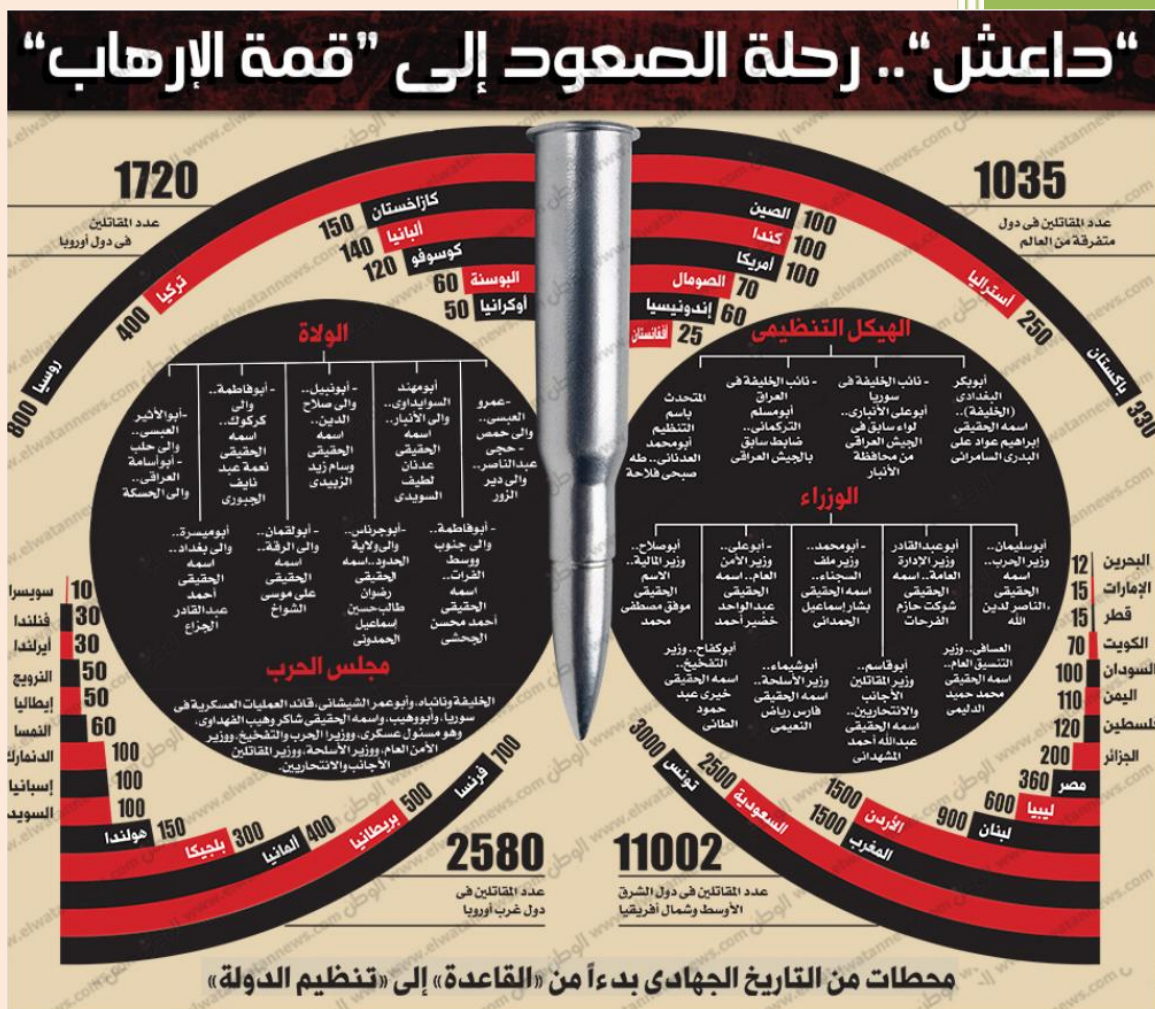


Sergio Bianchi

2015

IS ISLAMISM A THREAT?

A new comprehensive model to counter the obscure heart of radicalism





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TERMINOLOGY

To make the reading of names and Arab expressions easier and simpler for unspecialized readers the Arab names and terms have generally been transcribed in their common version. Only in some cases have we used technical transliteration according to the manual Laura Veccia Vaglieri, *Grammatica Terorico-Pratica de/la lingua Araba*, 2 vol., Roma, Istituto per l'Oriente, 1959 In order to make the text more comprehensible here follows a list of the Arabic technical terms used and the less common abbreviations which appear in the research together with a short explanation.

