool, which is suitable for measuring stereotyped impressions. This technique reduces the variables to only the one being tested alone. Subjects rate the perceived personality traits of the speaker, which provides more interpretable information than simple approval or disapproval reported. Nevertheless, the questionnaires can only measure the externalization of internal attitudes. Possibly, other factors can influence how subjects respond to questions besides accurately recording their attitudes. The anonymity of a questionnaire attempts to lessen social pressures to answer a certain way. In their study of the position of Spanish as a minority language in the United States, Achugar and Pessoa (2009) interview students and use discourse analysis to analyze the responses. By asking specific questions, they can guide the participants to providing relevant information for the analysis. The authors extrapolate judgments of Spanish in the participants’ communities.
Measures

The survey for the present study contains five demographic questions. Questions ask the subject’s gender, age, and the département in France where they reside. The next three questions pertain to the subject’s religious identification and observance. A question asking for a definition of laïcité elucidates the subject’s attitude toward the role of religion in the public sphere. See Appendix B.

To obtain more details on this attitude, six statements about religious elements besides language are presented accompanied by a Likert scale for subjects to agree or disagree with the statements. The responses to these statements were rated on two scales: 1. Laïcité and 2. Islamophobia. For the laïcité scale, more strongly agreeing with statements that did not permit distinguishing based on religious practice in public and more strongly disagreeing with statements making consideration for the practice of religion in public raise the score. For the Islamophobia scale, more strongly agreeing with statements lessen the rights of Muslims and more strongly disagreeing with statements that give Muslims rights raise the score. The only question that increases one score while lowering the other is whether Muslims should be educated in public schools. The statement on displaying the nativity scene at the town hall was problematic to rate because of the complicated position of Christmas in France as a national holiday. Therefore, this question was left out of the two scales and looked at separately.

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8 In contemplating the blurred divide between religion and culture in Europe, Roy (2013) observes that the religious do not have control over their symbols. In cases pertaining to the use of religion in contemporary art and advertising, the courts deliberated “either these religious symbols…are universal and belong to Western culture, or they are specific to the community of believers, represented by an institution, the Catholic Church. But in a society like that of Europe, where art and religion have been profoundly interconnected, religious symbols belong to believers and non-believers alike” (p. 118). The shared religious culture allows nonbelievers to understand religious references to appreciate the art or advertisements that make use of religious symbols. Christian references have had ample opportunity to be pervasive enough in European culture for religious symbols to be easily recognized and removed from their religious context.
In order to test the subjects’ perceptions of religiosity of the Muslim repertoire, they are shown a list of 45 French sentences, with 37 of them containing one element of the Muslim repertoire embedded in the sentence. The other sentences contained elements of the repertoire including religious Arabic, religious French, non-religious Arabic, and French slang. All five sentence groups are mixed in an arbitrary order in the survey. Subjects use a five-point scale to rate the perceived piousness of an imagined speaker of the statement. A score of 1 indicates that the speaker is perceived to be more secular, and a score of 5 indicates that the speaker is perceived to be very pious. The same list is presented again, but this time the subjects must check off which sort of locations would be appropriate for the sentences to be uttered. The possible locations, from most public to most private, are: at a school, at the town hall, at the police station, in a store, on the street, and at home. Each of these locations was given a value from 6 down to 1 so that by adding the scores for each sentence, the higher the score the more acceptable it is in more public places. Places are listed in an arbitrary order on the survey so that the participants do not view it as a scale, which could influence their decision of which ones to select. The acceptability in public of the each group of sentences is measured against the perceived religiousness of the same group of sentences.

As part of this phenomenon, French people can observe Christmas as a national holiday. Families can display nativity scenes under their Christmas trees without feeling like they are practicing Catholics. The Christmas tree has become such a secular symbol that it is permissible in government buildings and schools. Unlike in the United States, you will not find a Chanukah menorah next to Christmas trees in public places in France. The menorah does not have cultural relevance to France like the Christmas tree. The Jews living in France were not considered citizens until their emancipation during the Revolution. Their skullcaps mark them just as different from the Catholic culture as headscarves. Without being ingrained in the secular culture like Christian symbols, non-Christian symbols do not belong equally to nonbelievers. Following this logic, wearing a headscarf asserts religious belief while a large cross could simply denote a display of French culture. This assertion of religious belief is in spite of the intentions of the wearers to do so culturally or for another nonreligious reason.
The survey relies on the imaginations of the participants to assess the piety of imaginary speakers and imagining their reactions if they heard sentences in certain places. This factor may limit the responses based on their ability to accurately predict these imagined reactions. Obtaining the reactions based on the participants really hearing these sentences in actual locations would overcome the limitations of needing to imagine the situations. However, this alternative is outside the logistical scope of this study.

