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Sportsmen and suspects?

Objectify the place of religious radicalization in French sports associations by measuring social ties.

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Why work on boxing and radicalization?

There are two opposing views on the link between sport and radicalization: that of a gangrenous sport that promotes radicalization and that of a sport that protects against radicalization. Our first investigations identify several biases relative to these hypotheses: that of an essentialization of the place of sport for radicalized individuals and that of caricatural visions going against the work in sociology of sport relative to the "values" of sport, significantly dependent on contexts, individuals and interactions. The study of the link between sport and radicalization thus amounts to questioning a new "association" between the object sport and the properties attributed to it.

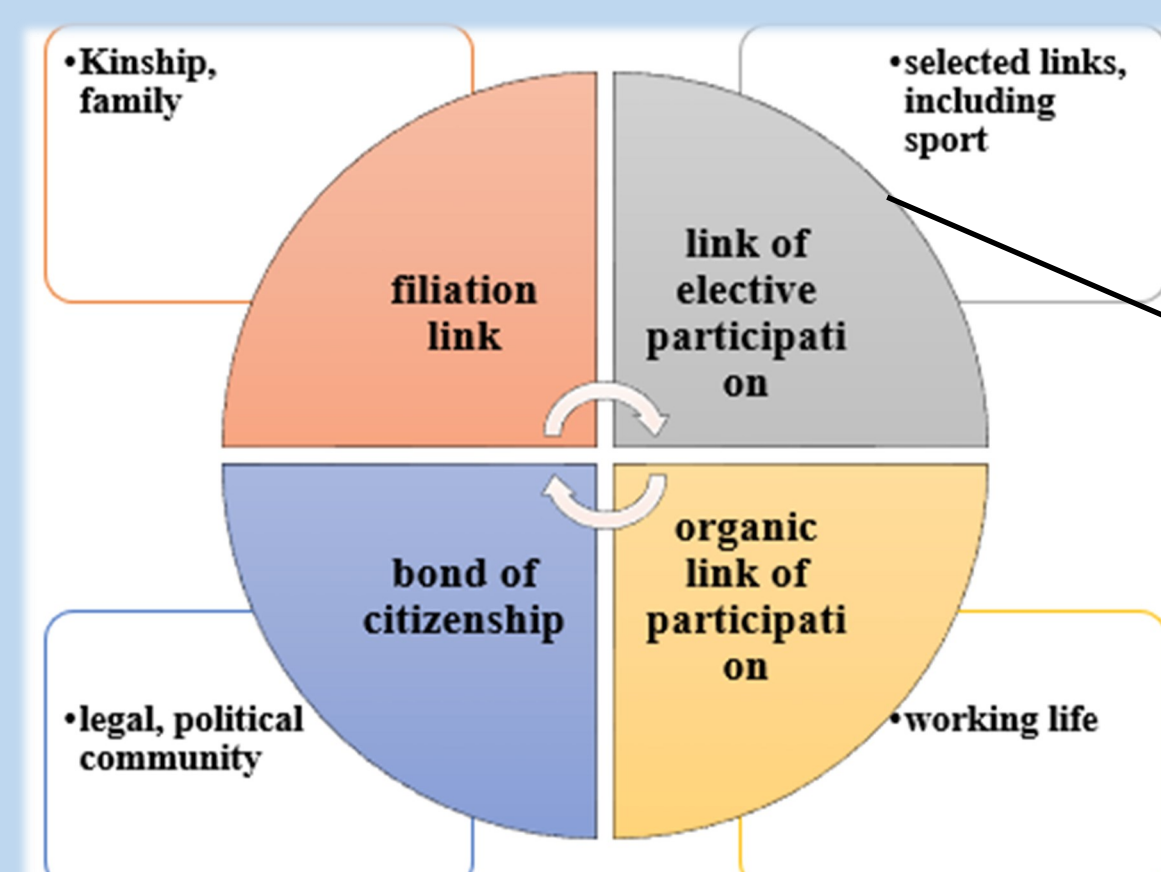
In this respect, the case of boxing is interesting, not because it is particularly concerned, but because its practitioners share a set of "biographical dispositions" with radicalized individuals, allowing systemic approach to the problem.



The approach to the problem

Radicalization is to be understood as an engagement in a process of change of social identity, effective through the social interactions found in the various social links (deficient or consistent)

Moreover, the literature shows that the engagement of individuals in religious radicalization tends to be associated with a form of social isolation, especially for working-class categories (khosrokhavar, 2014). It is through this filter that our research attempts to objectify the link between English boxing and radicalization. Moreover, in France, the public authorities are questioning the possible responsibility of combat sports in religious radicalization, especially because they would create a "warrior capital" (Sauvadet, 2006) useful to radicalized people.



