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A SOCIOLOGICAL-RELIGIOUS PROBE INTO CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL SALAFI JIHADISM

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Abstract

A relatively recent historical phenomenon, Global Salafi Jihadism (GSJ) constitutes a threat to both, the modern secular societies as well as to traditional Muslim communities. Threatened by the havoc of imminent terrorist attacks, analysts and politicians alike tend to overlook the true causes behind the rise of Global Salafi Jihadism and misread the religious and socio-economic determinants that foster it today. After carefully revealing the historical roots and development of this radical phenomenon, this study will offer a unique probe into the situation of GSJ in France, present a socio-religious analysis of GSJ members detained in recent decades (in select countries), and suggest more adequate ways of dealing with GSJ by local and national governments.

Keywords: Global Salafi Jihadism, Salafiyyah, Islam, terrorism, fundamentalism

1. Introduction

The topic of Islam's extension from cultural to political level is important in contemporary sociological, religious, as well as political discourse. The socio-political implications of Islam have become a controversial issue causing strong emotional reactions among all parties involved. There is still no consensus about how the West is supposed to react to Islam as a socio-cultural and political force. The end of the Cold War brought the end of the ideological enemy of Western civilization represented by Communism, yet within years militant Islam became the new ideological antagonist, feared for its anti-democratic elements and propensity to violence. The West reacted to increasing outbursts of this militant

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Islam in the context of a turbulent historical period – Iranian revolution, civil war in Lebanon, Arab-Israeli conflict, the war in Afghanistan, etc. – which resulted to understanding of Islamic culture (in the minds of many westerners) as a hostile monolith and opposition to Western values of dignity and human rights.

This research paper consists of four sections. The first is dedicated to terminology and methodology. Its primary sources are Lorenzo Vidino's *Birth, Development and Radicalization Dynamics* [1] and Michael Brtnický's *Political Islam, Islamism, and Theoretical Starting Points of its Sunni Lineage* [M. Brtnicky, *Politický islám, islamismus a teoretická východiska jeho sunnitské větve*, Global Politics, 2008, http://www.globalpolitics.cz/clanky/sunnitsky-islamismus, accessed 12/18/2018]. The second section is dedicated to Salafiyyah in historical context. The main source was *The Evolution of Salafism* by Fatima Mohie-Eldin [2] and *Reconsidering Salafism from the perspective of Conceptual History* by Henry Lauziére [3]. The third section includes theoretical and empirical information about Salafi jihadism, its worldwide network and *modus operandi*. The theoretical facts are based on a selection of papers from the former CIA officer, Marc Sageman [M. Sageman, *Global Salafi Terrorist Networks*, https://portals.jhuapl.edu/media/RethinkingSeminars/081506/SagemanPres.pdf, accessed 12/18/2018; 4]. Empirical data relevant for our research was made available by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC [5, 6]. In addition, we consulted the data published by Jie Xu, Daning Hu and Hsinchun Chen in their research paper *The Dynamics of Terrorist Networks: Understanding the Survival Mechanisms of Global Salafi Jihad* [7]. The last section is dedicated to particular Salafi jihadism attacks in France in recent decades. Empirical data were published by Marc Hecker's *137 Shades of Terrorism – French Jihadists before the Courts* [8] and Boris Toucas's *France's Determined struggle against Salafi-Jihadism* (2018) [6].

2. Terminology

Criticism of the term *radicalism* is based on its arbitrary usage, mainly by mass media. There seem to be no accepted unequivocal definitions of this term, which prompts the media and the public alike to use it as a simplified description applied to negative connotations connected to almost any idea or phenomenon. The elusiveness of the term is further heightened by the fact that one idea in one particular culture may be considered radical but the same idea in another culture may be part of a normal and healthy social life (e.g. women's right to vote or drive cars). One of the most complex definitions of *radicalism/radicalization* was arguable coined by Charles E. Allen. He understands radicalism as a process of adopting an extreme system of beliefs which includes the willingness to use, support or allow violence as method of change in society [1, p. 10-11].