Data and Analysis

To test the hypothesis that subjects will rate as least acceptable in public the elements they determined to be more pious, a Pearson correlation test was conducted. While few participants rated the sentences, there were 45 sentences for them to rate, thus providing plenty of data. When the participant selected the “unsure” option or left blank the rating of the piousness of a sentence, it was not counted. In terms of the acceptability of the sentences, each possible location the sentence could be uttered was given a number according to the degree to which the location is public. With only four participants providing complete information for the correlation tests, there were no significant correlations between how the participants rated the sentences based on their piousness and the acceptability of the sentences being uttered in different locations.
Demographics

For the demographic questions, a t-test was conducted on the questions regarding the participant’s gender, the département in which the participant resides, and the participant’s religion. The départements were divided into those in the west and those in the east, where there would be more Muslim immigrants. Since France is historically a Catholic country, the religions were divided between Catholic and non-Catholic.

Eight French men and eight French women reported their genders on the survey. The only question to which the two groups responded significantly differently (p=.020) was “Etes-vous d’accord ou pas d’accord avec les déclarations suivantes?-Les hôtels de ville devraient présenter une crèche de Noël [To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?-Government buildings should display a crèche during Christmas.]” On the scale where 1=Strongly disagree and 5=Strongly agree. The men were much more strongly against nativity scenes being displayed in a government building (M=1.40, SD=.55, n=5), while the women were on average more ambivalent on the matter (M=3.14, SD=1.46, n=7).

After dividing the participants between those living in the west of France and those living in the east, there were no significant differences in how the groups answered the other questions. With a more diverse assortment of geographic locations, other ways to divide the participants may have yielded more significant data. Recording more specific locations than the département could have allowed for a division between metropolitan and rural participants.

The t-test on the variable of religion, dividing the participants between identifying as Catholic or non-Catholic was only marginally significant concerning the question on the display of the nativity scene in a government building. Interestingly, the Catholics who answered this
question disagreed more strongly (M=1.33, SD=.58, n=3) than the non-Catholics (M=2.77, SD=1.48, n=9) with a mean score of 2.77.

In the Analysis of variance (ANOVA) test for the age breakdown, there was a significant difference (p=.016) for how the participants answered 5 of the attitudinal questions and deemed the sentences acceptable. The age groups answered according to the following table:

Table 1 ANOVA test on age ranges for the laïcité scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.20</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.25</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-59</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The younger participants supported religious neutrality in public spaces less than the others. Similarly, in the scale for Islamophobia for the same 5 questions, age is trending towards significance (p = .164). For the 18-29 range (n=5) and the 30-39 range (n=4), the means were 13.00 (SD=2.55) and 12.25 (SD=2.21) respectively. For the 40-59 and 60+ ranges, the means were both 16.00 (SD=1.41). Thus, the younger participants held less Islamophobic beliefs and adhered less to the conception of laïcité that politicians cited to ban the headscarves. Along the same lines, the younger generation was more tolerant of the Arabic elements of the Muslim repertoire. In fact, the one female participant in the 30-39 age range living Haute Saone, who averaged 18.50 on accepting the 12 religious Arabic elements and 13.71 on the 9 secular Arabic elements, was more accepting than the participants in the other age ranges who answered these questions (n=6). In the Post Hoc Tests, there was a significant difference (p=.011) between the 18-29 range and the 40-59 range on the laïcité scale (mean difference=7.80, SD=1.88).