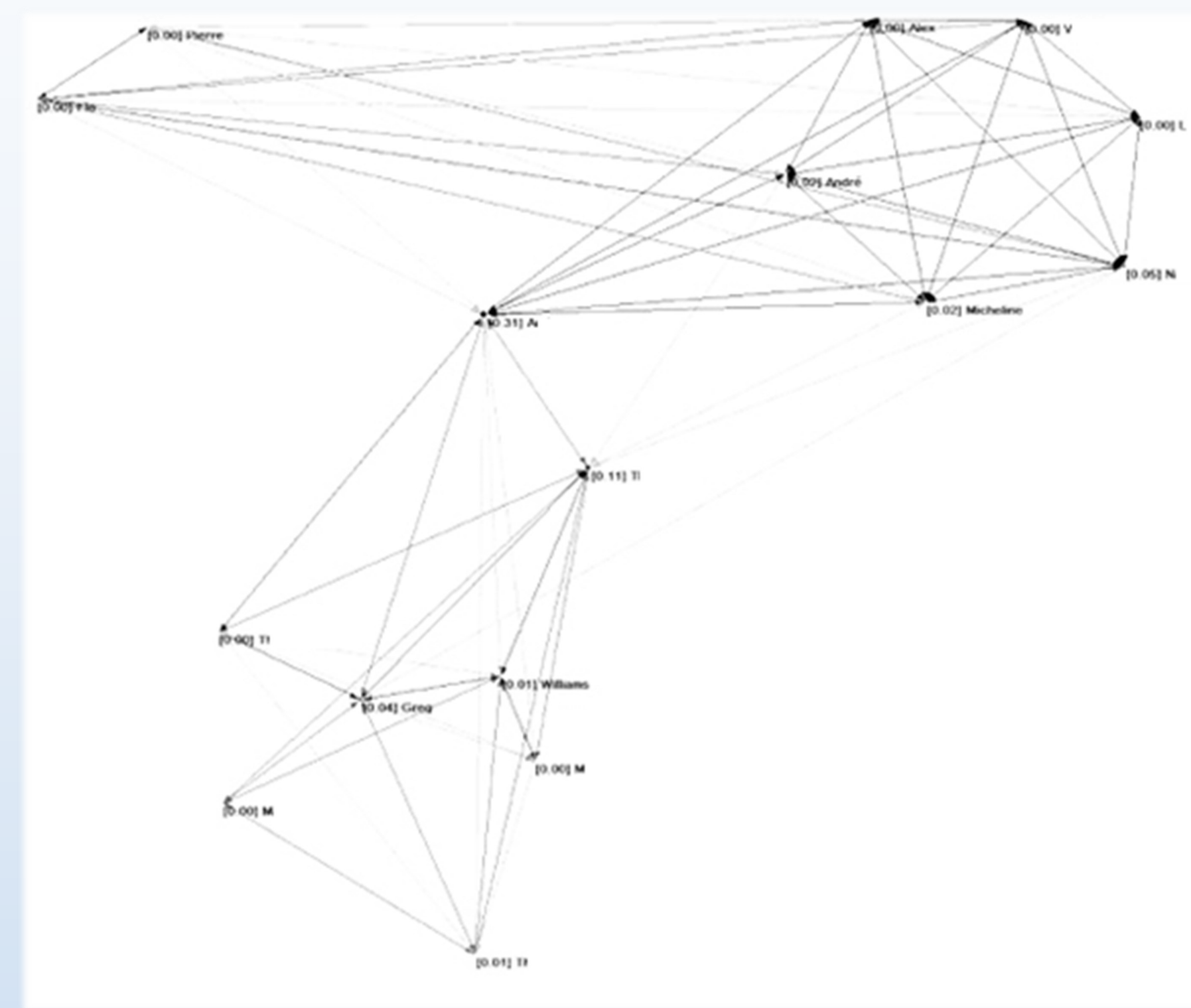
To measure the place of sport

Paugam, 2008

Focus on "Building a tool to measure social ties"

Personal Network and Logbook

The first objective of the analysis of social networks is to measure the personal network of the participants surveyed and to determine how their sociability has evolved during their socialization in sport. We mobilized the principle of the "logbook" that the individuals must complete each day. The qualitative interviews that follow allow us to refine the analysis, by focusing on weak ties, strong ties (Granovetter, 1973), their density, their consistency (Mercklé, 2016).



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
A	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
C	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
D	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0
E	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
G	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	0
I	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	2	1	1
J	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
K	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0
L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1
O	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	2	0

Full network and inner circle

The second part of the analysis of social networks is the realization of a "complete circle", a "socio-centric" approach that is concerned with identifying issues of collective action, that is interested in the relationships of this set of individuals, in the forms of solidarity, exclusion, social control, social regulation, collective learning. We try to identify the different structural roles that individuals occupy.

You want to share a meal with friends. Who do you invite from the list presented to you?

1.						
2.						
3.						

You are going to a boxing competition. You have to entrust some important things to people you trust. Who do you invite from the list presented to you?

1.						
2.						
3.						

You need advice about boxing. Who do you invite from the list presented to you?

1.						
2.						
3.						

Logbook : [Name] work : ??						
"You should fill out this logbook by considering only those individuals with whom you have a direct interaction of several minutes. Example: you are a student, you say "hello" to 100 people during the day, but you only have direct, prolonged exchanges with 10 people during the day. You note only the 10 people with whom you had an exchange. Example: you are at work, you greet all your colleagues, but during the day you have a discussion with only one of them. You record only that person. Exchanges can be forced (imposed by a superior, for example) or agreed upon (mutually decided). "They concern the whole social life (work, boxing, family, friends, etc.)"						
Days	Hour	Name	Place	Choice or not ?	Nature of the exchange	perception of the exchange

Methodology

- Statistical processing & demographic questionnaire**
 - 30 questionnaires per club in 8 clubs (n=240)
 - Sports statistics of Hauts-de-France
- Socio-biographical interviews**
 - 25 interviews with practitioners
 - 10 interviews with club leaders
- Ethnographic immersion**
 - 2 years of immersion and participant observation in an English boxing club
- Social Network Analysis**

Conclusion

Our first results show individuals who come to practice and enjoy many social links in the clubs & our surveys do not show any trace of radicalization in the surveyed clubs.

In the French case and for practices such as combat sports that are practiced within institutions, the observation of boxing clubs allows us to put two things into perspective: the widespread idea that combat sports clubs are breeding grounds for radicalized individuals, and the fact that sport is a revelation of an increase in solitude in advanced society. In the case of an institutionalized practice, Robert Putnam's (2001) thesis, produced in his book "Bowling Alone", is not verified here.

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