Youths and Radical Groups from the Perspective of Youths

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Prologue

Transformations of radical groups:
The boundaries of intellectual/ religious confrontation

Amr ElShobaki

Introduction:

Radical religious groups witnessed three phases of transformation in their contemporary history. They started with big jihadi organizations then were reduced to small cells until big organizations made a powerful comeback that was distinguished by the use of tactics that were quite different from those used by their predecessors in the 1970s. This paper will highlight the three major phases through which radical groups have gone and the social and political context in which each phase emerged.

First: The phase of big jihadi organizations:

The organizations of Islamic Jihad and al-Gamaa al-Islamiya emerged in the 1970s when a generation from the Muslim Brotherhood started promoting the ideas of Sayed Qutb, especially in his famous book *Signposts on the Road*, and called for ousting the regime by force and replacing it with an Islamic state. Both organizations pledged to stage Islamic revolutions and rejected democracy and the use of peaceful means to achieve political change. The story started with the group named Gammat al-Muslimoun (The Society of Muslim), also known as al-Takfir wa al-Hijra (Excommunication and Migration), which is one of the very few fundamentalist groups that saw both the regime and society as apostates and called for abandoning both of them. According to group founder Mustafa Shokri, it is impossible to be engaged in building modern cities while worshipping God at the same time and that is why the West was too busy building its modern civilization and chose the here and now over the afterlife. He adds that prophet Muhammad and his companions would not have been able to fight for Islam had they been physicists, mathematicians, or astronauts.

Aboud al-Zomor, a leading figure of al-Jihad who planned and took part in Sadat's assassination, condemns Arab leaders for abandoning the Quran for the sake of different transient matters such as

democracy, secularism, nationalism, personal freedom, socialism, and mingling between the sexes. The Islamic Jihad's manifesto declares holy war against secularism, which is considered a form of apostasy for demanding a separation between religion and the state and is seen as a manifestation of the corruption that prevailed in the pre-Islamic era. Al-Gamaa al-Islamiya issued a document entitled "The position of the Islamist movement on Egyptian political parties" where it rejected democracy and the multi-party system.

There is no doubt that early jihadi organizations, especially the Islamic Jihad and al-Gamaa al-Islamiya, did have an ideological and political project based on interpretations of religious texts by Ibn Taimiya, Sayed Qutb, Omar Abdel Rahman, and others who accused the regime of apostasy for not applying Islamic law. They did not, however, accuse the society of apostasy as was the case with al-Takfir wa al-Hijra.

The book called *The Neglected Obligation* argued that jihad is a neglected duty that Muslims have abandoned and that needs to be restored once more. Leaders of the Islamic Jihad issued a number of edicts that call for waging war against rulers who do not impose Islamic law and the same was done by al-Gamaa al-Islamiya which released the famous "Manifesto of Islamic work" calling also for fighting rulers who do not apply Islamic law. However, al-Gamaa al-Islamiya was more flexible than the Islamic Jihad in terms on the organizational and ideological levels which enabled it to attract more members. Al-Gamaa al-Islamiya garnered remarkable support in Upper Egypt.

Both organizations recruited thousands of members in a complex organizational structure that managed to expand its influence in all Egyptian governorates and cities. Those members were ideologically prepared to fight a war against all enemies of Islam, who for them included Christians, seculars, and state officials.

The two organizations carried out terrorist operations that targeted everyone, the most brutal of which was the Luxor attack that killed dozens of tourists in 1997. The Egyptian state eventually managed to disband the two organizations, hence rendering the Luxor attack the last operation by big jihadi organizations in Egypt. The 1990s witnessed a bloodier conflict in Algeria following the cancellation of

parliamentary elections won by the Islamic Salvation Front. This resulted in what verged on civil war in which thousands of civilians were killed, yet like in Egypt, the Algerian state finally won the battle against militant groups.

The collapse of any big organization usually leaves a vacuum that is expected to be occupied by other social and political factions that should be able to attract previous supporters or members of these organizations towards a different type of political activity that focuses on effecting change through peaceful means. However, this did not happen since Arab states relied on security measures to repress remaining supporters of these organizations, which left behind a soil that was still fertile enough for the same kind of activities to thrive again even if in different ways.

The defeat of jihadi organizations by the Egyptian and Algerian regimes and the emergence of new horizons that transcended national borders encouraged the expansion of these organizations on the international level. The September 11 attacks constitute the culmination of this shift to globalized terrorist operations. The year 1998, when Ayman al-Zawahiri merged the Islamic Jihad into al-Qaeda and formed The World Islamic Front against Jews and Crusaders, signaled the beginning of this shift from local to international operations. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 offered an ideal environment for those internationalized organizations.

Local jihadi organizations had a specific goal, which was toppling the regimes and replacing them with an Islamic state. However, the second phase, which followed the September 11 attacks, witnessed the emergence of small cells first then the emergence of globalized organizations that, unlike the previous ones, did not include in their discourse an Islamic state. These organizations rather focused on destabilizing the state or filling the vacuum that followed the ouster of several Arab regimes as was the case in Iraq and Libya.

Second: The phase of small cells:

The first reemergence of terrorism in Egypt was the Taba explosion on October 6, 2004, which was followed by two attacks then the second Sinai attack which took place on July 23, 2005 in Sharm al-Sheikh followed by the third in Dahab on April 25, 2006. The return

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of terrorism revealed a change in the techniques of militant religious groups. First, the new attacks were mainly individual-based since the perpetrators did not belong to any of the big jihadi organizations and did not have a clear purpose or ideology. Those are the type of terrorists who would not accept being part of strict hierarchical structure as was the case with big jihadi organizations. There was a shift from the "jihadi ideology" phase to that of "terrorist operations." Jihad in this phase turned into "an individual mission" emerging from a desire to seek revenge or as a means salvation but not as part of a specific project that aims at effecting radical change or toppling the regime or taking power. Second, operatives of this phase carried out terrorist attacks for a variety of reasons. The Taba operation might have been done to target Israelis and avenge Palestinians while other attacks might have aimed at destabilizing the Egyptian economy or retaliating against the regime following violations committed against Sinai residents following the Taba attacks. Third, those terrorist operations included both professionals and amateurs. The Taba attack was undoubtedly carried out by professionals who knew how to target a large number of people while this is not the case with other attacks. Fourth, those groups might have been supported by external entities such as other fundamentalist individuals or groups that do not form an organizational entity, but are rather part of a fragmented network.

This random mosaic that does not belong to a specific group and does not have a specific agenda is the product of accumulated feelings of resentment as a result of deprivation and poverty. It can also be the result of violations practiced on daily basis by Israeli and US forces and which would make a lot of people feel helpless and oppressed and would merge domestic indignation with external suffering.

Violence in this phase was no longer based on the ideologies of Ibn Taimiya or any of the other books and documents issued by big jihadi organizations, but is more of a product of a local political and social reality combined with daily scenes of murder and abuse at the hands of soldiers who might look like those tourists who come to Egypt.

The emergence of small cells in the last two decades underlined a number of social and political factors that nourished those groups. Although they did carry out terrorist operations, these small cells did not exceed being a source of trouble for regimes, but were never a

major threat to its very existence or that of the state like what happened in the third phase.

Third: The return of big organization:

Following the US invasion of Iraq, the toppling of the Iraqi regime, and the disbanding of the army, a new state was established along sectarian lines and this was a main reason for the prevalence of globalized radical institutions from al-Qaeda to ISIS. The collapse of the Iraqi state left a vacuum that was instantly filled by radical organizations that fought all parties—Sunnis, Shiites, and Americans—and others that focused on resisting occupation or fighting armed Shiite groups. The role of globalized radical organizations in Iraq started with al-Qaeda which launched unprecedented terrorist operations that mainly targeted Iraqi citizens and tried to establish a state within a state. The influence of al-Qaeda extended to a number of Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, even though Iraq remained the launching point.

The eruption of the Syrian revolution and its brutal repression by the Syrian regime gave birth to the second version of globalized radical organizations: the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The brutality of the Syrian regime played an important role in allowing ISIS to extend its influence beyond Syria and Iraq: in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the Maghreb, the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, and several parts of Africa in addition to European countries, especially France. ISIS became an example of a cross-border organization that commits the most horrid of crimes.

When in mid-2015 ISIS launched three terrorist attacks on the same day in three different countries and three different continents—Tunisia, Kuwait, and France—it was delivering a message about how globalized the organization has become and how powerful. After claiming responsibility for the attacks, ISIS called upon its members to continue their operations against "infidels" and "agents of the crusaders." Similar attacks took place later in 2015: the Paris operation that killed 140 people, the attack on Tunisian presidential guards, and a number of attacks in Egypt in the Sinai Peninsula and Cairo.

Fourth: Extremist Islam or Islamization of extremism

Several studies argued that ISIS is a typical example of Islamic extremism that is based on a contrived interpretation of religious texts that only serve the group's agenda. Yet, this argument needs to be revised because the case of ISIS cannot be examined through the criteria used with jihadi organizations in 1970s. Big jihadi organizations were founded on a complex ideological framework that required serious revisions in order to negotiate with the regime.

Al-Gamaa al-Islamiya launched the Initiative for the Renunciation of Violence in 1997 followed by a series of four books entitled *The Correction of Concepts* in 2002 and which detail the revision of the religious interpretations based on which the organization was founded. In the years that followed, the group issued around 20 other books in the same direction. This was followed by Sheikh Sayed Imam's initiative presented in a book *Rationalizing Jihad in Egypt and the World*. This signaled the end of this chapter of religious violence in Egypt.

The question now is whether ISIS needs religious and intellectual revisions similar to those initiated by big jihadi organizations or whether the nature of the organization does make any form of revision a priority at all. Recruitment for ISIS is conducted according to social, political, and sectarian factors that are endowed with an Islamic character or that rather Islamize extremism, which is initially a product of reality. ISIS is, therefore, not similar of the 1970s organizations, whose Islam was extremist because it stemmed from their interpretation of religious texts. Most jihadi organizations branched out of the Muslim Brotherhood and the writings of Sayed Qutb and were founded on an intellectual and ideological base that considers all human laws contradictory to Islamic law and all regimes apostates for not applying Islamic law. The establishment of this ideological framework in its contemporary form took decades and produced hundreds of books and thousands of documents and studies that justify violence. This means that members of jihadi organizations had to believe in this ideology before joining because only then would they be convinced that the regime is apostate and the society is corrupt. For example, Sayed Imam, codenamed Doctor Fadl, wrote a book entitled *The Essential Guide for Preparation* and which

exceeded 1,000 pages and became the main reference of all jihadi groups and the same applies to his second book *The Compendium of the Pursuit of Divine Knowledge*. A large number of religious scholars considered those books ideological deviations from Islam and Imam himself revised many of his writings as part of the initiative to renounce violence.

This kind of ideological and intellectual debate receded remarkably with the emergence of al-Qaeda then almost disappeared with the emergence of ISIS. A comparison of how members were prepared before joining jihadi organizations would reveal the difference between the 1970s and now. In the case of big jihadi organizations, members might take years of ideological education until they are fully prepared to become jihadis while this is not case with ISIS that is mainly driven by a desire to take revenge whether against the Syrian regime, the Shiites of Iraq, European governments, or "infidels" around the world.

All theories and studies that examined the phenomenon of terrorism, especially in the last few decades, were unable to explain it through one dimension. The argument that social and political factors are the main reasons has been refuted by the experiences of several terrorist groups. The same applied to arguments about authoritarian regimes when terrorism emerged in democratic Europe and arguments about avenging Palestinians since ISIS is everywhere except Israel.

Terrorist operations taking place in several parts of the world are the product of two major transformations. One is the transformation in the structure of jihadi groups and which saw the shift from domestic struggle that aims at toppling the regime and establishing an Islamic state to a desire for revenge for both domestic and external grievances. The second is the transformation in the ideological foundation of these groups and in which a contrived interpretation of religious texts was replaced with the use of religion only to justify murder and terrorism.

Chapter one: European youth and violent radical groups

European youths of Arab origins and the crisis integration:
The French model

Mohamed ElAgati

The terrorist attacks that took place in France and the subsequent victory of the right-wing in local elections coupled with the rise of right-wing rhetoric in general underlined a form of failure in the European, particularly French, concept of citizenship. Most perpetrators of the terrorist attacks were second generation immigrants born and raised in France and hardly know about Islamic or Arab heritage. This, for many analysts, underscored a problem with French identity and the principles relevant to it such as citizenship and coexistence. A number of French and international commentators attributed this to a scheme that targets the country's history of enlightenment and civilization and French President Francois Hollande described the terrorist operations as an attack on the values the French republic represents such as "freedom, creativity, justice, freedom of expression, and pluralism"[1]. This discourse overlooks the serious challenges faced by contemporary European societies. The attacks bring back to the forefront the question of what it means to be a citizen of Europe and how this citizenship intersects with pressing issues related to class and cultural identity[2].

This paper attempts to examine the crisis of integration from which immigrants suffer and its relation to the crisis of identity and national solidarity, the economic, social, cultural, and political reasons of this

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[1] One of the comments that best represents this situation what Egyptian leftist politician Emad Attiya wrote on his Facebook page in Arabic: "I have witnessed several elections in Europe. The usual fight has always been between the center right and the center left around taxes and social insurance. In short, the right always wants to reduce taxes on businesses, investments, and businessmen citing boosting investment. Of course, when taxes are reduced, spending on education, healthcare, pension… etc. would be reduced, too. The left is the opposite as it demands increasing taxes in order to improve services and spend more on social insurance and welfare. For the first time in my life as I was following elections in France, none of these issues were mentioned. Everything was about the identity of France to the extent that Sarkozy, Marine Le Pen, and the French socialist Prime Minister Manuel Vans ended their speeches with 'Long Live France!'" https://goo.gl/KjTbHr

[2] Maha Yehia. "Going Back to Charlie Hebdo and the Meaning of the Attack for Europe [Arabic]." *Al-Hayat Newspaper*, February 6, 2015: http://is.gd/eNg18ns

crisis, the relation between this crisis and the application of the French citizenship theory, and the relationship between policies and the rise of the European right.

First: The crisis of integration for French citizens of Arab origins:

French citizens of Arab origins constitute at the present the highest percentage of Arabs living in Europe for they exceed by far those in other European countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany. Those citizens are of Arab origin, yet are remarkably different from Arabs who live in the Arab world and were born and raised in France, yet are remarkably different from French citizens who have inherited the European culture. Several problems from which immigrants suffer started coming to the surface recently, especially in the case of third generation immigrants who were born in France, but retain an Arab identity even though they don't know a lot about the Arab world. This situation created a citizenship crisis and a feeling of loss of identity[3]. The first generation of immigrants, who moved to France in the 1960s, focused on earning a living for the purpose of making money then going back home. They lived in isolation and neither spoke the language nor knew of the Western culture. The second generation moved to France in the late 1980s and early 1990s and those tried to negotiate an identity and to determine whether they are French or Arab and this is how religion was introduced. In order to escape from a state of instability that imposed a number of confusing questions, a large number of immigrants resorted to religion that became a refuge for them and offered them comfort and peace of mind. The third and current generation is the one that focused most on religion and immigrants from this generation suffer the most from an identity crisis, especially that many of them suffer from familial problems and find it hard to integrate into the French society which they see as unjust and which according to them had oppressed their parents before. This sentiment gives rise to a desire for revenge, which is usually done through the adoption of extremist and jihadi ideologies[4]. The marginalization and

[3] Abdel Wahed Akmir. "Arab Europeans: Identity, Upbringing, and Citizenship [Arabic]." The Center for Arab Unity Studies, *al-Mostaqbal Magazine*. Beirut, 2012: http://goo.gl/FFtrgS

[4] Lina Khaled. "The Arabs of France: Extremism in the Midst of Racist Surroundings." *One World*: http://goo.gl/IlFFa7

discrimination to which immigrants are subjected drive them to get involved in illegal activities, to form underground groups, and to think of how to retaliate against the state.

Exclusion drives a number of immigrants to look for an alternative identity, which they find in religion. Religion is turned into religiosity, manifested first in a change of appearance such as growing a beard and wearing Afghani garments or a face veil. As a result of the absence of a moderate religious education and a general lack of culture, some of those immigrants fall prey to radical TV channels or websites that portray Europe as the center of infidelity and that, accordingly, encourage jihad there. Through these media, radical ideology is instilled into those youths to an extent that might drive them to leave for Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, or Syria to fight.

Second: The economic dimensions of the crisis

Studies underline Europe's need for immigrants not only for economic reasons, but also for demographic considerations related to the continent's ageing population[5]. This need started following the end of World War Two through the 1980s, but discriminatory practices against the first generation of immigrants, the job market's exclusion of ethnic minorities, and the rising influence of the right led to the impoverishment of immigrants and their concentration in the most disenfranchised neighborhoods in the country. This led French citizens of Arab origins to live in isolation, complaining of the state's indifference towards them, which drove many of them to form gangs and engage in illegal activities that bothered the French police for a long time[6]. According to study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), unemployment rates among foreigners in member states are four times for the majority of the population while it reached the double in member states. Unemployment rates among immigrants reached 15.6% compared to 13.8% in OECD member states. The report stated that France is the country that receives the largest number of immigrants born in Africa, three quarters of whom, including those returned to

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[5] Alessandro Figs. "Demographic Challenges and the Problems of Immigrants in Europe [Arabic]." *Al-Siyassa al-Dawlia*: http://is.gd/t6Mrnc
[6] Milod Ben Gharbi. "Immigrants: Marginalization or Identity Crisis? [Arabic]" *Voltaire Network*, 2005: http://goo.gl/h8d6th

their countries, are from the Maghreb countries. The report stressed that the number of foreigners living in OECD member states has risen by one third in 10 years. With the rising rates of poverty and unemployment, France emerged as the worst as far as integration of immigrants is concerned. France also occupies a middle position among OECD member states that include 110 million immigrants, which constitute 9% of its total population according to the study. However, the percentage of poverty among foreigners living in France has reached 21.2% compared to 17.3% in other member states while the percentage of poverty among foreigners reached 14.5% in 2010 compared to 11.9% in OECD member states[7].

According to studies by the International Labor Organization, immigrants are more prone to poverty. In fact, the percentage of non-Europeans that are subjected to impoverishment reaches 29% compared to 15% among European-born citizens, which highlights a legacy of poverty that passes through generations of immigrants and that will continue to do so as long as the policies of economic and social integration of immigrants are not modified[8]. Those numbers do not only underline deplorable economic conditions, but also confirm economic isolation to citizens based on their ethnicity.

Third: Political problems of French citizens of Arab origins:

Politician in France have for some time been addressing voters who oppose the integration of immigrants into the French society[9], whether through trying to win their votes or attacking them to win the votes of factions that oppose them. While the French law criminalizes racism and anti-Semitism, it does not pay attention to racist practices related to Islamophobia and far-right parties take advantage of this. This was demonstrated in the 2012 elections in which 80% of French citizens took part and which saw the National Front Party winning one fifth of the votes in the first round[10]. Marine Le Pen, daughter of the National

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[7] "France Faces Problem in Integrating Immigrants [Arabic]." *Al-Arab al-Qataria*: http://goo.gl/ikEtdD

[8] Megan Benton and others, "Moving up or Standing Still? Access to Middle- skilled Work for Newly Arrived Migrants in the European Union." July 2014, p. 7: http://is.gd/ozmdok

[9] Mohamed Sharaq. "Algerian Immigrants: The Fuel of Presidential Elections in France [Arabic]." *Al-Khabar*, July 18, 2011: http://is.gd/j9nLdn

[10] "Marine Le Pen: The Other Face of Far Right in France [Arabic]." *France 24*, April 25, 2012: http://is.gd/pFodBz

Front Party's longtime leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, was elected president of the party by 100% of the votes in 2014 and she is expected to make it to the second round of the 2017 presidential elections[11]. The number of seats taken by the far right in the French National Assembly increased and the same happened in the European Parliament in 2014 when the far right won more than 25% of the total seats[12]. Meanwhile, the number of French citizens of foreign origins in the French national Assembly did not exceed 10 members in the 2012 elections[13], which means that minorities are poorly represented. Added to this are the accusations leveled against Arabs and Muslims following any terrorist attack on the part of media outlets and far-right parties, which increases the intensity of Islamophobia and encourages establishing a constant link between Islam and terrorism[14].

Fourth: Social and cultural problems:

Those who follow talent shows will notice the large number of European, especially French, citizens of Arab origins who perform in their countries of origin. Even though they don't speak Arabic, they still take part in Arab shows because they want to perform in front of audience from their culture of origin, which betrays lack of integration in their host culture. This leads to the emergence of a number of questions concerning cultural and social problems facing immigrants.

There are several problems related to the theory of citizenship in France and which mainly revolves around melting into the host culture rather than cultural diversity. According to this theory, diversity is not acknowledged in the public sphere, but becomes a matter of choice in the private sphere[15]. There is, therefore, a missing link between the principle of equality and that of acceptance of diversity and

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[11] "French Far-Right National Front Party Elects Marine Le Pen as President [Arabic]." *Euro News*, November 30, 2014: http://is.gd/R3WyKp

[12] Colette Davidson. "Extremist Parties Win One Quarter of European Parliament Seats: France and the Tremor of the Far Right [Arabic]." *Al-Ittihad*, May 29, 2014: http://is.gd/085Pmj

[13] "Representatives of Arab and Foreign Origins in the French National Assembly [Arabic]." *France 24*, June 18, 2012: http://is.gd/wftvMs

[14] "Islamophobia: The Talk of Political and Media Circles in France [Arabic]." *France 24*, February 27, 2015: http://is.gd/HUQZc1

[15] "Local integration policies for migrants in Europe." European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Luxemburg, 2007: p. 12.

difference, for the French state does not acknowledge languages or social and cultural customs that are not French. This problem is further manifested in the way French citizens of Arab origins have to change their names so that they can integrate into the French society. Some third generation immigrants have two names: an Arab name used in family circles and a French name used in state institutions and for educational purposes. This is mainly because French citizens with Arab names are more subjected to violations by the French police, according to reports by French Journalists[16] or international rights organizations. French sociologists and experts on immigration issue note that civil status registries in neighborhoods predominantly populated by Arab immigrants now contain non-Arab names after parents started choosing Latin names for their children or at names that combine both. Analysts argue that this phenomenon demonstrates that desire of immigrant youths to integrate into the French society. Names of French citizens of Arab origins show that common Arab names that were used extensively by immigrant families in the 1970s such as Mustafa, Abdullah, and the like have been receding in the past few years. Families who choose Arab names for their children prefer names that can be easily pronounced by the French[17].

The problem of integration is also demonstrated in the way Arab immigrant communities resemble cantons on the outskirts of French cities. France, like other countries in which immigrants settled, established neighborhoods in the outskirts of big cities and which later became a hotbed for a number of pressing problems like housing, education, work, and coexistence among members of different cultures and communities. Added to this is the spread of crime and drug dealing in these neighborhoods. Those neighborhoods are like ghettos that are almost devoid of aspects of civilization seen in the cities. Arabs become the most isolated among immigrants since Francophone Africans have no language barriers, therefore integrate more easily into the French society and culture[18]. Meanwhile, there are very few reports that highlight the contribution of immigrants in

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[16] "Etre français d'origine arabe en 2009." *Le Monde*, October 29, 2009: http://goo.gl/FmHxNQ
[17] "French Arabs Change their Names for Hope of Integration [Arabic]." *Al-Wasat*, Bahrain, issue number 61, November 6, 2002: http://goo.gl/cyUHt2
[18] "Immigrants' Isolation in French Outskirts [Arabic]." *Al-Arab Newspaper*, London, July 18, 2013: rab.co.uk/?p=53285

the French society whether on the political or economic levels, which does not help in changing stereotypes.

Conclusion:

Reducing the crisis of citizenship in Europe to the cultural aspect, confining culture to identity, and limiting identity to religion constitute the core of the crisis and deepen it more. The crisis needs to be dealt with from a broader point of view through, for example, taking into consideration the social and economic repercussions of thee marginalization of immigrant neighborhoods.

The theory of citizenship founded on the necessity of melting into the host culture needs to be revised in a way that acknowledges diversity and therefore includes all forms of difference from appearance to religious faith. The feeling of estrangement from which younger generations of immigrants suffer will turn into a time bomb if it is not handled in a manner that respects diversity. It is also important to take into consideration that what worked with migrants coming from the countryside a quarter century ago does not work with immigrants coming from totally different cultures. It is necessary to link between the role of immigrant labor in achieving Europe's prosperity and the creation of a multi-cultural community where different cultures are acknowledged and respected and where appreciation of skills and talents prevails. This transformation should start with educational policies then move to strategies related to political, cultural, and social factors through revising the legislations that trigger the isolation and marginalization of immigrants and replacing them with ones that enhance equality and justice and protect them from ethnic-based violence and violations by security forces. Laws that protect Arab immigrants from racism should be issued such as what happened with the Holocaust laws and which makes Arabs feel that the French state has double standards. Arab immigrants should also be encouraged to participate in societal dialogues about national issues and not only matters that concern their communities. They also need to get acquainted with their heritage with which they have almost no links according to reports. In fact, the problem is that the link most immigrants maintain with their culture is only through religion, usually presented by conservative, if not radical, preachers. A cultural exchange program can be established so that Arab artists and

intellectuals can meet French citizens of Arab origins and introduce them to the creative scene in the Arab world.

In addition, European politicians and academics need to counter the clash of civilizations theory that has started to come to the forefront once more through dealing with identity as a larger concept that is broader than religion by developing it to include several dimensions. This will facilitate the process of taking immigrants out of their isolation through making them feel that their religion is only part of a much broader identity which they share with the rest of the community.

Why do second generation immigrants in Europe join violent radical groups?

Mohamed Sahbi El Khalfaoui

The year 2015 would always be marked as remarkably bloody in France for it started with violence and ended with violence and drew the state's attention to the fact that it is being targeted by an external enemy, namely the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). What complicates the matter is that those who took part in the attacks in France were not citizens of Arab or Muslim countries who joined the ranks of ISIS, but rather French citizens. The only difference that sets them apart from their compatriots is the fact that they are second generation immigrants. This means that France is, in fact, engaged in a confrontation with itself and the same applies to a number of other European countries.

There have been several attempts at examining the reasons that make second generation immigrants fall prey to a radical ideology that only acknowledges violent confrontation. This paper will present a number of clues about why youths from minority groups in Europe in general and France in particular join extremist organizations.

Two conventional interpretations of the phenomenon:

Attempts at interpreting the phenomenon of second generation European immigrants joining extremist groups have mainly revolved around two arguments:

a)   The first argument considers the rising power of extremist groups a natural outcome of the clash of civilizations. This "culturalist" approach attributes the involvement of youths with extremist groups to Islam's inability to be integrated into the universal value system without a comprehensive re-reading of Islamic texts, one that counters all attempts at presenting it as a special ideology[19].

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[19] French commentator Eric Zemmour is one of the most prominent advocates of this argument in the French media. This is demonstrated in one of his interviews: http://is.gd/k8ZU8N

b)   The second argument belongs to the Third World School which cites the post-colonial trauma, the Palestinian cause, Western intervention in the Middle East, and the rise of Islamophobia in European societies as the main reasons that drive youths to resort to radical ideologies[20].

Those two arguments, however, overlook an important fact; few European Muslims adopt Salafism in general and jihadi Salafism in particular and their numbers can be determined[21]. Each argument, also, is problematic in its way. The first argument, apart from being quite occidental-centrist, presents an essentialist understanding of Islam that overlooks the diverse sects and schools of thought it encompasses, each of which adopting a different interpretation of religious texts. In other words, this argument treats Islam as one single entity with fixed characteristics that do not change over time and space. This perception of Islam is similar to that of jihadi groups which do not take into consideration that religiosity is the social product of a complex and multi-faceted combination of economic, communal, and historical factors. The second argument overlooks the participation of citizens of countries where Western intervention is most flagrant, such as Palestinians, Syrians, and Iraqis, in the terrorist operations carried out in Europe. In addition, peripheral areas[22] are obviously the destinations most preferred by youths who join radical groups—with the exception of course of the attraction of fighting in Syria and Iraq following the creation of ISIS and not before—while this is not the case with Palestine. Not only did Palestine not witness the formation of any new jihadi groups, but Israeli interests in Europe were never targeted as was the case in the 1970s.

If those two arguments do not provide enough understanding of the phenomenon, what would? Below is an attempt to answer this question.

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[20] Francois Birgand of the French National Research Institute is among the most prominent supporters of this argument.

[21] On December 8, 2015, Soufan Group published an intelligence report on the number of ISIS members according to nationality. The report is available on: http://is.gd/5bcWO9

[22] Olivier Roy. "Islamic terrorist radicalisation in Europe", in Amghhar, Samir, Amel Boubekeur and Michael Emerson (eds.), European Islam - Challenges for society and public policy", Brussels, Center for european policy studies, 2007, p : 53

1- The Islamization of radicalism:

One of the most important factors that need to be examined in order to deal with the phenomenon is the fact that the backgrounds of youths who implemented terrorist attacks are quite similar:

-They are French citizens and children of immigrants.

-They live in the outskirts of Paris.

-Most of them were unable to integrate into the conventional economic and productive paths.

-Many of them dropped out of school or were unable to receive university education.

-Their ages range between 23 and 31.

-They are known to security forces before 2012 for committing a number of civil offenses such as drug use, theft, and other minor crimes.

-They were all placed on radical suspect lists.

Those youths share the conditions of many of their fellow second generation immigrants especially as far as their fragile social status is concerned. This fragility is distinguished by three levels of detachment from reality:

a)   Economic detachment: Most children of immigrants find it difficult to integrate into the economic system in Europe in general and France in particular. This is attributed to a number of factors, on top of which is dropping out of school at an early age. Youths who drop out of school do not reach the stage of integration into the official job market since their modest education would only enable them to earn their living through a parallel job market that does not require degrees. This eventually leads to a complete detachment from all official frameworks, whether political, civil, or social. Other factors contribute to this economic detachment such as the ghetto culture that does not allow those youths to mingle with the French society. This is aggravated by the rise of Islamophobia, which makes a considerable segment of this society reluctant to mingle with them.

b)   Cultural detachment: This is a double detachment where second generation immigrants are detached from the culture of their

host country as well as the culture of their country of origin. The first type of detachment is based on the concept of "othering." It is relevant here to note the failure of the two most prominent European models in integrating immigrants. First, in the Anglo-Saxon model, which is based on cultural diversity, immigrants are categorized under ethnic groups. This encourages the formation of community bonds that hinder integration with members of other communities. Second, in the French model, immigrants are expected to give up their original identity and totally assimilate to the host culture. Both models turn immigrants into strangers even though from the legal point of view they are full-fledged citizens and enjoy all the rights of their fellow citizens[23]. Those two models are also founded on a tendency to discard cultural specificities in the general policies of the state. However, it is interesting to see that the reaction of second generation immigrants is not the same as their parents'. The second type of detachment is directed against the parents or the first generation of immigrants. These immigrants carry to Europe the conventional religious ideologies they acquired in their homeland. The children rebel against these ideologies[24] because they only inherit them and do not go through a process of religious education like their parents did back home. The parents, therefore, fail to make their children adopt their religious ideologies as they are. Weak family ties also encourage this rebellion since parents, especially fathers, usually work in industrial sector and are away from home for long hours every day. This makes male children unable to find the guidance they need and which, according to the patriarchal societies from which they come, is typically the father. The problem of weak family ties especially applies on families from the Maghreb, yet not to immigrants from Turkey or the Comoros Islands, who managed to establish social solidarity networks that provide a form of protection.

c)   Political detachment: Youths reject conventional political paths that guarantee the inclusion of all segments of society in the representational system as well as all other political and state institutions. As for opposition parties and organizations, their discourse is mainly oratorical[25]. That is why neither official nor

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[23] Olivier Roy, p. 56.
[24] Amghar, Samir, "Le niqâb, pour s'affirmer ?" Revue Projet 2010/7 (n° HS 01), p : 73
[25] Jean Charlot. *Les partis politiques*. Paris : Armand Collin, 1971 : p. 109.

opposition entities succeeded in attracting youths let alone radical ones, so they ended up at the periphery of central political institutions despite the presence of these institutions on several regional and local levels. Political detachment drove youths to look for alternative entities and that is how the radicalized among them preferred to join groups that chose armed conflict with the state as a way of voicing indignation.

This is, therefore, a generation that suffers from estrangement problems that were translated into economic, cultural, and political detachment from its surroundings and that led those that are more prone to radicalism and more conscious of the stigmatization process to which they are subjected to adopt extremist ideologies. It is noteworthy that only a small segment of the Muslim community is affected by radical ideologies.

Jihadi Salafism finds a fertile environment in those youths who lack the necessary sources of security and who are inclined towards clashing with the social and political institutions to which they cannot belong. Violence, in this case, takes precedence over ideology for it is the possibility of violence that attracts them to radical groups and not the type of ideology those groups promote. They are mainly lured by the way radical groups address their and community's problems and offer solutions for them[26].

French professor of anthropology Alain Bertho argued that turning to radical thought constitutes one of the means of rebelling against living conditions especially that, according to him, violent Salafi ideology is currently one of the last alternatives in the "political radicalism market,"[27] as he puts it. Professor of political science Olivier Roy refutes claims that a radical transformation happened in Islam and confirms that the phenomenon constitutes "bestowing an ideological character on the phenomenon of radicalism or in other words an Islamization of radicalism"[28].

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[26] Olivier Roy, p.57.
[27] Interview with Alain Bertho on May 11, 2015 entitled "The Islamization of the Radical Revolution": http://is.gd/242JzL
[28] An article published in Le Monde on November 24, 2015 entitled "Jihadism: A Generational and Nihilistic Revolution": http://is.gd/8s7Go0

2-   The attraction of ISIS:

A number of analysts attribute the power of extremist groups, especially ISIS, to the funding they receive. While this is relatively true, one important factor is being disregarded, which is the attraction of ISIS for a considerable number of youths. In fact, the discourse used by ISIS seems to be almost solely designed for youths. According to reports about the perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Europe, none of the youths involved in those attacks had a history of religiosity and those of them who went to jail only committed minor crimes.

ISIS offers a form of rebirth for those youths. Their past, no matter how shameful, will be totally forgotten and they will be part of a universal entity unlike those national and local institutions in their home countries and which usually overlook the cultural specificity of their country of origin. This rebirth process offers those who agree to go through it a new life fuelled by an enormous energy inspired by the concept of "jihad." It gives a meaning to existence through a new set of practices, terminology, and even costumes which shape the new life with the new group. Part of the appeal of this new life is the choice to die for a noble cause, which in itself constitutes a strong boost to the ego of youths who start to love death as much as others love life.

This new life also offers youths the opportunity to build a new community in which they can play a major role. On November 24, 2012, Tunisian jihadi Salafist Kamal Zarrouk gave a speech to a huge crowd of youths in a neighborhood outside the capital Tunis: "Youths of Islam, the people are waiting for you. Teach them and let us see you words and actions in society. You are the source of prosperity; you are the leaders and you are the awakening. You will guide the nation to the path of victory. You are the type of youths the prophet talked about, the conquerors"[29].

This speech assigns youths life-changing tasks and turns them from disenfranchised victims into powerful masters. Such discourse provides youths in Europe with the self-esteem they lacked in the countries in which they lived. They are rendered the first defense line

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[29] Mohamed al-Hajj Salem. "Jihadi Youths in Douar Hicher: An Ethnographic Case Study" in Mohamed al-Hajj Salem, ed. *Jihadi Salafism in Tunisia: Reality and Consequences*. Tunis: The Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014: p. 215.

towards the reestablishment of the prophet's nation through defeating the infidel powers that marginalized them and the Muslim societies that deviate from the teachings of Islam. The kind of Islam promised to jihadi fighters is that of "the rescued group," the type that turns them from being excluded to practicing exclusion[30] under the banner of a noble project.

ISIS is not just the last offer in the political radicalism market as Alain Bertho argued, but also the last offer in the political idealism market since it does not organize a system governed by rotation of power or institutional reform, but builds a whole world that redefines good and evil and provides answers about the entire universe.

3-   Conclusion:

ISIS will shape the political, cultural, and geo-strategic scene for decades to come and if modernity gave birth to Nazism and Fascism in the past century as another facet of a system that places the human being at its center, post-modernity has now given birth to this entity that is proving extreme efficiency in using the products of civilization in order to destroy civilization.

Conventional political factions have failed in countering the type of terrorism which turns killing into a pleasant activity[31] because they were restricted by their conventional methods on both the political and social levels. Only nonconventional entities, radical though in a different way, would succeed in countering terrorism and uprooting the ideological foundations on which it is based, that is entities similar to Podemos and Syriza.

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[30] Pierre Vidal-Naquet tackled the same idea in his analysis of the founding generation of the state of Israel.
[31] A saying by prophet Mohamed about people who kill while smiling.

Motivations of the European Youths to Join Violent Radical Groups:
The Case of ISIS

Sezer Özcan

Abstract

This study will mainly analyze the motivations of the European youths for joining the radical groups, particularly to ISIS. The reasons are not disconnected from one another, they merge into one push and pull factor. In addition to that the recruitment process of radical groups will be analyzed as well to understand how foreign fighters participate to ISIS. In the final part, there will be several significant recommendations on how the European officials can cope with this threat.

Keywords: Radicalization, ISIS, European Youths, Radical Groups, Recruitment

A.   Europe Faces the Crucial Threat: The ISIS

Radicalization by definition is a complex phenomenon. Most simply, it can be defined as activities (beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions, strategies) of a character far removed from the ordinary. In conflict settings it manifests as a severe form of conflict engagement. However, the labelling of activities, people, and groups as "radical", and the defining of what is "ordinary" in any setting is always a subjective and political issue. Moreover, radical acts are more likely to be employed by marginalised people and groups who view more normative forms of conflict engagement as blocked for them or biased. However, dominant groups also commonly employ radical activities such as governmental sanctioning of violent paramilitary groups or the attack in Nigeria by the Boko Haram and the attacks in Syria by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS or IS).[32] Besides, radical acts often employ violent means, although radical groups will

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[32] Onuoha, F C. (2012). "Boko Haram: Nigeria's Extremist Islamic Sect", Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, February 29 2012, 1–6.

differ in their preference for violent vs. non-violent tactics, in the level of violence they employ, and in the preferred targets of their violence from infrastructure to military personnel to civilians to children. Here the term "radical groups" mainly refers to Islamist militants or organizations that follow strict practice of Islam (group of Salafism) and seek applying the Islamic Law (Sharia) in all the Islamic countries in an attempt to re-build 'Al Khilafa'. For example, the ISIS has come up with the discourse of "Resurrecting the Islamic State (Al-Khilafah)" according to their extremist interpretation of the Islamic law (sharia). The group basically present itself as the only capable group to unite the Islamic countries and nations under the rule of one Muslim-Sunni leader (Al Khalifa) Abu Bakr El Boghdaidi. This radical group recruits fighters from all over the world and attracts new members who hate the West, mainly the U.S. The fundamental belief of these radical groups is to make 'Al Jihad' by using violence, which is not acceptable by Islam.