Dividing the participants into two groups, 18-39 and 40+, a t-test revealed a significant difference in their responses to the attitudinal questions. On the laïcité scale, the younger
respondents disagreed more with statements in favor of laïcité (M=13.11, SD=2.09, n=9) than the older generation (M=18.00, SD=3.46, n=4). This difference was statistically significant, p=.008. Similarly, the younger respondents expressed fewer Islamophobic attitudes (M=12.67, SD=2.29, n=9) than the older generation (M=16.00, SD=1.15, n=4). While the ANOVA test did not reveal a significant difference among the age ranges on the Islamophobia scale, there was a significant difference (p=.020) between the younger and the older generations with respect to the anti-Muslim statements than the older generation; the younger generation objected to such statements more than the older generation.

The participants’ self-reported religious affiliation was significant in answering two questions. The first one was same attitudinal question on the nativity scene where men and women were significantly different. In the ANOVA test of religion for this question was significant (p=.004). The results were as follows:

Table 2 ANOVA Religion and Les hôtels de ville devraient présenter une crèche de Noël

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without religion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, respondents who identified as Catholics (n=3) strongly disagreed with the statement as much as those who identified as Jewish (n=3) while the self-identified Christians (n=3) and the participant who identified as non-religious agreed with the statement. Perhaps this group of Catholics ranked high on the laïcité scale⁹ and do not view the nativity scene as

---

⁹ In a t test of Catholics versus the other religions on the laïcité scale, Catholics (n=4) had a mean score of 16.50 out of 25.00 (SD=4.12), and the other religions (n=9) had a mean score of 13.78
symbolic of a national Christmas holiday. Meanwhile, the Christians and the other participant may associate Christmas with being a national holiday of France and deem it appropriate for town halls to display. Another possibility is the traditions of the town halls of the cities where the participants live. The second question where religion was of significance was in rating the acceptability of sentences containing religious Arabic elements of the Muslim repertoire. While five of the participants who answered the questions were very limited as to where they would accept hearing these sentences, the woman who identified as non-religious was very tolerant of these elements. She even rated the sentence containing the word choukrane [thank you] as indicating the piety of the speaker while others gave the sentence a low score for piousness. She was accepting of this sentence in all possible locations. While at first it may seem contradictory for a woman who had a high score in terms of laïcité would be so accepting of religious Arabic words in public spaces, the attitudinal statement she most agreed with was that Muslims should attend public school. Thus her secularism is related to inclusion. Perhaps, she does not view religious language as a threat to laïcité.

In terms of how frequently the participants attended religious services, the ANOVA test indicated a significant difference (p=.015) in how they rated the piousness sentences containing verlan and other words of French slang influenced by Arabic as well as how they rated the piousness of sentences without any elements of the repertoire (p=.010). The six participants were evenly divided into attending services during the holidays, rarely, and never (n=2 for each group). The two participants who attend services during the holidays had higher ratings for piousness of the slang sentences (M=2.7, SD=.42) and the unmarked sentences (M=2.19, SD=.2), which was higher than the others’. Perhaps these participants were religious enough in a (SD=2.86). This difference is trending on significance (p=.192), and the only group with a mean score higher than the Catholics on this scale was the woman who identified as without a religion.
non-Muslim religion that they consider any Muslims to be more pious than non-Muslims in France.

Laïcité and Islamophobia

Ten participants provided a definition of laïcité. An older woman from Haute Saone alludes to an early understanding of the secular by defining it as “ce qui n’est pas religieux [that which is not religious].” Three participants defined it in political terms of separation of religion and state. The other participants described the concept as limiting the scope of religion whether “dans certains lieux ou débats ou prises de décisions [in certain places or debates or making decisions]” or “dans un environnement public [in a public place].” A couple of the participants in this last group started out mentioning the freedom or respect of religions, but they specified that the religions should be practiced “de manière non ostentatoire [in an inconspicuous manner]” or with “neutralité dans le domaine public [neutrality in public].” These statements were divided into three categories: separation of church and state, keeping the public sphere as religiously neutral, and then other definitions. Perhaps this grouping is too arbitrary or too small (n=5), but neither those who saw laïcité as the separation of church and state nor those who saw it as keeping public places religiously neutral responded to questions with any significant difference. Nevertheless, the two participants viewing laïcité as the separation of church and state had a lower score (M=2.00, SD=1.41) as far as how acceptable they found the sentences than the two participants who view it as keeping public places religiously neutral (M=9.09, SD=6.53). Their scores on the Islamophobia scale are trending towards significance (p=.120). The three participants who answered the attitudinal questions and view laïcité as the separation of church
and state had higher scores for the Islamophobia scale (M=16.00, SD=1.73) than the four participants who view it as keeping public places religiously neutral (M=12.75, SD=2.06).