In view of this definition, it is crucial to acknowledge that fundamentalism and Islamism are not natural consequences of true Islam; they are rather provoked reactions ensuing from a perception of being treated unequally by a stronger geopolitical rival. They are defensive responses against what appears to

be a destabilizing influence of modern European societies (which includes both, the milieu of Modernism and Postmodernism) [9-11]. It is necessary not to synthesize Islam as religion with Islamism as a political ideology. Though the separation of these two can be historically problematic, we are able to find appropriate clarifications in historical and cultural differences among Christianity [12] and Islam [13]. While there is a clear separation of secular and ecclesiastic power in what we have traditionally come to call the Christian world, the Islamic cultural world does not promote such distinction and separation. Another important difference is that there is no formal priesthood in Islam. The only ones who wield comparable authority are the *ulama*. Unlike Christian priests, however, the *ulama* do not constitute a separate sacred group [http://www.globalpolitics.cz/clanky/sunnitsky-islamismus]. *Ulama* are qualified experts of religion, theologically and legally educated men who direct people in their spiritual life. Their position is currently changing in the *Sunni* Islamic societies today as the state-run mass media are becoming the most relevant source of dogmatism. *Ulama* are also criticized by radical Muslims because these scholars denying reject extremism, criticize the abuses of Islam for political objectives and emphasize the ethic of moderation in general [14].

Islam and Christianity underwent diverging historical developments. Whereas Christianity survived in persecution and secrecy for three hundred years [15], Islam immediately after its origination begins to experience success and expansion. The unambiguous victory of Islam on Arab peninsula resulted in far-reaching socio-economic changes. Mecca in Muhammad's time was the dominant economic centre which connected the Mediterranean area with India. As part of the effort to preserve business opportunities, *qiṣāṣ* was prohibited in Mecca. The term *qiṣāṣ* denoted revenge in the sense of an eye for an eye, based on Quran 2:178 "O you who have believed, prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female" [16]. Traditional tribal and family relationships were relativized in Mecca's society and special hierarchy and privileging were abolished. This enabled the rise in social mobility. Besides these secular, socio-economic reasons, we must also consider Muhammad's charisma and the mobilizing effect of his message. Furthermore, the two biggest players on the scene, the Byzantine and Persian empires, were exhausted following a three-decade-long war just before the emergence of Islam on the world scene. Such combination of parameters yielded a fertile environment for the development of a new, resilient religious culture of Islam, which, at a suitable moment, emerged as an assertive alternative to then dominant cultural and socio-political forms of life [17]. In a sense, the whole emerging Islamic culture became a robust force built on the 'fundamentals' of its origin – the *Qur'an* and *Shari'a*. However, it would be anachronic to label this early period as 'fundamentalist'.

We are inclined to follow the advice of Miloš Mendel who points out that fundamentalism is a term which is not natural in Islamic world. It rather represents an attempt of the West to label the phenomenon of strict adherence to religious fundamentals, a lack of ability to reflect self-critically and to engage

the outside world, and a propensity to violence. Fundamentalism as a distinct phenomenon (perceived from the Western perspective) can be found in the Islamic world since 1970s, whereas fundamentalism in its original meaning denoted the condition of American Protestantism of late 19th century [18]. Peter Mandaville defined Islamism as a form of political theory and practice the aim of which is the creation of an Islamic political system where the structure and authority of the government, state institutions and law are derived from *Shari'a* [1, p. 12]. Unfortunately, the terms Islamism and Fundamentalism continue to be confused, often being used as synonyms. Such practice is illegitimate and detrimental. There is a difference between these terms that is based on different roots of these movements. Fundamentalists (traditionalists) base their claims on movements which call for a return to authentic Islam in its originality (purity), strictness and severity. On the other hand, Islamism is based on Salafiyyah [http://www.globalpolitics.cz/clanky/sunnitsky-islamismus].