The issue of violent radicalization were moved back again on the European political agenda. As it is believed by the European officials that so far 5000 European youths have joined ISIS in Iraq and Syria for fighting, therefore, the European authorities are on alert.[33] It's long been known that ISIS has drawn fighters not just from the Arab World but also from Europe, especially from France, Germany and the U.K. The case of Burak Karan, a young player of the German football league killed in Syria in October 2013[34] is only one example of this political and media scrutiny. Falko Walde, an expert on Iraq at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Amman, highlighted that "These are mainly young men who have been attracted by the ideology." He also said that "IS is seen as the most radical and most aggressive militia active in the region. And apparently this is of particular interest for young people who are looking for orientation."[35] The majority of

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[33] In April 2013, the *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation* (ICSR) estimated the number of European citizens joining the Syrian rebels to be between 140 and 600. In December 2013 and according to the ICSR, the number of fighters from Western Europe ranged from 396 to 1,937. See http://icsr.info/2013/12/icsr-insight11000-foreign-fighters-syria-steep-rise-among-western-europeans/

[34] Der Spiegel (2013) "Toter Islamist Burak Karan: Vom deutschen Nationalspieler zum Dschihadisten" [Burak karan: From National Football team to Jihad], Der Spiegel, 18.11.2013.

[35] For further information, please visit the website: http://www.dw.de/german-jihadists-on-isis-terror-mission/a-17710907

these recruits are converts who identify with Salafism, an especially conservative movement centring on an idealized concept of early Islam. In the meantime, these trained fighters from Europe play little role in the group's military success, however they are significant to ISIS for propaganda purposes. By that way, ISIS will say that its fighters are not just from Iraq, Syria and the Gulf states, but also from Europe.

However, the EU, a strong economy and political power, fails to adequately address the radicalization problem on its own soil. The attendance rates to radical organizations, such as ISIS, have rapidly risen in Europe and the EU could not adequately address this problem. In that framework, the main threat for European security authorities is that jihadists will use their battle experience from the Middle East for attacks in Europe. There has already been an alarming example in the Paris attack and the attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels in 2015. These attacks were carried out by the fighters who were trained by the ISIS, which shows how transnational this issue really is. On the other hand, in Paris Charlie Hebdo attack in which 12 people were killed, was done by the Yemeni ISIS also shows that these kinds of terrorist actions could easily happen in Europe. Therefore, European officials must take strong measures on that issue in order to prevent actions of the radical groups.

 As a matter of fact, one of the main reasons of why Europe is unable to tackle with the issue of radicalization is that the messages conveyed by the European officials are not being well-received by the youths in Europe. In other words, the reason behind this failure is those legal actors' cultural differences with the radicalized youths. In France's case, France does not know which rhetoric to use, which cultural or religious values to emphasize and put forward. This is one of the constraints of France. Similarly, the Muslim Community in France faces some constraints. Although the Muslims are slowly overcoming the cultural and lingual barriers and advancing to become a part of the France fabric, the education problem for majority of Muslim Frenchs is not yet resolved. Therefore, Muslims themselves are not able to address the radicalization problem in their own community. This is also the reason for the Muslim youths for following the non-Islamic examples in the religious realm, thus the leadership gap is being filled by radical groups. In that respect, the lack of strong leadership among Muslims in France is one of the significant constraints for them. The

other constraints which are strongly related to the lack of leadership are the underrepresentation of Muslim civil society organizations (CSO) in France; the lack of adequate expertise on social, religious, and political issues, such as radicalization. For instance, Turkish youths in France are caught between two different cultures. Their cultural and religious values are different, and even sometimes in contradiction with the mainstream French society's values. Their families immigrated from distant impoverished Turkish villages to provide the workforce for the rapidly growing French and German economies one decade after the World War II. In this regard, the parents of the Turkish youths were not well-educated enough to successfully integrate their kids to the overall French society. Similarly, for Turkish youths, there has literally been no channel to learn Islam. Furthermore, it is not a secret that Turks are being discriminated at all levels in France. At this point, the radical groups address the religious and social needs of the Turkish youths. In that sense, the French government needs to overcome all these indicated constraints. President Francois Hollande said that more must be done to warn French families of the dangers of militant recruitment campaigns, which he said could touch people from every background, including converts. Converts do appear to make up a substantial portion of those attracted to IS from France. One recent survey by the French Institute, CPDSI, found that 90% of those who adopted radical Islamic beliefs had French grandparents, and that 80% came from atheist families.[36]   On the other hand, German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere (CDU) believes that Islamists from Germany are cooperating with ISIS in Iraq. He said that "When you know that IS is the same organization that is fighting in Syria, then you can easily establish that European fighters are also being deployed in Iraq. That is a big worry for us."[37]

 Furthermore, regarding the recruitment process of the ISIS, the suitable places that recruitment is most likely to occur are the prisons,

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[36] See more details on: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30119868

[37] See for instance the declaration of the German Minister of Interior, Thomas de Maiziere in January 2014: "*We do not want that, especially we do not want them to return battle-tested and perpetrate attacks here*". See Bundesminister Dr. Thomas de Maiziere beim Rat der Justiz- und Innenminister - "Foreign fighters" Problem fur die EU,
http://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Kurzmeldungen/DE/2014/01/ji-rat-athen-foreign-fighters.html

mosques, universities, cafes, gyms, etc. Besides that through the virtual space, the activity of radical groups is traced through different social-media platform like Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube, Facebook and other Blogs, as ISISissue monthly their magazine "Dabiq". Walde adds that the ISIS exploits that information to draw in new followers, "Propagandistic messages including that information spread incredibly quickly on social networks, and that helps to recruit new fighters."[38] He claims that reports indicate the young people become totally indoctrinated during the combat mission: "We're talking about a radical, fundamental interpretation of Islam that penetrates all areas of life. And everyone who completely commits to the cause might be ready for a terror mission in Europe."[39] Moreover, ideology conveyed through texts, videos or social media is not the primary factor of the passage to violence. On the contrary, dynamics of violence by clandestine organizations are relational: they result from the process of interaction between a series of actors, which include governments and their policies at home or abroad. This specific concern about youth radicalization was raised further with the publication of alarmist intelligence reports and the multiplication of news reports about European citizens travelling to Syria to fight, mostly alongside the Syrian opposition.[40] In that context, what makes this mentioned recruitment process drive so effective, Prof Filiu believes, is the way it harnesses the internet for a simple but effective propaganda campaign. The only way to counter it is to ignore the European faces in its execution videos, and its use of Islamic symbols, and focus on the victims. But so far, they're winning and we're just following each red herring they throw at us".[41] In that sense, the recruitment messages become highly crucial. These are very briefly: protecting the vulnerable and full justice and that protection covers specifically the Sunni-people that were prosecuted by Al-Assad Regime in Syria or the Shiite Regime in Iraq; the notion expands to include combating the oppressive policies of the United States and the West towards the

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[38] German jihadists on ISIS terror mission: http://www.dw.com/en/german-jihadists-on-isis-terror-mission/a-17710907
[39] Ibid.
[40] Martin Chulov (2012), "Syria: Foreign Jihadists could join battle for Aleppo", The Guardian, 30.07.2012
[41] What is driving French nationals to join Islamic State? By Lucy Williamson, BBC News, Paris
http://www.bbc.com/news/worldeurope30119868

Muslims of the Middle East; Being committed to the obligation of jihad and Hijra; emphasizing that Al-Hijra (religious immigration) is an Islamic Obligation if the demand condition exist; Last but not least achieve financial gains by providing job opportunities and a proper revenue.[42]

As a result, the individuals in question are generally French or German citizens capable of travelling with identification documents to the Turkish border and then back to France or Germany. By then, they are radicalized and potentially traumatized, but certainly experienced in war. A working group is now set to discuss what legal options are available to deny them re-entry. In France, they are regarded as heroes by likeminded individuals. Additionally, an investigator said Bild Press that "those returning from Syria are already celebrated as pop stars" in the Islamist scene.[43] In that framework, the main question to be answered by the European officials is that whether the radicalized youths will become a threat for the West or not? If yes, how European member states should react to this development? Could these youths be de-radicalized or should they be kept out of Europe? All these questions have to be answered by the European officials as quickly as possible. In accordance with the ad hoc briefing paper submitted to the European Parliament in January 2008 and entitled *Preventing violent radicalization and terrorist recruitment in the EU - The threat to Europe by radical Islamic terrorist group*[44], this briefing note acknowledges the following points: Youth radicalization should not be disconnected from its social and political context and must be investigated within the broader scope of sociology of conflict and violence studies; Radicalization should not be analysed as a form of pre-terrorism which could be disrupted before the shift to violence by an intensive surveillance of a community. It should not be analysed as a linear process but as a relational dynamic; Lastly dynamics of

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[42] Workshop notes of Amal Mukhtar, Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS) on November, 2015, Cairo-Egypt.

[43] http://www.dw.com/en/german-jihadists-on-isis-terror-mission/a-17710907

[44] Didier Bigo, Laurent Bonelli (2008), *Preventing Violent Radicalisation and Terrorist Recruitment in the EU. The Threat to Europe by Radical Islamic Terrorist Groups*, Briefing Paper for the European Parliament, PE 393.277. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/200804/20080407ATT25852/200804 07ATT25852EN.pdf

escalation or de-escalation should be taken into account when analysing radicalization .[45]

B. Motivations of the European Youths For Joining ISIS

The issue of 'radicalization' is high on the agenda of the EU, and political concerns about youth radicalization gained momentum with widely reported cases of young European 'jihadists' returning from Syria and Iraq. When youths from Europe started to join the ISIS, several European member states like the U.K., Germany and France started to wish for getting rid of those radical groups in their countries by ignoring the new trend. After the attack in Paris on 13 November, 2015, the European governments and experts of radicalization opened the discussion of what prompt European Muslims to join ISIS and why these young people commit brutal acts against their own citizens. It became apparent that ISIS was not only gaining control over significant territories in Iraq and Syria, but it also attracted rapidly increasing numbers of foreign fighters from around the world, particularly from Western Europe. European citizens fighting for ISIS are almost entirely first and second generation immigrants who came to Europe from Africa, Middle East or Asia. Despite the fact that they've been brought up and educated in European schools and in a democratic liberal environment, they have decided to leave behind the life of comfort and opportunity by joining and embracing the ranks of radical Islam. At the same time, an Islam expert Michael Kiefer claims that young, male, poorly educated and from difficult family environments - those are features of many violent Salafists' biographies that "a variety of negative factors must come together to radicalize youths. When young people in a difficult development situation meet others who show them respect, impart camaraderie and tell them what to do, then such a life can take a dramatic turn."[46] At the same time, another reason of the youths who joined the ISIS is the life style of those people who doesn't have any purpose in their life and they were attracted by the ISIS' extreme violence and cruelty. This fact caused them quickly to be radicalized. Besides, ISIS has a

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[45]EU Parliament Study: Countering Youth Radicalization in the EU:
https://publicintelligence.net/eu-youth-radicalization/
[46] Ibid.

group of fans on the internet both in France and Belgium. The European youths, who are influenced easily, see the Jihad an acceptable way in order to take the revenge against the community where they lived under pressure and with the discrimination. These youths try to run away from the society that were unable to empathize with them and saw them as 'foreigner'. The experts say that these youths also do not have the enough knowledge of religion compared to previous generations. For instance, Al-Qaeda jihadists acted more selectively on Jihadists, however, ISIS does not show such sensitivity on the fighters. This makes the European youths to participate ISIS very easily. This shows that how little the ISIS care about the theological ideology of Islamist organizations. Professor Anthony Glees, of the Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies at the University of Buckingham, puts it very clearly: "Why are there Brits there? In my view this is because Islamist extremist ideologies have been able to be spread with relative ease in our country under the cover of 'religion', 'free speech' and 'multiculturalism'.[47] Additionally, racism or Islamophobia towards Muslim minorities in European states explains why the youths participate so easily to radical groups. This fact also makes the radical groups to spread their radical ideologies so easy in the west in order to recruit foreign fighters. This perception of the Muslim minorities in Europe does not bring real integration as well, it only creates further alienation between different social groups. All these facts raise questions not only about the future security of Europe (as European citizens, these radicalized young soldiers might easily come back and attempt a "martyr mission", as they call it), but also for the quality and efficiency of the integration of ethnic and religious minorities in Western Europe.[48]

Contrary to the belief that ISIS appeals to devout Muslims in the West, it has been discovered that youths from secular families can also be inclined toward extremism with a lack of solid religious knowledge and can be militants' primary target for recruitment.[49] One of them, a 16-year-old girl named Elif Öskürci, left home telling her parents that

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[47] http://one-europe.info/the-europeans-in-isis

[48] *Strengthening the EU's response to radicalisation and violent extremism*, European Commission, 15.01.2014 (IP/14/18)

[49] For further information, please visit the website:
http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2015/04/02/turkishgerman-girl-an-example-of-isis-targeting-secular-families

she was staying at a friend's house. But she did not return. Her father, Atilla Öskürci, explained how his daughter started to change. He said the first thing he realized was her wish to wear a headscarf. He said: "We were glad to hear that since a family can face many hardships in protecting their daughters in Germany." But after a short while, she said she wished to wear a burqa. They were disturbed to hear that, but still accepted the girl's wish. Then she started to share some of her thoughts with her family such as Muslims are massacred and tyrannized in Syria and the Middle East and IS is fighting against this tyranny. But the family was still not suspicious. Atilla Öskürci did not know Elif's friends except a few. Also, they did not know what she did on her social media accounts. "She was not accepting us on her social media accounts," her father said. As a result, Elif gave a message to her family that she would like to join IS. The family did not get suspicious when she said she would stay at the house of a friend whom they did not know. Next day when she did not show up, they searched for her, but could not find her. She was not at school. Her relatives did not know anything about where she was. Upon that, the German police noticed that she joined the IS. When Atilla Öskürci arrived in Istanbul, Elif had already crossed the border. Another example is a 25-year-old woman named Duygu Doğan left her home in Frankfurt. The only thing her family knew was that she headed to the house of a friend named Selçuk in Syria. Both tragic events show that ISIS also threatens secular families in Europe.

After all, the children of immigrant families in Europe cannot escape from being an "other" no matter how they keep up with the "modern" lifestyle Europe imposes. We already know the innumerable street attacks targeting young girls wearing headscarves. They unfortunately turned into ordinary events. Youthfulness and extreme individualization can set a gap between a family and a child who opens up to the world on social media and turn the child into an introverted person. This isolation makes an individual more vulnerable and open to foreign impacts especially if they are young. The Islamic institutions based in the West could not address the youth and fill this gap since Islamophobic governments limit their activities. Therefore, the European governments have to develop policies towards these minorities/Muslim groups and try to change their perception on the Western governments.

Conclusion

 Radicalization among the European youths is a crucial problem for European society. Something is obviously going wrong in Europe. If integration process was properly working, these people would have been a normal part of society and would not join radical military groups with such enthusiasm. Because of culturally specific reasons, Europe cannot develop an effective communication with the youths. Both the European officials' willingness in developing communication channels with them and the youths' willingness to listen to the authorities matter in this regard. This situation could pretty much be interpreted, in Edward Said's term, as "us versus them." The culturally familiar is held as "us" and unfamiliar as "them". This situation is true for both European officials and the youth sides. Having said that, it is important to interact with the youths using a language that they understand, through people that they can relate with.

 Increasing number of European recruits in ISIS brings up the question what should European security agencies do about those, who have already fled to fight in Syria? Would it be safe to allow them to return? Thus, without support of experts and academia and without cooperation with the European governments, the issue of radicalization could not be fully resolved. While the European youths have some crucial fears, such as discrimination, unemployment, and racism, radical groups are generally gaining new members by using rhetoric related to the aforementioned problems. Therefore, if the EU leaves these youths alone with their problems, the radical groups will easily fill the gaps that the EU left open, and then will use them to advance their own non-Islamic political goals. In cooperation with the NGOs', institutions, academicians, I believe that the European authorities can develop an effective strategy to combat radicalization of the European youths in the EU and get better results at the end of such collaboration. In addition to that the issue of radicalization is trans-border and international, thus there is a crucial need on international and intercultural cooperation. As the official statistics indicate, the members of radical organizations, such as IS, come from different cultural, national, lingual, and ethnic backgrounds, such as German, French, Kurdish, white American, Nigerian, and Chechen. Because of this diversity, international cooperation on finding a

solution for this problem becomes crucial. At least, the members of the nations that are a part of this problem should be able to cooperate.

However, there are some constraints to overcome. For example, the radicalized youths in Europe need to be de-radicalized which depends on three factors: The first one is that European governments need to show adequate willingness for the integration of the youths to overall European society. This requires policies motivated by integration, not sending them back to their original countries; Second of them is that there needs to be alternative interpretation of Islam, and this interpretation needs to be channeled to the Muslim youths in Europe via legal organizations. This way, they could be socialized among like-minded peers and satisfy their needs of religious education; The last one is that their links with radical groups need to be broken. For this to happen, we need a strong cooperation between families, CSOs and the European and Islamic governments. Currently, social exclusion, lack of education, and links with radical groups seem to be the most significant constraints to overcome both for those interested in radicalization problem and the radicalized youths.

As a result, the literature review and web-search indicate that the issue of radicalization among the European youths has not been adequately studied. On the other hand, the participation rates in radical organization are in the rise in Europe. Despite this, neither European officials nor the European governments have successfully dealt-with this problem due to the aforementioned reasons. This fact indicates the strong need for collaboration on radicalization with the academia-CSO-government in Europe.

Why young people from Europe join violent Islamist groups – Multiple causes and common misperceptions

Hazim Fouad

1.   Introduction

According to a recent report of the Soufan Group an estimate of 5,000 foreign fighters from Western Europe is currently fighting alongside the different rebel groups in Syria and Iraq.[50] Given the fact that this figure is higher than the number of foreign fighters from North America, the Balkans, Southeast Asia and Oceania put together (~2,200), questions about the motivations of these mostly young men and women emerge. This paper will first discuss why some common one-sided explanations about the reasons for the rising number given above do not hold up upon closer scrutiny. It will then provide an overview of the different dimensions and multiple causes which can lead to a process of radicalization and also elaborate on the current attractiveness of violent Islamist thought. It will close with some recommendations for preventive work in this field.

2.   Common misperceptions

Especially after attacks such as those which took place in Paris in November 2015, there is an urge to understand 'what it is' that makes young people turn into violent extremists. With regard to Islamist radicalization there a few common myths which are regularly repeated as *the* explanation per se in these discussions, such as a lack of integration and so called parallel societies, especially among Muslims, the dissemination of radical ideology via the internet and finally discrimination against Muslims and Western foreign policy with regard to the Muslim world. This chapter will show that taken for themselves, these issues cannot explain the different backgrounds of those people who have left Europe to fight in Syria or Iraq.

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[50] Barret, Richard et al. (2015). 'Foreign Fighters. An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq'. *The Soufan Group*. December 2015. http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate1.pdf, p.5.

As for the first myth it is often argued that the existence of closed communities is the incubator for the spread of extremism.[51] This is supposedly true especially for Muslims, since the people perpetuating this sort of discourse see Islam as the main obstacle for the integration into Western societies. For debunking this argument it has to be stated that first of all the overwhelming majority of European Muslims has nothing to do and does not sympathize with any form of Islamist violent extremism and many do not see a contradiction in the concept of being a European Muslim.[52] Secondly, when examining their biographies, many of those who went abroad seem to have been perfectly 'integrated': They did their A-levels and went to university; they had been a member of the local sports club and went out with their non-Muslim friends. Finally, such an argument cannot explain the relatively high number of converts[53] (~20%) among the European fighters who have obviously never lived in a Muslim 'parallel society'.

An alternative argument states that it is the ideology of Jihadism[54] itself, disseminated via the internet, which turns young people into violent extremists. Interestingly, the sword cuts both ways. Right-wing groups declare that there is no difference between Jihadism and Islam, so it is the religion itself which makes people become

[51] Reinike, Joachim (2015). 'Radikalisierung in Parallelgesellschaften...'. *Focus Online*. 15.11.2015. http://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/radikalisierung-in-parallelgesellschaften-terror-in-paris-im-news-ticker-kommentar_id_7050517.html.

[52] The German Federal Agency for the Protection of the Constitution counts currently roughly 8000 Salafi extremists in Germany, 1100 are considered to be militant proponents of this ideology. Neglecting the current influx of refugees, there are roughly 4 Million Muslims living in Germany, i.e. the number of Salafi extremists equals 0,2%. N.A. (2015). 'Verfassungsschutz: 1100 islamistische Gefährder in Deutschland.' *Die Presse*. 2015. http://diepresse.com/home/politik/aussenpolitik/4885303/Verfassungsschutz_1100-islamistische-Gefaehrder-in-Deutschland. For the concept of 'hybrid identities' see Mersch, Britta (2012). '"Young Moslems wish to play their part in shaping Germany". An Interview with Naika Foroutan'. *Goethe Institut*. 2012. http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/mag/igd/en9494836.htm.

[53] By converts I refer to people with and without a non-Muslim migrational background who were prior to their conversion adherents to no or any other religion than Islam. I am aware of the fact that also most Muslims were not really practicing or aware of even the key concepts of their religion before they joined these groups so that it is possible to see them all as converts towards an extremist version of Islam.

[54] Though there are other violent Islamist groups such as Hamas and Hizb Allah, for the sake of simplicity I will use the terms 'violent Islamism' and 'Jihadism' interchangeably in this article.

radicals.[55] Muslim Associations on the contrary lament the fact that young people consult the internet instead of going to their local mosque, thereby getting in contact with the 'wrong version of Islam'.[56] The last argument is not entirely wrong. Salafi[57] websites do dominate the internet on questions about Islam and many young people refer to these websites without being able to distinguish Islamic teachings from radical ideology. But an analysis conducted by the German intelligence services on German foreign fighters shows that the involvement in the extremist scene as well as close social contacts (families, friends, schools) do play a larger role in the radicalization process than the internet, which only comes in third place.[58] There are also numerous cases of young people who went to local mosques previously but still did not find what they were looking for and subsequently turned to a more radical form of Islam.

Finally, it is often argued that discrimination, Islamophobia and Western foreign policy are the main reasons for the radicalization of young Muslims in Europe.[59] The question is whether these two aspects are a catalyst or the source for radicalization. Numerous studies have proven that discrimination against Muslims in Western European countries does exist and manifests itself in fields like education, the job market, housing and day to day insults or even

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[55] Zott, Helmut (2013). 'Islam und Islamismus'. *PI-NEWS*. August 2013. http://www.pi-news.net/2013/08/islam-und-islamismus/.

[56] Bewarder, Manueal et al (2013). 'Verbrecher, Mörder, die den Islam kidnappen'. *Die Welt*. 19.09.2014. http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article132394370/Verbrecher-Moerder-die-den-Islam-kidnappen.html.

[57] Again, not all brands of Salafism promote violence, but almost all foreign fighters who have joined jihadist groups had been active in the Salafi scene before, as shown in the analysis of footnote number 9.

[58] Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz; Bundeskriminalamt (2014). 'Analyse der den deutschen Sicherheitsbehörden vorliegenden Informationen über die Radikalisierungshintergründe und -verläufe der Personen, die aus islamistischer Motivation aus Deutschland in Richtung Syrien ausgereist sind'. http://www.pti-kassel.de/institut/download/praeventionsnetzwerk_salafismus_analyse.pdf. The analysis had been updated by mid-2015 but has still not been declassified. The proportions given above have not changed, though.

[59] Schroeer, Clemens (2014). 'Zwischen friedlichem Islam und Salafismus: „Es geht uns alle an – warum Jugendliche zu Dschihadisten werden können"'. *Nordstadt Blogger*. 25.11.2014. http://nordstadtblogger.de/19953.

physical attacks.[60] There can also be no doubt about rising Islamophobia and a general hostility towards foreigners.[61]

But if this was the prime reason for radicalization there would not be 750 but 75.000 German foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq.[62] People have choices and most youngsters find other ways of dealing with experienced or perceived events of discrimination. Again, the argument of converts who have never suffered from being discriminated against as a Muslim kicks in. As Milena Uhlmann, a researcher on radicalization from the Humboldt University Berlin, has recently put it: 'They [the converts] are not frustrated, they are curious'.[63]

Additionally, claiming there would be no Islamism without Islamophobia flies in the face of the history of Islamism, which developed under completely different circumstances and conditions in the Muslim world over the course of the 20th century. It is therefore far more likely that discrimination and Islamophobia do not instigate but rather fuel a radicalization process, especially if they are explained through the lenses of an extremist ideology.

It is similar when it comes to foreign policy. It is not difficult to point out the mistakes and double standards of European foreign policy

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[60] European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (2006). 'Muslims in the European Union. Discrimination and Islamophobia'. *EUMC*. 2006. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/156-Manifestations_EN.pdf. For the German context see Peucker, Mario (2010). 'Diskriminierung aufgrund der islamischen Religionszugehörigkeit im Kontext Arbeitsleben – Erkenntnisse, Fragen und Handlungsempfehlungen. Erkenntnisse der sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschung und Handlungsempfehlungen'. *Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes*. 2010. http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/publikationen/Expertisen/Expertise_Diskr_aufgrund_islam_Religionszugehoerigkeit_sozialwissenschaftlich.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

[61] Vopel, Stephan (2015). 'Religionsmonitor. Verstehen was verbindet. Sonderauswertung Islam 2015. Die wichtigsten Ergebnisse im Überblick.' *Bertelsmann Stiftung*. 2015. http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/Projekte/51_Religionsmonitor/Zusammenfassung_der_Sonderauswertung.pdf.

[62] A critical reading of a mere socio-economical explanation is found in the following article: Williams, Jennifer (2015). 'Sorry, Europeans joining ISIS probably can't be explained in one chart'. *VOX*. 02.12.2015. http://www.vox.com/2015/12/2/9833082/sorry-europeans-joining-isis-probably-cant-be-explained-in-one-chart.

[63] Alvi, Anna; Hübsch, Alia. 'Dr. Milena Uhlmann: „Die Menschen sind nicht frustriert, sondern neugierig"'. *Milieu*. 01.09.2015. http://www.dasmili.eu/art/dr-milena-uhlmann-die-menschen-sind-nicht-frustriert-sondern-neugierig/#.Vm1rpkrhC9L.

towards many parts of the Muslim world. Because of that, it goes without saying that they play a prominent part in the propaganda of jihadist groups such as al-Qaeda or ISIS. But to think a different foreign policy approach alone would be enough to solve the problem is an illusion. First of all, the ideology of these groups is essentialist in that it views everybody who contradicts their vision of the world to be an eternal enemy, no matter how he or she behaves. In other words, extremist groups will always find justifications for their actions. Another point is that although many young Muslims (but also non-Muslims) living in the West are extremely critical of Western foreign policy with some even resorting to conspiracy theories, the vast majority, as said before, still shows no sympathy for violent extremist groups. There may be some highly politicized persons among the European foreign fighters but in a lot of cases these youngsters have virtually no clue of the complex subtleties of foreign affairs and international relations.

In order not to be misunderstood: I am not saying these aspects do not play a role at all. They do play a role, as we shall see below. But none of these factors taken by themselves can explain all the various cases of radicalization. Numerous layers and constellations have to be considered as the case arises.

3.   Multiple causes for radicalization

In general, three levels of radicalization can be differentiated: The micro, meso and macro level.[64] An analysis of different cases of radicalization always has to begin at the micro level. It is the search for biographical fissures and individual experiences, which led to a state of disillusionment, lack of orientation and the search for a new identity, often framed as a new beginning.[65] Causes can vary from the loss of a friend or a family member, broken homes, social conflicts in a close surrounding or the failure of certain personal ambitions. This identity crisis can lead to a cognitive opening, which makes these persons susceptible for extremist ideologies, which they may

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[64] It is also possible to speak of the individual, the societal and the global or international level. Biene, Janusz et al. (2015). 'Nicht nur eine Frage der Sicherheit. Salafismus in Deutschland als gesamtgesellschaftliche Herausforderung'. *HSFK Standpunkt*. January 2015. http://www.hsfk.de/fileadmin/downloads/standpunkt0115.pdf.

[65] This can often be discerned by prison inmates, whose conversion tries to represent a break with their past.

encounter via virtual and real-life social contacts. Paying attention to this cognitive opening is important because it explains, why so many people do *not* radicalize, although they came into contact with extremist ideology.

This state of a general grievance can be exacerbated by developments on the meso level. It is here that discrimination against Muslims plays a significant role, because it restricts the possibility of social safety nets to help the person in need. At this stage, many young people do not only feel alienated from their parents but from the mainstream population, i.e. society in general. It is most often only then that these young people develop some sort of parallel society, where they actively promote their perceived otherness as 'the strangers' (*al-ghuraba'*).

Developments on the macro level might build upon this process in that they can be ideologically used to explain 'the bigger picture'. From this view, the individual problems are just a symptom of a global war against Islam and the proof is the different places all over the world where Muslims are subjugated and fought. A biased media coverage, which is focussing on terrorism and violence, when it comes to the topic of Islam and which creates binaries such as 'we and them', can serve as the last piece of a jigsaw to cement this worldview.

Apart from these push-factors there are also some pull-factors, which draw young people towards (violent) extremist organizations. One of the main advantages of the Salafi scene compared to extremist right-wing or left-wing groups is its inclusiveness. Everybody can join the movement no matter what skin colour, nationality, ethnic background or social status he or she has as long as they abide by the strict rules laid down in the writings and sermons of its preachers. It appears that for every problem there is a religiously sanctioned ruling, which helps to navigate through a world which is becoming more complex.

Many of these rules apply to both men and women, which is one of the reasons Salafism is also attractive to so many young women. Recent studies into the motivations of young women joining ISIS point to the fact that their motivations vary from naive imaginations about life in the 'caliphate' as the wife of a 'mujahid', the urge to help

those in need to an inclination towards violence.[66] Salafi groups and even more so those, who have violent intentions and go underground, promote a strong feeling of group solidarity and moral superiority towards everybody who is not a member, non-Muslims and Muslims alike. There is no great hierarchy inside the Salafi movement so it is easy to transform from being an outsider into a role model as a 'good Muslim'. Charlie Winter, a researcher at the London-based Quilliam Foundation, has analysed the media output of ISIS and came to the conclusion that the majority of the videos, audios and written statements were not about violence but represented the territory controlled by ISIS as the nucleus of a new world, where pure justice will reign and all the believers can live in a state of brother- and sisterhood, inner peace and sheer happiness.[67]

Understanding Salafism and its violent offshoots in Europe primarily as a youth phenomenon also leads to the aspect of provocation and attention. There is simply no better way to shock one's parents or teachers than by declaring loyalty to Usama bin Ladin or having the flag of ISIS as a patch on your jacket. Distinguishing between mere provocation and serious radicalization continues to be one of the most challenging tasks for those working in the field of education and youth work.

4.   What can be done?

If we understand the different levels and multiple facets of radicalization processes, which can lead young people in Western Europe to join jihadist groups, it becomes obvious that only a multi-pronged approach will lead to satisfactory results. For every level of radicalization different actors have to be engaged and different methods have to be implemented. The micro level requires help for families and the individuals themselves, who are undergoing a radicalization process. The wheel does not need to be reinvented here;

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[66] Saltman, Erine Marie; Smith, Melanie (2015). 'Till Martyrdom Do Us Part. Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon'. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. 2015.
http://www.strategicdialogue.org/Till_Martyrdom_Do_Us_Part_Gender_and_the_ISIS_Phenomenon.pdf.
[67] Winter, Charlie (2015). ‚Fishing and Ultraviolence'. *BBC News*. 06.10.2015.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-88492697-b674-4c69-8426-3edd17b7daed.

there already are civil society organizations and experts who are doing outstanding work in this field.[68] What they need is simply more funding to satisfy the increasing demand and requests they receive. The meso level calls for a shift in media coverage away from a problem-focused towards a more positively connoted discourse when it comes to the topics Islam and Muslim life in Europe.[69] Projects of intercultural understanding and deconstructing stereotypes can also help to reduce feelings of hostility and mistrust against Muslims in Europe. The macro level is the most complicated, since it would be extremely unrealistic to expect Western governments to change their foreign policy approach in order to fit the demands of some of their Muslim minority populations. But the least thing which can be expected is to act as transparently as possible and also publicly explain certain unpopular decisions. In times of a rising xenophobic climate across Europe, highlighting the self-evidence of European Muslims as equal citizens and not something to be worried about would be a beneficial first step.

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[68] See for example Hayat Germany: http://hayat-deutschland.de/english/.
[69] N.A. (2011.)'Muslims in the European Mediascape'. *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*. 2011. http://www.strategicdialogue.org/Muslim_Media_Overarching_April_2012.pdf.

Chapter Two: Youth from Arab states and violent radical groups

Why do youths from North Africa join radical groups?

Yassin Bazzaz

Introduction:
In order to answer the question about why youths join radical groups, it is important to analyze a number of factors, among which is the concept of "stability" and what it implies and to do that against the backdrop of the bigger contexts in which history and geography play a major role. Are the few "stable" Arab countries, such as Morocco and Tunisia, really safe and secure? If they are so in comparison to other restive countries, then why do their youths join the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)? In fact, youths from the Maghreb are among the most enthusiastic among ISIS fighters and play a major role in carrying out terrorist attacks and executing victims.

It is obvious that one single approach will never explain such a phenomenon in which sociological, historical, and psychological factors are intricately intertwined. It is especially intriguing to understand how youths, whose energy, creativity, and ambition are expected to be the reasons for a nation's development, become the most fragile and most vulnerable segment of society that can be easily swayed into embarking on drastic actions that are detrimental for them and their countries.

The bigger historical context:
It is important to link the current situation to the emergence of nations and empires in the Muslim world starting from the advent of Muhammad through the establishment of consecutive caliphates and dynasties. In his *Moqadema*, Ibn Khaldoun underlines the role played by "tribalism" and violence in the collapse of states and the emergence of others. This long history of political struggle has always been linked to resorting to Islam as the ultimate monotheistic religion.

Political utilization of Islam is not new and a lot of books tackle this issue. Islam has for a long time been used as a lethal and decisive ideological weapon by a variety of political factions for the purpose of remaining in power, bestowing legitimacy upon the regime, opposing the regime, or struggling to usurp power. The succession of states in Morocco—the Marinids, the Almoravids, and the Saadis—all support this argument. All analysts agree that attempts by moderate scholars

and enlightened preachers to introduce reform to the Islamic discourse were brutally aborted by ruling regimes. In fact both domestic and foreign factors combined to make this reform impossible. For example, the dream of an Egyptian renaissance was put to an end by Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion.

Historically, the Greater Maghreb, also called Islamic West, has always been part of a series of political changes owning to its strategic geographical location and its proximity to Europe. This location gave Morocco the chance to be exposed a number of different culture and, at the same time, encouraged imperial expansion.

History will play an important role in highlighting why Islam in particular was the ideology that was being resorted to and why the Islamic discourse is still prevalent 15 centuries after its advent. Answering these questions require going back to the fall of the caliphate with the collapse Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the modern Turkish state by Ataturk. This contributed to the emergence of an Islamic discourse that supported independence from occupation through the revival of Islam and the caliphate project. The caliphate became linked to freedom from foreign occupation. It is possible here to go back to the history of national movements that combined Islam and political struggle linked to the ideas of political modernism inspired by the Age of Enlightenment on one hand and Marxist and Leninist ideologies on the other hand. Some of those movements were linked to Salafis such as Allal al-Fasi in Morocco and Hassan al-Banna in Egypt. It is also necessary to examine the transformation through which a number of Islamist movements went whether in terms of action or ideology. This includes the conflict between the Muslim Brotherhood and Nasser's regime and the execution of a number of the group's members on top such as Sayed Qutb in 1966 and the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the coming to power of Khomeini, one of the most prominent symbols of political Islam. This was paralleled with the emergence of a number of international political Islam organizations with independent ideologies such as Maududi's Jamaat-e-Islami.

Youths at the heart of the storm:
Attempts at attracting youths started with radical groups' realization that those youths can constitute a destabilizing force in their respective countries and this especially applied to Tunisia and Morocco. This trend was not exclusive to North Africa or the Middle East with

radical groups appearing in Europe and the United States throughout the 20th century. These included Action Directe in France, Brigate Rosse in Italy, ETA in the Basque, the IRA in Ireland, Baader-Meinhof in Germany, and Black Panther in the United States.

Following independence, countries in the Arab world, such as Iraq, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt, established nationalist states that accomplished relative stability through guaranteeing a minimum of social justice and embarking on a series of developmental projects that mainly relied on state capitalism and not market economy, which prevented the widening of gaps between classes. Those states were far from perfect since many of them were known for their discrimination against ethnic, religious, or tribal minorities, but still enjoyed relative stability. This situation drastically changed with the introduction of market economy and the privatization of a large number of public sector institutions, which led to widening the gap between classes and the emergence of social tension, which on one hand compromises the stability of society and on the other hand threatens the existence of the state in its conventional form. This kind of transformation is what provided a fertile soil for the activities of radical groups that take advantage of rising frustration among increasingly disenfranchised youths. Several states, however, insist on exporting an image of stability, which is the case with Morocco.

Conclusion:

Youths who join radical groups are driven by several social and cultural reasons that are more or less related to marginalization and the search for a role, especially if it is one that will allegedly lead to heaven as they are told by those groups. Disenfranchised areas and neighborhoods became targets for radical groups and later turn into major sources for fighters that leave for Iraq and Syria. This is, for example, demonstrated in northern Morocco where residents are neglected and social justice is absent.