Predicting acceptability

A regression analysis was done on the scores from piousness ratings and the laïcité and Islamophobia scales for the dependent variable of the participants’ total scores for the acceptability of the sentences, resulting in the following:

Table 3 Regression analysis of piousness, laïcité, and Islamophobia on acceptability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piousness</td>
<td>3.805</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>30.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laïcité</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.694</td>
<td>29.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamophobia</td>
<td>-1.382</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>-.663</td>
<td>-27.289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.896</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis revealed that all the variables included in the regression were significant predictors of the acceptability of the sentences. Specifically, Piousness and Laïcité had positive relationships with the acceptability, while Islamophobia had a negative relationship with the acceptability. The one question included on the survey that distinguishes opinions supporting laïcité from opinions supporting racism was whether Muslim children should be educated in public schools. The one Muslim participant in this study neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. For the other participants, agreeing that Muslims should be in public schools exemplifies laïcité in being blind to religion. Disagreeing with that statement exemplifies Islamophobia in that Muslims are excluded from a right of French citizens to a public education.
A different answer to this question is predictive of the participants’ level of acceptance, while holding level of piousness constant. As the ANOVA test and t-test showed, the younger participants rated the piousness of the sentences higher. Since age did not make any significant difference (p=.81) in the number of Arabic or verlan words participants correctly matched with their meanings, the familiarity with the elements was not the cause of the difference. Instead, it seems that young people are more tolerant of Muslims and thus more accepting of pious elements of the Muslim repertoire in more locations.

Piousness and openness correlations

Further correlation tests also yielded more interesting results. There was a strong correlation of .906 between the ratings of piousness of the sentences with religious Arabic elements and those with religious French elements (p=.005). Because of their religious nature, these elements were hypothesized to earn the highest piety ratings. Since they contain words in Arabic and French that directly pertain to Islam, both categories being considered pious makes sense. There is an inverse correlation (r=-.960) between variables of the piousness ratings for the slang and how acceptable the participants found the sentences containing religious Arabic to be (p=.040). The participants who went to services during the holidays rated the sentences with slang as more pious than the other groups did. Perhaps these participants were not tolerant of the religious Arabic, or they did not understand the slang terms and thus misattributed them. Another inverse correlation (r=-.962) exists between the piousness ratings for the sentences without any elements from the Muslim repertoire and how acceptable the participants found the sentences
containing religious French to be \( p = .038 \). The sentences without elements from the Muslim repertoire should not indicate any piousness, but the religious French elements were tolerated perhaps because they are French words. There were no significant correlations between the number of elements of the repertoire the participants were able to identify and any of the other variables.

The only groups of sentences that had an inverse correlation between how participants rated their piousness and how open they were to the sentences being said in public were the slang \( r = -.567 \) and unmarked sentences \( r = -.447 \). The inverse correlation is supportive of the hypothesis that acceptability decreases as piousness increases. Neither of these correlations is very strong, nor are they close to significant \( p = .433 \) and \( p = .553 \), respectively). Nevertheless, they could perhaps indicate in a larger sample that the less the participants consider the sentences containing slang elements and the unmarked French to be pious the more public places they will accept hearing them. The other sentence groups all have an insignificant direct correlation, which is not supportive of the hypothesis. With only four participants supplying enough data for these correlations, there is not enough information to see a relationship between the piousness ratings and the acceptability ratings.