3. The meaning and implications of Salafiyyah

Salafiyyah is currently understood as a strict offshoot of Islam which was created based on the ideas of Muhammad Bin Abd al-Wahháb. His doctrine was based on rigid observance of *tawhid*. But the history of *salafiyyah* goes beyond Abd al-Wahháb. The Arabic term *salafiyyah* was derived from the word *salaf* – past, which we have to understand in Quranic context. The term refers to pious forefathers – *al-salaf al-salih* – who represented first three the generations of Muslims. These fathers of the Muslim faith were witnesses of Islam's beginnings and applied the Prophet's model of the right way of life. The period under scrutiny here is between the first Muhammad's epiphany and the death of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (855 AD). The term *al Salafiyya* was used for the first time by Islamic jurist Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya at the turn of 13th and 14th century as the name of his writings. Tamiyya witnessed the Mongolian and Mameluke domination over the Islamic world. This instigated his desire to purify Islam from heresy. He wanted to protect the unity of *umma*. He wrote that it is *umma's* duty to revolt against the ruler who stands against God or the Prophet. Taymiyya's writings are considered the original source of *salafiyyah* [2].

During the 19th century, *salafiyyah* began to assume the form as we know it today. *Salafiyyah* became a political-religious movement which – as the solution of global problems of the Muslim world – offered a return to an undebauched version of Islam. The main representatives of the movement in this period were Muhammad Abdu, Rashid Rida and al-Kawakibi. Their primary aim was to uplift the Islamic culture from stagnation and to reject the *taqlid* (to imitate) doctrine. After creation of four Islamic law schools there was prohibit of using individual, independent ideas for creating new forms of law. Lawyer activity was limited to intepretation and application once and forever appointed law doctrine – *taqlíd* [19]. Emphasis was placed on the allegedly golden ages of Islam. Real history of Islam was not taken into account and tradition was underestimated. On the one hand, *salafiyyah* appreciated Science and technology

but on the other hand it attacked the slowly progressing secularization and westernization of Muslim societies [3].

The earliest immediate historical proof of the existence of Islamic revivalist movements can be found in Egypt in the 1970s. President Anwar al-Sadat supported the creation of Islamic societies at universities during his presidency (1970-1981). Islamic societies became militant later following their acceptance of ideas of *Qutba* and *Faraj*, which made them opponents of president al-Sadat. Al-Sadat was murdered in 1981 and the militants were arrested. The indirectly involved militants were released after three years in prison and most of them left for Afghanistan. There they joined jihad against the Soviets. Their presence in Afghanistan and Peshawar transformed jihad – from local triumphs they started to focus becoming an international movement which wanted to reclaim former Muslim territories, captured by foreigners in the last five centuries [20].

After several countries in the Middle East blamed Pakistan for affording a harbour to terrorists, the government deported them. Most of the militants went to Sudan where they found support of the regime of Hassana al-Turabi. During their time Sudan, the majority of militants changed their priorities and focused on a common, remote enemy – the United States of America [4]. The Sudanese government deported the terrorists after an unsuccessful assassination of the Egyptian president Mubarak in Addis Abeba in 1995. Those who supported bin Laden's vision of a far enemy relocated to Afghanistan and started to cooperate with the leader of Taliban, Mullah Omar. Meanwhile, bin Laden gained monopoly over training and economic support among local terrorist groups. Al Qaeda was on top of hierarchy of terrorist organizations. After the 9/11, the USA began to destroy training camps and logistic networks which undermined bin Laden's power and control among the existing terrorist networks [5, p. 6]. The conditions of survival changed, so the structure of terrorist networks had to change, too.

4. Global Salafi Jihadism - GSJ

"Social bonds came before ideological commitment." [https://portals.jhuapl.edu/media/RethinkingSeminars/081506/SagemanPres.pdf, p. 22]

Terrorism and terrorist attacks are serious threat to national security and public life all around the world. Authorities fighting terrorism recorded numerous successes of terrorist organizations that managed to cause damage and inflict terror in the minds of the populace. The methods of operation of these organizations and the potential damages they can incur have been an important subject of research of competent authorities. Other studies have been conducted to assess the damage that has been inflicted and can potentially be inflicted on terrorist groups by governmental authorities.

There is speculation that the current structure of terrorist organizations improved their level of resistance against attacks by antiterrorist groups. Terrorist organizations used to be centralistic with a clear, hierarchical structure. This structure was vulnerable because the leader of the group was the main target – and after he was eliminated, the group was substantially weakened or fell apart altogether. That is why terrorist organizations adapted their structure to a network model. It is decentralized which makes it more resilient against outside attacks. The organization is able to continue operating even after one of its parts was destroyed [7].