Youths who join radical groups always belong to a segment of society that no longer feels any kind of affinity with the state since this state has stopped responding to its needs and does not work on protecting it from injustice and marginalization.

Why hasn't democracy prevented extremism in Tunisia?

George Fahmi

Several researchers have been arguing that authoritarianism is the main reason for the prevalence of extremism and violence and that countering such phenomenon necessitates the establishment of a democratic regime that includes all ideologies and political factions. However, the developments through which the Arab region has gone since the eruption of revolutions demonstrate otherwise. Tunisia is the only Arab country that has not deviated from the democratic path since the ouster of Ben Ali's regime in January 2011, yet it is the biggest exporter of fighters to Iraq and Syria. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) announced in July 2015 that more than 5,500 Tunisian are fighting in the ranks of extremist groups in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Mali[70]. The Tunisian Prime Minister also announced that 15,000 Tunisians were banned from leaving the country to join extremist groups. In addition, Tunisia has witnessed through its transitional period an increased presence of the Salafi discourse, which was obvious in the establishment of the Ansar al-Sharia group in April 2011 and which operated freely until officially declared a terrorist organization in August 2013. The question that poses itself is why democratic transition in Tunisia has not prevented the rise of violence and extremism. This is the question this paper attempts to answer through examining the developments the religious and political spheres have undergone after January 2011 and how the rules governing the two have impacted the phenomenon of extremism.

Jihadi Salafism in Tunisia:

The late 20th century saw the spread of jihadi Salafist ideologies among Tunisian youths, especially with the relative relaxation of restrictions imposed on religious thought and activities. The September 11 attacks in 2001 and the American "war on terror" that followed drove a number of Tunisian youths to declare jihad against what they saw as a war on Islam in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as Yemen and Somalia. Violence was not confined to foreign territories,

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[70] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Un Groupe d'experts de l'ONU appelle à des mesures urgentes pour arrêter le flux de combattants étrangers de Tunisie [A group of UN experts calls for urgent measures to stem the flow of foreign fighters from Tunisia]," news release, July 10, 2015.

but also extended to Tunisian soil in 2002 when a group of jihadi Salafis attacked a synagogue in the island of Djerba. Ben Ali's regime retaliated with clampdown that saw some 2,000 youths arrested under an anti-terrorism law issued in 2003.

Following Ben Ali's ouster in 2011, a large segment of the Salafi movement saw that the political climate had changed and that there was no longer need to resort to violence, so many of them decided to focus on preaching. The Ansar al-Sharia (Supporters of Islamic Law) group was established in April 2011 by Seifallah ben Hussien, known as Abu Iyadh. On several occasions, Abu Iyadh stressed that he rejects violence on Tunisian territory, arguing that Tunisia "is a land of preaching and not jihad"[71]. Through a series of social and religious activities, the movement managed to garner considerable support inside Tunisia. The appearance of many of its figures in media outlets succeeded in altering the negative image of jihadi Salafism, especially with the movement's adoption of the slogan, "Hear from us and don't hear about us."

Ansar al-Sharia became extremely popular amongst Islamist youths in Tunisia, especially as it focused on demanding political and social change. According to Bilel Chaouachi, a prominent jihadi Salafist leader, Ansar al-Sharia was the most successful among other Islamist parties and movements in attracting Islamist youths[72]. This was mainly attributed to the fact that the movement was not engaged in partisan work, which is always linked in the mind of Tunisian Islamists to striking deals with seculars that usually involved compromising on religious fundamentals like what al-Nahda did with the issue of citing Islamic law as a source of legislation in the post-revolution constitution. In addition, the radical discourse the movement adopted as far as social reform is concerned was met with enthusiasm on the part of revolutionary Islamist youths. However, the peaceful discourse the movement adopted did not prevent its members from taking part in the violent protests that took place during the transitional phase such as the attack on Afrique Art movie theatre for showing the controversial film "Ni Allah Ni Maître" on June 26, 2011, the attack on the headquarters of Nessma TV for showing the

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[71] Interview with Abu Iyadh in 2012:
http://www.echoroukonline.com/ara/articles/124052.html
[72] TV interview with Bilel Chaouachi in November 2012:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkIx0YJgOvA

French-Iranian film "Persepolis" on October 9, 2011, and the attack on the American Embassy to protest the release of an American film that insults prophet Muhammad on September 14, 2012. Some members of the movements went further as they took arms whether abroad by joining extremist groups in Syria and Iraq or in Tunisia through targeting security forces and secular political figures. The latter was manifested in a series of attacks against the Tunisian police as well as the assassination of the two prominent opposition figures Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi in February and July 2013, respectively. Those assassinations jeopardized the political process in Tunisia as seculars accused Ansar al-Sharia of orchestrating the assassinations and accused al-Nahda Party of covering up the movement's crimes. After a lot of pressure, the government of Ali al-Arid, the secretary general of al-Nahda, agreed to declare Ansar al-Sharia a terrorist organization in August 2013. This step put an end to the movement's public activities as many of its members sought to leave for Libya and Syria.

The Arab Spring and the political and religious spheres: What has changed?

The democratic process was expected to reduce the popularity of extremist ideologies since the new political climate allowed all factions to participate. This was demonstrated in the case of al-Nahda, which was not only free to play a role in the political scene, but also won the first post-revolution elections in 2011 and came second in the last parliamentary elections. The Salafi movement was similarly able to establish several parties and to take part in elections. However, jihadi Salafism still managed to promote its ideologies. This is mainly attributed to the fact that the rules the governed the political and religious spheres still marginalized youths who, unable to find a role to play through legitimate means, started looking for alternatives.

Youths and the political sphere:

Although youths played a major role in toppling Ben Ali's regime, the post-revolution climate did not allow them to be part of the decision-making process. Youths were not only excluded from senior positions within state institutions, but also from political parties. True the political scene had become open to everyone, but none of the political parties established after the revolution succeeded in winning the trust of Tunisian youths. According to a survey conducted by the Civil Youths Observatory in April 2013, the percentage of youths involved

in political parties did not exceed 2.7%. Civil society equally failed to attract youths to its activities after the revolution, for according to a World Bank study[73] only 3% of youths worked with civil society organizations in rural areas while the percentage did not exceed 1.5% in urban areas, as demonstrated in the below figure.
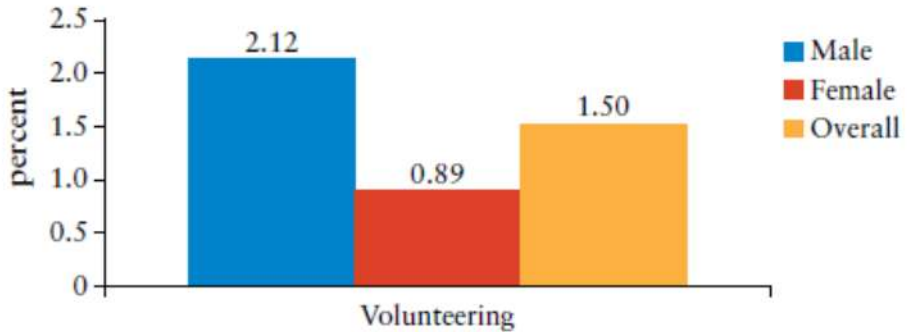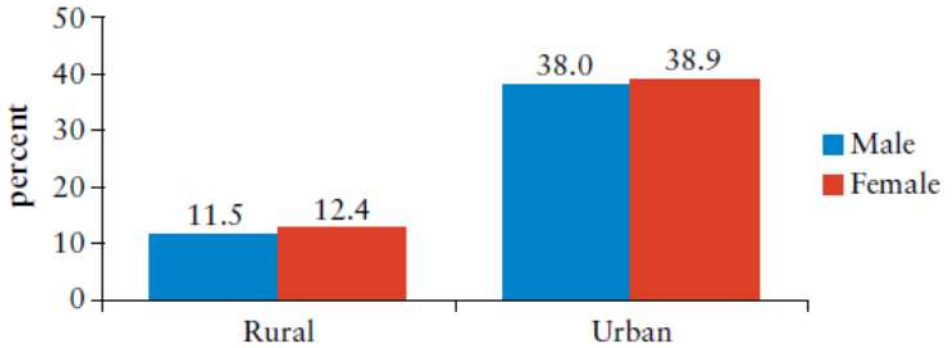

Source: World Bank 2012e.
Note: Figure refers to all youth.

When Tunisian youths were asked about their ability to influence local authorities, only 11.5% of males and 12.4% of females in rural areas said they feel that local politicians interact with them and listen to their grievances. This percentage rose in urban areas to 38% of males and 38.9% of females, as demonstrated in the figure below.

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[73] Tunisia: Breaking the Barriers to Youth Inclusion:
http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia/publication/tunisia-breaking-the-barriers-to-youth-inclusion

Vacuum in the religious sphere:
Ben Ali's regime worked on tightening its grip on the religious sphere in Tunisia. Security forces controlled all mosques while religious discourse was under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Restrictions were imposed on all attempts by other parties such as al-Nahda or the Salafi movement to take part in the religious sphere. Unlike Mubarak who allowed the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafis in Egypt a margin of freedom in return for not criticizing the regime, Ben Ali did not allow any form of religious activity outside state institutions. Tunisia did not also have an equivalent to al-Azhar in Egypt since Habib Bourguiba sidelined al-Zeitouna University following the declaration of the Tunisian Republic through cancelling all levels of education there with the exception of the School of Theology and Islamic Law that became affiliated to the University of Tunis. When the revolution ousted Ben Ali, all religious state institutions lost their legitimacy and the same applied to preachers affiliated to the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The Islamist al-Nahda movement then made a powerful comeback to the scene, but with little focus on the religious sphere since at the time the movement channeled all its efforts towards playing a role in shaping the politics of post-revolutionary Tunisia. This, coupled with the absence from the scene of official pre-revolution preachers, created a vacuum in the religious sphere, which gave jihadi Salafist groups the liberty to promote their ideologies and recruit more members without facing any

competition, possibly with the exception of scientific Salafism that also worked on taking part in the religious sphere.

During the transitional period, the religious sphere went through chaotic phase where pro-Ben Ali preachers were banned from entering mosques and the Ministry of Religious Affairs lost its control over one fifth of Tunisia's 5,000 mosques. Meanwhile, al-Nahda Movement tried when it came to power to restore the state's control over the religious sphere without clashing with Ansar al-Sharia, hoping that the latter might tone down its extremist discourse by time. However, the escalation of political tension between al-Nahda and secular factions and the violent actions carried out by supporters of the jihadi Salafist movement drove the government of Ali al-Arid to declare Ansar al-Sharia a terrorist organization in August 2013. Following the 2014 elections, in which Beji Caid Essebsi won the presidency and Nedaa Tunis party got the majority of parliament seats, the new government attempted once more to place the religious sphere under strict control as was the case during the Ben Ali era. After the 2015 Sousse terrorist attack, Prime Minister Habib Essid announced that 80 mosques that are not under state control were to be closed and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dismissed prominent Salafi preacher Bechir Ben Hassan and appointed another imam in his place. These procedures were not confined to Salafi preachers, but also extended to religious figures known for their close ties to al-Nahda such as former Minister of Religious Affairs Nourredine Khadmi, who was banned from giving sermons. Several religious figures, such as al-Nahda's prominent member Habib Ellouze, expressed their concern about the inability of such procedures to stop violent extremism and expected that they would backfire[74].

How can Tunisia counter the current extremist wave?

It is obviously not enough for Tunisia to stick to its democratic path in order to face the current wave of violent extremism, which necessitates a modification of the rules that govern the political and religious spheres in order to curb the popularity of radical ideologies.

In the political sphere, youths need to be integrated into state institutions especially in local entities so that they would be able to make an impact in their surroundings. Political parties also need to

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[74] George Fahmy and Hamza Moadab. "The Jihad Market: Extremism in Tunisia." Carnegie Middle East Center, October 2015.

offer youths the opportunity to occupy leading positions and take part in the decision-making process. A large number of youths who joined political parties in Tunisia after the revolution came to realize that they have no real role and that they have been used as a marketing facade or a tool of popular mobilization. Ironically, jihadi Salafist groups are the only entities in the Tunisian scene that empower youths through allowing them to occupy leading positions and involving them in the decision-making process.

In the religious sphere, Tunisia needs to find a middle ground between the chaos that pervaded the religious scene following the ouster of Ben Ali and the state's attempts at controlling religious institutions. This will be done through allowing religious figures that adopt a peaceful discourse and do not incite violence to take part in the religious sphere. If the regime insists on placing religious institutions under its control, these institutions will lose their credibility since they will be looked at as the mouthpiece of the government and other underground entities will once again make use of the resulting vacuum to promote extremist ideologies.

Radicalization of youth in Arab Spring States: The curious case of Tunisia

Anna Fleischer

After the overthrow of a number of dictators in the wave of protests that started five years ago in the Middle East, hopes were high that this so called "Arab Spring" would lead to a more democratic and inclusive future for the region. However, these hopes were not only unfulfilled, but in some cases the absence of the former authoritarian leaders have caused a more unstable and less democratic environment. One country however stands out in this general trend: Tunisia.

The Tunisian case is particularly puzzling regarding the duality of democratization and radicalization of youth. Out of the all the so-called "Arab Spring" states, Tunisia has emerged as the only one with a promising track of transition to democracy. Meanwhile, thousands of young Tunisians are joining the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS). They go abroad to fight and also plan and execute domestic terror attacks. These seemingly contradictory developments make Tunisia perhaps the most intriguing case of the Arab Spring states and thus the subject of this paper.

This paper will firstly look into the roots of Salafism in Tunisia and make some important distinctions within that category. Next, it will look at the rise of Salafism after the Tunisian revolution and what this means within the context of youth radicalization. The next question this paper will discuss is that of legislation aimed at combating domestic acts of terror and lastly I will discuss some recommendations in order to fight the problem of radicalization.

Roots of the Salafi scene

The emergence of Salafism as a political term is a recent development in Tunisia. Before the January 2011 revolution that overthrew President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia's Salafis seemed invisible and almost entirely apolitical. During the 1990s and the 2000s, Islamists (moderate or militant) were imprisoned, forced to go underground, or driven into exile abroad. They were viewed by the regime as opponents of the existing power structures, just like leftists,

insubordinate trade unionists, and critical bloggers. Those Islamists who wanted to engage in faith-based forms of political activism therefore had to be systematically silenced in the eyes of the regime.[75] The reasons for this oppression lay not only in the power struggle of an authoritarian regime against an opposition, but also in the political culture of Tunisia. Habib Bourgiba, the president before Ben Ali and one of the most influential political figures of the country, as well as Ben Ali himself subscribed to a Western, more specifically French, model of modernization. This meant that public and political displays of religious beliefs were regarded as backwards and harmful and therefore had to be mobilized against.[76]

There are no official numbers published, but some estimates say that there are 50,000 Salafi jihadi Tunisians (this number was published in 2011).[77] The current total population is almost 11 million, so this is still less than 1% of the population. Within this scene, Tunisian Salafis can be divided into two categories: scripturalist and jihadi. The former is a form of Sunni Islamism that promotes immersion in sacred texts and is rather inward-looking and quietist. It is generally peaceful and usually remains close to regimes in power. Jihadi Salafism on the other hand is in favor of armed resistance to non-Muslim military as well as political forces, as they believe them to be oppressing Muslims. There are three versions of the armed struggle, the first being internal and targeting Muslim regimes considered to be impious; the second being irredentist, which fights to free land under occupation; and third, global, which is the fight against the West.[78]

However, this dichotomy of scripturalist and jihadi no longer reflects the same political practices and ideological vision that they did under the authoritarian rule. Since then, scripturalists Salafis have focused on peaceful means, such as developing associations and garnering

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[75] Monica Marks, Who are Tunisia's Salafis?, SEPTEMBER 28, 2012, Foreign Policy, http://goo.gl/ZVKh1x

[76] Merone, Fabio/Cavatorta, Francesco (2013): The Rise of Salafism and the Future of Democratization, in: Gana, Nouri: The Making of the Tunisian Revolution. Edinburgh.

[77] Fahma, Georges/Meddeb, Hamza (2015): Market for Jihad: Radicalization in Tunisia. Carnegie Middle East Center: http://carnegie-mec.org/2015/10/15/market-for-jihad-radicalization-in-tunisia/ij5l.

[78] International Crisis Group: Tunisia: Violence and the Salafi Challenge, Middle East/North Africa Report N°137: http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/North%20Africa/Tunisia/137-tunisia-violence-and-the-salafi-challenge.pdf.

political influence. On the other hand the jihadi Salafis are taking another direction:

"Although jihadis still believe in the armed struggle, they say that Tunisia is a land for preaching and not for jihad. They therefore currently refuse to resort to violence against the Tunisian state even if they continue to support Islamic combatants in other countries, such as the Syrian fundamentalist insurgents and the Ansar Al-Din Salafis in Mali, considering themselves members of the same ideological family."[79]

This attitude seems to have shifted as recent events have shown. I will elaborate further below on the new level of violence in the jihadi fight on Tunisian soil. However, the preaching and radicalization of youth with speech is an important part of the global fight that groups like IS are leading and it is just as inflammatory as single attacks on the home soil.

After the fall of Ben Ali: A new age for Salafism?
When Ben Ali was overthrown, Tunisians were able to discuss many issues without fear of oppression and prosecution for the first time. This debate led to a fierce battle between Western ideas and values, which had been also part of the discourse the former regimes had used and misused in the past, and the Arab-Muslim identity and heritage of Tunisians.[80] The question of religion and politics was at the centre of the newly unleashed debate and it was noted by many sources that there was a stark rise of Islamist dress and symbols being displayed by the public after the revolution. There was and still is a fierce battle of ideology and political stances for the future of the country.

After the fall of the Ben Ali regime, Islamist parties were able to operate freely. The Islamist party al-nahda won Tunisia's first free election in October 2011 and is now the second-strongest party in the current parliament. It seems that the Islamist politicians have accepted the deal of power-sharing and negotiating compromises with the secular forces that also steer the country.

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[79] ibid
[80] Merone, Fabio/Cavatorta, Francesco (2013): The Rise of Salafism and the Future of Democratization, in: Gana, Nouri: The Making of the Tunisian Revolution. Edinburgh.

However, the dangerous and violent strand of Salafi jihadism has been able to spread more easily in Tunisia after the fall of the Ben Ali. The reason behind can be found in the structures that governed the political and religious spheres under Ben Ali for more than two decades that he was in office. These structures have also impacted the period after the revolution. During these post-revolutionary years, the main focus was put on political and constitutional concerns which in turn led to a neglect of socioeconomic fractures inherited from the former regime. This left the expectations of the lower and middle classes largely unmet and them feeling disenfranchised.[3] This neglect fuelled disenchantment among young people and encouraged radicalization .
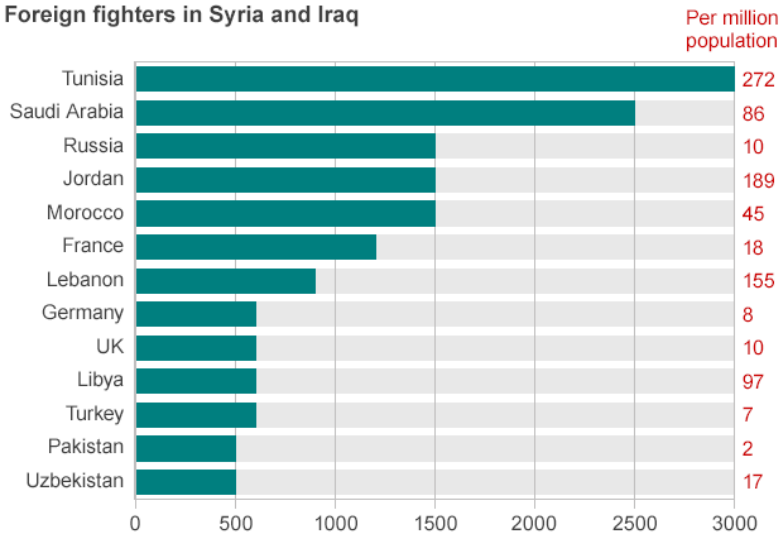
Additionally, Ben Ali's policy of marginalization of religious education on the one hand and imposition of tight security controls on mosques on the other hand created a vacuum in the religious sphere that allowed radical religious actors to emerge after the fall of the regime to recruit new members among those disenfranchised youth.[81]

It is estimated that 3,000 young Tunisians have gone abroad to fight with IS in Iraq, Syria and Libya.[82] According to other estimated published in July of 2015 by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights there are already more than 5,500 Tunisians fighting in jihadi groups in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and Mali.[83] In any case, it is striking that Tunisia is one of the largest contributors of foreign fighters to these conflicts, especially when measuring it against its relatively small population.

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[81] Fahmi, Georges/Meddeb, Hamza (2015): Market for Jihad: Radicalization in Tunisia. Carnegie Middle East Center: http://carnegie-mec.org/2015/10/15/market-for-jihad-radicalization-in-tunisia/ij5l.

[82] Langendorf, Manuel (2015): Tunisia grapples with radicalization of youth, Fair Observer: http://www.fairobserver.com/region/middle_east_north_africa/tunisia-grapples-with-radicalization-of-youth-64027/.

[83] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Un Groupe d'experts de l'ONU appelle à des mesures urgentes pour arrêter le flux de combattants étrangers de Tunisie [A group of UN experts calls for urgent measures to stem the flow of foreign fighters from Tunisia]," news release, July 10, 2015,http://www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16223&LangID=F.

Foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq

Per million population

Country	Per million population
Tunisia	272
Saudi Arabia	86
Russia	10
Jordan	189
Morocco	45
France	18
Lebanon	155
Germany	8
UK	10
Libya	97
Turkey	7
Pakistan	2
Uzbekistan	17

Note: Upper estimates used. Countries with fewer than 500 fighters not included
Source: ICSR, CIA World Factbook

Source: BBC News (2015):
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144

For young Salafis, many of whom feel unrepresented by Ennahda, economically disenfranchised, and increasingly pushed away by the elites of Tunisian party politics, the promise and purity of Islam remain very inspirational. There are charismatic leaders such as Abu Iyadh who garner great popularity among Salafi youths in general, and particularly jihadi Salafis. Abu Iyadh is a founding member of the Tunisian Combat Group, which was active in the fights against the United States in Afghanistan. He has emerged as a kind of legend amongst young people, who frequently show him as a symbol of Arab power against unprincipled regimes, both in Tunisia and abroad. [84] Many use social media to stay connected to radical groups, for example the Facebook pages for Abu Iyadh's group Ansar al Sharia.[85] Herein lies the appeal for youth not only in a sense of re-empowering oneself but also re-empowering as an Arab Muslim nation in a larger sense. The feeling of being oppressed by powers beyond one's grasp

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[84] Marks, Monica (2012): Who are Tunisia's Salafis? Foreign Policy: http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/09/28/who-are-tunisias-salafis/.
[85] See: www.facebook.com/pages/Ansar-al-Sharia/538143732947564

can only be reversed by creating anti-heroes and a movement against these "Western overlords".

The fight against domestic terrorism

Contrary to the formerly mentioned approach by jihadi Salafis of simply viewing Tunisia as a land for preaching, the fight has now reached domestic soil. Recent attacks on parliament and tourists have shaken Tunisia. On March 18th 2015 an attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunis left 24 dead, 20 of them foreign tourists with IS claiming responsibility.[86] These terrorist activities have elevated the level of violence, because up until that point targets of terrorist activity were mostly military. Attacking and killing civilians (even if in some cases they were foreigners and not locals) shows a new escalation of the means jihadi groups are willing to use to perpetuate their fight domestically.[87]

In an attempt to fight this escalation of violence, parliament passed a new terrorism bill on July 25th 2015 with an overwhelming majority of yes-votes (only ten MPs abstained and no one voted against).[88] Only a day after this law was passed, a gunman shot dead 38 on a popular tourist beach in Sousse. This attack was also claimed by IS.[89] This sequence of events makes it clear that Tunisia needs to address the issue of domestic terrorism not only to save lives but also to safeguard its political transformation process and economic development.

However, this new legislation came under a lot of criticism. Leading human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, warned that the law "lacks the necessary safeguards against abuse" and "grants security forces broad and vague monitoring and surveillance powers." The statement goes on stating

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[86] Darke, Diana (2015): Tunisia: 'lessons were not learnt from Bardo museum attack', The Guardian:
 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/travelnews/11701610/Tunisia-lessons-were-not-learnt-from-Bardo-museum-attack.html.

[87] Merone, Fabio (2015): Explaining the jihadi threat in Tunisia, Open Democracy:
https://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/fabio-merone/explaining-jihadi-threat-in-tunisia.

[88] Samti, Farah (2015): Tunisia's New Anti-Terrorism Law Worries Activists, Foreign Policy:
http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/18/tunisias-new-anti-terrorism-law-worries-activists-tunisia/.

[89] Darke, Diana (2015): Tunisia: 'lessons were not learnt from Bardo museum attack', The Guardian:
 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/travelnews/11701610/Tunisia-lessons-were-not-learnt-from-Bardo-museum-attack.html.

that this new law "extends incommunicado detention from 6 up to 15 days for terrorism suspects, and permits courts to close hearings to the public and allow witnesses to remain anonymous to the defendants."[90] The law replaces one that had been in force since 2003 passed under Ben Ali rule. Politicians and activists denounced the previous law, which, according to them, was used by the old regime to repress its political opponents, particularly those with an Islamist background. Mohamed Ennacer, current speaker of parliament, on the other hand called it a great achievement, defending it as an urgently needed measure in the fight against terrorists.[91] It will be crucial for the coming years to balance security measures with guaranteeing basic freedoms to all religious, social and political factions.

Ways forward
In order to overcome the growth of radicalization, Tunisia needs to address the demands of its youth, diversify the religious sphere[92] and create positive Salafi role models for youth to look up to.
In order to address socioeconomic issues, the state needs to implement a number of policies which at the surface will not read as de-radicalization of its youth. But in order to reverse the current trend, this goal needs to be present in the minds of policy-makers. Tunisian youth are drawn to Salafi jihadism in part because of feelings of disillusionment and stagnation, so it stands to reason that improving social mobility and stemming frustration among youth should be at the center of new policies.
In addition, strengthening political inclusion in the Salafi movement will be a key factor for young people to turn away from means of violence towards a more peaceful way of expression. Those young people who would like to work within formal politics and civil society should be allowed to do so freely as long as they respect laws and not be subjected to arbitrary anti-terrorism measures. This will be an

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[90] Samti, Farah (2015): Tunisia's New Anti-Terrorism Law Worries Activists, Foreign Policy: http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/18/tunisias-new-anti-terrorism-law-worries-activists-tunisia/.
[91] ibd
[92] Fahma, Georges/Meddeb, Hamza (2015): Market for Jihad: Radicalization in Tunisia. Carnegie Middle East Center: http://carnegie-mec.org/2015/10/15/market-for-jihad-radicalization-in-tunisia/ij5l.

important challenge for Tunisia as new legislation targeting terroristic activities is drawn up and implemented.

This also ties into balancing out state control over the religious sphere. The state should allow all non-violent religious actors a voice, while also encouraging official religious leaders to compete with Salafi preachers to create a diverse picture of religious ideas, rather than closing down mosques by the dozens and therefore forcing Salafi voices into the underground. Also, al-nahda as a party and a movement needs to re-evaluate where it stands. Two distinct organizational structures within al-nahda would allow the political party to operate without any interference from the religious movement and the religious movement to operate without being manipulated by the party for political gains. This will be a process and should also be watched closely by the other political forces in the country.

Last but not least, religious and secular actors should coordinate in order to formulate and implement policies aimed at de-radicalizing, disengaging, and reintegrating members of radical groups into society. In my opinion, creating positive and non-violent role models also falls into this category, as it is vital for young people to have someone to aspire to.

Why youths from Arab Spring countries joined violent radical groups

Rabha Allam

Introduction:

Contemporary Arab history has witnessed the rise of a number of armed radical groups that adopted violence as a means of achieving societal change in accordance with an extremist interpretation of religion. Such groups, which started in Egypt then spread to other Arab and Muslim countries, relied on the theories of Islamist ideologues who condemned modern society as non-Islamic and supported the use of violence to overthrow governments in the post-independence era. Among the most prominent of these ideologues are Sayed Qutb and Mohamed Abdel Salam Farag, who promoted toppling regimes by force and imposing a specific view of Islam on society. The Islamic Revolution in Iran proved the feasibility of such model and the possibility of applying it in other countries in the region, especially Egypt. The assassination of Sadat was the first step towards a broader plan to control Egypt through spreading chaos and kicking government powers out of cities. The discourse of jihadi violence was at the time focused on the necessity of fighting the closer enemy: the governments that need to be overthrown by force. However, the failure of this plan in Egypt in the early 1980s and the impact of fighting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan years earlier drove jihadists to shift focus to fighting the distant enemy. This contributed to the arrest and detention of a large number of Egyptian jihadists while others started fighting on international fronts. This crystalized the experience of fighting the distant enemy, which started earlier with the Soviets, until the emergence in 1998 of al-Qaeda which confirmed its presence with the September 11 attacks then with its role in Afghanistan and Iraq following the US invasion in 2001 and 2003, respectively.

Arab Spring revolutions offered an alternative approach through a number of popular peaceful rallies that reshaped the role of the people in the decision making process that was previously monopolized by authoritarian regimes protected by military power in the presence of

weak opposition. The Arab Spring changed the power equation since it highlighted the peaceful role of people in effecting change as opposed to violence promoted by jihadi groups. Radical groups, however, still functioned despite the changes they have undergone in terms of structure, purpose, and influence. In general, a striking difference emerged between the Arab Spring and radical groups with the first calling for justice, dignity, and human rights and the second advocating violence and imposing values that are alien to the societies in which they operate. The question here is how the two opposites merged and how violence escalated in countries that witnessed the eruption of Arab Spring revolutions. This paper attempts to pose a number of structural questions related to the nature of Arab states/ regimes, the nature of radical groups, and the nature of Arab Spring revolutions.

The nature of Arab states/ regimes:

-The violent repression of Arab Spring revolutions by the state led a large number of peaceful activists to leave the political scene whether voluntarily or forcefully. This left the stage for violent radical groups and confined the equation to a competition between the violent state and violent groups and both became locked in a bloody conflict.
-Losing hope in effecting change through peaceful means drove a large number of youths that started with peaceful protests to resort to violence, hoping it would succeed where peaceful activism failed or at times merely seeking revenge against the entity that aborted their attempts at effecting change.
-Failure to recover from decades of state repression whether before or after the Arab Spring initiated a vicious circle of violence whether on the part of the state or radical groups[93]. There are also several cases where youths adopt violence while in jail after being subjected to torture and abuse inside or through indoctrination by jihadi leaders incarcerated in the same prisons.
-Lack of trust in state institutions especially security and religious ones led to the weakness or absence of societal response to the

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[93]Róisín Hinds (2014), "Conflict analysis of Tunisia", GSDRC, International Development Department, College of Social Sciences University of Birmingham, January 2014: p. 11.

increasing number of youths joining radical groups. Because they are not trustworthy, these institutions were not expected to play a role in dealing with radicalism or aborting recruitment efforts. Also, these very institutions violently repressed peaceful opposition. Meanwhile, civil society remained incapable of acting unilaterally to counter radicalism since the activities of its organizations remained restricted by the state and this did not change following the revolutions. Add to that the fact that ruling authorities refused to include different factions in the decision making process and insisted on pre-revolutionary monopolization of such process.

- The violent states that suppress attempts at peaceful change are by nature weak ones that are not representative of all segments of society, hence have no other tool except legitimized violence against demands for change since it is incapable of engaging in dialogue or negotiations with different social and political players.

- The weakness of the state allowed radical groups to use loopholes to its advantage, especially the inability of security forces to control borders, which made it a lot easier to smuggle weapons and arm radical groups[94]. This applied to Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, and Syria.

- The weakness of the state was also manifested in the rigidity of its institutions that were unable to respond to the demands of youths who yearned for change. It was easier for youths to join radical groups and fight the state in a different manner.

- Jihadists fighting in international fronts were allowed to go back to their countries and a number of militants serving time in jail were released. This was either part of the state's plan to reconcile with these groups that were supposed to reintegrate and respect the law[95] or part of a ploy to use radical groups in suppressing peaceful activists. This pattern was remarkably repeated in Egypt and Tunisia following the toppling of Mubarak and bin Ali, respectively, where a number of jihadists sentenced to jail or detained under emergency laws were released. In Syria, hundreds of Syrian jihadists who fought US troops in Iraq were also released. These militants were arrested by the Assad

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[94] Hinds, p.11-13
[95] Haim Malka (2015), "Jihadi-Salafi Rebellion and the Crisis of Authority," in Jon B. Alterman ed. (2015) *Religious Radicalism after Arab Uprisings*, Center for Strategic and International Studies: p. 10 & Hinds: p.12

regime as part of a deal with the United States before relations soured between the two countries following the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri in 2005. It is noteworthy that jihadists in Syria were released upon a presidential pardon promoted by the Syrian regime as a response to calls for political reform. In reality, it was only a plan to expand the influence of militant extremists at the expense of peaceful factions that demanded change.

In this context, Syria's case appears to be the most exemplary since the revolution was purely peaceful and civilian throughout 2011, a fact even acknowledged by the Syrian regime itself. But as a result of the violent repression of protests, the siege of revolutionary towns, and the frequency of sectarian massacres, revolutionaries were forced to take arms to protect themselves and their people and towns[96]. In Egypt, change was pretty smooth right after the revolution and at the time radical groups were almost inactive and their activities were only confined to the bombing of the natural gas pipeline to Israel more than 15 times within 2011 and 2012. Otherwise, all domestic issues were the subject of peaceful rallies and political debates. However, when change via peaceful means was obstructed and when the state started repressing revolutionary and reformist factions, violent activities by radical groups were on the rise. Added to this are attacks against state facilities and police and army personnel by groups that are not necessarily extremists. It is noteworthy that radical groups that do not adopt a religious ideology also emerged as a response to the violent repression practiced by the state. These include the group called al-Iqab al-Thawri (Revolutionary Retribution) and other popular resistance movements.

The nature and development of armed radical groups:

-The failure of democratic transition through Arab Spring revolutions supported arguments adopted by radical groups about the impossibility of effecting change through peaceful means, especially in a state whose institutions are beyond reformation. That is why, they argued, the state has to be dismantled by force then rebuilt on strict

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[96] Testimonies by Syrian refugees interviewed between September and November 2015 in Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt as part of a project launched by the Arab Women Organization

religious rules. This led to a remarkable rise in recruitment for radical groups among youths from Arab Spring countries and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) presented itself as the alternative to the current state and the orchestrator of its destruction.

-The Syrian crisis remarkably contributed to increasing the number of youths joining radical groups and to justifying the jihadi approach. This was especially effective in the light of the International Community's inaction and the inability of regional powers to reach a resolution to the crisis as well as general failure in protecting civilians. The Syrian regime's sectarian-based repression helped radical groups promote the conflict in Syria as a sectarian one, which in turn increased the number of members[97]. Observes argue that part of the Syrian problem can be attributed to the failure of radical groups in adapting to the domestic environment at the beginning of the crisis with local communities unwelcoming fundamentalist ideology, especially promoted then by al-Nusra Front. However, this changed when the front started winning a number of battles against the regime, therefore was more locally accepted as a partner in the struggle.

-The development of jihadi ideology from al-Qaeda to ISIS, was striking. This meant as shift from a jihadi organization that carries out vengeful attacks against particular regimes to a state that works on expanding and extending its influence along large swathes of land that were already marginalized by the state, thus became an easy catch. ISIS took advantage of contradictions inherent in the failed state in which it operates in order to declare the reestablishment of the caliphate, impose its rules on residents of areas under its control, recruit a large number of fighters, and seize resources available in that territory. ISIS allegedly replicated the early Islamic immigration model. This meant that those who joined ISIS ranks were not only fighters, but also civil servants who occupied a number of positions required for the operation of a proper state.

In this context, it is possible to see ISIS as a development of the Arab Spring or, in other words, as another revolution that managed to topple an old state and establish a new one. ISIS was successful in

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[97]Nathan E. Shields. "Unrest in the Middle East: Potential Implications for International Terrorism and Counterterrorism Policy," in *Global Security Studies,* Spring 2012, Volume 3, Issue 2 & Malka, p.100

utilizing youths who were marginalized in their countries whether as a result of the failure of peaceful revolutions or constant repression at the hands of the state. ISIS can also be seen as a revolution against conventional jihadi ideologies represented by al-Qaeda, which did not seek to establish a state or restore the caliphate.

The nature of peaceful Arab Spring revolutions:

-The culture of democracy is not rooted into Arab societies, which led to expectations that democratic transition should happen immediately after the revolution then made it easier to abandon peaceful activism in favor of violent radicalism when this transition did not happen.
-Islamist youths were disillusioned in the ability of democracy to effect change since they saw that democracy does not necessarily guarantee rotation of power and considered the results of the democratic process a fragile façade to behind-the-scenes negotiations between members of the political elite rather than the will of the people.
-The idea of punishing the state seemed attractive to a large number of youths who attempted to effect change via peaceful means then failed as a result of state repression. It is important here to underline the way youths confuse the state and the regime, since the monopolization of the state by the regime makes them seem like one entity.
-No clear rules were set to govern the process of democratic transition, which gave each party the liberty to compete with its rivals in whichever way it chose and this included violence. This was demonstrated in Islamists' adoption of a sectarian discourse that justified verbal violence then actual violence.

In this context, it is important to highlight the crucial role played by political elites in Arab Spring countries in fueling polarization in terms of Islamist-secularist rivalry and adopting sectarian and exclusionist discourses that made sliding into violence, which started verbally, much easier[98]. This led to the start of Islamist rallies that meant to intimidate their secular rivals and in which different types of Islamist factions took part including radical ones. This pattern was repeated in varying degrees in Egypt and Tunisia where seemingly

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[98] Hinds, p.9.

moderate Islamist factions, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Nahda, kept manipulating the people through the threat of radical Islam. So, instead of attempting to reform religious discourse, it was in their best interest to keep radical groups influential so that people would see how moderate they are and elect them to ward off the radical threat. Meanwhile, the same factions attempted to curry favor with radical groups through adopting an extremist sectarian discourse, which led to deep divisions in the national fabric in Egypt and to a lesser extent in Tunisia.