**Conclusion**

This thesis sought to look at the clash of perceptions of Muslims with the conception of secularism in France from a sociolinguistic perspective. Joppke (2009) draws from Dominique Schnapper in exploring how “[laïcité] is not just the French way of privatizing religion, but also an ‘essential attribute of the modern state’ which ‘transcends the diversity of religious beliefs,’ symbolizing ‘the social tie is no longer religious but national and thus political’” (p. 30). The
idea is that instead of uniting by personal beliefs subject to individuals, families, and cultures, the nation unites under the founding ideals of the Enlightenment and the Revolution. Philosophers like Voltaire and Rousseau advocated against religion. Thus, a part of France’s national mythos is anti-religion, giving value to laïcité. That being said, Catholic elements have remained in French culture and have been tolerated within secularism. The elements of the Muslim repertoire are but one example of what Muslims introduce to France. If they had deemed these linguistic elements to be on the same level as elements of Muslim dress that the French have banned, the participants would have checked off the fewest amount of places where the sentences they rated the most pious could acceptably be uttered.

Although the results were inconclusive concerning the influence of perceptions of piousness on acceptability of the elements of the Muslim repertoire in France, the data revealed interesting trends concerning changing attitudes. Among the younger participants, there was not as much adherence to the principles of laïcité that keep religious signs out of public schools. Moreover, younger respondents expressed greater acceptance towards Muslims and towards the display of Islam in dress and via the use of elements of the Muslim repertoire. Although the sample is too small to make any sweeping generalizations, the significant difference between the generations could indicate the softening of attitudes towards Muslims in France over time. The recent waves of immigrants from North Africa and Turkey have already established themselves and the children of immigrants born in France in the late 1990s are already old enough to become French citizens. Thus, France is no longer a country with just a tradition of Catholicism and of secularism; Muslims make up an estimated 8% of the population and many are now French citizens.
The fact that people of other religions besides Catholicism and Islam reside in France should not be overlooked. This study also included non-Catholic Christians, Jews, and a woman who self-identified as without religion. The attitudes of these respondents were statistically significantly different concerning the display of the nativity scene at town halls. The Christians’ definitions of *laïcité* focused on the separation of religion and the state, which was the category of definition that was trending towards significance on the Islamophobia scale. These Christians were in favor of the nativity scene in town halls. The Jews defined *laïcité* in terms of the religious neutrality of public spaces, which was the group that scored the lowest on the Islamophobia scale. They were opposed to the nativity scene in town halls. The trends from this study show the relationship between religion, conceptions of *laïcité*, and Islamophobia is more complex than generalizing the views of the French people. The position of Catholicism or even Christianity within secularism is not distinctly defined as the Christians who viewed *laïcité* as the separation between religion and government agreed with the nativity scene in a government building.

This study showed that this tolerance of Christianity in public does not always translate to tolerance of Islam, but the regression analysis provided a glimpse at the opportunity for change. The impact of Islamophobic and *laïque* attitudes is particularly informative. Islamophobia’s influence has been the subject of much of this thesis. This fear of Islam is the fear of the spread of this religion that is perceived to be foreign changing the imagined norms of modern France. The presence of Islam interferes with the maintenance of a secular public space and the culture grown out of Catholicism. The headscarf provides visible evidence of this threat, and the repertoire provides audible evidence. If participants already agree with statements about lessening Muslims’ abilities to express and practice their religion in public, they will also oppose
verbal expressions of the religion. Participants would also hold attitudes against public expression and practice of Islam if they value France’s modern interpretation of laïcité. As many of the participants defined it, religion and the state are separate, and the public sphere is religiously neutral. The question pertaining to Muslims educated in public schools that differentiates laïcité from Islamophobia is representative of similar questions like whether Muslims should be able to hold public office or serve in the police force. In not disagreeing with Muslim participation in public life, certain participants indicate that it is possible for laïcité not to be Islamophobic. These participants are the ones who are most open to the Muslim repertoire even when giving the sentences high ratings for piousness. If the young people of France have different views than the older generation, many of the discriminatory policies against Muslims may eventually disappear or be phased out as the younger generation enters politics. This study touched upon what those views are and the policies that link with them. The participants who filled out the survey in its entirety supplied their impressions of sentences containing elements of the Muslim repertoire. Repeating this study after several years can measure whether these impressions have changed.

Participants had different impressions of the elements of the Muslim repertoire, but further study with a larger sample size could yield more significant results. Not only would a larger study be able to examine the generation gap concerning attitudes towards Muslims and laïcité in greater depth, but it could also indicate an inverse correlation between perceived piousness and acceptability of elements of the Muslim repertoire. Additional demographics to look into would be to compare participants living in cities where the immigration is the highest like Marseille and the banlieues of Paris with participants in western France where there are
fewer Muslims. Coming in contact with Muslims may influence being offended by or tolerant of displays of being Muslim.