Terrorist organizations are dynamic systems which are constantly evolving. On the one side, they recruit new members who are connected through existing social relationships or via modern social networks; on the other side, these networks constantly loose members due to arrest or death. The terrorist cells that are destroyed do not stay empty for a long time. New, often more aggressive leaders emerge to occupy the empty space in the network. Also worth noticing is the fact that older leaders (previous generation) needed years to accomplish their target (e.g. the 9/11 attacks), whereas new leaders reduced the time needed from the planning to realizing the attack to weeks [4].

By its own logic, the Salafi jihadism is fighting for justice and honour. It wants to build a better world, a utopic model of community in line with Muhammad's example. To achieve their vision, they do not hesitate to use violence against not only the non-Muslim populations but also against those Muslims who do not share their radical vision of Islam [https://portals.jhuapl.edu/media/RethinkingSeminars/081506/SagemanPres.pdf]. GSJ is a unique terrorist social movement. Traditionally, terrorist organizations consist of people A, who are originally from country A, who attack the government of country A. GSJ consists of people A, who are living in country B, who attack country C. The attacking terrorists are without a direct connection to their target, lacking any social or economic relationships with the target, which could (theoretically) prevent them from attacking [4]. When magnified to a more horrifying scale, the GSJ may resort to using weapons of mass destruction in the target country. The absence of social bonds and inner inhibitions is exactly what makes GSJ a lethal threat.

Jie Xu from Bentley University with Daning Hu and Hsinchun Chen from the University of Arizona published a study aimed on the mechanisms of GSJ in 2009 [7]. The study is a result of fifteen years of collecting information about the members of GSJ. The findings of the study show that GSJ represents a new form of terrorism the goal of which is to maximize civil and economic damages, including human casualties. To achieve its goals, GSJ connects several terrorist groups from different countries. The study is based on Marc Sageman's investigations [https://portals.jhuapl.edu/media/RethinkingSeminars/081506/SagemanPres.pdf]. Sageman is a former CIA officer who cooperated with the mujahedeen in Afghanistan between 1987 and 1989. Based on available and verified data they compiled profiles of 366 GSJ terrorists. The study contains

sociological and individual psychological variables which help to clarify why those people became terrorists [7].

Al Qaeda was established in 1988 and its base consisted of militants who originally fought against the Soviet army. During 1991-1992 the organization changed its attention from near enemy to far enemy and started targeting its violent attacks of the latter. Between 1996 and 2001, Al Qaeda was established in Afghanistan as a logistically secured organization. Marc Sageman points out that the majority of Al Qaeda members are representatives of the middle class having grown up in secular families. Sageman also discovered that five times more members studied in secular schools than in the *madrassas* [https://portals.jhuapl.edu/media/RethinkingSeminars/081506/SagemanPres.pdf].

Other scholars have since confirmed that young people who joined jihadism have low levels of religious education [21, 22]. The sociologist Farhad Khosrokhavar offers an explanation according to which the source of radicalization is not any pre-existing knowledge of religion but rather a of lack of religious knowledge, exaggerated confidentiality, and naïve conclusions which are based on misunderstandings and ignorance of Islamic history, culture and the Quran [23].

The average age of those joining the organization is 25.69 years and the majority joined Al Qaeda during their 23rd year of life. The study also showed that the number of uneducated men who joined Al Qaeda exceeds the number of educated men by more than half. Regarding family status, married men exceed single men three times and only one third of married men did not have children. Another interesting result of the study is that the number of Al Qaeda members who have not been convicted is four times higher than those who have had a criminal past or been connected to political activism. Sageman also pointed to minimal evidence of mental disease or personality disorders among Al Qaeda members. Most of the examined sample joined jihad in diaspora. 68% joined jihadism based on pre-existing friendships, 20% based on family relationships and 10% based on succession (we talk about students inspired by their teachers). [https://portals.jhuapl.edu/media/RethinkingSeminars/081506/SagemanPres.pdf]

Studies also confirm [21, 22] that women show a greater extent of radicalization than men and they cannot be excluded from the circle of suspects. It has been documented that the number of women who decided to travel to Syria to join jihadism or to marry mujahedeen is rising. It has been shown that women are involved in combat operations, which is a new pattern in jihadism [24]. Women terrorists represent a new and tremendous threat because it is more difficult to determine whether they are victims of terrorism (who were forced to attack) or whether they are genuinely voluntary assassins [X. Crettiez and R. Seze, *Saisir les mécanismes de la radicalisation violente*, Mission de Recherche Droit & Justice, http://www.gip-recherche-justice.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Rapport-radicalisation_INHESJ_CESDIP_GIP-Justice_2017.pdf, accessed 12/10/2018].