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Arab youths and radical groups: Observations on civilization, behavior, and violence

Ali al-Mamouri

Introduction:

Despite the number of studies that attempted to answer the question of why youths from Arab Spring countries join armed radical groups, it has not been possible to reach a definite answer and the answers proposed so far have been too diverse and at times even contradictory, which complicates the issue more. This paper will examine the main perspectives that attempt to explain the problem in general while focusing on the particular case of Iraq. Although a number of general characteristics can be applied to youths in Arab Spring countries, each country has its own specificity. It is also noteworthy that the broadness of the issue makes it impossible to include all its facets in one short paper.

While religious, social, and cultural motivations for joining radical groups can be specific to each society or country, there is a broader spectrum through which the phenomenon can be interpreted as a civilizational regression in which the traditional components of civilization were destabilized. These components range from the mechanisms of understanding religion to the concept of state, which is considered the most significant achievement of civilization.

Civilization, with all the complex structures of which it is comprised, encompasses historical, socio-cultural, political, and economic values that differ in accordance with the experiences people of a given civilization have gone through, the way community operates, the interpretation of religious texts in the case of civilizations where the scared in an important component. Ideology, after all, is the product of society and is shaped by its experiences and development and this is what the argument of this paper is mainly about.

First: Distinguishing between radical groups and their intellectual origins

There are several differences between radical groups in the Arab world, some organizational and others ideological. Radicalism in general revolves around rigidity of thought and its political manifestations always focus on subverting the current order and replacing it with a radically new one or, in other words, with the old order which radical groups seek to restore[99].

There are organizational differences between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) while there are ideological differences between Sunni and Shiite movements. However, looking at the Iraqi case demonstrates that ideological differences cannot only be attributed to the sectarian reference of the movement, but also the political, cultural, and social factors related to the historical development of the state and the community in Iraq. True, the religious factor constitutes the ideological base of these groups, but it is not the main motive of the groups as much as it is the justification for the behavioral patterns in which they engaged.

Second: Researchers' views

There are main groups of views that researchers offer in this context, some of which are matching while others are contradictory.

The first group: Ideological/ religious motivations:
Several radical groups rely in their ideologies on old religious texts that focus on the concept of jihad. This is particularly the case with the legacy of Sheikh Ibn Taimia al-Harani, who died in 1328, and the teachings of Mohamed ibn Abdel Wahab based on which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was established and which it has been attempting to spread in the Muslim world[100]. The same applies in one way or another to modern strict interpretations of Shiite ideology and

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[99] *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Vol. 7. William A. Darity Jr. (editor in chief). New York: Macmillan Reference, 2008: p. 48.
[100] For more information on Jihad and the way it is employed please see "Jihad, Martyrdom, and the Martyr [Arabic]," a research file supervised by Dr. Bassam al-Gamal, Mominoun without Borders for Studies and Research, 2015.

which eventually led to the emergence of the concept of the supreme leader (Vilayet-e Faqih)[101].

However, assuming that the presence of a religious legacy that promotes violence is the main motivation for radical groups does not explain why religious radicalism had not emerged until the mid-1960s despite the existence of much older texts that support it. Radicalism, in fact, is rather linked to civilizational regression, lack of proper education, the rise of social indignation, the domestic policies of local regimes, and the foreign policies of Western governments. A number of researchers agree to this view and many writers seem to identify with radical ideologies and their analyses are closer to justification than objective interpretation[102]. These ideological motivations cannot be fully understood without underlining their interaction with political factors.

The second group: Political factors:
When analyzing political factors, many researchers focus on lack of political participation, dictatorship, and absence of basic freedoms. However, it is important to underline a broader concept that could encompass the afore-mentioned factors, which is the failure of the national state in becoming an actual state. Several countries in the region are still suffering from a crisis of national identity and social integration. In the light of developmental failure of all levels, this led to a separation between the state and its citizens. When the state weakened, all identity crises, which were mainly religious/sectarian, came to the surface and from there emerged several armed groups that fought the state and each other and behind each group stood regional and international supporters[103].

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[101] For more information please see Ali al-Maamouri's "Religion and the State in Iraq: Between Political Islam and Alternative Theories [Arabic]": http://is.gd/Du1aoz

[102] For example, some writers hold Western countries entirely responsible for the emergence of radical groups because of their policies in the region. Please see Bakr al-Attar's "Five Reasons that Drive Youths to Join ISIS and its Likes [Arabic]": http://is.gd/3ecXdV
And, Maha Yehia. "Fatal Attraction: Five Reasons that Drive Youths to Join ISIS [Arabic]." http://is. gd/QxVv24

[103] Please see Ali al-Maamouri's "Values and Organized Violence in Iraq: Paths for Regional Influence [Arabic]" in the proceedings of the *Fifth Regional Conference on the Middle East in the Light of Political International Variants* [Arabic]. The Center for Research and Strategic Studies- The Lebanese Army.

The third group: Economic factors:
Several studies lay special emphasis on the role of economic factors in the recruitment of youths for radical groups. When combined with the afore-mentioned factors, unemployment and the market's inability to cater to the needs of increasing numbers of youths, university graduates, and labor force would tempt youths to join radical groups. Those groups offer material gain for individual members and offer the promise of eliminating poverty through the achievement of justice.

Third: How those factors interact

The above-mentioned factors cannot be analyzed individually or apart from the environment that gave rise to them. It is important to pay attention to the fact these factors do not operate in similar ways or with similar percentages in all Arab countries with each country having its own historical and geopolitical specificity. They also interact in different ways in each country.

In order to understand how those factors interact and according to which kind of formulae they give rise to violence, it is important to highlight the following points:

1-   Understanding religious texts, on both individual and communal levels, differs from one Muslim country to another for an important reason: even though Islam managed to subjugate older civilizations during the expansion of the Islamic nation, these civilizations might have collapsed politically but the values related to them have stayed. Such civilizations started gradually infiltrating the interpretation of Islamic texts across the region so the way texts were understood was to a great extent linked to the pre-Islamic civilization that prevailed in a given country. In addition, the interpretation of religious texts was linked to the whims of rulers and their ability to influence preachers to propagate the interpretation that suits the rulers' purposes. It is noticeable that the religious texts on which scholars relied in practicing philosophy and promoting it during the Abbasid era are the same texts that were later used to prohibit philosophy altogether. This demonstrates that radicalism does not rely on the text as much as it is related to the historical context in which the text is

interpreted[104]. Furthermore, sectarian conflicts, which are more political than religious make the reasons for the emergence of radical groups diverse. For example, militant Shiite groups in Iraq, which emerged in 2003, have not started remarkably expanding until it almost replaced the state except after the occupation of Mosul by ISIS in 2014. The circumstances under which ISIS emerged, on the other hand, are different as it constitutes an extension of al-Qaeda and other radical Sunni groups.

2-   There is a link between religious extremism and impoverished communities in several Arab countries, which demonstrates the way religious texts interact with economic factors to drive youths to violence. These impoverished communities are linked in different ways to developmental failure for it offers an example of the ruralization of urban spaces, which is a result of failure to develop the countryside and to integrate migrants from the countryside into city life. Added to this is failure to offer proper education to children of migrants, which forced them into the labor market at a very early age. The psychological dilemmas that result from those factors pave the way for radical religious preachers to offer a refuge for those youths[105].

3-   The state seems to have played double roles that had multiple effects. The state's adoption of a certain sect and imposing it on the people created a counter-reaction that would eventually lead to violence. In addition, even if the regime does not adopt a religious stance at all, its failure to establish a legal framework that protects the rights of citizens and promote social justice and political participation would lead to instability followed by the emergence of local powers that replace the state. And because religion is an integral part of social values, it will play some role or another in these groups and a conflict will start between the state and groups promoting ideological values

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[104] For more details please see Ibrahim Gharaiba's "Religious Extremism is only a Small Part of a Deeply-Rooted Religious State [Arabic]." Mominoun without Borders: http://is.gd/oDCIFO

[105] Dr. Karim Mohamed Hamza. *The Problem of Poverty and Its Social Repercussions in Iraq* [Arabic]. Baghdad: Bait al-Hekma, 2011: pp.26, 74, 77. See also Dr. Mahdi al-Hafez's *Human Development: New Idea and Treatments* [Arabic]. Baghdad: Bait al-Hekma, 2012: p. 30.

that counter its hegemony[106]. The state's failure in responding to social demands resulted in the appearance of militant groups which youths join for reasons not necessarily related to religion at all. Those youths are rather motivated by political demands and sectarian-based policies, which was seen in Sunni protests in Iraq followed by the fall of Sunni governorates to ISIS against which Shiite militant groups emerged and so on[107]. The state's inability to provide jobs for the increasing numbers of youths led them to choose one of two paths: the first is working for state entities that started expanding at the expense of other state institutions and the second is joining radical groups that have started to establish a state within a state and even impose taxes on residents in territories under their influence. Meanwhile, security institutions either fail to fight these groups or collaborate with them.

Fourth: The case of Iraq

The above-mentioned factors can provide a broad view of the reasons that make youths join radical groups, yet they overlook the specificity of each region or country. In order to examine the specificity of the Iraqi experience, two points have to be highlighted:

1-   Violence of place:
The history of Iraq shows that this land has for the longest time been the scene of wars and instability, starting from the onset of civilization through the advent of Muslims till the modern times which witnessed a number of coups, wars, and armed conflicts that continue till the present day. This was mainly attributed to the diversity of resources on this land.
Political conflicts in Iraq have always been endowed with a sectarian nature, which is the result of the state's failure in creating a national identity to which all citizens can belong. This triggered the emergence of entities that started replacing the state and youths started joining them because they provide the protection the state failed to provide[108].

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[106] Maha Yehia. "Fatal Attraction: Five Reasons that Drive Youths to Join ISIS [Arabic]." IBID
[107] For details please see Ali al-Maamouri's "ISIS and Mosul: A Background [Arabic]." Cairo: Arab Forum for Alternatives, 2014.
[108] For more details please see Baker Yassin's *The History of Bloody Violence in Iraq* [Arabic]. 2nd edition. Damascus, 2014.

The conflicts Iraq has undergone saw many of its citizens killed, which left a large number of orphans behind, thus paving the way for the emergence of a violent generation. This was aggravated in 2003 as the number of victims rose and their families became a direct target of militant groups that started growing at the time. According to a report issued by the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights, out of 669 minors detained in juvenile facilities, 239 were accused of terrorist crimes while 153 were accused of murder, 101 theft, 50 mugging, 12 kidnapping, and 78 other crimes[109]. Developmental failure on the political, economic, and social levels made such escalation much easier.

2-   Class factors

Religious, economic, and political factors interacted with a process of class filtration in the Iraqi society, which led to the emergence of marginalized cities and the relegation of segments of society to the lower levels of the social hierarchy. This was a direct result of the policies of ruling authorities that worked on deepening divisions, which led a horizontal distinction along class lines to run parallel to vertical distinction along sectarian lines.

It is worth noting that classes whose conditions were quite similar on the horizontal level practiced discrimination against each other on the vertical level. Disenfranchised Shiites are members of radical Shiite groups that fight radical Sunni groups whose members are disenfranchised Sunnis.

The policies of ruling authorities were not the only reason for the perpetration of class division since the afore-mentioned ruralization of cities also played a major role. Migrants from the countryside were scorned and unwelcome by residents of the city, which created a wide gap between the two and racial terminology used by city dwellers against rural immigrants started emerging. The most prominent armed Shiite groups come from the outskirts of Baghdad, the area now called Sadr City, and ISIS members who control Mosul and abuse its residents come from the villages on the outskirts of Mosul that were scorned by established families in the city[110].

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[109] *The Impact of Terrorism on Human Rights in Iraq in 2008* [Arabic]. Baghdad: Ministry of Human Rights, 2009: p. 30.

[110] Among the best studies about the impact of class on social and political reality in Iraq is Hana Batatou's *Iraq* (3 volumes) [Arabic]. Kuwait: Dar al-Qabas, 2003. For information

Conclusion:

Examining the state at which Arab societies have arrived makes us realize that we are dealing with a case of civilizational regression in the proper sense of the world. The values that make up civilization and which govern both thoughts and actions are fading away and making room for extremist ideologies, lack of rationality, and educational institutions' inability to nurture critical thinking[111].

The state, which is seen as the most prominent manifestation of civilization, has totally receded to the background and is replaced by alternative entities that encourage youths to revert to the primitive instinct Thomas Hobbes analyzed, that of self-protection even at the expense of harming others.

In an interview with *Le Monde*, Jürgen Habermas said, "ISIS terrorism has nothing to do with Islam as a religion. They could have used any religious or ideological reference to justify their violence." This puts in a nutshell what this paper is attempting to argue.

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about the impact of class on contemporary Iraq, please see Ali al-Maamouri's "Al-Azamia: A Class Comparison [Arabic]": http://is.gd/HyRxai

[111] For more please see Ibrahim Awad's "A Point of View on Why Youths Join ISIS [Arabic]" CNN: http://is.gd/Y840HA

Chapter Three: Economic dimensions for youth joining violent radical groups

Why youths turn from civilian alternatives to violent extremist groups:

Social and economic reasons

Ayman Abdel Moati

A number of news websites ran a story about a young man called Amr, who took part in the attack on the Judges Club in the Egyptian city of Arish in the Sinai Peninsula on November 24, 2015 and which killed two judges and four policemen and injured 10. Amr, codenamed Abi Waddah al-Masry, is the son of an army officer and was known for supporting Mohamed El-Baradei and for being a fervent opponent of Islamists[112]. This story, regardless of its accuracy, underlines a substantial change in the mentality of youths and their political choices and that drove them to abandon peaceful revolution for extremist violence. Seeking martyrdom and consequently heaven through individual violent activities is not a manifestation of religion as much as of despair. Several youths who lose hope in effecting change through communal peaceful means would resort to faster solutions through individual violent means regardless of the consequences. This shift is the result of a feeling of estrangement and failure that has become common amongst a large number of revolutionary youths who failed to see their hopes materialize.

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[112] "A Surprise about the Arish Attack [Arabic]." *Mofakerat al-Islam*, November 26, 2015: http://is.gd/QZDV3C

First: The beginnings:

In 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood was established against the backdrop of a world economic crisis and the failure of the liberal movement to lead the national scene and secure Egypt's independence from British occupation coupled with the suppression of the communist movement that for the first time linked the national cause with class distinction. The ideas on which the Muslim Brotherhood was founded were not similar to those of previous religious reform movements for it resorted to violence first in 1945 with the assassination of Interior Minister Ahmed Maher than a number of other figures such as Prime Minister Mahmoud Fahmi al-Nokrashi and Judge Ahmed al-Khazendar in addition to carrying out several explosions. This signaled the beginning of the use of individual violent actions carried out by a specific group as an alternative to communal change that should be effected by the people.

The Muslim Brotherhood continued gaining supporters as did the liberal and communist movements before. Despite the fact that the 1940s had witnessed a remarkable rise of both the Islamist and communist movements which competed for the support of urban classes in particular, power was seized by a small organization inside the army that did not enjoy previous support amongst the people. This peculiar turn had at the time terminated all other attempts at political reform, especially with the repressive measures that were soon introduced by the state against opposition. For sixty years, the military remained in power with the exception of one year that was followed by the return of power to the military once more. This is not by any means a coincidence, but is rather the result of the strategies followed by all movements that might seem capable of driving people towards change including the left which also abandoned its faith in the role of the people in achieving political transformation.

It is undoubtedly impossible to separate the ideological meaning of politics from its social and economic meanings and it is similarly impossible to deal with religion in a vacuum without linking it to social interests that constitute part of the struggle in Islamist groups. That is why the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood and later radical Islamist groups can be seen as an expression of social interests rather than a product of a jurisprudence debate about the relationship between religion and governance. The Muslim Brotherhood came as an expression of the problems suffered by different segments of the middle class, especially in rural areas, and who because of the dominant culture as well as a complex network of interests cannot subscribe to liberal or communist ideologies. The Muslim Brotherhood also garnered a lot of support among the marginalized, whether the poor in Upper Egypt and impoverished areas or parts of the middle class whose conditions deteriorated as a result of the decline of local economy. Islamist movements took advantage of the grievances of several segments of society at the time to offer a set of religiously inspired slogans that promise the implementation of reform while, in fact, serving their own political agenda that could not be explicitly stated since it was not congruent with the ideologies of a large number of their supporters.

Second: The emergence of militant Islamism:

Most leading figures of the Muslim Brotherhood spent long years in jail during Nasser's rule and even though many of them left for the Gulf region after being released, the seeds of armed struggle had already been sown inside Egypt. This trend was started by thinker and writer Sayed Qutb who was later executed by Nasser's regime. True, many of the radical organizations established afterwards were from outside the ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood, yet they all shared a tendency to rely on individual violence at the expense of popular struggle, which implies sidelining the people and their role like what was done by several armed leftist groups in the Southern Hemisphere.

The second wave started on April 18, 1974 when 100 members of the Islamic Liberation Organization stormed the campus of the Technical Military Academy and seized weapons and vehicles under the leadership Saleh Sarreya. The attackers were hoping to assassinate then President Sadat and a number of senior officials who were then meeting at the adjacent Arab Socialist Union building. Operations continued until Sadat was actually assassinated. The regime managed to a great extent to control militant operations in the 1980s, yet they made a powerful comeback in the 1990s. The continuing marginalization of large segments of society drove a large number of disenfranchised youths to join those groups, which contributed to their forceful reemergence that was also helped by the return of Afghan War fighters. This new wave started on October 12, 1990 with the assassination attempt against then Interior Minister Abdel Halim Moussa and which instead killed Parliament Speaker Refaat al-Mahgoub. Those operations reached their peak on November 17, 1997 with the massacring of 58 people, mostly Swiss and German tourists, in the southern city of Luxor.

The economic crisis that took place in the 1970s and the collapse of the Nasserist project that promised development and national independence played a major role in driving a number of impatient and frustrated youths to seek faster alternatives after losing hope in long-term solutions. Their decision to do so was supported by the increasingly minor role played by leftist factions whether owing to their elitist discourse or as a result of repressive state policies against their activities. The state dealt with the crisis in an extremely imprudent manner that was mainly manifested in the open-door policy that flooded local market with imported products, which led to a decline in GDP growth rates from 6% in the 1960s to 3% in the 1970s[113]. Added to this is the collapse of local industry in the face of foreign imports, the rise of unemployment rates from 2.5% in 1960 to 7.7% in 1976, 14.7% in 1986 then down to 8.8% in 1996 and up again to 9.1% in 2002. Mubarak's regime continued destroying local economy and marginalizing the poor while corruption and nepotism became more rampant than ever and the state became more of an armed gang that represses the people.

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[113] The World Bank. Egypt: Economic Report: http://is.gd/FwJccQ

Radical groups did not collapse with the arrest of some of their leaders and the liquidation of other. Even after the announcement of ideological revisions that renounced violence in 2002 to pave the way for the release of a number of detainees, the conflict did not stop. Violence was especially escalated following US invasion of Iraq in 2003 which led many youths to join several revolutionary groups, many of which turned to violent extremism and adopted a sectarian discourse.

Egypt is not the only country whose policies triggered the emergence of radical armed groups, for Algeria also played a major role following the cancellation of the 1990 Algerian parliamentary elections in which the Islamic Salvation Front scored a sweeping victory and the subsequent establishment of an armed group that killed thousands of Algerians. Other countries like Jordan witnessed similar operations as a result of repressive state policies even if on a much smaller scale.

Third: ISIS, jihad, and the failure of the revolution

Following the fall of Saddam Hussein on April 9, 2003, Iraq started going through a series of conflicts that started with resistance to US occupation and developed into sectarian wars at times under the auspices of occupying forces. In the absence of a clear popular vision that works on eliminating both occupation and sectarianism, it was easy for militant groups to offer a new alternative to managing the conflict even though it was still one that did not address the interests of the people.

On April 9, 2011, that is shortly after the eruption of Arab Spring revolutions, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State in Iraq, the successor of al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad, established by Abu Mossab al-Zarqawi in 2003, announced the annexation of Syria to his caliphate project, hence the establishment of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). On June 11, 2014, Mosul, the second biggest city in Iraq, fell to ISIS and on August 5, 2012, an armed group attacked an Egyptian military base and killed 16 soldiers and seized two armored vehicles. Since then violence has been escalating until the Sinai Peninsula turned into a target for militant operations. The reaction of security forces was quite brutal especially against average citizens who were constantly accused of harboring terrorists. A series of explosions targeted a number of police and military facilities in other parts of Egypt and led to the assassination of several security officials as well as the prosecutor general. The Sinai Province organization, previously known as Ansar Beit al-Maqdes, which had earlier pledged allegiance to ISIS, claimed responsibility for the majority of these operations.

The Syrian conflict saw the emergence of a number of armed groups, some of which fighting the regime and others fighting each other in an indication of the fragmentation of the Syrian revolution. This development was mainly the result of the brutality of the Syrian regime together with a lack of vision that led the revolution to turn into a number of conflicts that take their toll on the Syrian people who are killed, starved, and rendered homeless. The situation in Syria expanded on a much larger scale than that in Iraq.

The number of foreign fighters in ISIS in Syria alone is estimated at 12,000 who joined in the past three years. This number is much bigger than the total of those who joined the Afghan War throughout 10 years. Around 25% of those fighters come from Tunisia, the only Arab Spring country that did not witness actual armed conflicts with the exception of Bahrain whose revolution was not completed. ISIS fighters come from around 81 countries. The number of foreign fighters from Western countries is estimated at 3,000[114].

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[114] Amani Bahgat. "Where Do ISIS Fighters Come from? How Do They Leave their Countries? [Arabic]." *Sasa Post*, April 11, 2015: http://is.gd/HZOQEX

Impoverishment and lack of justice as far as the distribution of wealth is concerned and that result from the huge class gap perpetrated by the capitalist system led a number of youths to look for alternative solutions. Despite a general rise in gross world product from 3,000 billion dollars in 1960 to 92,889 billion in 2012, the number of the poor increased from 400 million in 1970 to the double in 1980 and exceeded 1.2 billion in 2000 in developing countries alone. The 2014 Human Development Report notes that poverty is still a pressing problem on the universal level since the rich, who constitute 1% of the world's population, own half its wealth. In fact, the wealth of 85 rich people is equivalent to what half the planet's poor own together. The same report in 2006 noted the widening gap between the poorest 10% and wealthiest 10% and which rose from 2.3 to 31.5 in Tunisia, from 2.7 to 30.6 in Jordan, from 2.8 to 26.8 in Algeria, from 3.7 to 29.5 in Egypt, from 2.6 to 30.9 in Morocco, and from 3 to 25.8 in to Yemen[115]. The number of the unemployed in the Arab world has reached 22 million out of a total labor force of around 120 million and the number increases by 3 million every year[116].

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[115] Karam al-Helw. "On Poverty and Extremism in the Arab World [Arabic]." *Al-Hayat*, March 1, 2015: http://is.gd/739wE2
[116] "Unemployment in the Arab World [Arabic]." The Union for Arab Banks: http://is.gd/Or2Jjq

A study conducted by the Center for Arab Unity Studies stated that the failure of economic development plans in the Arab world throughout the past three decades, especially following the 1970s oil boom, the crisis of foreign debt that reached 220 billion dollars in 1995, and the transfer of around 800 billion dollars of Arab capital outside the region are all factors that contributed to the decline of basic rights such as food, education, and healthcare. More than 60 million adults and 9 million children in the Arab world have not received elementary education and more than 10 million do not get enough food[117]. According to the 2009 Arab Human Development Report, around 65 million Arab citizens, which corresponds to 39.9%, live in poverty and in 2005 20.3% of Arab citizens lived in abject poverty according to international standards. According to the 2009 Arab Labor Organization report, the percentage of unemployment in the Arab world reached 14.4% of labor force, compared to 6.3% on the international level[118].

This was the situation before the eruption of Arab Spring revolutions and was, in fact, the situation that led to their eruption. However, the post-revolutionary era witnessed an aggravation of past problems as political stability, economic development, and justice seemed far-fetched. Countries that witnessed those revolutions are either torn by bloody conflicts or ruled by regimes that are not different from their predecessors.

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[117] Al-Wafi al-Tayeb and Bahloul Latifa. "Unemployment in the Arab Region: Reasons and Challenges [Arabic]." *Kenana Online*: http://is.gd/F4ghnN

[118] "2009: The End of a Decade: Shifting the Problems of Illiteracy, Poverty, and Unemployment in Arab World to 2010 [Arabic]." *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 28, 2009: http://is.gd/ReXin8

Reports stated that revenues from tourism and industry declined as a result of the drop in economic development rates in the past three years and the country is currently dependent on grants and loans, mainly from the International Monetary Fund. In Egypt, tourism declined by 70% and several investments were withdrawn from the country which is now excessively dependent on aid from Gulf countries. Libya is expected to be suffering from absolute economic paralysis, yet the continuation of oil drilling and available financial reserves protected the country from total collapse. In Yemen, economic losses as of 2011 are estimated at 10.5 billion dollars, which corresponds to one third of GDP and poverty rates have remarkably risen. As for Syria, the economy lost in three years half the GDP, which was estimated at 60 billion before the crisis, and almost half the population were rendered homeless and those who stayed are suffering from deplorable health conditions with 75% of them living in abject poverty. Economic decline in Arab Spring countries in general led to increased dependence on imports and to a price hike by 25% at least[119].

Conclusion:

It is obvious from the above that the emergence of religious radical groups in the modern history of the Arab world and their ability to attract indignant youths are a reflection of a state of failure not only on the part of regimes, but also opposition factions. Countries that gained their independence in 1950s were dominated by dictatorships that repressed opposition and in several cases became subordinate to imperial powers as a means of consolidating their power. Meanwhile, civilian options available to indignant youths proved too fragile to effect a change and too bland to attract them. This was the result of many reasons:

-The limited influence of political factions, which rendered them unable to garner popular support and to mobilize the youths that took part in the revolutions and in pre-revolutionary political activities

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[119] Economic report: "The Arab Spring Exacerbates Poverty and Unemployment [Arabic]." *Deutsche Welle*, October 11, 2014: http://is.gd/QQuLrF

-The reform programs proposed by political factions do not target the core of policies that have been the cause of people's suffering, but instead focus on superficial changes

-Lack of realistic political and social alternatives to totalitarian regimes that could find support among the majority of the people

-The way most of those factions scorn popular action and only take advantage of the people as a means of destabilizing the state, negotiating power, and wining electoral votes and such was the case of both liberals and Islamists after the revolutions

-        Falling prey to illusory polarizations such as secular-religious, which eventually led to all parties losing the struggle to the ruling regime and the counter-revolution

Extremist youths between "Salil Sawarim (Clashing of Swords)" and the robbed rights: A political reading[120]

Jana Nakhal

In most studies, the Salafi ideology and the radical Islamist discourse are dealt with first as a religious phenomenon and second as an exceptional event that happens outside history and the world's social and political context. This short paper attempts to examine the major economic and social factors that attract youths to extremist ideologies and questions the arguments that have been taken for granted as well as the constant assumption that youths who join radical groups are always the victims.

As for methodology, we started with conducting interviews with journalists specialized in working with extremist Salafi Islamists in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen and interviews with moderate clerics that are close to the Salafis as well as discussions with males and females from the city of Tripoli where extremist thought prevails among youths.

It is important to mention the main issues related to the method of research and the conclusions. First, during our stay in Barja, we collected people's analyses, interpretations, and expectations without obtaining quantitative scientific information about the economic conditions of youths supporting Salafist thought and we do not have statistics about the diversity of their motives. This led us to question how accurate the information we collected is. Second, all the people we talked to were not Salafists, for they were friends, relatives, and acquaintances or religious scholars. This is mainly because of our known affiliation to a leftist party, which would most likely make Salafists resist talking to us and would put to question the information they would provide us with in case they agree to talk, especially that there is obvious hostility to the party and its members in the area where we conducted the interviews.

Types:
Posters that read "Islam I the solution" are all over the walls of the outworn walls in poorly-lit streets where garbage bags accumulate and

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[120] The title refers to Salil Sawarim (Clashing of Swords) which is the known ISIS anthem.

stinky smell fills the air. Armed youths can be hired for 200 US dollars, which gives insight into the social and economic conditions that pave the way for recruitment by armed groups. Reasons that arguably drive those youths to adopt extremist ideologies vary, but away from generalizations and superficial analyses, it is possible to see a number of types that recur in cases where extremist ideologies gain momentum. Areas that are economically and socially marginalized are considered a fertile soil for the spread of extremist thought since youths there feel estranged and do not see any hope in the future. This is accompanied by state practices that deepen those feelings. Youths, therefore, can easily be dragged into any prevalent ideology in which they can find a way out of their ordeal.

Reasons:

The general political and historical background of the region, the repressive measures of usually Western-backed Arab regimes, on top of which is Saudi Arabia, the main exporter of extremist thought, neoliberal policies that only make the poor poorer, and frustration resulting from the failure of the Arab revolution are all factors that generate a feeling of estrangement and insecurity. Those factors can seem weak if separated from one another, yet combined at the same time and place, the impact is absolutely different. Hisham Zogheib[121] attributes the rise of extremist discourse to four types of failure that took place in the Arab region:

-Political: failure to establish an institutional state that oversees the fair division of duties and rights

-Economic: failure to boost local production, modernize industry, and protect local markets from the power of international markets

-Cultural: failure to rationalize and modernize the culture

-Identity: failure to modernize Arab identity, which encouraged resorting to tribal, pre-modern identities

These reasons might seem redundant, since they are being used almost with every crisis that hits the Arab region, yet there is more to be said about the Salafist discourse in particular. Zogheib links the prevalence of extremist discourse to the adoption by Arab states of neo-liberal policies, which led to a rise in poverty rates and the marginalization of

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[121] Hisham Zogheib. "The Historical Foundation of Extremist Discourse [Arabic]." *Al-Rai*, Jordan, February 6, 2015

a large sector of society, which in turn created an environment that is ready to embrace any ideology that offers an alternative. The eruption of revolutions across the Arab world also drove oil-rich states to intensify their use of religious fascism, which supports extremist discourse that renders opponents infidels, in the face of anyone who dares to rebel against the status quo.

Pankaj Mishra[122] links extremism to the economic crisis and repressive regimes, arguing that this offers the perfect recipe for the rise of groups that promote "cults of authoritarianism and violence."

Residents of different regions and villages across Lebanon agree that economic and social conditions deprive citizens of their basic rights and lead them to lose all trust in the government. Extremist groups emerge as the savior that will provide all what is lacking. This is especially done in Lebanon through using a sectarian discourse, which was demonstrated from responses by youths from Sidon who argued that Sunnis are poor because Shiites have money and power.

Cyclical revolution and the religious discourse:

According to youths in their twenties from Barja, a Sunni village in southern Beirut that in many parts is controlled by Salafis. It is noteworthy that those who currently call themselves Salafi have a history of joining different trends that become dominant at certain points in time, for they were communists when the Communist Party was in control, backed Rafik Hariri when he supported them financially and introduced modernist mega-projects, and now follow extremist Islamists because they are the most powerful at the moment.

This peculiar political scene is characterized by a cyclical pattern, which can also be "chameleonesque" in the sense that it changes in accordance with the dominant context. This kind of political scene sees youths shifting from one political extreme to another, so they would abandon communism when it is no longer powerful, forget about Hariri when he is killed, then support the extremist Islamist through which they adopt a sectarian discourse that blames Shiites for their grievances. This becomes obvious in their appearance with their unkempt beards when they were communists, modern outfit at the heyday of Hariri's rule, and Salafist beards without a moustache when they became extremist Sunnis.

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[122] Pankaj Mishra. "How to Think about Islamic State [Arabic]." *The Guardian*, July 24, 2015.

These changes offer an insight into the needs of low-income communities that are usually located in marginalized regions within a state that is centralized par excellence. Youths in these places hurry to support any movement that allows them to express their indignation. This can take the shape of communism, neoliberalism, or Salafism. The latter does not only target marginalized youths, but specifically Sunnis who are pushed to believe that Shiites are prospering at their expense. This leads youths to overlook the main cause of their marginalization, which revolves around state policies. Religion, then, becomes an entity to belong to and one that promises to solve their problems and bring back their robbed rights.

Brainwashing:

The role of security forces is quite ambiguous in the sense that extremist preachers who incite violence are left to speak freely while youths are the ones who get arrested and tortured. Based on interviews with Radwan Mortada, an expert on Salafi movements in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, and Mustafa Malas, lawyer and chairman of the National Solidarity Party, it is obvious that youths subjected to state repression go through a phase of "temporary penance" where they retire from the political scene then after a while come back to take revenge on their oppressors after being brainwashed by extremist preachers. Those youths can be later joined by their friends who start by sympathizing with them. According to Malas, the majority of defendants in Salafi trials are almost children: "They have not yet developed any ideology. They are simply brainwashed."

Feelings of sympathy for brainwashed youths prevail in a considerable portion of studies about extremist groups. Youths, those studies argue, turn into mercenaries as a result of their living conditions and are exploited by extremist leaders who only want supporters to achieve their political goals. Youths are always portrayed as helpless in the face of the ideological pressure to which they are subjected in addition to the temptation of money and the power inherent in taking arms.

In order to be able to influence youths, extremist preachers use a discourse that addresses their feelings of deprivation and estrangement. Pankaj Mishra argues that while ISIS is often described as belonging to the Middle Ages, it is in fact an extremely modernist movement that knows how to address the needs of these youths and which promises to give them back their rights even if those promises are not kept later on: "Islamic State is often called 'medieval' but is in

fact very modern – a horrific expression of a widespread frustration with a globalized western model that promises freedom and prosperity to all, but fails to deliver." Although ISIS is always described as backward, which on several levels is true, this backwardness does not hinder its use of modern tools to attract youths and reach those who are seemingly the harder to recruit. This is obvious through the way it uses religion as an indisputable source that needs to be obeyed and that, therefore, justifies all their activities as well as the extensive utilization of modern technology, especially social networking websites. ISIS also offers to arm those indignant youths, which makes them feel powerful and capable of effecting a change.

In order to join extremist groups, youths abandon their lives and are initiated into a totally new world. Many youths who joined extremist groups speak of the trauma of being part of a very different context. While those youths become indoctrinated and reach a point of adopting all the ideologies promoted by the group, they find themselves oppressed in a different way after they join for they are forced to be part of a lifestyle they have never subscribed to before. Many of those youths were also revolutionary and demanded freedom and justice only to find out that the opposite is applied within these groups where an authoritarian system is dominant. That is why many of them abandon extremist groups after they realize that the promises they were given at the beginning would never materialize. Tripoli offers a typical example of this development since there extremist ideologies gained momentum between 2013 and 2015, especially with the Syrian crisis, yet a number of clerics in the city agree that it is now starting to fade away.

There is no doubt that economic conditions in the Arab world could easily lead to the eruption of revolutions, but the version of revolution as offered by Salafi movements is quite misleading since it claims fighting oppression while it is based on the establishment of an oppressive system that is as dictatorial as the state they want to fight. However, ISIS remains influential because it offers weapons and training that give vent to accumulated anger inside youths who decide to join. ISIS invests into the justified resentment youths feel towards their societies and governments to create its own version of the revolution needed to counter injustice.

Youth Radicalization
Rouba El-Helou

This article serves as an initial discussion of the radicalization process, particularly among young people. It focuses on the availability of positive interventions and suggests possible solutions to prevent extremism and violence, despite the limitations of achieving such goals. The debate circling around tolerance, reconciliation and possible peaceful conflict transformation is seen as the ultimate outcome of dialogue on this topic.

A fresh look at "Lord of the Flies"[123] by the Nobel-Prize winner William Golding will facilitate this process. The novel's worldwide significance is rooted in its portrayal of how civilization and social interaction should be understood, as well as for the author's narrative about a group of young boys who were not inherently 'monsters', but were transformed through their performance of series of 'monstrous' rituals (Zimbardo's evil traps number 2 and 6 as will be seen below) while attempting to govern themselves in an extreme crisis situation. The novel shows how easy it is to bring evil into the world, through the savage behavior of the young school boys left on an island, despite the absence of adult influence and external supervision. The outbreak of a violent, bloody battle took place among them within the context of an 'idyllic' tropical island, witnessing a shift in behavior from innocent to barbaric; leading the reader to ask questions about the nature of humanity, such as: Why do good people do bad things? How should the world understand civilization and counter both fear and superstition through the use of rational argumentation?

In the same vein, a book written a decade ago is enjoying new relevancy. Considered the 'manifesto of radical Islam' this publication has become a recent online hit after being translated into English by the US Brookings Institution in 2006: "Management of Savagery" (*Idarat al- Tawahush)[124]* written by the anonymous jihadi ideologue

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[123] *Lord of the Flies,* a novel published in 1954 by the Nobel-Prize winning English author William Golding. It tells the story of a group of British boys ages 6 to 12, whose airplane has crashed on an uninhabited island and try to govern themselves with disastrous results.

[124] Abu Bakr Naji trans. by William McCants. "The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through Which the Umma Will Pass By". *The US Brookings Institution*. May 23, 2006.

Abu Bakr Naji. The book calls for the necessary creation and promotion of "nationalist and religious resentment and violence in order to create long-term propaganda opportunities for jihadist groups." Abu Bakr also suggests a strategy of attrition which will weaken the ability of superpowers to defeat committed jihadists. He mentions that "The policy of violence must also be followed such that if the demands are not met, the hostages should be liquidated in a terrifying manner, which will send fear into the hearts of the enemy and his supporters."