The association of elements of the Muslim repertoire with different degrees of piousness shows that linguistic elements can be demonstrative of religion like dress can be. The participants who indicated that the sentences they rated as pious were not acceptable in schools or in town halls subjected the linguistic elements to the same discriminatory views that promoted the headscarf ban. Whereas supporters of laïcité tolerated an element of Christianity in a town hall, they did not accept pious Muslim repertoire elements in a town hall. The evidence from this study points to a distinction in which religions can exist within French secularism because of its cultural history in the country.

The French see Muslim identity as easily removable so that a French identity can replace it. Asad (2003) describes this view as the “idea that people’s historical experience is inessential to them, that it can be shed at will…Muslims as members of the abstract category ‘humans,’ can be…‘translated’ into a global (‘European’) civilization once they have divested themselves of what many of them regard (mistakenly) as essential to themselves” (p.169). The question presented is how far should the Enlightenment mentality be pushed to translate these humans into their new culture. If people are brought into a new culture, however, after they have been introduced to different cultural norms, they then need to navigate between the cultures. With the goal of keeping the country unified, French culture can provide the glue while all other cultures would divide the population. By forcing everyone into the French culture, the aim is to eliminate the differences that would lend to disunity and cause conflict. When the airport security guard was suspended, it was for the association of Islam and terrorism. Thus in the new environment away from the countries of origin, Muslim elements takes on new meanings to those who
perceive them. Others assign these meanings regardless of the intentions of those doing the speaking.

When the French parliament passed the law in 2004 banning “ostensible” religious symbols from the classroom, they were deciding that the classroom must be a religiously neutral space. The contradicting values of laïcité and liberté form one of many paradoxes that surround the Muslim headscarf ban. The law puts the right to have an educational space absent of religion as more important than the students’ freedom of religion. The headscarf, however, is not always a religious symbol as perceived by its wearers or by those who see it; it blurs the boundary between the religious and the cultural. If it is a cultural marker then the need for laïcité does not apply.

If the citizens view themselves as superior or are viewed by other citizens as inferior, they no longer recognize the equality regardless of whether the distinction is based on religious or cultural difference. Roy (2004) explains that Islam as a religion can be considered a culture “only after the process of immigration has disconnected religious tenets from a given culture. This disconnection fits with Western secularism, for which a religion is defined as a mere religion separated from other sociocultural fields” (p. 128). The immigrants maintain the customs but no longer associate these customs with the religious beliefs. If by way of assimilating, immigrant women divest the religious significance of wearing a headscarf, then they should fit in with the French pattern of secularization of religious practices. However, they would not fit in. Catholicism’s historic significance and continued strong role in the French identity makes it the favored religion in French culture. Equating Catholic culture with French culture leaves Islam out. It also leaves out Protestant Christianity, Judaism, and any other religion.
Some Muslim leaders have attempted to create a French Islam (Bowen, 2010). Such an invention would alleviate part of the issue, but it will only be fully effective if people can accept French Islam as French. Even with Islam in France not posing the threat of Islamism, it would still overstep the boundaries around religion. The headscarf can also exist within a secular society. Even when the intentions of the wearers are religious in nature, the external expression of their religion is merely a reflection of their internal beliefs. When others perceive the headscarf or elements of the Muslim repertoire as religious, the religion need not appear foreign. Barring Islamophobia, France can recognize Islam as a religion of some of its citizens. This recognition would legitimize its presence and the right of its adherents to express their religion even in secular spaces. To achieve this kind of acceptance of Islam, France needs to disconnect itself from the narrative of its Catholic history, which is in conflict with its secular present.