The migrants who joined a terrorist organization share several common traits. First, they are mature men originally from religious middle-class families with strong family bonds. They can speak three languages minimum. Second, they are separated from their traditions and culture. They are thus haunted by a sense of anomy, eradication, and marginalization. They satisfy their need for social relationships by visiting mosques where they create fellowships [5, p. 4-8].

Similar traits can be observed in what we call a 'second generation' of migrants. By second generation Sageman understands: a) second generation of Muslims in West; b) young economic migrants in West. The common denominator is their secular background and social exclusion. These factors are supplemented by unfinished education, small crimes, and drug addiction at a young age. The second generation is discriminated against by the majority society and suffers due to a loss of collective identity. These personal issues resonate with Salafi ideology. In general, young men join terrorist organizations (such as Al Qaeda, or GSJ) as one of group of friends who grew up together and who gravitated towards religion together as a solution to and/or escape from their dreadful life situation [https://portals.jhuapl.edu/media/Rethinking Seminars/081506/SagemanPres.pdf].

Sageman identified the behavioural profile of an individual who is planning to join the GSJ terrorist network or has already become its member:

1) **Attributes of life:** life in diaspora; young age (15-30); rough employment; spending free time mostly on the Internet; traveling to hazardous countries (e.g. Syria, Pakistan, Iran, Yemen);
2) **Behavioural attributes:** dramatic changes of lifestyle – adhere to new community and isolation from old; rapid change of appearance – conservative clothes, beard; proselytism; activities that involve martial arts or surviving courses;
3) **Internet attributes:** chat-rooms about jihadism; jihadi web pages;
4) **Suspicious behaviour:** downloading information about terrorist activities; suggestions or plans about terrorist activities; excessive interest in a potential target; communication about destruction, etc. [4].

After the migration crisis outbreak in 2015, scholars focused their studies around possible connections between the spreading od Salafi jihadism in Europe and the migration waves. A research conducted in France by Marc Hecker was published in April 2018 under the title: *137 Shades of Terrorism – French Jihadists before the Courts*. This study confirms that 90% of the convicted supporters of Salafi jihadism in France had the French citizenship. This contrasts the typical ISIS rhetoric according to which new converts are necessary to reach the aims of the terrorist organization. Researches demonstrated that only 26% of the individuals connected to terrorist attacks were converts [8, p. 15-17].

Other numbers that came as results of recent studies are equally revealing. According to the report entitled *The* Evolution *of the Salafi-Jihadist Threat* (2018), the number of Salafi jihadists rose by 270% in 2018 as compared with the 9/11 period (early 2000s). Regions with the highest numbers of radicals are

Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. Countries with the highest numbers of fighters are Syria (43.000-73.000), Afghanistan (27.000-64.000), Pakistan (17.000-39.000), Iraq, Nigeria, and Somalia. Currently there are 67 groups of Salafi jihadism and approximately 44 groups exist besides ISIS, Al Qaeda or its offshoots [5, p. iv].

5. Salafi jihadism in France

The presence of Salafi jihadism in Europe is based on the existence of militant mosques whose specific sermons are dedicated to increase hate against the Western civilization [4]. Studies claim that numerous French men joined the Jihadists because they saw it as a possibility to free themselves from their atrocious social situation and, potentially, earn some appreciation in society [8, p. 20]. There have been 246 people murdered in France as a consequence of terrorist attacks since 2015. As a result, the country is undergoing changes in jurisdiction, safety measures, and intelligence agencies. The whole society is mobilizing to cope with the threat of the rising radicalism of Salafi jihadism [6].