The book offers a systematic differentiation between the meaning of Islamic 'jihad' and other religious doctrines. It sets a strategy for jihad-based education encouraging regular practice and toughness: "One who previously engaged in jihad knows that it is naught but violence, crudeness, terrorism, [deterrence] and massacring… I am talking about jihad and fighting, not about Islam and one should not confuse them. He cannot continue to fight and move from one stage to another unless the beginning state contains a stage of massacring the enemy and deterring him." As opposed to the trajectory described in "Lord of the Flies", *"Idarat al- Tawahush" would seem to call for an intentional and mindful path to the barbaric.*

"Dabiq", ISIS' monthly online magazine, is formatted in a contemporary style and issued in many languages and has proven to be a very effective propaganda and recruitment tool. The English version targets young men (in all English speaking countries). David Denby, in writing about "Dabiq", mentions: "What does ISIS want? The word 'want' seems strange in this context, since the wants of a totalitarian death cult don't seem to fall within the normal range of desires. Death ends all wants. But *Dabiq* addresses certain aspects of life, too, so clearly not every member of ISIS is expected to die. Survival is also one of the magazine's aims. Reading the magazine, one can see that, in a general way, ISIS wants land and resources, a recognized state, a caliphate that dominates the Middle East. It wants to slaughter Christians, Jews, and Yazidis. It <u>wants to slaughter Muslims</u> who do not believe in its version of Islam. It wants revenge against the Western presence in Arab lands. It wants to 'defend the

Prophet.' Most of all, it wants power. That is, it wants the future."[125] It is believed that the internet has increased the radicalization of young people, it made it very simple for one individual to learn radical ideologies by following a global network of extremism and maintaining contacts: this is much easier when it is done online. As shall be described below, both "*Idarat al- Tawahush" and* "Dabiq" fit into the Zimbardian category of 'situational evil', introduced intentionally and systematically to trap otherwise well-meaning and/or idealistic individuals.

An Extremism Project

Is extremism merely the expression of human nature in extreme situations, as is the case in "Lord of the Flies"; is it the result of intentionally barbaric conditioning, as in the cases of "*Idarat al- Tawahush"* and "Dabiq" or should it be seen in a larger context of societal and structural injustice and oppression? In this context, Zimbardo differentiates between the dispositional, situational, and the systemic. Two so-called "lone wolf"[126] attacks last year, one by Martin Rouleau-Couture who drove his car into two soldiers and killed one before he was fatally shot by the police, and another by a Michael Zehaf-Bibeau who shot dead a Canadian soldier in front of the parliament building in Ottawa, before being killed afterward, led to a swift and – some would argue – disproportionally draconian response on the part of the Canadian government. The then ruling conservative administration introduced far reaching anti-terrorism legislation, known as Bill C-51(The Anti-Terrorism Act) in June 2015. This gave unprecedented powers to government departments, police and to the Canadian Secret Intelligence Service (CSIS) which is the country's spy agency, while further alienating large numbers of the disaffected young population. According to CSIS, at least 130 citizens were involved in extremist activities abroad, estimating 30 fighting in Syria alone. In addition to these incidents, Calgary

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[125] David Denby. "The Perfect Children of ISIS: Lessons from Dabiq." *The New Yorker.* November 24, 2015. URL: http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-perfect-children-of-isis-lessons-from-dabiq. Accessed December 20, 2015.

[126] A lone wolf is considered as someone who commits violent acts supporting a group, a movement, or an ideology alone, outside of any command and without factual assistance from anyone.

(Alberta) has been labeled by the media as a 'hotbed of terrorism' after five youths from one mosque (8th and 8th Musalla) fled the city and joined the Islamic State. "When you don't find purpose and meaning in life, the only thing you look for is death, and this how I feel a lot those young kids ended up fighting. This goes down to a social and psychological disorders of fascination with death, killing and the empowerment of the oppression", says Imam Shaykh Navid Aziz from the 8th and 8th Musallah Mosque, in an interview, he continues to say" "I find a lot of the anger and frustration that young Muslim men feel, it has to do with foreign policy."[127] Damian Clairmont, turned to Islam in his late teens after trying to take his own life when he was 17 years old. He died at the age of 22 while fighting in Aleppo-Syria in January 2014. Damian told his family that he was going to leave Canada to study in Egypt, however he had flown to Istanbul, then crossed into Syria with El-Nusra Front before joining ISIS. Stories similar to that of Clairmont fueled fears that the radicalization of Canadian youth had become a country-wide phenomenon. Imam Aziz says he never personally knew Damian or the other youths from the mosque who joined IS, but believes they may have been radicalized by preachers online.

There is much we do not understand regarding the fundamental causes of this form of violence, but there is much we can and should be doing. The analyst David Kaulemu applied the Fanon/Mamdani[128] thesis when victims become killers. He stated: "Violence breeds violence and the victims of violence become violent themselves…the method of violence developed during the War of Liberation have spread through our society. It has become part of our social political language."[129] Scott Attran, a leading researcher on why people turn

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[127] Dylan Robertson. "More freedom to discuss hot-button topics could stop radicalization at mosques, say Muslims". *Calgary Herald.* October 3, 2015. URL: http://calgaryherald.com/news/national/more-freedom-to-discuss-hot-button-topics-could-stop-radicalization-at-mosques-say-muslims

[128] Frantz Fanon is one of the most prominent philosophers who have written about liberation movements and their armed struggle, and the concept of violence and among his works the most famous book "Wretched of the Earth", Mahmoud Mamdani adopted the thesis of Fanon in his study, that was published in 2001 by Princeton University entitled, "When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and Genocide in Rwanda".

[129] David Kaulemu. "The Culture of Party Politics and the Concept of the State" in D. Harold-Barry (ed.). *Zimbabwe: The Past is the Future*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2004.

toward violent extremism writes: "It's 'the first of the storm', says Islamic State. And little wonder. For the chaotic scenes on the streets of Paris and the fearful reaction those attacks provoked are precisely what Isis planned and prayed for. The greater the reaction against Muslims in Europe and the deeper the west becomes involved in military action in the Middle East, the happier Isis leaders will be. Because this is about the organization's key strategy: finding, creating and managing chaos." Confronted with these overwhelming incidents and declarations normal people will seek to ask unavoidable questions: is peer influence effective in such cases? What exactly would prompt young people to engage in such horrible activities? Is it the influence of drugs, the strains of economic deprivation? Mark Warr sees that "groups can create their own moral climate, defining what acceptable behavior within a self-contained social system is." Of course it will be hard to establish a clear pattern or series of causes for such behaviors, but such incidents can provide useful clues regarding people's behavior: the traditional attribution of the 'bad' person influencing the 'good' person by changing their victim's moral standards and beliefs is often applied to the case of a group such as ISIS. A strong commitment to religious beliefs has been ascertained among these radical groups, which was expressed in the violent actions based in authority rooted in a particular interpretation of Islam. This leads us to another question related to the authenticity of this interpretation, and their qualities? Tahir Abbas argues in response that "showing the actions of Islamic terrorists as almost entirely political and not at all theological."[130]

Does the alienation Canada's Arab and Muslim youth, caused by the exaggerated response to isolated terrorist attacks, merely exacerbate an already dire situation, leading 'good kids' to turn bad? If so, Zimbardo would see this as being a 'situational' form of evil. However, if the Canadian authorities were intentionally creating an environment in which young Arabs and Muslims find it almost impossible to 'do the right thing', this, according to Zimbardo, would be a form of systemic evil. Allow us to now take a closer look at this unique approach to individual and institutional evil.

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[130] Tahir Abbas (Editor). "Islamic Political Radicalism: A European Perspective". *Edinburg University Press.* 2007.

The Lucifer Project

"*What makes people go wrong?*" asks Philip Zimbardo, then continues "*That line between good and evil is permeable, any of us can move across it....I argue that we all have the capacity for love and evil--to be Mother Theresa, to be Hitler or Saddam Hussein. It's the situation that brings that out.*"[131]

Zimabardo's book the *Lucifer Effect*, revolves around the negatives of human behavior; it states that "any person, when placed under the right set of circumstances, is capable of evil behavior? He adds: "You don't need a motive, all you really need is a situation that facilitates moving across that line of good and evil."

In the Stanford Prison Experiment Zimbardo tested the dispositional hypothesis by demonstrating that conditions in the prisons were not primarily due to the type (or disposition) of individuals working and incarcerated in the prisons but could be best explained using a situational attribution. He believed that the conditions were influenced by the social roles that prisoners and prisoner guards are expected to play.[132] Taking Less Ross' 'fundamental attribution error'[133] as a point of departure, he attempts to distinguish between the individual 'bad apple', the 'bad barrel of apples' which make ethical people do evil things, and the 'bad barrel maker', that is forces like the German National Socialists and ISIS(ISIS) who intentionally create systems (i.e. 'systemic evil') in which evil become the norm and ethical behavior is seen as deviant and criminal. Zimbardo presents 10 'systemic' evil traps for good people, they are:

1.   **Offering an Ideology so that a big lie provides justification for any means to be used to achieve the seemingly desirable, essential goal.**
2.   **Arranging some form of contractual obligation, verbal or written, to enact the behavior.**

[131] Philip Zimbardo. "The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil." *Random House New York*. 2007.
[132] For more information please see Integrated Socio-Psychology website. URL: http://www.integratedsociopsychology.net/stanford_prison_experiment.html
[133] Lee Ross. "The Intuitive Psychologist and his shortcomings" in Leonard Berkowitz (ed.), Advances in Experimental Social Psychology. *Orlando*, *Fla*: *Academic Press*, 173-220. 1977

3.   **Giving participants meaningful roles to play that carry with them previously learned positive values and response scripts.**
4.   **Presenting basic rules to be followed that seem to make sense prior to their actual use, but then can arbitrarily used to justify mindless compliance.**
5.   **Altering the semantics of the act, the actor, and the action; replace reality with desirable rhetoric.**
6.   **Creating opportunities for diffusion of responsibility for negative outcomes; others will be responsible, or it won't be evident that the actor will be held liable.**
7.   **Starting the path toward the ultimate evil with a small, insignificant first step.**
8.   **Having successfully increasing steps on the pathway be gradual, so that they are hardly noticed as being different from one's most recent prior action.**
9.   **Changing the nature of the influence authority from initially "just" and reasonable to "unjust" and demanding, even irrational, elicits initial compliance and later confusion, but continued obedience.**
10.   **Making the "exit costs" high, and making the process of exiting difficult by allowing usual forms of verbal dissent, while insisting on behavioral compliance.**

Could the draconian anti-terrorism policy of the Canadian government not only lead to violations of freedom rights, but also be interpreted as a set 'systemic' evil traps meant to entrap misguided Arab and Muslim youth?
Zimbardo says: "situational forces are more powerful than we think, or that we acknowledge, in shaping our behavior in many contexts."[134]
Furthermore, Zimbardo analyzes the question of bad and good in a social context: *are people evil by nature (the 'bad apples' mentioned above) or they become evil under the force of situational factors ('bad barrels') like being in a prison or a war zone? Who wins over evil and how? In this context should the policies of the Canadian (and other Western) government(s) been seen as systemic, structural evil?*

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[134] Philip Zimbardo. "The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil." *Random House New York*. 2007.

At the heart of the matter relies a revisiting of the social values and the educational system and its potential to create a more positive and pro-social behavior. Can individuals resist situational and – even worse systemic pressure? Is it possible to generate goodness out of evil? Zimbardo has discovered through series of empirical studies that a core group of 5-10% of all those studied resist situational and systemic pressure. In most cases it holds true that if one wants to change the person the situation needs to be changed first. The *Lucifer Effect* is about understanding human character transformations. Zimbardo is currently focusing on the 'heroic 5 percent'. Their existence offers hope and gives youth a chance to think of differing patterns of behavior. Zimbardo's alternative, the "Heroic Imagination Project", can be seen as an antidote to evil, it promotes non-conformist, counter-situational options for young people, in particular in the educational system, in the West and potentially in the Middle East. *In such cases it is significant to repeat what Benjamin* Franklin's said once "Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety."

Chapter Four: Ideological and political dimensions of youth joining violent radical groups

Why do youths join armed radical groups for political and ideological reasons?

Habiba Mohsen

Introduction:

It is hard to talk about armed radical groups without thinking of extremist organizations that have made headlines in regional and international media outlets, especially with the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Since the 1970s and 1980s, a lot has been written about Islamist movements, whether violent or non-violent, and then those writings doubled in the early 2000s, particularly following the September 11 attacks that made such groups the focus of numerous analyses and studies.

The interest in radical groups was then revived in the past few years with the emergence of ISIS and the terrorist attacks that targeted a number of European countries. What distinguishes the current phase of Islamist radicalism is the number of European youths joining extremist groups, which they apparently consider exotic. It is noteworthy that not all radical groups have an Islamist background, since several of them adopt other ideologies. These include Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization in Iran[135], Palestinian liberation movements that have armed wings such as the Qassam Brigades, affiliated to Fatah, and several others[136]. However, this paper will specifically focus on armed radical groups affiliated to the extremist Islamist movement in the region.

It is not possible to analyze the reasons that drive youths to join radical groups without resorting to political sociology theories that basically focus on attempts at interpreting "collective action" or why people join groups and movements, whether radical or non-radical, and why they are engaged in communal activities. Political sociologists have come up with a number of theories to answer such questions, the most common of which are "relative deprivation theory," "rational choice," and "resource mobilization." It is important

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[135]Mujahido Khalq, Encyclopedia of Al-Jazeera (Arabic), 28/5/2015, http://goo.gl/8fnYxH

[136] Shuhdi Kashef, what are the armed groups in Gaza? (Arabic), August 20 / August 2013, http://goo.gl/gwI68J

to examine the theoretical background of the study of radical groups rather than analyze individual cases, especially that the phenomenon of Islamist radical groups is already shrouded in mystery and is considered an exception that cannot be fully interpreted through political sociology theories, which makes the task of researchers much harder. The paper will present the main theories that can be used to explain the phenomenon of youths joining radical groups and will attempt to apply those theories on examples from the Arab region.

Relative deprivations theory:

A large number of researchers tend to attribute the phenomenon of youths joining radical groups to economic and social reasons such as poverty, lack of education, unemployment, marginalization, and others. In fact, this interpretation is linked to the "theory of relative deprivation"[137]. According to this theory, joining radical groups is attributed to a feeling of deprivation on the part of youths as a result of the failure of modernist mega-projects, demographic pressures, the failure of development projects, and the rise in poverty rates. This feeling can also be a result of a number of political factors such as excessive foreign intervention in domestic affairs, which was especially obvious following the September 11 attacks, or the 1967 defeat. The report presented by The Economist in February 2011 about the "instability index" in the Arab world lists a number of other reasons that fall under the same category such as unemployment, police violence, corruption, and lack of democracy[138].

Studies using relative deprivation theory may interpret the emergence and rise of radical groups in the Arab region on the macro level, yet this interpretation was faced with a number of reservations. First, most sociological studies argue that poverty and marginalization might not be a decisive factor in youths' adoption of violence, since many of

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[137] For details about the theory of relative deprivation, please see the following references:
Jacquelien Van Stekelenburg & Bert Klandermans, "Individuals in Movements: A social Psychology of Contention", *in* Bert Klandermans & Conny Roggeband, *Handbook of Social Movements across Disciplines*. Springer, 2007: p.157- 204
Corcuff Philippe, « Frustrations relatives », *in* Olivier Fillieule et al., *Dictionnaire des mouvements sociaux,*
Presses de Sciences Po « Références », 2009 : p. 242-248.
[138] Variously vulnerable, Feb 3rd 2011, The Economist, http://goo.gl/Nf8CyD

them have received decent education and most of them are city residents who belong to the middle class. Similarly, a large number of youths who suffer from poverty and marginalization do not join radical groups and do not engage in any form of communal activity. Second, radical groups did not emerge from a vacuum, but most likely were a product of other movements that did not promote violence as a tool of political activism. This poses the question of why some Islamist movements resort to violence while others remain peaceful even though members of both share a number of sociological and demographic characteristics. Third, relying on the theory of relative deprivation alone is not enough to explain why several moderate movements turn to violence after a while or under specific political circumstances and why some radical groups renounce violence within a specific context[139].

The ideological interpretation:
Other analysts, especially experts in Arab affairs, attribute joining radical groups to ideological reasons. This interpretation usually tends to mix between an analysis of the discourse and behavior of members of these groups and the ideological texts they produce on one hand and reasons that can fall under the relative deprivation theory on the other hand. This kind of interpretation offers a profound analysis of the trends of thought that prevail among members of radical groups and help, to some extent, security forces in tracking down those groups. One of the most accurate interpretations presented in this direction is that issued by al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in its magazine *The Guide to Islamist Movements around the World*. The center categorizes Islamist movements around the world based on each movement's stance on that state in which in emerges and the policies of this state. According to this classification, Islamist movements can be divided into two types: religious Islamist movements and political and social Islamist movements.

The first type, as defined in the afore-mentioned analysis, "is based in a particular reading of Islam and religious texts that judges individuals and communities based on what they see as the authenticity of their

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[139] This idea was examined in detail in: Muhammmmed M. Hafez & Quintan Wiktorowicz. "Violence as a Contention in the Egyptian Islamic Movement", *in* Quintan Wiktorowicz (dir.), *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach.* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004: p.61-88.Muhammmmed M. Hafez & Quintan Wiktorowicz.

faith and the main preoccupation of these movements is establishing a correct system of worship and faith as they view it." These movements tend to accuse entire states as well as individuals and communities of apostasy based on a number of texts from Islamic heritage that support their views. Their discourse and tools of political actions are also inspired by these texts.

According to the study, Islamist religious movements, while both radical, are subdivided into two categories based on their perception of the society in which they operate: peaceful religious Islamist groups and jihadi religious Islamist groups[140]. Peaceful radical groups perceive contemporary societies in comparison to the life of the prophet and early Muslims as similar to the pre-Islamic era. True Muslims according to this view, are in a weak position and that is why it is not yet time for them to take a political action whether through fighting or establishing an Islamic state. Instead they resort to two other strategies that are peaceful in nature. The first is complete isolation from the society which they see as hopeless at the moment because of its abandonment of true Islam. The second is the revival of the concept of preaching since unlike the first group they still see that there is hope and that society can be reformed after being guided towards the teachings of true Islam. An example of the first category is al-Takfir wa al-Hijra and the second al-Tabligh wa al-Dawaa.

Violent radical groups are the ones that have received most of the attention, especially since the September 11 attacks in 2001. These also see that modern states and society are living in the pre-Islamic era, but the difference is that they don't believe that true Muslims are in a weak position, but rather strong enough to be able to impose true Islam by force. Violence, therefore, becomes the political action these movements choose to take to achieve their goals. Radical violent groups differ according to the target of their violence. Some of them choose local struggle that targets the "immediate enemy" represented by vital state facilities and regime officials while others choose to fight the "distant enemy" through carrying out operations on foreign soil. An example of the first is al-Gamaa al-Islamiya in Egypt and the second al-Qaeda and recently ISIS.

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[140] "A Guide to Islamist Movements around the World [Arabic]." Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo, 2006.

The second type of Islamist movements, as stated in the study, is political and social Islamist movements. Unlike religious Islamist movements, these movements do not question the faith of the societies they live in, but rather work on reforming those societies in accordance with the principles of Islam. These movements have at their disposal a number of political tools that can range from the use of violence as is the case with Hamas, Hezbollah, and national independence movements through peaceful protests to the formation of a government.

The ideological interpretation assumes that youths who join different types of Islamist movements do so because they are convinced of the ideology these groups promote and which they get to know through mosques or the internet. However, this interpretation was faced with a number of reservations. For example, this interpretation focuses on the discourse used by preachers while overlooking the political context in which these movements emerge and assumes that the approach of these movements and the political actions they take do not vary in accordance with that context. Even if the assumption that youths are driven by ideological factors to belong to movements that promotes the same ideologies is true, this interpretation does not explain how the individual shifts from personal belief to a communal action.

Rewards of activism:

French researcher Daniel Gaxie argues that it is important when examining the reasons for joining radical groups to take into consideration what he terms "rewards of activism" or, in other words, the material and moral rewards members of these groups are given in return for the activities they carry out. According to Gaxie, the satisfaction resulting from commitment to a cause is among those rewards. In fact, he adds, moral incentives can be stronger than financial rewards and that is why some movements focus when choosing potential members on the politically deprived. This could be related to the relative deprivation theory, for if individuals are deprived of their political rights and subjected to violations by the state, they are more likely to feel rewarded when they join these groups.

Gaxie adds that it is hard to assume that all members of a given group have the same understanding of the ideology this group adopts. That is why it is necessary to look for other reasons that encourage them to join and motivate them to stay. This is where Gaxie focuses on the idea of rewards and says that there are divided into two types:

financial through salaries and job opportunities and moral through leading positions, recognition, and prestige[141]. This interpretation can apply to radical groups in the Arab world since according to several field studies, a large number of youths who join these groups are more after moral or material rewards than a specific ideology. This is demonstrated through the way radical fighters move frequently between groups of different ideological affiliations.

However, Gaxie asserts that it is very rare to find youths who are consciously after rewards. They, on the contrary, usually convince themselves that they are driven by an ideological belief and hardly ever admit that they are after rewards even though they could be the main reason they engage in communal activities. Despite the validity of this theory, it is still not enough to explain the reasons for joining radical groups.

Resource mobilization theory:
Several writings that tackled the issue of Islamist movements attempted to overstep the traditional approaches that have already proven to be relatively flawed. This is how "resource mobilization theory" came to be utilized in explaining the reasons that drive youths to join radical groups. Writings that resort to this theory argue that radical groups are not violent by nature, but become so as a result of exposure to a number of surrounding factors that drive them to choose violence as a tool of political action.

Through examining a number of radical Islamist movements in Egypt during the 1990s, especially al-Gamaa al-Islamiya, proponents of this theory argue that it is important to follow the different paths these movements have taken and the contexts in which they operate, especially the challenges and opportunities these contexts impose on the political action tools available to them. This theory underlines two important variants that govern these movements' tendency, or lack of it, to use violence. These are first the ability to take part in and/or influence institutional policies and second the degree and timing of

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[141] Shoukri Hamad. "An Analytical Overview of Writings on Mobilization, Integration, and Stopping Integration [Arabic]." Arab Reform Initiative. Unpublished paper. And for more on Gaxie, See: http://goo.gl/ZfLKLU

repression practiced by the regime. These are two significant variants in what is commonly called "political opportunity structure"[142].

Regarding the ability to influence political institutional channels, this includes the government or the parliament as well as other unofficial channels such as civil society. According to the theory of source mobilization, in a society where a large portion of players are able to influence official policies, mobilizing large numbers of individuals to use violence becomes extremely challenging. The more exclusionist a regime is, the less hope people would have in change through peaceful means and the more likely they can become susceptible to radicalization. One of the most significant examples took place in 1992 when part of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria established an armed group in response to the cancellation of the results of the first round of Algerian parliamentary elections in 1991.

The theory adds that the inability to influence policies is a crucial motive for resorting to violence even though it is not the only one. The timing and degree of repressive policies practiced by the state are also important. When state repression increases, any attempts at resorting to violence on the part of radical groups would seemingly be doomed to failure since the state is expected to react immediately. However, this depends on the degree of repression; if repression is preemptive there is a chance that plans by these movements are aborted before a large number of individuals are recruited, but if repression is reactive, that is after a given movement has already organized its ranks and mobilized its resources, it would be much harder to crush this movement. As for the degree of repression, if the state targets a specific group or a limited number of individuals while justifying this repression by explaining through media outlets how troublesome these people are and cite examples of the illegal activities in which they take part, it becomes harder for movements to resort to violence. On the other hand, if repression is practiced on a wider scale where people who are not involved are persecuted or where leaders, members, and supporters of groups are equally punished, it is easier for groups to resort to violence and to mobilize for violent activities. Wide-scale repression intensifies already-existing grievances and gives rise to new ones as well as

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[142] Researcher Maryjane Osa gives a detailed account of the theory of resource mobilization in her book *Solidarity and Contention: Networks of Polish Opposition.* University of Minnesota Press, 2003, but this paper mainly relies on Muhammed M. Hafez & Quintan Wiktorowicz.

increases the number of sympathizers with repressed groups and individuals. For example, a large number of Muslim Brotherhood members and supporters only resorted to violence following the massacre that resulted from the dispersal of Rabaa sit-in. The same applies to Syria where the brutal violations committed by the Assad regime against large segments of the population and in quite a random manner triggered the escalation of violence. Similar examples happened a long time before the Arab revolutions. For example, several studies argued that one of the main reasons that drove the Jihad organization in Egypt to resort to violence was the large number of youths who sympathized with the Muslim Brotherhood and were shocked at the extreme repressive practices their members were subjected to in the 1950s and 1960s during the reign of Gamal Abdel Nasser and which for them reached its peak with the execution of Sayed Qutb in 1966. Some researchers, on the other hand, believe that the Moroccan regime was successful in dealing with Islamist movements since it always preemptively repressed radical groups and on a limited scale. This repression was also marketed in the media as targeting only a group of "terrorists" or "trouble makers" and not the entire Islamist movement or its supporters[143].

Some analysts include several cultural and ideological factors in the resource mobilization pattern through adding another factor, which is "framing." According to this approach, all political players, whether individuals, movements, or institutions, have their views of the way things are, how they should be, ways of changing them…etc. But the theory stresses that for social dynamism to be possible, some form of rapprochement needs to happen between a "critical mass" of individuals to create a social perception of the status quo as unfair and unacceptable. Social movements and groups can formulate a number of visions about the status quo and ways of changing it or dealing with it. The theory distinguishes between three major levels of framing produced by groups. First, diagnosis framing defines the status quo as was the case with radical groups that saw contemporary society as part of the pre-Islamic era and saw themselves as the only true Muslims. Second, prognostic framing includes everything the movement agrees on to change the status quo as was the case with jihad for violent radical groups. Third, motivational framing revolves around the necessity to

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[143] Muhammed M. Hafez & Quintan Wiktorowicz.

take an action in order to effect this change such as the example of the Egyptian Jihad organization that decided to assassinate president Sadat in 1981 or the Technical Military Academy organization, also in Egypt, that attempted to stage a military coup in 1972.

Those different framing patterns assume the ability of youths involved in radical groups to reach a minimum level of harmony since they join these groups knowing that the action they will take is conditioned upon a certain perception. That is why they establish a frame for communal action, which means a group of beliefs and perceptions that serve the actions to be taken and endow them with legitimacy. This is done while constantly stressing the danger and injustice of a given social condition that fuels this action. The success of the framing project depends, therefore, on the ability of the explanatory frame formulated by organizers of the mobilization process to become harmonious with the cultural environment in which they operate. This depends, on one hand, on the credibility of the framing pattern for a given audience and which is determined by the credibility of its formulators as well as the consistency of framing and is contingent, on the other hand, upon the pressing nature of the problems on which this framing focuses and how related they are to the daily lives of the receiving audience. Finally, while most framing patterns are related to a specific mobilization process, several of them can still be applied on a wider scale. These are called "master frames," which are authorized by several groups at the same time and which can be used for a different variety of mobilization processes. In many cases, master frames can be a source for subsequent rounds of mobilization[144].

Conclusion:

This paper has attempted to offer a number of different theoretical patterns that can be utilized to analyze the complex phenomenon of Islamist radical groups. As previously mentioned, it is important not to restrict research to one theory as only the utilization of a diverse number of theories would make it possible to break the mystery surrounding radical groups and to deal with the issue in a much broader manner that transcends traditional theories such as relative

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[144] Contamin Jean-Gabriel, « Analyse des cadres », *in* Olivier Fillieule et al., *Dictionnaire des mouvements sociaux,*
Presses de Sciences Po « Références », 2009 p. 38-46.

deprivation. It is only then that a deeper understanding of the phenomenon can be reached and new theories can be developed in accordance with the different contexts in which radical groups operate, especially in the Arab region and the Middle East.

Salafi Jihadi Mobilization in Armed Conflicts: Situating Ideological and Political Rationales in Diverging Settings

Jerome Drevon

Introduction

The Syrian uprising has questioned previous understandings of *salafi jihadi* mobilization in foreign conflicts.[145] This conflict has precipitated in only four years an unprecedented mobilization of foreign fighters in a single war-zone and fuelled the recruitment of more than tens of thousands of individuals into numerous *salafi jihadi* armed groups, including the Islamic State organization (IS thereafter). *Salafi jihadi* mobilization has involved individuals stemming from an array of Muslim and Western nations, socio-economic conditions, political leanings, and religious backgrounds. Recent developments suggest that mobilization has grown stronger for the past year and the expansion of IS in Egypt and Libya indicates that foreign fighters could for the first time mobilize in North Africa in a forthcoming future.

The affiliation of most *salafi jihadi* militants with IS and affiliated franchises has occasioned numerous misunderstandings of ongoing mobilization processes. The remarkable diversity of mobilised individuals has notably legitimized the predominant view that the strength of IS's ideological project and skillful use of online social media primarily account for the group's global outreach. The elimination of the looming threat would, according to this perspective, necessitate a common effort designed to undermine the political and religious underpinnings of IS's project and, in a second phase, terminate the civil wars affecting Iraq and Syria. However, this vision misrepresents the role of IS's religious and political agenda in the mobilization of previously unaffiliated youths. This perspective

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145   In this article, the denomination *salafi jihadi* refers to Muslims who embrace the *salafi* manhaj to Islam and legitimise the use of violence against nominally Muslim heads of states.

conflates dissimilar settings and hinders the formulation of a contextualized understanding of ongoing *salafi jihadi* mobilizing processes

This article develops two complementary arguments. The first argument is that *salafi jihadi* mobilization in armed militancy cannot be amalgamated under a single religious, sociological, or political rationale. While sociological and political considerations partially contextualize several distinctive mobilizing patterns, it is important to differentiate *salafi jihadi* mobilization at a broader level depending on its timing, the nature of the armed conflict (domestic or external), and the country of origin (Muslim or Western) of the fighters.

The second argument presented in this article is that these three distinctions contextualize the relative importance of ideological and political rationales of *salafi jihadi* mobilization. The timing of mobilization suggests that the first waves of departure toward Iraq and Syria were motivated by an array of rationales stretching beyond ideological and political considerations, considering the initial legitimacy enjoyed by the war against Syria's regime. *Salafi jihadi* mobilization inside Iraq and Syria has also been only marginally informed by ideological and political considerations, since mobilization in war-torn countries is primarily contingent on local dynamics and logistical issues. Finally, ideological and political motivations have played a more substantive role in later phases of mobilization, when its overall legitimacy eroded. In Muslim countries, mobilization has henceforth materialized as an answer to domestic political failures while, in non-Muslim countries, mobilization has occurred against the backdrop of a multifaceted sociological and political crisis.

Three Predominant Views on *Salafi jihadi* Mobilization
According to recent reports released by Western governments, think tanks, and research centers, more than 30,000 individuals originating from more than 80 countries have joined the Iraqi-Syrian war-zone.[146] The Iraqi-Syrian conflict has attracted in four years more foreign

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146   Soufan Group, (2015). "Foreign Fighters", December 7.
http://soufangroup.com/foreign-fighters/

Islamist combatants than all previous conflicts combined (including Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya).[147] Foreign fighters stem from a large array of backgrounds stretching across virtually all socio-economic, political, and religious categories. While most fighters have joined IS in Iraq and Syria, the group's affiliates in North Africa seem to be keen to hosting foreign fighters as well.

IS's successful recruitment of foreign fighters, when compared to other *salafi jihadi* factions, has framed the debate around the group's presumingly unique characteristics.[148] The nature of the group's revolutionary revival of the Islamic caliphate combined with its prolific use of online social media have sustained the prevailing inference that these two criteria are key to IS's success. This perspective contends that the reference to an idealized conception of the Islamic polity and the mobilization of online supporters explain why IS has succeeded where al-Qaeda and associated groups failed, despite similar aims. However, this perspective often tends to misrepresent the role played by online social media, assume that online mobilization is similar across cases, and fail to contextualize *salafi jihadi* mobilization in diverging contexts.

Two prominent scholars of political Islam have formulated two alternative sociological and political perspectives on *salafi jihadi* mobilization reflecting broader academic debates. Olivier Roy argues that *salafi* jihadism epitomizes the Islamization of radicalism rather than the radicalization of Islamism.[149] Roy portrays the current wave of mobilization as a rebellion of a young nihilist generation that is primarily swayed by the radicalism, rather than the political and religious rationales, of *salafi* jihadism. Roy argues that these youths are on the fringe of the Muslim community and only join IS because of the latter's presumed monopoly on radicalism. François Burgat rejects the de-polarization of Roy's argument and conversely contends

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147   ICSR. (2015). "Foreign fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghanistan conflict in the 1980s", January 26. http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s/

148   Anonymous. (2015), "The Mystery of ISIS", *The New York Review of Books*, August 13. http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2015/08/13/mystery-isis/

149   Roy, O. (2015). "Le djihadisme est une révolte générationnelle et nihiliste", *Le Monde*, November 24. http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2015/11/24/le-djihadisme-une-revolte-generationnelle-et-nihiliste_4815992_3232.html

that Western states' foreign policies have played a critical role in the emergence of *salafi* jihadism.[150] According to Burgat, IS's successful mobilization cannot be dissociated from the failure of Western states to fully integrate their Muslim population and from their support of autocratic Arab regimes, Israel and uninterrupted military interventions in the Arab World.

These sociological and political perspectives are beneficial to the contextualization of *salafi jihadi* mobilization beyond a prejudicial essentialization of Islam and a sole focus on online social media. Yet these two perspectives, regardless of their respective strengths, tend to amalgamate distinctive mobilizing patterns into a single analytical framework. These analyses dissociate and champion the political or sociological dimensions of mobilization, and assume that only one dimension prevails in all cases. In addition, they do not effectively account for the absence of mobilization of other like-minded individuals, nor do they clarify mobilizing mechanisms.

<u>Situating Ideological and Political Rationales in Three Settings</u>
Most analyses of *salafi jihadi* mobilization present generalizable perspectives that do not demarcate the settings in which this phenomenon occurs. However, the resonance of IS's project, online social media and sociological and political grievances do not necessarily account for the mobilization of all concerned individuals. The relative importance of each of these factors has to be differentiated in three specific contexts informed by the timing of mobilization, the nature of the armed conflict (domestic or external), and the country of origin (Muslim or Western) of the fighters. In addition, the study of *salafi jihadi* mobilization has to include logistical considerations, whose importance is often neglected.

The first distinction concerns to the timing of mobilization. Mobilization for the Syrian conflict began around 2012 and accelerated in 2014. While mobilization is currently perceived with hostility across Western and Muslim countries, the first departures

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150   Burgat, F. (2015). "Réponse à Olivier Roy : les non-dits de « l'islamisation de la radicalité »", *Rue89*, December 1, 2015, http://rue89.nouvelobs.com/2015/12/01/reponse-a-olivier-roy-les-non-dits-lislamisation-radicalite-262320

were politically promoted or simply disregarded.[151] The publicized exactions committed by the Syrian regime initially stimulated a relatively benevolent stance towards foreign fighters. The turning point only occurred subsequently, when external observers began to report brutal actions perpetrated by opposition factions and foreign fighters. Public hostility then reached a peak when IS widely disseminated diffusion of mass executions on online social media.

Timing is therefore critical to the contextualization of ideological and political rationales for mobilization . According to numerous reports and testimonies, early comers were less motivated by the necessity to fight for an Islamic state and join IS than recent departures. These departures to the Syrian war-zone were instead inspired by an array of reasons stretching from a strong feeling of solidarity vis-à-vis the Syrian population, a sense of adventure inherent with the conduct of jihad, individual search for meaning, and small-group dynamics. Favorable ideological inclinations toward IS and external political factors were less frequent during the first phase of mobilization. The main exception concerns pre-established *salafi jihadi* networks in Western and Muslim countries who had their own views.[152] Considering the wide range of initial mobilizing rationales, the joining of specific *salafi jihadi* factions at the time had more to do with logistics than ideational factors: new fighters joined available groups that were willing to train and equip them.

The second distinction concerns the nature of the ongoing conflicts. *Salafi jihadi* mobilization includes individuals participating in armed conflicts inside their countries or abroad. This dichotomy has important ramifications on the contextualized role of ideological and political factors in accounting for their mobilization. As in other civil war environments, joining a domestic faction is often less correlated to ideological affinity than local dynamics and practical issues of

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151   e.g. Hegghammer, T., & Zelin, A. (2013). How Syria's Civil War Became a Holy Crusade. *Foreign Affairs;* Hegghammer, T. (2013), "Syria's Foreign Fighters", *Foreign Policy*, December 9. foreignpolicy.com/2013/12/09/syrias-foreign-fighters/
152   These networks include, for instance, the French networks formed in the early 2000s in the 19th arrondissement and the Sharia4Belgium nebula. E.g. Taub, B. (2015). "Journey to Jihad", *The New Yorker*, June 1.
http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/01/journey-to-jihad

logistics. While local fighters might choose a faction sharing their world views, they usually prefer to join a faction to which they are connected through local social networks (including family ties and friends) or that can provide access to material rewards. Local dynamics often subdue purely ideological factors in a civil war environment. Foreign mobilization is conversely less tied to similar considerations.

The last distinction differentiates Muslim and Western countries of origins. The failure of Western states to integrate their Muslim population cannot account for foreign mobilization from Muslim countries. In these cases, the rationales previously mentioned to explain the first phase of mobilization apply primarily when the Syrian jihad was publicly supported or simply ignored. In subsequent phases however, a combination of political and ideological reasons should be additionally included. *Salafi jihadi* mobilization has been later additionally motivated by the perceived failures of Muslim states and mainstream Islamist movements such as those affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood to provide alternatives to these countries' political deadlocks. In that regard, the alternative presented by IS, which is characterized by the claim to revive an ideal Islamic polity and numerous successes on the ground, has materialised as a unique way-out. Burgat's and Roy's political and sociological perspectives are more convincing with regards to non-Muslim countries, even though they should be seen as complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

Conclusion

Salafi jihadi mobilization is a multi-faceted process that must be disaggregated. While most foreign fighters have joined a group claiming to revive the historical caliphate and projecting a notable presence on the internet, this article argues that these two singular characteristics are insufficient to fully understand *salafi jihadi* mobilization . Online social media and the resonance of the caliphate in Islam have not necessarily had the same causal role across cases. IS's specificity lays in its successful recruitment of an array of fighters stemming from diverse backgrounds and motivated by varying individual agendas.

The sociological and political perspectives articulated by Olivier Roy and François Burgat as alternatives to the sole focus on online social media and to essentialist perspectives on Islam are mostly accurate regarding recent Western-based mobilization processes. While these perspectives are presented by their authors as mutually exclusive, they should rather be considered complementary. Roy's position is particularly appropriate to comprehend the sociological dynamics of Western-based *salafi* jihadis and to capture their sway toward radicalism, which was previously witnessed among European Maoists in the 1970s. Burgat's analysis is important to include a broader political context characterized by Western states' failure to integrate an immigrant population coming from former colonies and by harmful foreign policies toward the Muslim world. These two perspectives are nonetheless less adequate to the understanding of the practicalities of mobilization and to the analysis of *salafi jihadi* mobilization in the Muslim world and in war-torn countries.