The perceptions of Muslims in France as immigrants displaying their religion in public places whose secularism the constitution protects includes perceptions of the Muslim repertoire. Because members of a religion can adhere to that religion to different degrees, a repertoire corresponds with a religion when no ethnolect forms. A combination of religious words, words from the holy language of Arabic, and the anti-language of verlan the repertoire serves Muslims when they speak French consciously or unconsciously presenting themselves as Muslim. The perceptions can change now that Muslims have been present in France for an extended time and the repertoire can be acceptable in public with a laïcité that does not marginalize Muslims.
Appendix A

Muslim Repertoire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repertoire Element</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Arabic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah</td>
<td>God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barakallahoufik</td>
<td>Thank God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chari'a</td>
<td>Religious law code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coran</td>
<td>Recitation, Islam’s holy book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halal</td>
<td>Permissible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamdoullah</td>
<td>Praise be God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haram</td>
<td>Sinful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidjab</td>
<td>Curtain/scarf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inchallah</td>
<td>God willing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masdjid</td>
<td>Mosque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouallah!</td>
<td>By God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salam alikoum</td>
<td>Peace be unto you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salat</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arabic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achi</td>
<td>My brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bled</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choukrane</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flouze</td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hachma</td>
<td>Shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahu fi ‘asr</td>
<td>In the age of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouaich/Wesh</td>
<td>Yo/ what’s up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rnouch</td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zéref</td>
<td>Annoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious French</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le foulard</td>
<td>Scarf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frères</td>
<td>Brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La mosquée</td>
<td>Mosque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu’Allah te protège</td>
<td>May God protect you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu’Allah nous guide</td>
<td>May God guide you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sœurs</td>
<td>Sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le voile</td>
<td>Veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slang</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bétom</td>
<td>Fallen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheum</td>
<td>Ugly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genhar</td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keutru</td>
<td>Thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiffe</td>
<td>Like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lassui</td>
<td>This one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma gueule</td>
<td>My man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naze</td>
<td>Idiot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuf</td>
<td>Brother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix B

Survey Questions

1. What is your age?
   18-29
   30-39
   40-59
   60+

2. What is your gender?
   Male
   Female

3. In which department do you live?

   ____________

4. With which faith do you identify?
   Catholic
   Christian
   Muslim
   Jewish
   Other (Please specify)
   None

5. How often do you attend religious services?
   Once a week
   Once a month
   For holidays
   Rarely
   Never
6. What is your level of religious practice?
   Practicing
   Cultural
   Secular
   None at all
   None of the above

7. What is the meaning of the term “laïcité for you?”

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

   A. Muslim children should be educated in public schools.
   B. Government buildings should display a crèche during Christmas.
   C. Young Muslim women have the right to wear headscarves in public schools.
   D. Public schools should not serve its students alternatives to dishes containing pork.
   E. Religious communities existing in France contradict French values.
   F. French citizens should never wear any visible symbols of their religion in public.

   Strongly Disagree
   Disagree
   Neither agree nor disagree
   Agree
   Strongly Agree
   Not sure

9. People of Muslim faith fluent in French uttered the following sentences. Please rate on a scale from 1 (secular) to 5 (pious) the level of religiousness of the speakers. If you are unable to decide, select Unclear.

10. In which locations would it be appropriate for the following sentences to be uttered? Select all that apply.
    In a shop.
    In a school.
    In the home.
    In the street.
    In a police station.
    In a town hall.