One of the most dreadful attacks in the history of France took place in January 2015. The attack was prepared by three men. Two of them – brothers Said and Chérif Kouachi – went to the headquarters of the local satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and started their killing rampage. Under the patronage of AQPA (Al Qaeda of Arabian Peninsula) they murdered 12 people. The third man, Amedy Coulibaly, murdered four hostages and claimed that he worked under the directions of ISIS although this information was never confirmed [5, p. 8-11]. These men had one thing in common. During their time in prison, they met with Djamel Beghal, a man who had worked with the Algerian terrorist organization in 1990s.

Terrorist attacks in France did not start after France had joined the war against Taliban in 2001. France had been a target of jihadism since 1994. The jihadists proclaim (since 2013) that their attacks are a revenge for French intervention in Sahel. Assertions like that just serve as propaganda and manipulation in order to gain new members. A closer look at the recent attacks (in the last three years) shows that the attacks occurred in countries that are not and have not been involved in fighting against jihadism abroad.

Marc Hecker studied a sample consisting of 131 men and 6 women who were convicted of supporting Salafi jihadism in France. Their average age was 26 years. The citizenship of 130 persons from this group could reliably be determined: 90 French, 29 double-citizenship (14 French-Moroccan, 10 French-Algerian, 5 French-Tunisian) and 11 persons were foreigners (3 Moroccan, 3 Algerian, 3 Tunisian, 1 Indian, 1 Pakistani). Of this numbers, 18% had parents with French citizenship and the rest were second generation of economic migrants mostly from North Africa. The religious affiliation was confirmed in all but one case. 101 persons (74%) were born to a Muslim family and 35 persons converted to Islam. Level of education could be determined in 68 cases: 32 did not have a high school diploma, 6 had vocational education, 6 had

advanced vocational education, 16 had high school diploma, 4 had technical education, two had bachelor's degree, one was engineer and one was doctor of particle physics. Compared to an average sample of young French people this group was poorly educated. Given this low level of education, it is not surprising that they had trouble to find employment. They earned insufficient amount of money (approximately 1000 € per month – not enough to live decently in France). Criminal records could be checked for 126 individuals: 50 persons (40%) had a criminal record, 15 (12%) did not have any criminal record but they were known to police and 61 persons (48%) did not have any criminal record, nor were they known to the police. The financing of the jihadist's activities was identified in 59 cases: 37% were financed by a jihadist group, 27% used their own resources, 21% used their earnings from criminal activities and 15% persons had money from their family [8, p. 19-24].

6. Conclusions

Terrorism is an old and constantly evolving complex of phenomenon which dynamics is hard to interpret. Another complication is that terrorism is connected with nonconventional and asymmetrical way of war [25]. The jihadists did not attack the West because of its past military interventions but because of a residing and growing inner frustration that produces hate and the willingness to destroy what the Western countries represent – a mixture of technological advancements, economical neo-colonialism (in the minds of the jihadists), and liberal values [26-29].

Intelligence agencies and scholars have confirmed that the idea of a 'lone wolf' attacker is not real. It was verified that every terrorist had some direct or virtual connection with other like-minded individuals or groups. There is set of sociological determinants according to which an individual may have predispositions to radicalization. Neither the migrants, nor the asylum seekers have decisive influence on the development of terrorism. National antiterrorist and anti-radicalization arrangements must be constituted and applied by experts and not through political hysteria. To understand contemporary radicalization trends, it is necessary to understand the nature and dynamics of local communities.

The empirical data collected in France in the past decade confirm the overall trend happening in other European countries too: the terrorism that affects Europe is essentially domestic terrorism. Majority of the attackers were born and raised in the country which became their target later. We do not want to use a terrorist rhetoric but, in this case, it is proper to say the following: If a state wants to solve the problem with radicalization, it must focus on the near enemy, not on the far enemy. In this case, the near enemy is the national, social system which ought to provide protection and dignity to its citizens. This in no ways diminishes the personal responsibility of the agents of terrorism, or their ability to choose their course of actions. In some cases, however, the decisive (formative) tragedy happens in the beginning of the life of a person and this

individual is then unable to process it and overcome its detrimental effects. Marck Hecker identified such tragedies among the members of the examined sample:

- Karl D. never knew his father and his mother suffered from psychological problems; he spent his childhood in foster homes;
- Paul M. had a polygamous father; his mother died when he was ten, so he was raised by his sister;
- Nicolas M. was adopted when he was four; his adoptive parents got divorced when he was 12; as a juvenile delinquent, he was placed in a detection centre for juveniles;
- Jamel B. described his father as a criminal boss who spent years in prison; he grew up in a dysfunctional home, mostly by himself;
- Malik N. was born in France but grew up in North Africa with his mother; when they came back, he didn't know the local language well; he lived with his polygamous and violent father;
- Mohamed G. was raised by a violent father who was an alcoholic and a drug addict; his father left the family after his baby sister was born;
- Nicolas R. was raised by a mother who was sexually abused when she had still been a child; her partner was violent;
- Ibrahim O. never knew his father; his mother had seven children with different men and recently she was imprisoned on charges of child abuse;
- Sydney D. never knew his father; his mother was a drug addict and died when he was 12; he grew up in foster family homes;
- Karim H. was affected by the death of his younger sister;
- Jonathan D. was affected by the suicide of his father and grandfather when he was still a child;
- Samir A. had a violent father; at the age of 12 he lost his twin brother in a car accident [8, p. 25-27].

Hate seems to be the preferred choice of the terrorists. The psychological reason may be simple: Hate is simply an emotion, a clear, distinguishable, understandable emotion. Empathy, on the other hand, is a complicated emotion [30], especially when it comes to murderers, driven by inner anxieties [31] and unresolved personal traumas.

However, the challenge of Global Salafi Jihadism cannot be reduced the dimension of introspective psychology. There are other important factors that must be considered – macro-level factors "that influenced this Muslim revivalist social movement, such as Western policies toward Muslim countries, social policies of immigration and education in the Western world, lack of occupational opportunities in the Middle East, and state policies toward religious practices" [32]. It is not primarily inner traumas, madness, ignorance, or even poverty where GSJ has its roots. For the majority of the contemporary GSJ terrorists, social bonds predated ideological commitment. These social networks inspired young, economically and culturally alienated Muslims to join the jihad. Isolated from the rest of society, these young men and women were transformed into fanatical killing machines, desiring martyrdom in the name of something

that was supposed to give significance and purpose to their existence. It was these tight bonds of family and friendship that contributed decisively to the jihad movement's resilience and flexibility.

There might be ways to mitigate this wave of violence. Some European countries, like Denmark and the Netherlands, "have had a counter-radicalisation structure in place for almost ten years, and are now using many of their resources to diffuse the potential threat posed by returnees. In many countries, such efforts take the form of psychological counselling and coaching from trusted mentors. At the same time, authorities seek to monitor the returnees' [mainly from Syria] activities and assess the dangerousness of each." [24, p. 243] None of these attempts, however, have proven their long-term effectiveness. The radicalized Salafis seem to continue rejecting the secular framework of Western societies even after some of their socio-economical grievances have been overcome – the secular, immanentist frame of reference that does not allow for any notion of transcendence in public life [33]. Altruism [34] in the form of social activism has only very limited effects in the situation when the estranged and alienated hope for a de-secularization [35] of the society instead.

Despite all this uncertainty, hope remains. We suggest that the pacific faction of the Salafis, the so-called 'purists', should be promoted, as Wiktorowicz rightly suggests [21]. It is the purists who continue to believe and to preach that "The source for mankind's rectification is through knowledge" [21, p. 213]. Yet, even this solution is rather uncertain in its viability and long-term effects. Knowledge can be, to be sure, objectively summarized and formulated in a creed (*aqida*) – after all, all Salafis share the same *aqida*. The problem is the "inherently subjective nature of applying a creed to new issues and problems" [21, p. 214]. All Salafis "emphasize *tawhid* and reject a role for human desire and intellect in understanding how the immutable sources of Islam should be applied to the modern world. But," as Wiktorowicz revealingly points out, "this application involves human evaluations of the modern world and its particular problems and issues, evaluations that are vulnerable to the subjective nature of human judgment" [21, p. 234]. Yet, there seems to be no better option for now than to support the 'purist' faction among the Salafis, even if it remains questionable, to what extent can this faction keep at bay the more militant factions within the movement (above all the Jihadis).

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