This article therefore presented three main distinctions. The first distinction refers to the timing of mobilization . Early mobilizing processes were motivated by diverse rationales rather than purely political or ideological considerations. The second distinction differentiates domestic from foreign conflicts and contends that domestic mobilization is primarily tied to local dynamics. Finally, the last distinction separates Muslim and Western countries. This dichotomy suggests that recent waves of mobilization in the Muslim world have materialized partially as an answer to domestic political deadlocks while, in non-Muslim countries, mobilization has to be contextualized in consideration of an unprecedented sociological and political crisis.

Radical Islam in Context

Bilal El-Amine

The sudden appearance of ISIS and its shocking acts of savagery has sprouted a whole industry of rushed analysis around the group, attempting to provide explanations—as well as some questionable solutions—for the seemingly unstoppable jihadi juggernaut.

Early stunned accounts attributed the Islamic State's success to its military prowess, particularly during the period of expansion, which culminated in its fighters overrunning Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, without having to fire a shot. Others focus on the organization's propaganda machine, putting too much emphasis on ISIS adept use of the internet—particularly social media—as the secret to its ability to draw tens of thousands of supporters from around the globe.

A more sober approach looks at the specific case of Iraq to explain the emergence of ISIS there, proposing a list of factors such as the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, the dissolution of the Saddam-era army, and the political disenfranchisement of the Sunni population, in addition to Gulf Arab backing and Turkish complicity. Western and Gulf media pundits also insist that Iran's growing influence, former Iraqi prime minister Nouri Maliki's sectarian policies, and Bashar Assad's repression also played a key role in nourishing the ranks of the Islamic State.

At best, these are mitigating circumstances and the roots of ISIS go much deeper. One has to go further back in the history of this region to truly grasp where the ideas of militant jihadism originated and the forces that have shaped them over the years. Such an approach allows us to better appreciate why such movements have been resilient, despite decades of repression, and continue to inspire Muslims across the world.

The Long View

The intellectual roots of ISIS can be traced back hundreds of years to the medieval theologian Ibn Taymiyyah, but the Islamist movement, from which the Islamic State emerged, is a modern phenomenon through and through. What is also sometimes referred to as political Islam first made an appearance alongside the secular-leaning national

liberation movements that emerged in opposition colonialism. Its earliest political expression was the Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in the early part of the 20th century.

The first two decades of the post-independence period were not very kind to the Islamists. They were ruthlessly put down and banned from political life by the nationalist governments and were generally viewed as conservative or reactionary by much of the public. Islamist activists coped by either going into exile or moving their operations underground—they continued, however, to debate and develop their ideas. It is at this stage when the first major wave of radicalization took place, particularly among the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, who were imprisoned, tortured, and executed by the hundreds in Gamal Abdul Nasser's desert prison camps.

Despite years of repression, the Islamists returned with a vengeance to reassert themselves on the political stage across the Muslim world, beginning sometime around the mid- to late-1970s. It was in the following decade during the Afghan war against the Soviet Union that the balance of forces within Islamism began to tip decisively in favor of the less patient, more combative, elements in the movement.

This time around, radical interpretations of political Islam resonated with wide sectors of a population that had become increasingly discontent with the nationalists' failed policies. In effect, by the end of the 1980s, these nominally secular parties were a spent force, which had decayed into corrupt, authoritarian regimes, servile to their previous colonial masters. The promise of real political and economic independence had eluded much of the global south.

Between the rise of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan in the 1980s and a few years after the 2001 "September 11" attacks by al-Qaeda, the radicals were on the ascent, organizing and conducting attacks against Western targets in places as varied as Kenya, Yemen and Indonesia. Flush with their victory against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, foreign jihadi fighters returned to their respective countries hoping to replicate their experience at home. It did not take long for the authorities to respond with another ruthless crackdown.

Arab Spring(board)

The utterly brazen attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City ushered in a period of retreat for radical Islamists, many of whom were now operating under the umbrella of al-Qaeda. Under pressure, the Bin Laden franchise began to splinter with tensions coming out into the open after the group's founder and leader was killed at the hands of US special forces in May 2011, just as the "Arab Spring" was beginning to unfold.

One of the unintended consequences of the 2010-11 popular uprisings was, however, to bring about a revival of radical Islam on an even bigger scale than we had seen before, in addition to strengthening the hand of the equally reactionary Gulf monarchs and emirs in the region. The Islamists had little to do with sparking the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, for example, yet they were the best placed and organized to fill the vacuum created by the sudden collapse of decades-old regimes.

The Arab Spring also represented a paradigm shift of sorts—it effectively marked the end of an era that started with independence and the rise of the nationalists to power. Even those regimes that did survive the explosion of popular protest understood that they can't go on operating in the old way. For the Islamists—of all stripes—this was a historic opportunity to step into the void and present themselves as the guardians of brighter future.

Since their long and exceedingly successful campaign against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, militant jihadis largely became bogged down in a localized, low-intensity warfare with their respective governments backed by the West. Until the Syrian crisis came along, none of the struggles they were engaged in managed to capture the imagination of the movement and energize it like the Afghan war once did.

Pilgrimage to Syria

The way the crisis quickly degenerated in Syria into what could easily be portrayed as a sectarian Sunni-Shia civil war was just what the doctor ordered to help rally the global jihadi movement once again. Characterizing the conflict as one of defenseless Sunnis being bombed, jailed and tortured by the hundreds of thousands at the hands

of a Shia-backed dictatorship proved to be a potent message that resonated in militant Islamist circles across the globe.

In the Syrian bloodbath, the radicals had found a cause that electrified their base and won them tens of thousands of new recruits in record time. The charge of Sunni disempowerment at the hands of the Shia became an effective rallying cry on par with defending the lands of Islam from the godless communists several decades ago. Perhaps what is most alarming about this current wave of jihadi resurgence, represented by ISIS, is an almost genocidal hatred of Shia Muslims. Once ignited, religious sectarian strife—particularly in an area as diverse as the Levant—can last for many years and wreak irreparable damage, as was the experience of Lebanon's civil war.

In this situation, it was only natural that ISIS would take advantage of its reversal of fortunes by declaring the (re)establishment of the caliphate. Supporters from all corners of the world were already flocking to northern Syria by the thousands to defend the honor of their Sunni brethren, and the declaration opened the floodgates. Three years into the Syrian fratricide, the country became a Mecca for radical Islam.

But this decision may in the end prove to be a double-edged sword. While the idea of the caliphate won ISIS unprecedented support, staking the fate of the movement on a geographic area is a risky step. Given the vast array of hostile forces laying siege to the caliphate today—from Hezbollah and the Kurds to Russia and the US—it would be hard to imagine that they can hold their ground through 2016. Already alternative locations are being declared as new ISIS territories (in Libya, for example), in anticipation of having to disperse again along the lines of al-Qaeda.

ISIS Appeal

Based on the above account, we can make several observations about radical Islamism and the sustained appeal it continues to enjoy among a significant number of Muslims today.

•Islamism, much like nationalism, initially developed as a nativist response to colonialism and the profound and often turbulent social and economic changes that followed. Ideologically, it reflects the fragile transitional nature of most Muslim societies where the old

social order is assaulted without producing any stable or sustainable alternatives.

•It went through a period of radicalization due to repression and marginalization at the hands of the authorities, but has always displayed remarkable staying power, even after long periods of surviving underground.

•The movement's influence ebbs and flows according to concrete circumstances on the ground. Its appeal grew exponentially as the post-independence, nationalist-led order stalled and the future of the region became increasingly uncertain.

•Like the Afghan jihad against the Soviets, the Syrian crisis is fuelling jihadi sentiment across the globe and swelling the ranks of the movement to unprecedented levels. The Arab Spring also unintentionally opened the way for the current resurgence of radical Islamism, by unseating several pillars of the old order.

•The motivations driving so many young Muslims to turn to religious extremism tend to be varied and complex, with no obvious correlation to commonly cited causes such as poverty, oppression or war. (We can also safely say that it takes more than the local imam's Friday sermons or reading jihadi blogs on the internet for a young person to become a committed radical).

•Militant Jihadism, as dark and violent as it may be in practice, bears a deeply utopian undercurrent that is responsible for much of its popular appeal. The radical reconstruction of society, through a return to an idealized and authentic past, can be a powerful draw to those searching for answers to the multiple crises that plague most modern Muslim societies

•The level of violence, displayed with pride by ISIS, can be linked to the depth of the crisis at hand. Iraq, for example, had gone through an eight-year war with Iran in the 1980s, followed by the devastating first Gulf War (1990-91) and over a decade of deadly US-led sanctions, culminating in the 2003 invasion and the consequent dismembering of the state and the disbanding of the national army. The Islamic State's savagery is partly a product of the Iraqi inferno.

•Finally, the long history of Western meddling in the region has played an important role in creating monsters like ISIS and al-Qaeda. Although it should be clear by now to Washington, London and Paris that their repeated interference in the region has been disastrous for all parties involved (including them), they continue in that fine Western tradition of resorting to unilateral military force and expect the local population to see them as saviors.

Chapter Five: Cultural and identity dimensions for youth joining violent radical groups

The formation of Salafi identity between individualism and communalism

Samiha al-Hamedi

Introduction:

Arab societies are going through radical changes on different fronts. Such changes have had an impact on the religious scene and the way religion is manifested in the public sphere, which was reflected on the nature of relationships and social structures. The repercussions of the September 11 attacks might have drawn the attention of analysts and experts to the fact that they need to focus more on the way the changes through which the world is going have seen a shift from a material conflict to a cultural, religion-based one. This is how interest started in radical religious groups that have become the resort of a considerable number of Arab youths and have since the Arab Spring revolutions even extended to Europeans.

Here emerges the importance of a sociological approach to the problem, one which analyzes the Salafi radical ideology and attempts to understand its significance. In order to reach a deeper understanding of the dynamics according to which the identity of Salafi youths is shaped, this paper will base its argument on the assumption that religion is a cultural system emerging from a social reality through a process of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction on the part of the new cultural and social institutions that dominate the religious scene and have replaced conventional entities in the light of a reality where the boundaries between the local and the global have been vanishing. This created a state of instability and anxiety upon youths and drove them to look for communal identities that would allow them to achieve social integration.

Here emerges a major contradiction—that of a generation that lived through globalization and experienced the trans-border culture it gave rise to, yet chooses to adopt a narrow outlook and that lived in an age where creative and innovative individualism reigns, yet chooses to dissolve into an insular entity that erases its independence.

1- Globalization and the emergence of individualistic patterns of religiosity

A number of sociologists examined the so-called "disenchantment of the world"[153] assuming that rationality has triumphed over religious thought. However, the changes the world is currently witnessing drove many to think of the return of the "enchantment of the world"[154]. Such view was supported by the rise of jihadi organizations from al-Qaeda to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) as well as the attacks for which these groups claimed responsibility[155].

It became obvious through interviews with a number Salafis[156] that youths go through a number of stages before embracing Salafism, whether ideologically or organizationally, for they are guided through a path of secondary social upbringing. According to testimonies, this is done through media outlets, the internet, friends, and at a later stage at mosques. Those in charge of recruitment always depend on convincing youths that Salafism is the ideal version of Islam: "I listened to the sermons of Abu Mohamed al-Maqdisi, Abu Basir al-Tartousi, and Khaled al-Rashed about jihad, I followed the Tawhid and Jihad website, and I read books. That is how I was convinced of the importance of jihad, especially that they used the Quran and the prophet's teachings to convince us of jihadi Salafism"[157]. Testimonies highlight the difference between methods of recruitment for jihadi Salafism and other groups such as al-Daawa wa al-Tabligh and al-Tahrir Party, where the first depends on the internet and the media while the second is mainly done through friends and family members.

It is necessary to analyze the relationship between "the patterns of cultural productions and the givens of social structure"[158] in the

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[153] Max Weber. Le savant et le politique, Union Générale d'Éditions, Paris, 1963 ; Marcel Gauchet, le désenchantement du monde une histoire politique de la religion, Gallimard, 1985

[154] P.L. Berger (dir.). *Le Réenchantement du monde*, Bayard, 2001.

[155] The most recent of those attacks were Charlie Hebdo on January 7, 2015 and the Paris terrorist operations on November 14, 2015.

[156] Those interviews were conducted as part of a research project entitled "The paths of the formation of the identity of Salafi youths in Tunisia" in cooperation with Dr. Etemad Mehana and launched by the Middle East Center in London.

[157] An interview with a 24-year-old Tunisian man who joined the Tunisian Tahrir Party then jihadi Salafism, after which he joined militant groups in Syria and quit following the dispute that happened around the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

[158] Hani Awwad. "Youth Religiosity as a Straying Pattern of the Ideological Institution [Arabic]." Omran Magazine, issue 2, 2015: 65-85.

Tunisian society and the Arab region in general. This is based on Clifford Geertz's definition of religion as an efficient cultural system that established a set of psychological states and constant strong incentives inside people through the formation of a general conception of existence and the bestowal of a realistic nature upon these conceptions[159]. What is relevant in this definition of religion is that relationship Geertz established between religion as a cultural system and those psychological religious incentives that the afore-mentioned social upbringing entities such as websites and TV channels work on enhancing and reactivating for the purpose of attracting as many youths as possible.

Observers of jihadi Salafist groups would notice that they are capable of attracting the largest numbers of youths. This was confirmed by an interview with a young woman who first joined al-Daawa wa al-Tabligh then Salafism: "Al-Daawa wa al-Tabligh group does not attract as many youths as Salafi groups," she said[160]. It becomes obvious that these groups have created alternative social institutions that replaced conventional ones such as the family, the school, and the mosque. They were also able to create unconventional influence spheres that cater to the demands of youths in a way that endows such demands with religious symbolism so that those youths can be profoundly impacted.

This can be analyzed through going back to two specific moments. The first revolves around the changes brought about by globalization and which will be examined later. The second revolves around the weakness of the "nation state" which had for a long time monopolized the discourse of social institutions that worked on shaping the culture of the community. The state lost this role owing to the dissolution of economic and cultural boundaries through satellite channels, the internet, and social networking websites, especially within the context of authoritarian regimes that monopolized all forms of cultural production. As for the effects of globalization, it is noticeable that a new form of religiosity started, one that initiated a consumerist relation with religion. Audience became able to choose the religious approach that suits them best and if they don't like a specific

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[159] Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Arabic translation by Mohamed Badawi. Beirut: The Arab Organization for Translation, 2009: p. 228.
[160] An interview with a 22-year-old Salafi woman.

approach, they would look for another until they find what they want in accordance with their needs[161]. Those who followed satellite channels in the early 21st century would notice how they managed to present new religious patterns based on the individual's ability to choose his/her religious product. In Tunisia, for example, and even before the fall of ben Ali's regime, the numbers of men frequenting mosques and women wearing the headscarf started increasing. This was mainly the influence of Salafi channels such as al-Nas and the appearance of new preachers such as Amr Khaled and others. Those new spheres triggered the creation of an individualistic form of religion among youths where an individual relation started between the audience and religious symbols in a way that allowed them to choose. This choice was mainly based on the form of religion that satisfies each individual's personal version of religion. This was confirmed by the above-mentioned Salafi girl: "It all started with TV channels such as Iqraa then al-Nas. I used to compare so that I can develop my thinking. At the end of the day, reaching the right path required being stripped of all backgrounds"[162]. It is obvious that those entities initiated an actual change through breaking the relation between the sheikh and the student and instead introducing "new religious horizons devoid of enforcement, violence, and anxiety so that everyone can choose what suits him/her best"[163].

Radical groups made use of all manifestations of globalization to affect the personality of Arab youths. This was specifically done through using the internet, social networking websites, and audio and video content—all media that are bound to have more influence than traditional ones. Radical groups also utilized the individualistic trend in the process of radicalization, yet after this is done they go back to traditional entities such as mosques through which they start creating a communal identity that replaces the individualistic one. Recruited youths are, therefore, subjected to "a social and cultural dynamic that redefines the boundaries between the individual and the communal and places the individual in confrontation with modern and pre-

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[161] Hossam Tammam. "Religion, Secularism, and Identity in the Age of the Fall of Ideologies and the End of Grand Narratives: An Interview with Patrick Michel."
[162] Interview with Salafi woman.
[163] Hossam Tammam.

modern social bonds"[164]. The emergence of those social upbringing institutions as educational entities allowed the creation of new conception of religions and the re-construction of individual patterns of religious beliefs. From there emerged a new identity dynamic among Arab youths.

2-   Youths looking for a communal identity in an age of uncertainty

The emergence of new forms of religious concepts poses a question about the path of ideologies and the collapse of grand narratives of the world especially following the end of polarization between Communism and Capitalism as systems of value. From there emerged the problem of belonging and identity especially among youths that have started living in the age of skepticism and uncertainty[165]. With the recession of ideologies and the subsequent collapse of political and religious structures, the world was being reshaped and this is exactly what makes identity more fluid, thus creating an identity crisis. Religious groups took advantage of this vacuum to involve religion so that a balance can be struck: "The fluidity of identity triggered a form of religious enthusiasm since feelings were directed to the only remaining symbols that give meaning to the world: religion"[166]. This change was accompanied by instability and disorientation which prepared the stage for religion, considered an effective player in the reconstruction of identity. All the criteria that regulated the definition of identity, which were characterized by stability, changed so identity became no longer fixed. For example, sex identity that determined whether a person is male or female changed as sex was redefined even biologically to be replaced by gender. The same applied to professional identity as in the past professions were more stable and people would spend all their lives in the same job, but now they can move from one workplace to another and do that quite smoothly. Social identity is not an exception, which is demonstrated in the shift from belonging to a fixed class to the emergence of the middle class and the possibility of social mobility. As for political identity, the definition of right and left that was dominant in the past and that was

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[164] Andrea Semprini. *La société de flux : formes du sens et identité dans les sociétés contemporaine*. Paris: l'Harmattan, 2003: p.255.
[165] Robert Castel. *La montée des incertitudes*. Paris: Seuil, 2009.
[166] Hossam Tammam.

used to explain politics is no longer the same. For example, in post-revolution Tunisia the working class and the underprivileged voted for the right rather than the left. National identity changed with globalization and the subsequent dissolution of boundaries, which explains the emergence of social movements that advocate universal causes that transcend borders such as human rights and the environment[167]. Religious identities, like other identities, are affected by social changes: "The reformation of religious identities is done in the same context as all other types of identity. Since religion cannot be separated from society, religious identity loses its independence and stability as a result of individualization, which means that it becomes liable to change"[168].

Radical groups work on reconstructing identity through reconstructing the relationship between youths and their societies and producing meanings that are different from the reality to which they belong: "Each group creates a 'story' through which it explains to its members why they have to submit to the obligations of communal life. What makes this 'story' unique is its implicit nature: changing social criteria into values and world views that do not even need to acquire a meaning since their adoption by individuals renders their meaning 'a given.' Part of the nature of communal obligation is making any social player treat a meaning as a given without being able to explain the rationale for its existence or the significance it acquires"[169].
Those groups work on constructing an imagined culture among Salafi youths based on the return to the golden age of Islam as opposed to the current state of Muslim societies. Youths, therefore, aspire to a renaissance of the "nation" for a better future: "Making a previous societal pattern the point of departure takes them back to a distant past that is considered idealistic since it offers a pleasant experience that needs to be relived"[170]. This golden age revolves around an idealistic past that glorifies the fundamentals of Islamic society, which are

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[167] Hani Awwad.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Guy Bajoit. "Le changement social Approche sociologique des sociétés occidentales contemporaines Collection." Cursus – Armand Collin:
http://www.cnam.fr/servlet/com.univ.collaboratif.utils.LectureFichiergw?ID_FICHIER=1295 877017846
[170] M. Eliade. *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*. Paris: Gallimard, 1969: 16.

based on solidarity, strength, and unity. This renders the present devoid of meaning until it goes back to the early Islamic era, specifically the time of the prophet and the caliphs that succeeded him. Tying the progress of the Muslim world to going back to an idealistic past makes a radical change of society necessary, especially at a time when youths already feel that the present society is fragile and subservient to external powers, which in turn increases their feeling of helplessness and their scorn for the present. The past, therefore, becomes the tool with which they can fight the present and all the drawbacks it represents: "The topmost priority is obeying God. Because of the poverty and oppression from which Muslim countries are suffering, I aspired to establishing a state that spreads justice among its citizens and achieves economic power"[171].

"True I am strong. I speak five languages and I am educated. I am also a Swedish citizen, but at the end of the day I am Tunisian. In fact, I am first and foremost Muslim. I belong to a great nation and this makes me feel strong. Yet, I feel weak. I am athletic and well-off, thank God. But I feel I am weak. What is not reformed through religion can be reformed by force and only through reestablishing the caliphate that God's laws can be applied. That is why I am with the Salafis who work on achieving this end by force. Otherwise, we will never progress"[172].

This testimony shows that the issue for Salafi youths is the definition or creation of a new space within their society through looking for an alternative identity matrix that aims at severing ties with a form of hegemony practiced upon youths by their society or other external powers[173]. This is done through the establishment of a symbolic cultural system that goes back to the earlier Islamic era, which makes youths sever all ties with the time and space in which they live in order to be part of that communal identity that provides them with stability and psychological balance.

Conclusion:

Based on the afore-mentioned analysis, it can be deduced that the formation of Salafi identity is based on a process of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction through a cultural system that new

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[171] Interview with one of the Salfists.
[172] An interview with one of the Salafis.
[173] Mohamed-Ali Adraoudi, Opcit, p.133.

media outlets have contributed to establishing. This process is linked to youths' search for an alternative identity that starts with the construction of an individualistic identity then shifts to a communal one so that at the end dominant social meanings undergo a major change.

Why youths join radical groups:
Reasons pertaining to culture and identity
(ISIS as a case in point)

Mavie Maher

Introduction:

History has witnessed the emergence of violent radical groups throughout different eras, but the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has been given extra attention not only by experts, politicians, or observers, but by average citizens as well not only in the Arab world, but also around the world. This is mainly attributed to the fact that Arabs are not the only ones who join ISIS. The organization managed to attract a considerable number of youths from different parts of the world, especially Europe and the United States in addition, of course, to Arab and Muslim youths. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights stated that the number of ISIS fighters has exceeded 50,000; of those 20,000 are foreigners. The CIA estimated the number at more than 31,500. Fighters came from 81 countries across the world[174].

"It needs every school, every university, every college, every community to recognize they have a role to play, we all have a role to play in stopping people from having their minds poisoned by this appalling death cult," said British Prime Minister David Cameron[175]. This statement constitutes a clear acknowledgment of the major role played by the cultural factor as far as fighting the phenomenon of ISIS is concerned. This paper examines the way youths are attracted to ISIS through factors that pertain to identity and culture and which, in turn, intersect with psychological and sociological factors in an attempt to discover why ISIS has become an attractive force for youths, both male and female, from all over the world.

ISIS: Source of belonging and security

Stories of youths that join ISIS show that they are both male and female, European, American, or Arab, from lower, middle, and upper classes, and have received little or high education. The common

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[174] Mahmoud Ali. "In Photos: Get to Known the Numbers and Nationalities of ISIS fighters [Arabic]." *Al-Badi*l, November 16, 2015: http://is.gd/ZWxIuM

[175] Dana Ford. "Who are the missing UK Girls thought to be in Syria?" *CNN* February 25, 2015: http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/24/europe/uk-missing-girls-syria/

factors all those share is a feeling of estrangement inside their homelands, loss of belonging, identity crisis, and lack of purpose, all generating a general sentiment of discontent. It is important here to focus on the term "belonging," which cannot be separated from the term "acceptance," that is individuals' ability to accept them and feel the acceptance of the community around them. Feelings of belonging and acceptance cannot materialize in isolation from the individual's surroundings. That is where the need to interact and establish balanced social relationships emerges. In the absence of feelings of belonging and acceptance, individuals feel rejected, lonely, and estranged as well as lacking love and security. This proves that the need to belong is an instinctive one that cannot be replaced or discarded because if this happens, serious deprivation disorders are expected to ensue. In this context, the behavior of individuals becomes linked to the way they see themselves and the way they see their society, the other, and the world[176]. People deprived of feelings of belonging, hence security, tend to see themselves and the other in a negative manner, therefore become an easy prey for any group that satisfies those missing feelings.

The absence of the feelings of belonging and security is not confined to specific countries or regions and this is exactly why ISIS attracts anyone looking for a community to belong to and uses its religious discourse that is endowed with a universal character to promote the dream of a society or a group to which anyone can belong regardless of nationality. This is based on the fact that Islam is what ties the members of ISIS together regardless of nationality, race, or gender.

Those who do not feel they belong usually look for the following[177]:

1-   An entity to belong to and that would earn them the respect and appreciation of others such as religion

2-   Belonging to a group to feel secure

3-   Expressing an anger that have been bottling up for years as a result of lack of acceptance

[176] Mgr. Alina Cogiel, Department of Psychology, *University of Ostrava*, May 7, 2005: http://ff.osu.eu/kps/index.php?kategorie=34854&id=4496

[177] Arthur Brown. "Why do young people join ISIS?" *The Institute of Middle East study,* April 12, 2015: https://imeslebanon.wordpress.com/2015/04/02/why-do-young-people-join-isis/

4-   Escaping the pain resulting from the feeling of frustration and insecurity through looking for a way out no matter the cost

All of the above applies to ISIS, which gives youths an opportunity to belong to a religion and be members of a group and which also treats them as heroes and takes advantage of their pent up anger to engage in violent activities.
What remains intriguing is the fact that youths are attracted to ISIS in particular. To examine this issue, youths will be divided into two categories: Arab youths and Western youths.

The ISIS-ization of Arab youths:
The number of Arab youths that join ISIS is unprecedented when compared to other armed groups. Most of those youths have what it takes to have successful careers and purposeful lives, which means they could have played a major role in the development of the Arab world instead of being an agent in destroying it. However, the problem is that youths in the Arab world, especially teenagers, are always eyed with distrust and patronized by older generations.
To understand how this happened, it is important to examine the circumstances of each category:
1-   Educated youths: Youths who belong to the middle class, who do not suffer from poverty or unemployment, and have received good education, join ISIS in large numbers. But the fact that they are educated is not equivalent to them being enlightened since the type of education they get does not encourage analysis and critical thinking, but rather focuses on memorization. Youths, therefore, get used to receiving information and to obeying symbols of authority, whether religious, patriarchal, or political. They are willing to submit to ideas fed to them without analyzing them. The same youths are marginalized in the decision-making process in their respective countries and many of them are even imprisoned for reasons pertaining to political affiliation or religious beliefs. This is the opposite of what is done by ISIS, where youths feel they play a major role in the management of the group and have the power to impose change on their societies[178]. This is especially applicable when the

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[178] Ibrahim Awad. "Youths's Reasons for joining ISIS [Arabic]." *CNN Arabic*, October 12, 2014: http://arabic.cnn.com/middleeast/2014/10/12/opinion-shorouk-why-teens-join-isis

context in which youths find themselves makes them lose hope in the future and in realizing their dreams.

2-   Youths with economic problems: Most Arab youths now suffer from economic problems to the extent that they have become unable to secure their basic demands such as getting married and starting a family. In this context, parallel shadow economics emerged. For example, 33% of economic activities in Morocco and 40% of the GDP in Egypt are illegal, which deprives a large segment of the population from any form of social security. If we take into consideration that one in every five persons in the Arab world is between 15 and 24 years old and that the percentage of unemployed youths, many of them university degree holders[179], reaches 29%, the level of frustration and insecurity these youths feel would be more obvious. Teenagers start feeling the same when they see how unfulfilled youths are, thus lose hope in achieving anything themselves. It becomes easy for them to fall prey to any group that offers them what the homeland deprived them of.

3-   Youths who went to jail: Youths who go to jail, and especially one who were subjected to torture, start developing feelings of hatred and a desire to take revenge. Imprisoned preachers take advantage of this to attract them to militant groups that will help them retaliate against the state and/or society. ISIS itself was established in Bucca prison in Iraq where founder of the organization Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi spent five years. Nine leading ISIS figures were incarcerated in the same prison.

4-   Youths who were frustrated after the Arab Spring: The eruption of Arab Spring revolutions in late 2010 and early 2011 raised hopes among youths who dreamt of freedom, justice, and dignity. When they were unable to see any of those dreams come true and even saw how things got from bad to worse in cases where their countries were torn by war and their people rendered homeless, youths developed feelings of anger and vengefulness. Those feelings had already been dormant for a while as a result of years of state repression, corruption, and worsening economic conditions. When the

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[179] Maha Yehia. "Fatal Attraction: Five Reasons why Youths Join Isis [Arabic]." Carnegie Middle East, November 7, 2014: http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/?fa=57251&lang=ar

revolutions were not able to assuage these feelings, many youths found in ISIS the way to do so, especially that ISIS legitimizes violence and terrorism when committed in the name of religion. According to a study conducted by the British Council and the John D. Gerhart Center at the American University in Cairo about youths who took part in revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, those youths are frustrated because of the current political situation in their countries[180]. In such a context, it is expected that youths would feel estranged inside their homelands unlike in ISIS where they feel important and needed.

The ISIS-ization of Western youths:
Western youths who voluntarily leave their countries to join ISIS and who are willing to die definitely feel that they belong to ISIS which becomes their homeland and reshapes their ideological affiliations. According to Pierre de Villiers, Chief of the Defense Staff in France, European youths who join ISIS look for a framework and values they cannot find in their societies and are deceived into thinking that ISIS will compensate for that[181]. In the past, the majority of youths who joined radical Islamist groups came from impoverished backgrounds, but this is no longer the case. A large number of youths joining ISIS belong to the middle class[182].

In an attempt to understand the reasons, Western youths will be divided into several categories:

1- Youths of Arab origins: Youths who carry the citizenship of countries to which their parents had immigrated earlier constitute a considerable portion of ISIS fighters. Some analysts attribute this to the identity crisis from which those youths suffer since they feel that they neither belong to the culture of origin nor to the host culture.

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[180] "Why Are Youths in Arab Spring Countries Frustrated? [Arabic]." *BBC Arabic*, June 11, 2013:
http://www.bbc.com/arabic/interactivity/2013/06/130611_comments_youth_not_trust_media

[181] Michel Cabirol. "Pourquoi les jeunes se trournent vers Daech, selon le chef d'état-majeur des armées." *La tribune,* November 25, 2015: http://www.latribune.fr/entreprises-finance/industrie/aeronautique-defense/pourquoi-les-jeunes-se-tournent-vers-daech-selon-le-chef-d-etat-major-des-armees-522435.html

[182] Patrick Goodenough, British PM. "Ideology not Poverty, is the root cause of Islamist Terrorism." *CNC NEWS,* July 22, 2015: http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/british-pm-ideology-not-poverty-root-cause-islamist-terrorism

Added to this is the fact that they face a lot of challenges in integrating into the European society[183].

2-   Youths from the working class: Youths who come from working class backgrounds and join ISIS usually have a criminal record that involves theft or fraud, hence have been to jail before. They usually come from dysfunctional families where domestic violence is quite common. Recruiters of new fighters always focus with on severing all the ties those youths might have with their countries through convincing them that these countries are the enemy. The recruitment process in this case is facilitated by a number of factors. For example, those youths are already indignant at their societies which they believe are responsible for their suffering and are awaiting a chance to vent their anger against those societies. With ISIS, they dream of turning from victims into heroes and from being marginalized to playing leading roles. Most importantly, they become convinced that they will be feared and respected by the entire world after being despised and ignored by their societies[184].

3-   Youths from the middle class: Some middle class youths might have a history of crimes and drug abuse while others have no record at all and have received good education. They usually live in neighborhoods that do not suffer from the same problems of marginalized ones. Those are driven in their decision to join ISIS by a desire for achievement and this is especially the case with teenagers. Western societies are characterized by independence and individualism and as much as this guarantees personal freedom, it becomes a burden on some youths, who would prefer to belong to a larger entity in which they play a specific role instead of being on their own. This need for belonging to a community is intensified by the fact that some of those youths might also come from dysfunctional families. Added to this is the adventure that teenagers seek in the ISIS

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[183] Azza Hashem. "Why Are Youths Attracted to ISIS?" The Regional Center for Strategic Studies, April 29, 2015: http://is.gd/WNbxM9

[184] Farhad Khosrokhavar. "Le jihadisme en Europe: des classes populaires aux classes moyennes." *LE HUFFINGTON POST*, April 1, 2015: http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/farhad-khosrokhavar/jihadisme-en-europe-recrutement_b_6977308.html

experience, which is also something they lack back in their homelands[185]

4-   Females: ISIS specifically targets frustrated girls from the West. With ISIS those girls are convinced that they are playing a heroic role in protecting the oppressed such as the Syrian people and fighting against tyrants. They also encounter a type of men they are not familiar with in the West: the hero who is honest and giving, who champions a cause and is willing to die for it, who is feared by his enemies, who would risk his life to protect his woman. This type of men becomes the perfect husband, especially for girls who come from dysfunctional families. Compared to relationship problems between men and women in the West, these men provide security[186]. Western girls accept not to be equal to men in the ISIS society in return for being in a marriage that is seen as much more stable than those in the West. Here, girls confuse their naïve perception of romance with violence until war becomes the price to pay for stability. Anisse de Vieux, director of the documentary film "Behind the Veil" where she interviewed a number of European girls who joined ISIS, said that the girls she met are obsessed with marriage "and because they did not find their prince charming, they headed to Syria"[187]. In addition, the idea of war is quite tempting for girls, especially those experiencing late adolescence since they look for adventure and for a context where they can feel they are doing something important, which is not the case in their homeland. For example, Western girls are in charge of women ISIS fighters take hostage and who are used as sex slaves. They are also member of al-Khansaa Brigade, responsible for applying Islamic laws on other women in ISIS. This brigade contains around 60 British females whose ages range between 18 and 24[188].

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[185] Jethro Mullen. "What is ISIS' appeal for young people?" *CNN,* February 25, 2015: http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/25/middleeast/isis-kids-propaganda

[186] Farhad Khosrokhavar, Qu'est ce qui pousse ces jeunes filles à rejoindre Daech." *LE HUFFINGTON POST,* April 3, 2015: http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/farhad-khosrokhavar/jeune-filles-daech_b_6998796.html

[187] Ranim Hanoush. "ISIS' Temptations for Youths: Between Imagination and the Bitter Reality [Arabic]." *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, March 8, 2015: http://is.gd/yLTEkO

[188] Mohamed Metwalli. "Al-Khansaa Brigade: ISIS' Women Police [Arabic]." *Al-Watan*, September 15, 2014.

In conclusion, no matter what the reasons are that drive youth from all over the world to join ISIS, each of them is like a time bomb about to explode in the face of the whole world. This means that different parties need to think carefully of where they went wrong that would drive youths to prefer risking their lives than living in their homeland. This does not mean that youths who join ISIS do not take responsibility for their actions, but society and the state cannot be absolved of their role. There is no future in a country whose youths are rendered incapacitated.

Why youths fight in conflict zones:
Reasons pertaining to culture and identity
(Wahabi Salafism as a case in point)

Sherif Mohei el-Din

Introduction:

The phenomenon of youths' travelling to different parts of the world to engage in conflicts in which their home countries are not party, whether on individual or communal basis, is not utterly new. The Bosnian War (1992-1995), the Afghan war against the Soviet Union (1979-1989), the wars waged by the American-British coalition following the September 11 attacks, and the conflict in Syria which has started in 2011 and is still ongoing all witnessed the participation of hundreds, if not thousands, of youths from a number of countries.

Those youths make the decision to leave their countries for conflict zones for a variety of reasons. This paper's point of departure is that it is impossible to analyze this phenomenon through attributing it to one single factor, yet there is no doubt that factors like culture and identity play a major role. The paper attempts to explore the influence of the Wahabi Salafist background of a number of youths who decided to fight in foreign lands out of belief in the concept of "jihad" as they perceive it. This, of course, does not mean that youths with this background are the only ones who have such motives, but they are dealt with here as a case that cannot be overlooked.

The importance of jihad in Salafi heritage:

Jihad occupies a prominent position in Salafi heritage and its prominence is always inspired by a saying by Prophet Muhammad about "jihad for God" being the main pillar of the Islamic faith[189]. The former mufti of Saudi Arabia Abdul Aziz bin Baz confirmed this concept by saying that jihad is one the best ways of submitting to God and that this jihad necessitates the suppression of "infidels and

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[189] Told by Imam Ahmed in *Masnad al-Ansar* no. 21511 and Muhammad Ibn Eissa al-Tirmidhi in *al-Iman* no. 2616

hypocrites" in order to facilitate the propagation of Islam around the world and to "take people from darkness to light"[190]. Bin Baz also quotes a poem reportedly written by Hassan ibn Thabet about the fact that the "sword," rather than peaceful preaching, was a major factor in the conversion of the people of Mecca. According to the poem, the prophet had preached in Mecca for a long time and only a few responded, but when he used the sword they all gave in[191]. This argument is strikingly similar to a statement by Abi Mohamed al-Anani, spokesman of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and in which he described the prophet as "the propagator of Islam by the sword"[192].

Scholars and different sects and schools of thought in Islam differ in the way they interpret verses from the Quran about jihad such as verse number 190 from Surat al-Baqarah: "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed. Allah does not like transgressors." Imam Mohamed Abdu, for example, argue that this verse cannot be taken out of context since it talked about a previous attack on Muslims and how they have to defend themselves. According to Abdu, this verse cannot be interpreted without linking it to the following verses (191 and 192): "And kill them wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and sedition is worse than killing. And do not fight them at the holy shrine until they fight you there. But if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers. And if they cease, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful"[193].

Ibn Baz, on the other hand, offers a different interpretation of the verse. In an article entitled "Jihad is not for defense only," he refutes the argument that it means Muslims should fight whoever starts

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[190] The religious edicts of Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz about the necessity of jihad against the ruler of Iraq, chapter 281, p. 18.