   1. Je jure sur le Saint Coran que je n'ai rien avoir avec le groupe. (I swear on the Holy Quran that I have nothing to do with the group.)
2. Ouallah! j’sais pas si c’est le soleil ou l’amour qui tape trop fort. (By God! I don’t know if its the sun or love that strikes harder.)
3. Bonjour et salam alikoum, les enfants. (Hello and peace be unto you, children.)
4. L’argent harâm est néfaste pour celui qui le gagne. (Sinful money is harmful for those who earn it.)
5. Ouaich ma gueule ! (What’s up, buddy !)
6. Va demander ça à un savant mon frère, je crois pas qu’on est assez cultivé pour répondre à ta question. (Go ask a wise man my brother, I don’t think I’m learned enough to answer your question.)
7. Achi, pourquoi tu veux un livre sur l’informatique ? (My brother, why do you want a book on computers ?)
8. La protection de la femme et de la fille musulmane, c’est son foulard. (Protection for the Muslim woman and girl is her scarf.)
9. Oui on peut être voilé et avoir des loisirs. (Yes one can be veiled and have leisure time.)
10. Je le ferais pour éviter que mes hidjabs soient froissées. (I would do it to avoid wrinkling my headscarves.)
11. Il a observé et pratiqué les lois de la Chari’a. (He observed and practiced the laws of the religious code.)
12. Je te conseille de voir la mosquée un vendredi. (I suggest that you see the mosque one Friday.)
13. Il conseille à ceux qui ne pas suivre la décision du masdjid. (He advises those who do not follow the decision of the mosque.)
14. Commentaires sur Professeur polyglotte et hyper polyvalent hamdoullah! (Comments on a multilingual and versatile professor thank God !)
15. Il serait temps pour ces jeunes de démarrer leur vie avec des projets viables, Inchallah. (It would be time for the young to jumpstart their life with viable projects, God willing.)
16. On dirait pour nous les sœurs, le mariage, c’est Cendrillon. (One would say for us sisters, marriage is Cinderella.)
17. En comparaison avec Pierre, ben, j’suis vraiment naze. (Compared to Peter, I really suck.)
18. Choukrane à tous ! Je vous remercie pour vos messages d’anniversaire ! (Thanks to all ! I thank you for your birthday wishes.)
19. Qu’Allah te protège ainsi que toute ta famille. (May God protect you as well as all your family.)
20. Qu’Allah nous guide au droit chemin. (May God guide you on the right path.)
21. Nahu fi ‘asr al-Internet ! (In the age of the Internet !)
22. Barakallahoufik pour cet article. (Thank God for this article.)
23. Les mérites de la salat et le châtiment réservé à celui qui l’a délaissé. (The merits of prayer and the chastisement reserved for the one who abandoned it.)
24. Il ressemble à quoi ton bled ? (What does your ‘hood look like ?)
25. Je kiffe manger mes frites avec de la mayonnaise. (I like to eat my fries with mayo.)
26. Je peux pas sortir ce soir, j’ai pas de flouze. (I can’t go out tonight, I don’t have any money.)
27. Quand je vais à la coiffeuse, je le dis sans hachma, non merci. (When I go to the hairdresser, I say without shame, no thank you.)
28. Bien sûr je me zéref parce que déjà t’arrives en retard. (Of course I’m annoyed because you’re already late.)
29. Les mouchoirs arrêtent pas de nous chercher. (The cops don’t stop looking for us.)
30. Les centres commerciaux, laisse bétom ! (The malls, forget ’em !)
31. Elle est cheum et elle est dans une banlieue paumée. (She is ugly and she is in the sticks.)
32. Comment ce brillant capitain a pu devenir ripou pour quelques dizaines de milliers d’euros ? (How could this brilliant captain become corrupt for tens of billions of Euros ?)
33. Mon reuf, ne te fâche pas. (My bro’, I’m not angry with you.)
34. Wesh, tu fais quoi ce soir ? (Yo, you’re doing what tonight ?)
35. Il est complètement barré, lassui ! (He’s completely crazy, this one !)
36. Faut respecter les gens et pas leur genhar. (One needs to respect people and not their dough.)
37. C’est quoi ce keutru ? (What is this thing ?)
38. La langue peut causer bien des maux. (Language can easily lead to evil.)
39. Ça ne marchera pas et pire ça aura l’effet contraire. (That will not work, and worse it will have the opposite effect.)
40. L’Etat a fini par comprendre que le seul moyen était d’interdire. (The State finished by understanding that the only way was to ban.)
41. J’ai remarqué beaucoup d’injustice dans notre bel Hexagone. (I noticed a lot of injustice in our beautiful France.)
42. La mort ça n’arrive pas qu’aux vieux. (Death does not only happen to the old.)
43. Je lui ai fait voir la tour Eiffel. (I showed him the Eiffel tower.)
44. Mon petit ami est en prison. (My boyfriend is in prison.)
45. Le mec y passe sa journée à s’battre avec des vaches. (The dude spends his day there fighting with the cops.)

11. Match the following words or phrases to their meanings.

Salam alikoum Peace be unto you.
Bétom Fallen
Inchallah God willing
Keutru Thing
Allah God
Choukrane Thanks.
Cheum Ugly
Barakallahoufik Thank God
Hidjab Curtain/ headscarf
Reuf Brother
Chari’a Religious legal code
Haram Sinful
Lassui This one
Halal Permissible
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