[191] The religious edicts of Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz, vol. 18, The Book of Jihad, "Jihad is not for Defense Only":
http://www.alifta.net/Fatawa/FatawaChapters.aspx?languagename=ar&View=Page&PageID=3519&PageNo=1&BookID=4

[192] Audio statement of Abi Mohamed al-Anani entitled "Tell the infidels they will be defeated": https://ia601508.us.archive.org/11/items/satoghlabun/satoghlabun.mp3

[193] Muhammad Abdu. *The Complete Works*. Part I (The Interpretation of Quran), p. 485. Cairo: The General Egyptian Book Association, 2009.

fighting them and instead argues that it means Muslims should wage war on all "infidels" even if they do not start an attack since is the only way a "sedition" can be avoided. Bin Baz interprets "sedition" as the spread of apostasy[194]. Bin Baz's interpretation is the type described by Mohamed Abdu as impregnating verses with a meaning they did not intend through, in this case, generalizing the idea of jihad regardless of the conditions in which it should happen[195].

Wahabism: A revolutionary-turned-far-right ideology:

The ideology of Mohamed ibn Abdul Wahab is based on three pivotal points which according to bin Baz said were the reasons why he was the target of criticism[196]:
First: The rejection of polytheism and propagating pure monotheism
Second: The rejection of all novelties such as tombstones, shrines, and Sufi orders
Third: The propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice even if by force
When bin Baz was asked about jihad in Afghanistan he issued the following fatwa: "Jihad in Afghanistan is legitimate because it is a war for God against the most malignant state in the world, the Communist state. That is why all Muslims and Muslim states should support this jihad with people and money. This is how beleaguered Muslim states can be protected and how oppressed Muslims can be saved"[197].

Based on this fatwa, travelling to conflict zones where Muslims are being persecuted is a religious duty all Muslims should take part in. Despite the clarity of this tendency in Salafi thought in general, differences emerge with every new conflict or war since in many cases calls for jihad are quite politicized, especially in Saudi Arabia where Salafism emerged. For example, on February 3, 2014, late King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz issued a royal decree that penalizes

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[194] Abdul Aziz bin Baz.
[195] Mohamed Abdu.
[196] Abdul Aziz bin Bas. "Imam Mohamed ibn Abdul Wahab: His Preaching and Life": http://www.binbaz.org.sa/node/8193
[197] Abdul Aziz bin Baz in an address on Jihad in Afghanistan [Arabic]: http://www.binbaz.org.sa/node/11734

everyone who engages in a military conflict outside Saudi Arabia and who joins religious or armed groups or any groups that are declared terrorist organizations on the regional or international levels[198]. This means that Saudi citizens are banned from joining conflicts in Syria, Yemen, or any other country. This decree was not the first of its kind, since another one was issued 10 years before to ban Saudi citizens from travelling to Iraq following the 2003 US invasion. This is also similar to the decree banning Saudis from travelling to Bosnia and which was issued in 1994 following the departure of many Saudi youths who wanted to take part in fighting "the genocide to which the Muslim Bosnian people are subjected"[199]. This means that the country from which Salafism emerged and which was established as state by both Mohamed ibn Abdul Wahab and Abdul Aziz Al Saud would allow the politicization of its founding ideology in accordance with its interests[200]. Jihad was promoted during the Afghan war and when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, but the same did not happen when the US invaded Afghanistan and Iraq.

Why do youths travel to conflict zones?

- <u>Jihad as an Islamic duty:</u> In response to being accused of inciting Muslim youths to join the jihad in Chechnya and Kosovo, Ayman Abu Abdul Rahman, spokesman of the Arab Mujahedin in Bosnia, said, "This is an honorable accusation. It is a duty assigned to us by God and our duty is to instigate Muslim youths from around the world to join the fight and defend their fellow Muslims not only in Bosnia, but in any land where Muslims are persecuted"[201].
- <u>The desire to protect Sunni Islam:</u> Mohamed Mokhtar al-Shankiti said, "One of the characteristics of the Hanbali school of

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[198] "Saudi Royal Decree to Boost War Local and International Terrorism [Arabic]." *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, February 4, 2014: http://goo.gl/KSrbvW

[199] "Travel Ban on Saudis for Iraq and Bosnia Lifted… with Conditions [Arabic]." May 15, 2014: http://goo.gl/1MWC1J

[200] For example, current Saudi Mufti Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah, who succeeded bin Baz after his death in 1999, did not issue any religious edicts that confirm those issued by bin Baz about jihad. In fact, when asked whether jihad is a duty if Muslim land is invaded by "infidels," his answer was quite ambiguous : "These issues concern the people who live in the invaded land and they are the ones to decide": http://www.mufti.af.org.sa/node/2855

[201] "Ayman Abu Abdul Rahman: Arab Fighters in Bosnia [Arabic]." *AlJazeera.net*, September 1, 2000: http://goo.gl/oVVtG9

thought is a concern for Islam in a way that makes Muslims anxious about the conditions of their fellow-Muslims. It is a positive anxiety of course as long as it does not become compulsive"[202]. This can be applied to a great extent to the Egyptian case in the aftermath of the January 2011 revolution. Following the ouster of Mubarak, the Islamist and Salafi rhetoric started gaining momentum especially in the transitional period based on the argument that the original fight is not against the regime, but rather a fight for identity. The impact of this rhetoric, which got extremely fiery in many cases and involved extremely derogatory remarks against Christians such as those by Salafi preacher Wagdi Ghoneim, was demonstrated in attacks on churches in different parts of Egypt[203]. This violent rhetoric is, according to them, a result of their concern about Islam and their anxiousness about the condition of Muslims. This constitutes one of the motives that drive youths to join jihad against "infidels" in Afghanistan and Iraq or to defend Sunni Islam against the Shiite Syrian regime.

- The reluctance of Muslim countries to support Muslims overburdens Muslim individuals: Youths who join wars in foreign territory are frustrated by their governments' inability to support Muslims and decide to take this duty into their hands. This is especially the case when governments no longer support jihad like Saudi Arabia and Egypt did during the Afghan war in 1979. In fact, this support was one of the main reasons for strengthening jihadi organizations and for the fact that the same governments were unable to crush them later on when they changed their stance. When the same countries that supported Jihad start banning it then imprison youths involved in it, the feeling of animosity towards the state increases and youths have more reason to fight against this state, which they now see as an enemy of Islam and Islamic holy war.

Conclusion:

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[202] Mohamed Mokhtar al-Shankiti. "Salafism and the Hanbali School of Thought [Arabic]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWzsF87WX9A
[203] Sherif Mohei el-Din. "The Relation between Islamist Rhetoric and the Regime and Change Mechanisms in Egypt [Arabic]" in *Islamist Rhetoric and the Re-establishment of the Public Sphere*. Cairo: Dal Center for Research and Media, 2014.

It is obvious that factors related to culture and identity are of extreme importance in analyzing the motives that drive youths to join militant groups in conflict zones. This is because jihad, which is already sanctioned in a number of religious edicts, becomes a means of preserving the Islamic identity that is seen as threatened. The shift in the stance of countries like Saudi Arabia as far as jihad is concerned also contributed to driving youths further towards extremism as the state abandoned the cause and politicized the issue of jihad in accordance with its political interests.

The Salafi ideology, which is mainly based on the Hanbali school of thought, also promotes the concept of jihad especially through interpretation of Islamic texts in a way that supports the argument of the necessity of initiating jihad.

Why do they join ISIS?
The case of Dabiq[204]

Sahar Mandour

Youths do not join radical groups for factors related to culture and identity in isolation from the other different aspects of their lives and the lives of people around them. True, the discourse used by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is based to a great extent on the issues of culture and identity, which the group uses to attract youths, but ISIS also places itself in a historical context that links its existence to the reestablishment of the Islamic caliphate. ISIS uses the context in which it emerged and organizes information in a way that promotes the rhetoric of violence it aims at spreading.

This paper will specifically focus on Dabiq[205], the monthly electronic magazine issued by ISIS in several languages including English and will particularly highlight the discourse of women who join the group. This will be preceded by a brief overview of the mechanisms used to understand the motives of these women in mainstream media, whether Arab or Western, which mainly focuses on being shocked at the harrowing footages of crimes committed by ISIS.

ISIS media outlets are rarely used as sources of information, which can be attributed to rejection of acknowledging its presence as a state and the position it has come to occupy. It is understandable that ISIS is a repulsive subject owing to the brutal crimes it commits and it is indeed difficult to accept its presence, whether long or short, as a reality. But only approaching reality would enable researchers to understand the phenomenon of ISIS. Regardless of whether ISIS is the making of intelligence agencies or the product of conspiracies, one fact remains indisputable: that one of the main reasons for ISIS'

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[204] This paper is based on the results of a Masters research I have conducted at the School of Eastern and African Studies at SOAS University at the United Kingdom. Arguments in the paper are supported by a study I conducted on the 10 issues of Dabiq till July 2015, with special focus on the four articles published in the women's section that was added to the magazine in its 7th issue in January 2015.

[205] The first issue of Dabiq was released in July 2014 by Al-Hayat Media Center, owned by ISIS.

survival and expansion[206] is the ability of its rhetoric to attract youths, not only males but also females. That is why it is a rhetoric that deserves analyzing very thoroughly in order to understand its points of attraction.

A question that blocks its answers:

In mainstream media outlets in the West and the Arab world, there is a focus on the constant state of shock at the brutalities of ISIS, especially as far as women were concerned. This applied to women the group has been abusing such as Yazidis and women from lands ISIS seizes as well as women who abandon their lives to join the fight in foreign lands and perform the roles the group assigns to them. While the "migration" of women from Tunisia, for example, was surprising enough, this surprise doubled at news of women from the United Kingdom also joining ISIS. While the decision of the first to join ISIS can be attributed to a variety of religious, cultural, political, and social factors in the region, the case of the second seems extremely intriguing. Sometimes European women are seen as impulsive teenagers driven by their naivety and if they are of Arab origins, then identity crisis and the feeling of not belonging are cited as the main reasons. However, those are all general interpretations that do not, in fact, delve deeper than mainstream media. Other interpretations include poverty, anger, ignorance, adolescence, and religion. Yet, dealing with many of these factors takes place through refuting them. For example, there is an objection to condemning the poor or to linking religion to violence. There is also a tendency to separate ISIS from the present time by repeating that they belong to the Middle Ages and that our modern age is innocent of such a brutal entity. In short, we are always involved in an attempt to absolve ourselves and not take any blame from the emergence of ISIS. Discourses that agree to link ISIS to our present time tend to present the group as the product of one single entity that also gave birth to all other radical groups. These include Islam, Western Modernism, colonialism, post-colonialism, dictatorship, oil money, the New Middle East, and so on.

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[206] The cover of the first Dabiq issue read, "Migrating to the Caliphate." The term "migration" refers to the migration of prophet Mohamed from Mecca to Medina as a means of attracting members to join the fight.

In the midst of all this, it is important to note that listening to media outlets owned and operated by ISIS is crucial for understanding the reasons that drive youths to join the group. However, listening to ISIS requires an acknowledgment of the existence of a complex rhetoric that does tempt a considerable number of people from Iraq and Syria through Tunisia, France, and the United Kingdom to Chechnya. Dabiq is originally created to instigate people to "migrate" and to act as a public call for mobilization that convinces/orders its readers to join the fight. The discourse promoted by ISIS in its media outlets is always treated with contempt. In fact, material ISIS provides is only used to provide details of the crimes committed or to prove how barbarian this group is, but this material is never used to analyze the nature of their rhetoric. Some analysts would focus on how technologically advanced ISIS is, which becomes clear in the quality of the footages they post and in the way they use social networking websites. Still, this approach does not take ISIS media outlets seriously as entities that take responsibility for what they say and, instead, focuses on condemning the victims of those outlets who are brainwashed by their rhetoric. Those who choose to fight for ISIS head towards their death. This is exactly what Dabiq promotes. It is important to ask whether those who join ISIS do that out of full awareness of the details of the group's emergence and before it al-Qaeda or whether this decision is mainly in response to the group's ways of marketing itself.

A three-pillar rhetoric:

Dabiq contains a section for women that appeared in the 7th issue under the title "To our sisters" then changed to "From our sisters" in issues 9 and 10. The section is written by one woman called Om Somaya the Immigrant, who adopts gender repression practices as a source of pride and a tool of resistance.

During the establishment of post-independence states, official discourses empowered women and supported their role in the face of Western accusations of recently independent states as backward. Women's citizenship remained negotiable on the domestic level and changed in accordance with the political context. Meanwhile, women kept fighting for their rights and this was particularly obvious in their role in Arab Spring revolutions. In fact, the presence of women was considered a proof that those revolutions are after justice and equality. That was before they were isolated and excluded once more and they still fight this returning patriarchal tide.

Then came ISIS, in which women also play a major role, though in a different way. It is important, however, to note that a preconceived image of Muslim women was already delineated long before the emergence of ISIS. This was done through Samuel Huntington's theories about the clash of civilizations, Bernard Lewis's theories on Islam, the discourse of the Bush family on the war on terror and rescuing Muslim women, and the patronizing Western discourse on Islam in Europe. Many of the characteristics of Muslim women in these discourses are now mentioned as exclusive to ISIS. In fact, ISIS confirmed those stereotypes in which they now take pride and legitimized all criminal practices committed against women in the Arab world such as honor crimes, domestic violence, stoning, and female genital mutilation.

According to Dabiq, pregnant women are explicitly ordered to abandon the lands of apostasy in which they live and their invalid marriage contracts which made them live a life of fornication. They are expected to take all sorts of risks including the deaths of their children or even their own death for the sake of the Islamic State, according to the 8th issue of Dabiq. The caliphate, according to the first issue of Dabiq, should start with "migration," establishing the "group," followed by "clashing with the tyrant," "empowerment," and finally the establishment of the "caliphate."

The discourse used by ISIS does not promise an alternative world in which justice prevails, but rather a world of settling scores and possessing absolute power. It is not a group that calls for revolution, for it condemns revolutions and labels it an act of apostasy and condemns jihad if it is not in its ranks. Since the first issue, Dabiq has been condemning all national entities and supporting their replacement by the caliphate. For ISIS, there is no legitimacy for revolutions or borders.

Dabiq is a bulletin that presents the religious and political background of the methodology used by the State and it initially targets an audience of supporters who are being instigated to join. Articles in Dabiq's follow a strict unified structure based in three pillars:

1- <u>The scared:</u> The Quran, the prophet's life, and the prophet's sayings

2- <u>The historical:</u> Following the example of the early Muslim state with all its procedures, punishments, and arguments

3-   The contemporary: Linking every crime ISIS commits to a context that justifies it, including past events such as the Crusades, colonialism, the war on terror… etc. regardless of whether those who wrote has actually read about those events or has understood them properly

This calculated use of historical, religious, and political references is what makes ISIS part of this world rather than an absolute freak of nature as it is deemed to be. The discourse of ISIS is located at the intersection of a number of contexts, each of which is used in a way that serves its interests. This kind of discourse does not only target Muslims or the disenfranchised, but targets practically everybody regardless of religion, class, or gender in order to convince them that staying outside the State is a form of apostasy and that coming to the State is the only way one becomes a true Muslim.

The language Dabiq uses characterizes it as pan-Islamic and detaches it from any specific national context. The magazine places ISIS at the heart of a universal war that utilizes a variety of local, regional, and international crises in order to make dying for the cause an aim in itself. ISIS' rhetoric not only attracts audience, but also drives many of them to sacrifice their lives for it. When Dabiq publicizes the crimes committed by ISIS, it does that to prove the credibility of the group through demonstrating its ability to take serious actions. The fact that the language combines the scared, the historical, and the contemporary makes the discourse of ISIS a context in itself

Chapter Six: Geo-Strategic dimensions for youth joining violent radical groups

"How International policies can lead to youth joining violent radical groups?"

Omar FASSATOUI

Introduction

To introduce this paper, I would like to say that analyzing the phenomena of radicalization among youth; in particular Arab or Muslim youth, in order to understand it cannot be done without recognizing its multidimensional and globalized character. In a world where everything is connected, I was wondering while writing this article if Donald trump was conscious of the possible impacts of his declarations against Muslims. Simply defined by Paul Neumann as *"'what goes on before the bomb goes off[207]'*, radicalization is often reduced to religion and poverty but the reasons that would push young people to be radicalized go way beyond. It is sufficient to think of the case of young people for whom religion is just a cultural context or a parental inheritance and youth from wealthy socio-economical backgrounds who were radicalized and joined armed groups in Syria, Libya or elsewhere. The example is even more relevant for European youth where poverty covers different conditions of those seen in the Arab world. It is therefore useful to focus on other factors as the workshop is intended to do. For my part, I will try to explain how International policies can lead youth to join radical groups.

Because of its security impact, its networks and its media treatment, radicalization is an international and a globalized issue. It is also international by its causes as it seems increasingly clear that youth radicalization is considered by radicals as a reaction to several foreign policies from the Western world especially when a discourse analysis is conducted. But western foreign policies seem to be a part of the scene as radicalization is linked to some Arab countries foreign policies mainly. We will try to explain how what is decided in Washington, London or Paris can sometimes lead to the radicalization of young in Cairo or Tunis.

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[207] Peter NEUMANN, Perspectives on Radicalization and Political Violence: Papers from the First International Conference on Radicalization and Political Violence, London, 17–18 January 2008 (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, 2008), p. 4.

Western foreign policies:

Analyzing radicalization can lead to many conclusions. There is a clear will in the discourse of radical groups to play a symbolic political role and to appear as an actor of the international scene speaking in the name of Islam. Radical groups clearly want to substitute themselves to the "official" states which are considered to be obedient and pro west. If we focus on *Daech* wanting to be recognized as the *"Islamic state"*, this indicates a clear will to be the alternative to the states considered as non representative. We have to recall that the context of the Muslim world is full of what I would call historical frustrations linked to western foreign policies mainly the borders issues. The map of the Arab countries was made according to western agreements. Sykes-Picot and Sevres agreements signed respectively in 1916 and 1920 considered as marks of shame for the Arab population. After the decline of the Ottoman Empire, all the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire turned into areas of British or French control or influence. The ottoman domination, partially accepted by Arabs because of religion, was replaced by a western domination that allowed the creation of the state of Israel in the Middle East. The impact of western agreement on the area is still visible today and very often used to nourish feelings of frustration and anger specially when dealing with the issue of the Palestinian territories. Radical discourses very often recur to the concept of Islamic *umma* to reject the existence of borders, nation states and nationalities. Reconstructing the *umma* is a common argument for several radical groups.

In addition to drawing a map in accordance to their energetic needs, as Arab countries borders were clearly made to fit British and French oil companies' interests, France and Great Britain neglected ethnic and religious considerations leading to permanent conflicts between the Muslim major population and minorities, that pop up continually (Kurds, Yazidi, Chaldeans etc). Even after decolonization, western powers continued to play a major role on the fate of their ex-colonies by having a clear policy in supporting dictatorships and repressive regimes that allowed them to keep providing western power with oil and resources. Before 2011 and the Arab uprisings of the so called "Arab spring", there was no clear position from the west against the dictators of the Arab world. Western democracies were supporting regimes in the MENA region with no consideration to the abusive

situation people and especially political opponents were living. Some of Arab leaders were even given as an example of the perfect ally as Ben Ali who was considered until his last day as helping the EU in securing its southern borders against Islamists and illegal immigrants from Africa. Few days before January 14, 2011 Michelle Alliot-Marie[208] proposed to the National Assembly to help the Tunisian police with the French know-how in «*resolving security situations*".

Energy, immigration and the issues of Islamists allowed regimes to last in time with apparently no consideration from the west to the need for democracy of the Arab population. Closing eyes on what was happening in the Arab world in terms of human rights infringements is a recurrent reproach made to the west and used in radical speech against the west. The reproach is even more powerful when combined with Western countries policies on immigration and freedom of speech. The west indeed, mainly the European part of it, adopted policies to become increasingly hermetic to economic migrants especially from the Muslim world because of religion. The western democratic model promoted as the model to follow also posed problems in the Muslim world related to freedom of speech and religion. The model seemed to be incompatible with the Islamic vision of the sacred. On one hand, western democracies seemed to limit freedom of religion when dealing with Muslim signs as *hijab* or more controversial *niqab*. On the other, they allowed, in the name of freedom of speech, that caricatures touching holy figures of Islam are published first in Denmark and then in France with no consideration for Muslims feelings of disapproval. This led to an incredible reaction among Muslims in the Muslim world and the Diaspora. The same reactions were visible in post revolutionary Tunisia with the Persepolis movie. The recovery of such event by radical groups is visible as they try to create a clear break with the western model considering it offending Islam.

When talking about western policies and their impact on radicalization, we have to recall the crucial point that 9/11 was. In terms of international policies, things got worse after 9/11, as the United States decided to fight the axis of evil in which they included Iraq. The invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan had consequences on the political, religious and economic regional map that contributed

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[208] French foreign affairs minister in 2010-2011

undoubtedly to what is happening today in Iraq and Syria. During this fight, the United States did not hesitate to break with international laws especially with bombing and torture showing that democratic principles can be infringed. During the global terror war years, some Arab regimes in addition to be repressive for their own population, allowed the United States to outsource torture out of any legal sight.

Seen from the eye of an Arab and Afghani or a converted European, international policies from the west can seem very discriminative. The radical groups do not hesitate to show radicalization as a way to balance a world where Muslims and Arabs are always the victims of international policies. We also have to notice that the west is not the only part with policies playing a role in the radicalization process. To my opinion two gulf countries have foreign policies that play a major role in radicalization: Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Saudi Arabian and Qatari foreign policies:

Since Wahhabism became the official religion of the Saudi dynasty, Saudi Arabia never ceased to promote and to export a very rigorous and radical Islam to other Muslim countries and western ones. This rigorous vision of Islam very often merges with *salafism* as they share common principles mainly their opposition to the state. The Saudi proselytism to promote radical and exclusive Islam is more than visible. *"Indian intelligence says that in India alone, from 2011 to 2013, some 25,000 Saudi clerics arrived bearing more than $250 million to build mosques and universities and hold seminars[209]. ".* The power of Saudi Arabian policy in exporting salafism plays a clear role in the radicalization process. The path of youth radicalization very often starts with a contact with a salafist group either in original or migratory contexts of Islam. Young European converted to salafi Islam very often ends up with joining radical groups or radical actions on the ground. It seems undeniable that the Saudi proselytism leading to religious radicalization is a breeding ground for a more violent expression of radicalization. We have to be careful with salafism, as it covers both non-violent and violent forms of a rigorous Islam. But by spreading with impressive financial means a religious speech officially calling for backing to an idealized original Islam of the ancestors and unofficially calling for jihad and breaking with

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[209] The WEEK, How Saudi Arabia exports radical Islam, august 8,2015 (consulted online December 15,2015)

civilization, the Saudi Arabian religious foreign policy is dangerous for young people who are unable to see the real political purposes of Saudi Arabia in its proselytism. For the IS case, Saudi Arabian proselytism seems to be combined with a political will from Saudi Arabia to play a role in the MENA region especially against Bachar Al Assad supported by Iran, the historical "competitor". Thinking that they found the true Islam, youth adopting salafism end up with being disconnected from a reality they consider too modern to integrate them and any call from the religious "chief" found a favorable echo among them.

Saudi Arabia is not the only Muslim country having a foreign policy with possible effects on youth radicalization, indeed Qatar, which does not have the historical legitimacy that Saudi Arabia may have when it comes to Islam, is playing an ambiguous role. On one hand, it hosts the largest American military base in the Middle East, on the other, Qatar has been supporting in various ways a wide range of islamists by providing financial aid, shelter or diplomatic assistance. The Qatari assistance also took the form of media visibility via the Qatari channel Al-Jazeera where banned islamists from different countries could express freely their opinions before and after the "Arab spring". Qatar is not hiding its financial support to Hamas despite the American position toward the Palestinian group and it clearly helped the Muslim brotherhood and Ennahda to survive when they were banned and fought in Egypt and Tunisia. The support continued while both countries experienced political Islam after the first free elections. The tiny kingdom clearly wants to play a role in the region and decided to use islamists as a winning card to get influence. As done in Libya with supporting the Libyan rebels against Khadafy, the role of Qatar in the Syrian crisis is undeniable. Qatar is considered as the first fund supporter of the rebels in Syria even is the Syrian revolution turned into a civil war. According to the Stockholm peace research institute, Qatari arms support to Syrian rebels is the most important as *"90 Qatari military air cargo flights were made to Turkey between 3 January 2012 and the end of April 2013[210]"*.

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[210] Amena BAKR & Mariam KAROUNY, Qatar, allies tighten coordination of arms flows to Syria http://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-qatar-support-idUSBRE94D0GT20130514

Through its financial support, its networks of influence among the Muslim brotherhood and other islamists groups, Qatar encouraged indirectly departures of youth to the Syrian battlefield. Without even passing by the religious radicalization steps, which remain a marker of Saudi proselytism, an important number of young Muslims joined Syria to fight the oppressive regime. This was also allowed by the west not willing to take any clear action on the Syrian ground. After being criticized by allies like US and Israel and shaken by the military power recovery in Egypt, Qatar was obliged to recalibrate its foreign policy.

Conclusion

Youth joining radical groups is a globalized and multidimensional issue. International policies can frustrate youth especially in contexts of top down regulations. But understanding the phenomena should go beyond and explore personal histories to check the breaking points with the society leading to radicalization. Radicalization seems to be a market regulated by offer and demand. Even if it seems that there is uniformity in radicalization, I would rather say that there are many radicalizations. It is clear today that joining radical groups is a sign of a societal malaise and crisis not limited to the Muslim world but the paths to radicalizations are as different as the profiles of radicalized youth.

How life conditions can lead to youth joining violent radical groups?
Radicalism in the regional context

Cristina Casabón

The rise of ISIS and its success in mobilizing young foreign fighters and supporters across the MENA region have put the issue of combating radicalization. Military, intelligence, and law enforcement approaches dominate the initial response. But the key to combat extremism is also prevention: How did young people become radicalized? What are the external factors that are creating this regional phenomenon?

To prevent extremism, we cannot solely rely on counterterrorism strategies. We must start addressing the life conditions that create a favorable environment for radicalization and recruitment to flourish. By taking a "social determinism" approach we can find the interconnection of political, economic and cultural factors over and above the individuals that joint salafists groups.

Many young people started to follow criminal organizations after they were active within a peaceful framework in 2011. In order to know the extent of this transformation analysts only have to look at the huge number of youth who are increasingly active now inside radical armed organizations. According to a recent report published by The Soufan Group [1], in 2014 and 2015 the great majority of foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria are coming from Arab countries, with both the Middle East and the Maghreb supplying large numbers.

Since 2011, the permeability of borders has encouraged thousands of young people to flee abroad. Tunisians, Saudis, Turks and Jordanians continue to outnumber other national contingents traveling to joint jihadists organizations. Other nationals who are part of this radicalization process are concentrated, according to the mentioned report, in "terrorist hubs". In Libya, the eastern coastal region—and more specifically Benghazi and Derna—is known as a hub for recruitment. In Tunisia, the city of Ben Gardane has provided the

largest number of foreign fighters, whereas in Morocco, the Sidi Moumen slum outside Casablanca has also been a hub of violent extremists and suicide bombers. Gaziantep in Turkey appears to have emerged as a city of choice for terrorist financing and human trafficking.

Transformation from civil peaceful activities arguing for and demanding basic human rights to violence and armed organizations has become a regional phenomenon in these countries. Common circumstances may draw disproportionate numbers of young individuals to violent extremism; so in order to study the process of radicalization we should start identifying life conditions on the ground.

Vacuums of power

The rise of extremist groups in the anarchy of the Syrian civil war and the post invasion chaos of Iraq remains a regional phenomenon with global implications. In Iraq, Jihadi groups benefited from the struggle of the Iraqi resistance against the US government: from 2003 to 2006, Al Qaeda leaded the struggle against the occupier, and the emergence of local jihadi groups in Iraq conformed a new organization, which from October became known as the Islamic State of Iraq.

2011 was the year of the beginning of the civil war in Syria, which was a new starting point of the jihadist insurgency in complicity with the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Since then, Syria has faced a much greater threat of jihadist infiltration in comparison with other MENA countries. It is difficult to distinguish between moderate Islamists and Salafi-jihadists in the context of the Syrian civil war, since Assad's aggressive response transformed the largely peaceful uprising into an open civil war, and now both groups are engaged in this conflict.

From Syria ISIS has spread to other neighboring countries, and now they are expanding its tentacles in Libya. We can see that the vacuums of power confined with authoritarian rule have exacerbated terrorist groups and individuals seeking power, and their territorial gains are attracting other foreign regional fighters. They are now free to spread

their influence in the region, either from tacit government approval, or from the vacuum of power in this semi-failed state.

Poor government structures

According to Brookings Institution, the institutional dimensions of governance (the rule of law and control of corruption) exhibit somewhat lower regional variation among MENA countries, in comparison with other regions.

The ruling elites of these countries, including extended family and selected allies captured both the polity and key segments of the economy. They abused formal institutions to control the accumulation and distribution of resources to perpetuate their power. Extensive corruption is the region is exemplified by the multibillionaire clans in Saudi Arabia, the oil monarchies of the Gulf, Jordan, the Libya of Gaddafi, the Alawite clan in Syria, etc.

Establishing good governance procedures has been an impossible task for liberal groups and political parties that emerged after the Arab Spring, due to lack of experience in democratic institutions and ineffective organization. In 2015 Egyptians are experiencing the failure of the Egyptian liberal revolution, Libyans are on the verge of becoming a failed state, Syrians have been brutally repressed by their government, the outbreaks of Bahrain and Iraq have been repressed and silenced, and other more stable countries have been unable to create inclusive and democratic governments and institutions — perhaps with the exception of Tunisia.

Generally speaking, after the Arab uprising, most of these governments adapted their tactics and practices to address the specific new challenges of these young groups and the rise of mass politics. Now regimes are more corrupt and more repressive, they made little progress in the reform of institutions and they repress or exclude opposition parties. In addition, the economic and policy reforms they announced after the revolution are very ineffective as there is no "trickle down" effect in the economic level and no inclusiveness in the political arena.

Depression about the corrupted systems, and the general perception of rising inequality have been ignored, and the failure of the Arab revolts

to bring change in the MENA region has accelerated these trends. Most of the young Arabs have not reached stable financial positions, nor stable personal lives. This situation is creating a regional environment where individuals have no ambitions, no future. There is a lack of patriotism, a growing sense of "us against them" that impregnates the society, especially the youth —a phenomenon that is also creating intergenerational ruptures.

Political and social exclusion of the youth

As the majority of the population remains absent in policy-making processes, some analysts are starting to consider that political exclusion of both young men and women is a key cornerstone of the process of radicalization. At the same time, MENA governments have shown little ability to include the aspirations of the youth in their political programs.

Participation of the new generations —either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives— is very important, as more than 50 percent of the population is under age 25 (more in some individual countries), according to UN population data. [2] This is an age cohort known particularly for being a "Jihad Candidate", with most of them being in their 20s and some of then even younger.

Through participation and inclusion of the youth, terrorist organizations often supply the lack of participation in the political and social spheres. According to what has been said in the Youth and violent groups conference organized by the Arab Forum of Alternatives in Lebanon, most of these youth have left the primary education and they are living on the streets. Some of them are coming from rural areas and have difficulties integrating in urban development areas.

Terrorist organizations often grow their ranks by recruiting youths which are visibly not integrated, as they are more vulnerable to the influence of connectedness and affiliation of criminal groups. Governments should guarantee an organized civil society in which the majority of the population — the youth— can find better

opportunities. For the moment, those who have broken ties with society don't have a second opportunity.

Lack of freedom and fundamental rights

The Arab uprising revealed a deep discontent with the general state of fundamental rights and freedom, but most of these countries are still under oppressive and even non-elected governments. The region has experienced the threat of terrorism and in 2015 the respect for human rights and justice appear secondary to security challenges.

According to the Human Rights Risk Index of 2014 [3], since 2008 the countries which have seen the worst deterioration of their human rights environment include Syria (ranked 1st in the 'extreme risk' category), Egypt (16th) and Libya (19th). Other 'extreme risk' countries in the region are Iraq (7th), Yemen (9th), Iran (11th) and Saudi Arabia (31st).

A key factor for extremism is precisely the lack of protection of fundamental human rights and freedom of these governments. If a system fails to respect core human rights established under international law it does not deserve to be called a rule of law system, and the question is: does it deserve to be respected?

Transformation from civil peaceful activities arguing for and demanding basic human rights to violence and armed organizations has become an open phenomenon. The logic of this collective process is simple: when injustice is perceived, terrorist groups are not looked upon as perpetrators of violence but rather as fighters struggling against a tyrannical enemy. Against this backdrop, it is no difficult to understand why youths that do join such groups are perceived to be heroic, and why their radical ideologies are attractive.

A recent survey carried out in the southern Tunis neighborhoods of Douar Hicher and Hay Ettadhamen, in which 800 young people were interviewed by NGO International Alert [4], found "an acute awareness of injustice and relegation". At the same time, Tunisia it is also the number-one supplier for recruits for ISIS.

In my opinion, the perception of violence being a means of change is nothing than an outcome and not a reason in itself. The dismantling of radicalism in "terrorist hubs" and across the region requires analyzing the hidden factors behind it: the state of desperation about the legal system and about the state, and the conviction that change is not possible.

Poverty

The Arab uprising uncovered a number of vulnerabilities, and specially the poverty of the population. After five years, analysts perceive a deeper deterioration in living standards, and traditional middle class lifestyles seem to have evaporated, especially for the younger generations.

The role that "life conditions" play in MENA countries is very important, where human challenges are presented in terms of basic needs. Take Egypt: in the final conference of the Masar Citizenship Projects [5] that I attended in Madrid, a nation poll showed that an overwhelming majority of respondents (86%) consider the Egyptian government to be the main entity responsible for meeting the people's basic needs, and yet only around 40% are satisfied with the quality, cost, and availability of public services.

What happens when a state cannot provide for its citizens? Can dissatisfaction of the youth with the provision of public services, poor living standards and lack of job opportunities lead to this phenomenon of radicalization? As researchers have found out, the lack of a social policy to reduce social disparities only encourages the youth to leave the country and to radicalize.
In MENA countries with low- and middle-income population, youth have few opportunities to break out of the cycle of poverty. In this scenario, there is a greater tolerance for violence, and new survival mechanisms are developed, so the economic retribution from the informal sector is key to attract unemployed youth groups. Foreign fighters who join ISISare relatively well payed in comparison with other militant groups, and Jihadist militancy can be perceived as a source of income.

Conclusion

To dismantle the phenomenon of radicalization, analysts should start dismantling all topics: terrorism, radicalism, foreign fighters, jihadism, etc. and start studying this complex phenomenon in its social context. ISIS recruitment is so new that efforts to counter it are still in the preliminary phase, and jihadists groups are taking advantage of the lack of effective counterterrorism policies.

Radical groups have seen the opportunity to exploit the environment in Iraq, Syria and in the poorest regions, and this is linked with the failure of governments and their policies. Youth that demanded dignity in 2011 was unable to change their societies for the better; now the sense of humiliation is a powerful mobilizing factor.

The sense of vulnerability among youth groups is palpable; it reflects not only young peoples' lack of participation and representation in the legal system but also frustration with widespread corruption, the state's lack of accountability and inadequate public services, mounting dissatisfaction with the lack of respect for human rights and deteriorating living conditions…

A great number of young people that were active within a peaceful framework have been joining salafists groups, but this pattern can be reversed if governments introduce positive changes in their societies.

Understanding life conditions on the ground helps to design tools that naturally help experts and governments to introduce changes in this process of radicalization . The root causes of terrorism are inserted in the social, economic and political structures of the region, and therefore to stop violence and radicalism new regional policies must emerge.

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[1] "Foreign Fighters. An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq," *The Soufan Group,* December 2015. soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate1.pdf

[2] "Youth population trends and sustainable development," *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs,* May 2015. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/adolescents -youth/index.shtml

[3] Human Rights Risk Index 2014
https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/wr2014_web_0.pdf

[4] "Experiences and perceptions of young people in Tunis", March 2015
 http://www.international-alert.org/resources/publications/experiences-and-perceptions-young-people-tunisia

[5] "El Estado que no cumple: prestación de servicios en Egipto". Cristina Casabón and Hélène Michou. Política Exterior. October 2015 http://www.politicaexterior.com/actualidad/el-estado-que-no-cumple-prestacion-de-servicios-en-egipto/

Why do youths join Islamist radical groups?

Labib Shaef Mohamed Ismail, Baligh Ahmed Ali al-Mekhlafi

Radical groups constitute a major threat to global security especially that they are no longer linked to a specific country or region, but are expanding through different parts of the world. A major part of this threat lies in the fact that those groups manage to recruit large numbers of youths. Radicalism is defined as a rigid and extremist ideology that aims at achieving sweeping change[211]. In this paper, the term "radical groups" means fundamentalist Islamist groups that resort to violence as a means of change and impose their will by force such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), al-Qaeda, al-Nusra Front, al-Shabab Movement, and so on. This paper underlines the reasons that drive youths to join radical groups and the consequences then offers a number of recommendations that would contribute to curbing this phenomenon.

Presence and influence:

There is almost no Arab or Muslim country that is free of Islamist radical groups whether their activities are public or underground. The influence of these groups is also not confined to the countries in which they were established, but extend to different parts of the world. However, certain places can be considered a fertile soil for the activities of these groups such as Afghanistan, the headquarters of al-Qaeda from which many of these groups later branched out, Iraq after the fall Saddam Hussein, and Syria after the Arab Spring as well as Yemen, Somalia and before that Egypt, where many radical groups were active. All environments in which these groups flourish share a number of characteristics. They are always impoverished areas that suffer from lack of basic services and illiteracy and where state control is almost nonexistent. They are, in many cases, remote areas and are sometimes plagued by armed conflicts. Official religious

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[211] On Radicalism: https://goo.gl/OYP41F

institutions also play no role there[212]. Radical groups have announced their presence in a number of countries from where they launch their activities such as Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, ISIS in Syria and Iraq, al-Nusra Front in Syria, Ansar al-Sharia in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, al-Mourabitoun in Mali and West Africa, Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco, Ansar Beit al-Maqdes in Egypt, and al-Shabab in Somalia[213].

Reasons for the rise and growth of Islamist radical groups:

When looking into the reasons that led to the emergence of Islamist radical groups, it is important to differentiate between two stages: before and after the Arab Spring. Each of the two stages has its own circumstances even though they both share a number of factors, on top of which are unemployment, poverty, deprivation, and absence of social justice. Added to this is the absence of the role of the state in relatively remote areas and the armed conflicts that erupted in several countries. The failure of several Arab Spring revolutions to achieve the goals for which they erupted drove many youths to losing hope in peaceful means of change and the security vacuum that followed the revolutions provided armed groups a chance to operate more freely. The growth of radical groups was aided by the fact that the lands they seized are rich in natural resources in addition to the taxes they impose on residents of those lands and the income they get from selling oil, drugs, and antiquities, among others[214].

The policies of Western countries which take a firm stance against Islamist groups while turning a blind eye to religious fanaticism in Israel contributed to the empowerment of these groups. In addition, a number of Arab and Western countries supported radical Islamist groups as was the case with Saudi Arabia's support for Islamist groups fighting the Assad regime in Syria and Iran's support for

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[212] Friedrich Ebert. Introduction. Proceedings of the conference "The Rise of Religious Radicalism in the Arab World": p.7-8.
[213] The researcher consulted a number of different references on the names and location of Islamist groups in the Arab world and some Muslim countries.
[214] Mohamed Abu Rummana. "Is it al-Qaeda Spring?" Proceedings of the conference "The Rise of Religious Radicalism in the Arab World": p.21-23.

Hezbollah as well as earlier Gulf and Western support for militant groups in the Afghan War[215].

Who join radical Islamist groups?

Those who join radical Islamist groups come from almost all echelons of Arab and Western societies. This includes males and females with different degrees of education and at times even illiterate. They can also be teenagers, youths, or middle-aged. In short, these groups attract all sorts of people.

Available data indicates that youths constitute the largest portion of members in radical Islamist groups. A survey about the image of radical groups among youths revealed that 11% of the sample view ISIS, the most dangerous of these groups, positively compared to 85% who view it negatively. It is noticeable that the percentage of those who view it positively has increased when compared to the results of two surveys conducted by for the Washington Institute for Near East Policies on a sample of 1,000 participants from each country in September and October 2014. The surveys revealed that the percentage of ISIS supporters is 1% in Lebanon, 3% in Egypt and the UAE, 4% in Kuwait, 5% in Saudi Arabia while this percentage increases to 31% in Palestine according to a survey conducted by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion in August 2014[216]. Youths are followed in support for Islamist groups by children and teenagers who are attracted by the activities of these groups and are usually subjected to a process of brainwashing[217].

Radical groups also attract the middle-aged—30plus—but these are a minority and they do not join unless the temptations are extremely strong or if they come from a fundamentalist background. Members of this age group always join radical groups through recommendations

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[215]Ibid, p. 23.

[216] Yousef Wardany, five factors: Why do young people join the region to organize a "Daash" ?, 12/16/2014, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies-Cairo, http://goo.gl/OMkzVL

[217] Saudis in Daash..12 reason to drive teenagers from the Kingdom to join the organization, August 7, 2015, Diyar, http://goo.gl/pAabnm

and this especially applies to Europeans[218]. Women between 18 and 21 years old also constitute an important group that is now being targeted by radical groups, especially ISIS[219].

Reasons for youths joining radical groups:

Youths constitute the main target of radical groups and this can be attributed to a number of reasons that can be divided into two categories: direct reasons and indirect reasons. These reasons are the result of the consultation of a long list of references and sources in addition to interviewing a number of experts and observers and many youths, some of whom have been through recruitment attempts by radical groups.

<u>Direct reasons:</u>

1-   The characteristics of youth: Radical groups target youths because they are easier to influence since they are not mature, have not yet chosen which ideologies to be affiliated with, and do not have much knowledge or experience, all factors that facilitate directing them towards a certain path. The energy and ambition youths possess are also considered important assets for radical groups[220].

2-   Financial temptations: Several Arab societies suffer from poverty and the absence of social justice and a large number of youths are unemployed. Impoverished youths can easily be tempted by the financial incentives offered by radical groups. In fact, the majority of youths who joined ISIS and al-Qaeda were recruited through financial promises that not only provide their basic needs, but rather make them rich[221]. ISIS actually stole around one billion dollars from banks in Syria and Iraq and makes a lot of money from oil and taxes as well as dealing in antiquities, drugs, and weapons and sacking state

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[218] «Daash» disclose the terms for joining.. and advises the new to carry cigarettes and stay away from mosques, November 8, 2014, the Egyptian gate today, http://goo.gl/wWm9fY

[219] Secret beyond women joining ISIS, Cairo Dar, 17 - 1 - 2015, http://goo.gl/6Or6Qt

[220] Abdel Wadoud Kharboush. "The Psychology of the Suicidal Extremist [Arabic]." Arab Psychological Network Magazine, issues 25-26, 2010: p. 32.

[221] Heidar Saeid. "ISIS in the Iraqi Context [Arabic]." Conference proceedings.

institutions. All this makes ISIS capable of keeping its financial promises to its members[222].

3- Lack of religious awareness: The religious discourse used by jihadi Salafists has a powerful impact on youths[223] who are convinced that they would engage in jihad against the infidels and take part in spreading Islam. This discourse even works with entities that fund those groups. That is why radical groups pay special attention to interpreting religious texts in a way that supports their activities no matter how inaccurate such interpretations might be[224].

4- Lack of self-esteem: Many of the youths who join radical groups suffer from lack purpose and low self-esteem and are faced with integration challenges. Joining these groups gives meaning to their vacant lives and gives them the chance to be part of a group that welcomes and appreciates them. This especially applies to well-off youths who are not tempted by money, but rather by the absence of a goal, an empty life, and lack of fulfillment[225].

5- Cultural rigidity: Many youths who join radical groups do not read and are not exposed to anything outside the culture of which they are part. This makes them scorn other cultures and generates an attitude of intolerance that can be easily channeled towards violence upon joining radical groups.

6- Dysfunctional families: Many youths leave their homes to join radical groups as a result of family problems. In fact, radical groups always take advantage of problems youths have with their parents to attract them and offer them an outlet that they do not find at home[226].

7- Political and economic marginalization: The marginalization of youths renders them unable to integrate into society and makes it hard for them to resist joining a group to which they will belong and in which they will feel they have an important role[227].

8- Revenge: As a result of deprivation and marginalization, youths start developing feelings of resentment that turns into s desire to retaliate against the society or the state that caused their

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[222] Mohamed al-Omari. "ISIS and the Funding Mystery [Arabic]." August 2014: p.7.
[223] Morabet Batal al-Shishani. "Jihadi Salafists in Jordan and the Repercussion of the Syrian Conflict [Arabic]": p. 59.
[224] Based on interviews conducted with a group of youths and observers
[225] Ibid.
[226] Based on interviews with a number of experts
[227] Mohamed Abu Rummana.

suffering[228]. Many youths said in interviews that one of the main reasons that drove them to join radical groups was revenge.

9-   Search for identity: When nationalist ideologies started fading away, youths needed to subscribe to another identity. In fact, almost all preachers from radical groups focus on the importance of restoring a lost Islamic identity as an alternative to national identity[229].

10-   Social networking websites: Radical groups managed to use technology to recruit youths whether through posting their ideologies on the internet or contacting potential members. Technology also makes contact between members and leaders and members and each other extremely easy, which facilitates the planning and implementation of different activities. The impact of this method remains powerful since Arab states have not yet developed a strategy to deal with recruitment via the internet[230].

Indirect reasons:

1-   State failure: The state's inability to perform its role in the developmental process led to a remarkable deterioration in living conditions and public services, which in turn generated a feeling of deprivation and marginalization among a large number of youths[231]. This is always used by radical groups to attract youths who have suffered from the repercussions of the withdrawal of the state.

2-   Education: The educational system in several Arab countries encourages rejection of differences, hence justifying violence against groups that do not follow the same ideology. This is obvious in school curricula in Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the rest of Gulf countries[232]. Several radical groups also established their own education system as demonstrated in religious centers that glorify Afghan War fighters and offer lessons about the necessity of jihad in a corrupt society[233]. In addition, educational systems in the Arab world failed to promote a number of crucial values such as citizenship,

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[228] The power of money and weapons attract young people «Triangle of Death» Iraq to «Daash», Al-Hayat, August 4 / August 2014, http://goo.gl/uveiFc

[229] Conference proceedings

[230] Study:10 reasons why young people join terrorist groups, Al Mojaz .20th August 2015, http://goo.gl/0TDl4l

[231] Morabet Batal al-Shishani. Opcit, p.59

[232] Manar al-Rashwani. Conference proceedings: p. 113.

[233] Abdel Wadoud Karboush., opcit, P. 33.

tolerance, and social solidarity. They also did not use learning methodologies that would encourage critical thinking, but rather relied on memorization where students are not allowed to question any of the facts that are being spoon-fed to them. This made it easier for radical groups to brainwash youths who are already trained to receive information without questioning[234].

3-   Ideological conflict: Both Taliban and al-Qaeda started with fighting socialism then later turned to fighting American capitalism. Other radical groups followed suit as they attempted to justify their existence on ideological basis in the sense that they fight any ideology that might conflict with Islam, which in this case meant their own version of Islam[235].

4-   Sectarian conflict: Countries with Sunni and Shiite populations are likely to fall prey to sectarian strife and in the absence of a state role that attempts to tone down the hostile rhetoric and handle any ensuing conflicts, it becomes easy to recruit youths to one group against the other, which is the case in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen[236].

5-   Political regimes: The corruption of political regimes and their engagement in repressive policies make youths willing to take part in activities against those regimes. Youths from different backgrounds can join radical groups for this reason, especially in the absence of political role models and the failure of peaceful means to achieve the desired change[237].

6-   Lack of freedom of expression: Most Arab countries impose restrictions on freedom of expression in both political and religious matters. This leads youths to look for alternative media through which they can express their views freely. Radical groups offer youths the opportunity to use a discourse that is hostile to the regime and that can be later translated into violence[238].

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[234] Zoheir al-Maliki. "ISIS: Reasons and Results": p. 6.
[235] "The Emergence of Terrorism in the Algerian Society [Arabic]." Different pages, no date
[236] Heidar Saeid, Opcit, P. 79.
[237] Four reasons why Egyptian youth join Daash, Youm 7 website, February 22, 2015, http://goo.gl/ZhF9Wl
[238] Based on interviews with experts

What are the consequences of youths' decision to join radical groups?

Several observers and youths were asked about the consequences of youths' decision to join radical groups and the answers revolved around the following points:[239]

1-   The effect on youths: Youths who join radical groups and take part in terrorist operations would spend the rest of their lives as fugitives and will never be able to lead a stable life. They will no longer be able to control their lives since that are dominated by the groups to which they are affiliated. Many youths can also lose their lives in one of those terrorist operations and if they refuse to obey the orders they would be killed by the group.

2-   The effect on countries where radical groups operate: When youths join radical groups, they choose to act against their countries rather than take part in reforming and developing them so they become a threat instead of a support. This drains those countries on different levels since it loses the youths that make up future generations and it keeps fighting the threat they pose against its security. This is the case in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, and Somalia.

3-   The global effect: The threat of radical groups has been spreading to the entire world as their activities started targeting a number of countries outside the region. That is why international coalitions are formed in order to face the growing threat of radical groups and organizations are working on finding the means to curb their growing influence[240].

What can be done?

Curbing the phenomenon of youths joining radical groups requires the application of national, regional and international policies that work on the following:

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[239] Based on interviews conducted by researcher Labib Ismail with youths and politicians who specialize in militant groups in Yemen

[240] For example, UN Resolution number 2249 on fighting terrorism, based on which strikes are being launched against ISIS and Arab League Resolution number 7804 about preserving national security and fighting extremist groups

-Drying up the funding sources of radical groups and imposing sanctions on countries that facilitate the transfer of funds to these groups or allows any money laundering activities related to them
-Allowing religious institutions to play an effective role in promoting a moderate religious discourse
-Launching a strategy that aims at fighting online recruitment of youths so that social networking websites used by radical groups can be monitored and dealt with immediately
-Launching national initiatives for reforming school curricula
-Adopting an international project that aims at improving the conditions of marginalized communities
-Encouraging discussions and debates about Islamic issues in a way that promotes tolerance and creates a culture of critical thinking and exchange of ideas
-Launching a media campaign that raises awareness about the dangers of radical groups and encouraging media outlets to publish and show material related to this campaign free of charge

Youths joining violent radical groups:
Local dimensions

Omar Samir

Introduction:

There is no doubt that the reasons which drive youths to join radical groups are diverse, but the developments through which the region has gone starting with the eruption of Arab Spring revolutions and their different repercussions generated a dynamic interaction between economic, social, political, and cultural factors on the local, regional, and international levels. This interaction played a major role in creating a cycle of violence on the part of radical groups and counter-violence on the part of regimes even if with different degrees depending on the country. This paper will focus on the local dimensions of youths' decision to join radical armed groups.

Local reasons pertaining to marginalization, poverty, and struggle:

Many of the youths who choose to join radical groups suffer from a number of social and economic problems that result from lack of justice in the distribution of incomes and rising unemployment rates, especially in countries that have witnessed long-term political tensions and even in countries that have democratic elections. For example, Nigeria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are all countries that hold elections, yet suffer from serious economic problems owing to the gap between different classes or different regions in terms of income and resources. Unfair distribution of wealth can in many cases be linked to sectarian or ethnic divisions that render some groups privileged and others marginalized. This does not imply that youths who did not suffer from poverty and marginalization never join radical groups, for a considerable number of members of these groups have received good education and come from relatively well-to-do backgrounds. However, these cases remain limited and can be attributed to a number of reasons including a sense of guilt because of the suffering of others or a moral responsibility that drives some to try to effect a radical change.

Owing to the severe economic crises that hit countries during wartime, joining radical groups becomes a profitable alternative that allows youths to escape from poverty and starvation. This is especially the

case with Iraq and Syria[241], where long term conflicts intensify the desire of many to retaliate against the entity that caused their suffering even if this will cost them their own lives. It was no coincidence that ISIS chose Iraq and Syria in particular since they are the weakest links in the Middle East as well as the most suitable places for fueling sectarian tensions, which become an important factor when intertwined with economic and social problems.

At a time when the government is unable to perform its duties towards its citizens and provide them with their basic needs, radical groups such as ISIS, al-Nusra Front, Ahrar al-Sham, and others offer a number of economic and social incentives. This is especially true with ISIS, which has managed to seize areas that are rich in natural resources starting mid-2014 such as al-Reqqah governorate in northern Syria and the governorates it controls in Iraq. In fact, ISIS has now become self-sufficient in Syria through selling wheat, oil, and water, requesting ransoms in return for releasing foreign hostages, and imposing taxes on residents of the areas under its control. That is why many ISIS members joined the group for economic reasons. For example, several fighters in the Free Syrian Army left for al-Nusra Front since the former offered them 60 dollars per months and the latter 300 dollars. Some of those left for ISIS, which offered them higher salaries[242].

In Libya, ISIS and other radical groups work on controlling oil reserves and ammunition warehouses so that they can tempt more youths from Libya or across Africa. This is mainly because a large number of youths prefer to join stronger groups that demonstrate their ability to impose their will.

Local development of educational and cultural dimensions:

Official religious institutions are always subordinate to regimes, which always instruct them to focus on basic religious practices and on a discourse that would discourage rebellion against the status quo through a contrived interpretation of religious texts that makes disobeying the ruler a grave offense[243]. This religious discourse

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[241] Vaira Vike-Freiberga and Peter R. Neumann, ICSR Insight – Violence and Its Causes, 16/10/2015, at: http://is.gd/VLl2AR

[242] Lina al-Khatib. "The Strategy of ISIS Remains and Expands [Arabic]." Carnegie Middle east Center, June 29, 2015: http://is.gd/QGUxKw

[243] See the text of a Friday prayer sermon posted on the website of the Egyptian Ministry of Religious Endowments on December 11, 2015: http://is.gd/OCJzD4

underlines the discrepancy between religion and reality so that while religion is expected to solve problems, it becomes totally detached from them. When mainstream religious discourse loses its credibility, alternatives are sought and this is what breeds extremism. In an attempt to look for a more convincing religious discourse, youths can fall prey to radical groups that seem at the beginning to be more rational when compared to state propaganda and ineffective calls for reforming religious discourse.

In addition, a large number of violent operations that took place in the Arab region or across the world were the result of religious and sectarian polarization or in response to the emergence of far-right factions that reject minorities as is the case in several European countries. That is why radical groups were founded upon the principles of including those who belong to the same religion and the same sect of that religion. This is a direct result of the absence of citizenship principles demanded by Arab Spring revolutions. This is not only the case with Muslim countries that rush to defend themselves the moment a terrorist attack takes place in the West while not attempting to examine the domestic factors that lead to the promotion of radical ideologies. This problem with citizenship is also seen in Europe where Muslims are targeted following any terrorist attack in one of its countries.

As for foreign fighters in ISIS and who either carry out attacks in Iraq and Syria or in the West and whose numbers are remarkably increasing[244], many of them are second generation Muslim immigrants or new converts to Islam who used to listen to preachers from the same nationality or appointed by official religious institutions in the Southern Mediterranean as part of bilateral cooperation agreements between Europe and several countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco to train imams. This demonstrates the problem with the prevalent religious discourse, which requires serious reform.

Local developments pertaining to losing hope in change through peaceful means:

Ruling regimes in the region, whether those against which revolutions erupted or those that came to power after the revolutions, have dealt with a great deal of suspicion and mistrust with all revolutionary

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[244] Swati Sharma. "Chart: The number of foreign fighters in Syria surged in 2015," *Washington Post* December 7, 2015: https://is.gd/create.php

factions including reformist powers that are quite similar to those regimes at least as far as right-leaning economic ideologies are concerned. Viewing revolutionary factions as a threat drove regimes to engage in systematic repressive practices against youths in what seemed like a retaliatory plan in which the state wants to restore its hegemony through repressing those who rebelled against it before. This persecution of pro-revolutionary factions was in many cases translated into hundreds of torture cases inside Arab prisons through the past five years and which in fact exceeded cases reported before the revolutions.

According to a number of reports, 83% of the victims of terrorism in the period between 2000 and 2013 were from five countries: Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria[245]. All those countries are in themselves witnessing complex political conflicts, which proves the theory that violence breeds violence; state violence targets specific groups, based on political or sectarian affiliations, then these groups retaliate against the state and at times these groups fight among each other and so on[246]. This circle now also includes Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. It is noteworthy that most governments in these countries call for the reformation of religious discourse, yet this reformation for them has to be of the type that never opposes the state. In fact, those governments promote the idea that only attacks against them are considered terrorism, which instigates youths into adopting an extremist ideology, not because they really believe in extremism, but as a way of getting back at the state.

The escalation of violence in Arab Spring countries is to a great extent driven by loss of hope in effecting change through peaceful means such as running for elections, joining political parties, and establishing independent media outlets. The majority of youths in Arab Spring countries were disillusioned in a way that made them prefer to detach themselves from the political scene altogether, which made a number of youths believe even more in the futility of peaceful changes. Youths were also disillusioned in Islamist movements that promote themselves as moderate since they, too, failed in including them in the

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[245] Global Terrorism Index 2014, p. 13: http://is.gd/XFyHy2
[246] Mark Clark. "Youth and Violent Extremism in the MENA Region: Risk and preventive factors of youth violence in the MENA region in the context of ongoing crisis.1" Generations for Peace Institute: http://is.gd/lMZbhc

transitional process that followed the revolutions. That is why many youths who have recently joined ISIS or other radical groups label those movements "apostates."

It is noteworthy that joining radical groups means by definition stopping to believe in transitional periods or political processes, which confirms loss of hope in the peaceful tools proposed by the revolutions. It is as if those youths keep asking themselves the following cynical question: "So what was the result of peaceful revolution against dictatorships?"

Local reasons pertaining to the fragility of the state:

Most Arab Spring countries suffer from state fragility whether in terms of institutions or public services. The same countries have powerful regimes that are relatively capable of surviving despite the escalation of violence whether against the state or against civilians. The rise of extremist activities is, in fact, quite beneficial for those regimes since they also deceive people into thinking that they are the ones protecting them and that their departure would entail much bloodier conflicts. Terrorism, extremism, and war are frequently used to justify state practices whether in terms of local policies or external alliances. For example, Pakistan always justifies its close ties with the United States through stressing the importance of the aid provided by the latter for the former's war on terror while their relation is basically part of the rivalry between India and Pakistan and the alliances each of them forges with superpowers. Several Arab regimes used al-Qaeda, though the threat it posed was far from fabricated, to remain in power and to gain legitimacy in front of the International Community[247]. Following the Arab Spring, all regimes against which revolutions were staged used the pretext of fighting terrorist groups, which was also used before the revolutions to justify repressive state policies. So, while regimes warned of the chaos that would follow their ouster, they themselves took part in creating that chaos and making youths lose hope in peaceful means of change.

The fragility of the state is demonstrated rising power of the Houthis in Yemen since September 2014, the aftermath of June 30, 2013 in Egypt, and the crises of legitimacy that started in mid-2014 between the Tobruk parliament and the National Transitional Assembly in

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[247] Fawaz Tarabulsi. "The Rules of Using al-Qaeda [Arabic]. *Assafir al-Arabi*, February 27, 2013: http://assafir.com/Article/1/302827/AuthorArticle

Libya. In those cases, the state seemed unable to curb the violence even though potential violence was what originally endowed it with legitimacy. It is also under the pretext of this violence that strict laws that make peaceful means of protests almost impossible were passed. The strong wave of polarization that took place among political parties also contributed to losing faith in political solutions and preferring radical alternatives.

Conclusion:

Economic and social problems resulting from the failure of local policies in achieving an acceptable level of justice in the distribution of income, wealth, and services can be among the reasons that drive youths to join radical groups. However, they are still not enough to interpret this phenomenon. Violence practiced by the state does indeed breed violence, but this is not enough to create such a level of violence as practiced by ISIS, al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham or Boko Haram for example. In fact, violence on both sides serves to secure the survival of the two parties, especially in cases when sectarian divisions intertwine with prolonged political conflict.

In other words, grievances or extremist ideologies do not automatically generate this kind violence, but in order to do so they have to intersect with a violent and prolonged political conflict in which violence becomes an almost inevitable outcome. However, it is not possible to eliminate this violence without addressing the political, social, and economic reasons that give rise to it instead of solely focusing on the security measures. In fact, brutal reactions on the part of the state only lead to the perpetuation of violence, especially when sectarian tension is involved and when the official religion of state is not the same as that of the group it fights.

On economic and social levels, the adoption of slow policy reforms at revolutionary moments or moments which require radical change is bound to generate resentment and disillusionment. The one year the Muslim Brotherhood spent in power offers a good example as extremist Islamist groups accused them of apostasy and the same could happen in the present if serious changes in the core of policies are not adopted.

Local policies and the radicalization of youth

Fouad Ghorbali

Introduction:

Through following the phenomenon of radicalism and especially religious radicalism, it becomes obvious that the majority of members in radical groups are youths between 18 and 35 years old. This poses a question about the sociological factors, whether on the macro or micro level, that drive youths to join extremist organizations that have been expanding across the Arab region. What makes this question more intriguing is the fact that youths who join these groups come from different backgrounds since some of them are poor while others belong to the middle class. This is where it is important to examine the local policies that might have given rise to this phenomenon, especially those related to education, human rights, security. The centralized nature of those policies also plays a role, especially of those policies are dictated from above.

1-   State withdrawal and the erosion of the middle class:

The 1980s constituted a critical phase in the contemporary social history of the national state. This decade witnessed a number of political, economic, and social crises that triggered several protest movements that were then labeled "urban incidents" in an attempt to strip them of their political nature and reduce them to sheer riots that have to be crushed. Claude Liauzu argues that those protests that took place in all Maghreb states, especially Tunisia, are an expression of "an explosion of needs" and a desire on the part of middle and lower classes to be fully integrated into the consumerist society especially that the city is an embodiment of consumerism, which has become an aspect of self-achievement. Lack of the ability to take part in the consumerist system generated a sense of deprivation as a large portion of the population became unable to engage in the process owing to the contradiction between the urban pattern of consumerism and lack of the means to become part of it. One of the basic needs on which members of the middle class focused in those protests was the right to

housing, which is a need that involves a cultural and symbolic dimension. In this regard, Salah Hamzaoui argues that "any study of the urban sphere that does not take into a consideration the cultural criteria that partially determine the conceptualization and utilization of this sphere is a lacking and simplistic one"[248]. Based on this, housing according to Manuel Castels, is linked to a number of desires and frustrations pertaining to social integration and psychological development of the dwellers[249]. Housing has become one of the new media of expression for lack of social integration and the frustrations resulting from the harshness of the gap between reality and ambition.

It is not possible to understand the frustrations of poor and middle classes related to the "promises of development" without linking them to the erosion of the welfare state as the government is no longer capable of fulfilling its social obligations. The state has now abandoned its responsibilities even though this same state was initially founded in the post-independence era on the prioritization of social issues. French researcher Sylvia Chiffoleau argues that all Arab countries have had their share of state withdrawal accompanied with growing support for the private sector, which was manifested not only in the decline of social projects, but also a general drop in the provision of public services. In a context in which inequality is growing, well-to-do classes are capable of relying on the increasingly prospering private sector, while poorer classes do not have this luxury and thus remain dependent on state institutions that are no longer capable of performing their duties. This was especially manifested in the deterioration of education and healthcare, which are important indicators of developmental and social policies. The result is a society that moves at two different speeds at the same time[250].

2-   **The neo-poverty industry:**

After January 14, the illusion of the "Tunisian miracle" was exposed as poverty rate turned out to have reached 25% and that the World's

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[248] Salah Hamzaoui. "Logement et conduites économique." in *Système de développement urbaine au Maghreb.* Tunis : Edition Cérès, 1980: p.43.

[249] Manuel Castels. *La question urbaine*. Paris: Maspero : 1974: p. 190.

[250] Sylvia Chiffoleau, *Sociétés arabes en mouvements : trois décennies de changements*. Paris : L'Harmattan, 2013: p 16.

Bank favorite country is indeed a failure. However, different forms of poverty have emerged since the start of integration into market economy based on the recommendations of the World Bank as part of the so-called "structural reform." The emergence of the neo-poor is linked to the unemployment crisis as well as the transformations witnessed by the global job market and the erosion of the middle class. The transformation of the labor market is manifested in the remarkable decline in permanent jobs as more people started taking temporary and freelance jobs, which means liberating working contracts from all conditions that guarantee the worker's/employee's rights and prevents any intervention on the part of the state in case of disputes[251].

According to Claude Dubar[252], there a shift from normative to non-normative work since economic growth as conditioned by the global market renders permanent jobs which people occupy for a lifetime and in which they keep getting promoted until they retire an outdated concept since the job markets has become inclined to reducing the guarantees offered by employers to their employees and which are an integral part of social security. This transformation in the job market enhanced marginalization in urban areas and led to undermining professional identity. According to Robert Castel, work instability is closely linked to the disintegration of social relations and increases the risk of social dysfunctionalism[253]. Individuals start facing the threat of losing a job and becoming socially isolated as a result of the "collapse of institutions," which means the institutions that were originally established to guarantee social security and to strike a balance between the state and society. In this regard, Danilo Martucelli argues that institutions which were supposed to provide individuals with social security are gradually leaving individuals to be on their own[254]. Based on this transformation, exclusion has gradually come to encompass all fields of life and social struggles were no longer linked

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[251] Fathi al-Raqiq. *From Work Flexibility to the City of Projects* [Arabic]. Sfax: Dar Mohamed Ali for Publishing, 2009: p. 23.

[252] Claude Dubar. "De l'école à l'emploi : les parcours précaires" in Serge Paugam, ed., *l'exclusion : l'état des saviors*. Paris : la découverte, 1996: p. 184.

[253] Robert Castel. "La Dynamique de marginalisation : de la vulnérabilité à la disaffiliation." in *Cahier de recherche sociologique*, n° 22. p.19.

[254] Danilo Martucelli. *la grammaire de l'individu.* Paris, Gallimard, 2002: p.347.

to work, but also to the ability to integrate and the fear of exclusion, both becoming, according to Pierre Rosanvallon, a product the disintegration of the social fabric[255] whereas Michel Wewiorka sees social vacuum as a result of deprivation, suffering, or loss of directives.

3-   Radicalism in the light of a local policy of inequality:

Moroccan researcher Mohamed al-Sharqawi[256] noted that any society is based on three main poles: the social, the religious, and the state. The state is supposed to be in charge of the social, but the moment the state abandons its social role, the religious steps in. The religious here means all movements that use a religious discourse to justify their presence in the public sphere. Religious values are invoked in the absence of the other pillars of society and are seen as a means of resistance against marginalization and exclusion. This is demonstrated in the case of al-Aqareba neighborhood, in Morocco, where Salafist groups took advantage of the frustration of youths to promote the idea of religion as the means of restoring their dignity. Youths in the neighborhood started praying regularly, wearing Salafi outfits, and growing their beards and from there religion becomes the entity to which youths belong after they were abandoned by the state. According to researcher Olfa Lamloum[257], Salafi groups give youths the chance to engage in communal activities, part of which related to resisting the state which is seen as the source of corruption, oppression, and inequality. Nezar, a 27-year-old worker and a member of a Salafi group, says, "Corruption in society is the result of not applying Islamic law. If we go back to real Islam, corruption will be eliminated. I am struggling with my brethren to achieve this end. We do so through preaching and reminding people of the necessity of abiding by God's laws and we have already succeeded in guiding a lot of youths in the neighborhood and other neighborhoods to the right path. They all stopped committing sins and now know the way of

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[255] Pierre Rosanvallon, *La nouvelle question sociale, Repenser l'Etat providence*. Paris : Seuil, 1995: p.118.
[256] The inauguration of the 19th Conference of the Global Association of Francophone Sociologists, July 2-4, 2012, Rabat, Morocco
[257] Olfa Lamloum. "La politique à la marge de l'Etat et des institutions." in Olfa Lamloum and Mohamed Ali Ben Zina: p. 115.

God. I, for one, was like them. I lived a life of pleasure and sins, but now I never miss a prayer. I am extremely respected by my brothers in the neighborhood."

It is noteworthy that the religiosity to which many unemployed youths resort cannot be separated from a youth culture that turns in the middle of anxiety and insecurity to a search for individual identity. Manuel Castels explains that individual identity is based on two factors: endowing the ego with a meaning and expressing this ego through a set of actions and behavioral patterns[258]. Based on this, resorting to religion becomes a personal matter for frustrated youths who need to find a meaning for their lives and acquire recognition within a community. This is direct result of the absence of the role of state institutions which were supposed to address the demands of disenfranchised youths as well as the absence of guidance when it comes to protecting youths from different threats that include radicalism and other common crimes, drug abuse and so on. The absence of the state is compensated by the presence of religious preachers especially in urban outskirts where they target vulnerable youths.

Conclusion:

It is obvious that the collapse of welfare state, which is expected to provide citizens with their social needs, plays a major role in driving youths to join radical groups. This is aggravated by the state of insecurity that accompanied the adoption of market economy and which gave rise to a number of other problems related to the stability of work and its impact on the social structure. Radicalism is, therefore, a result of the combination of local policies and global systems.

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[258] Manuel Castels. *Le pouvoir de l'identité.* Paris : Fayard, 1999: p.116.

Youths joining radical groups:

Local policies

Sara Sogar

The current escalation in violent activities perpetrated by extremist groups has shocked the whole world, especially as it started crossing national borders. In the inauguration of the conference organized by the Norwegian Global Network for Rights and Development, the network director stated a number of shocking facts about the threat terrorism is now posing to the entire world. He said that before five years, victims of terrorism were confined to eight countries, while today they are distributed among 151 countries and there are 1,812 organizations declared terrorist entities and under whose banner more than 13 million persons work and by whose ideologies around 80 million persons are influenced. He added that before ten years, the area controlled by terrorists and terrorist groups did not exceed 30,000 square kilometers while now it has reached more than 12 million square kilometers. He noted that the economic losses incurred by terrorism are estimated at more than five trillion dollars.

While reasons for the emergence of religious extremism are diverse, the dominant world order and the regimes that apply its policies do take the initial responsibility for the crisis of religious extremism. This is mainly because this world order is based on the commodification of human relations and starving human beings in return for the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few. The globalization of consumerist values also led to the globalization of violence and extremism and enabled radical groups of attracting youths from different countries, backgrounds, cultures, and religions, which poses a lot of questions about the hidden reasons for the globalization of violence and extremism.

This paper does not attempt to answer these questions as much as it attempts to examine the reasons that make youths from the Arab region in specific join radical groups and look for death instead of life. The paper will link this phenomenon to the failure of local

policies in countries in which Arab Spring revolutions to address the demands of youths, who then found in violence a means of venting their anger and frustration. A number of local policies can be seen as responsible for extremism and religious violence.

1- A cultural policy that encourages discrimination and violence:

Arab regimes established educational systems that are based on memorization rather than analysis and critical thinking. These systems encourage spoon-feeding and require accepting a set of givens without questioning them, which also includes a rejection of any different or opposing discourse. Gradually, a process of "Othering" develops where religious, national, ethnic, and gender differences are not tolerated.

This educational system is paralleled by an upbringing that encourages stereotyping and consolidates patriarchal power in a way that undermines and suppresses the abilities of children and does not nourish in them a sense of belonging to humanity as a whole, but rather replaces it with gender or religious affiliations.

Regimes' persistence in controlling the religious sphere and banning any attempts at offering interpretations other than those of official institutions generates an extremist culture that rejects the very existence of the regime. Extremist preachers and media outlets, therefore, offer an alternative as they provide answers to the questions that were not answered by official institutions.

In his book *Islamic Awakening from a Rational Point of View* (1987), Egyptian thinker Fouad Zakaria (1927-2010) explains the link between authoritarianism and extremism:

"If I would like to sum up the relationship between extremist religious thought on one hand and dictatorship and democracy on the other hand, I would say that democracy does not fight extremism, but rather eliminates the reasons for its existence. Religious extremism is not persecuted in democracies since it simply does not find a fertile soil to emerge. Dictatorship, on the

other hand, offers extremism all the reasons for its existence and prepares the context that allows it to flourish. This same dictatorship then suppresses extremism if it crosses a certain line, which it has to do since extremism does not accept any 'red lines.' This way, dictatorship and extremism become engaged in an extremely complex relationship since dictatorship benefits and harms extremism at the same time, helps it to thrive then attempts strangling it. However, if you ask religious extremism, 'Who is your archenemy? The tyrant that opens the door for you then represses you? Or the democratic ruler who does not persecute you, but does not give you a chance to emerge?' the answer would be that the latter is the real enemy."

Those factors gave birth to a culture that encourages the acceptance of ready-made concepts, nourishes prejudices, and rejects the values of equality, citizenship, and diversity.

2- Excluding youths from the decision-making process:

According to Mustafa Abdel Qader, "Arab youths almost have no political life at all since they do not take part in the political scene whether based on a decision by the regimes or by youths themselves. In some cases, regimes work on preventing youths from performing their duties towards their society"[259].

The revolutions that erupted in the Arab region revealed a stark discrepancy between youths' determination to effect change and their actual ability to alter the balance of power on one hand and their rejection of all forms of conventional political participation such as political parties on the other hand. Youths, instead, chose to engage in all battles for democracy in their own way through mobilization for reform projects and the utilization of technological advancements.

Youths were also used whether by official institutions or political parties to create a semblance of inclusion while not really

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[259] Mustafa Abdel Qader. *Youths between Productive Ambition and Consumerist Behavior* [Arabic]. Beirut: The University Institution for Studies and Publication, 2002 (1st edition)

involving them in the decision-making process. Instead, they were excluded and their demands were sidelined. As a result, they retreated to the margins and were overwhelmed by feelings of frustration and estrangement. Those feelings were transformed in many cases to a desire for revenge following the failure of peaceful means to effect change. That is why youths can easily be convinced by the discourse of extremist groups that promise turning them from being at the receiving end to being actual players. In other words, youths find in these groups a meaning, a place, and an existence.

For this reason, developing policies that both respond to youths' demands and involve them in the decision-making process is a crucial step towards guarding them against violence and extremism.

3- A subordinate economy that supports marginalization and oppression:

The hegemony of the global economy had a negative impact on local economies, which reduced youths' opportunities in finding jobs and taking part in the production process. This was reflected in the growing fragility of the social system where the gap widens between classes and where social justice is absent. This was demonstrated in the unfair distribution of wealth, resources, basic services, and infrastructure. Individual frustration and communal indignation were intensified by the rise of the consumerist pattern that was promoted as the most suitable.

According to Ahmed Loqman, the director of the Arab Labor Organization, unemployment rates in the Arab world have reached 16% in the past year. "The Arab Monetary Fund states in its most recent report that Arab countries are facing a number of economic challenges, on top of which is the decline in growth rates to a level that makes it difficult to reduce unemployment, which are in themselves among the most pressing challenges. Every 1% rise in unemployment rates translates into 2.5% loss in the gross Arab product, which means around 115 billion dollars.

This amount can provide around 9 million job opportunities, hence reducing unemployment to the quarter of its current rate"[260].

Market liberation, the signing of unfair trade agreements and the exploitation of natural resources are among the most prominent characteristics of Arab regimes. For example, the rentier economy of Morocco encourages corruption and the accumulation of wealth while in Jordan, taxes on banks and institutions were reduced from 50% to 30% while taxes on citizens were raised from 28% to 30%. In Palestine, the Value Added Tax is between 15% and 30% and this is a burdensome consumerist tax. These types of economy enhance the economic exclusion of youths as poverty rates increase and resources are not fairly distributed.

This situation created a general rejection of all these policies and their repercussions and generated demands for freedom, justice, and democracy. However, with the repressive measures with which the state responded, youths started believing in the futility of peaceful resistance and started looking for other ways to vent their anger. This was through resorting to violence, which seemed like a tool capable of effecting change.

Persistence in adopting subordinate economies is bound to put an end to peaceful resistance and escalate violent activities. These economies only increase poverty, unemployment, and marginalization among large segments of the population, which in turn leads to the transformation of all bottled up energy into violent behavior. This violence will not only be manifested in attacks carried out by extremist groups, by also a rise in crime rates in general. The marginalization of youths turns them into time bombs and only through involving them in the decision-making process and replacing the policies that gave rise to such conditions will this change.

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[260] Youth unemployment, or A crisis in the Arab region, Arabs website, 2nd May 2015, http://goo.gl/Wobhep

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