AQMI	Al Qa'dah nel Maghreb
AIVD	Dutch intelligence Agency
1Alim (pl. 1Ulama')	Knowledgeable, wise, expert on religious matters
Ansar	Defenders, referred to the Medini who defended Muhammad after the Higras
Aqalliyah (pl. Aqalliyat)	Minority
Dar al-Islam	Territory under Islamic Sovereignty
Dar al-Harb	Territory lacking the protection of the Islamic Law, to be converted
Da'wah (da'y pl. Du'at)	Call, ways through which God and the prophets convert men, the Jihadist propaganda
Deobandi	The Indian-Pakistan movement of the reformed 1Ulama, with a lot of members. initially they opposed the partition of India
Fard 1Ayn	individual legal obligations to which each single Muslim is subject if others do not fulfil them.
Fard Kifayah	Legal obligations which can be carried out by the Muslim community as a whole.
Fiqh	Rights
FIS	Algerian Islamic Salvation Front
Fitnah	Testing, temptation, chaos created by inter-Muslim conflict
Gama'ah Islamiyyah	Egyptian Islamic Grouping
Ghulat	Extremism
GIA	Armed Islamic Group of Algeria
GICM	Moroccan Islamic Fighting Group
Giahiliyyah	The age of ignorance, a worldly period without God
Gihad (o Jihad)	the struggle, the Holy War, the Crusades, the battle
Hakimiyyah	The period in which men are subject to the law of God. Governance of God
Halal	Permission (e.g. Halal food)
Harakah	Movement
Higras	Emigration from Mekka to Medina. The model of each migration and the abandonment of those Muslims desiring purification.
Khawarij	The segregated, a heretic group of the past, against Shiti and Sunni and the Islam origins, supporting a pure Islam accusing others of heresy. They murdered the Caliph 'Ali a Kufa in 661. Many of them have now merged with the Ibadis
Khutbah	The Friday sermon in the congregational rites in the Mosque.
Igthid	The individual interpretation of the Koran and the Sunna
Igma'	The consent of the community, one of the pillars of rights.
Ikhwān al-Muslimun (or Ikhwān)	The Muslim Brotherhood
Imam (pl A'immah)	He who guides the Prayer
Irhab (agg. Irhaby)	Terrorism
Islah	The reform
ISNA	Islamic Society of North America
Khilafah	Caliphate
Kufr (Kafir pl. Kuffar)	Misbeliever
LEA	Law Enforcement Agencies, Police bodies
MAK	Makhtabat al Khidmat, established by 1Azzam and Bin Ladin s the first office of al-Qa'idah
Mutatarraf	radical, extremist
Mujtahid (o Mugtahid)	He who interprets (the Koran or the Sunna)
Muqawamah	Resistance, sometimes synonymous of national based terrorist movements (e.g. Hamas)
Murdataddun	The Apostats
Mutaharraf	Those who corrupt the Koran
Mutashaddid	The strict, synonymous of fundamentalists
M15 e M16	English intelligence Services
NYPD	New York Police Department
Al-Qa'idah (o al-Qaeda)	The network 1base' founded by Osama Bin Ladin and 1Abdallah 1Azzam, later substituted by Ayman az.Zawahiri
Qiyas	Legal principle of confrontation
Rukkam	Rubble, in the qutbista language the rubble of the western culture hinders the rediscovery of true Islam
Salafis	A name deriving from Salaf 'religious ancestors', from which is derived the reformist movement which has taken on the actions of al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh
Shahid (pl. Shuhada')	Martyr, he who donates his life to God
Shari'ah (o Sharia)	the religious law
Shaykh (pl. Shuyukh)	Expert on religious matters, an important person, venerable

Shi'ah (o shia)	the Shites, Islamic minority, followers of 'Ali
Sunnah	The tradition of the Prophet, made up of a collection of ahadith
Tabligh	Indian reformist movement founded by Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas in Delhi in 1927. It appeals to minority Muslims.
Taqlid	tradition
Tagdid	renewal
Takfir	define a Muslim as faithless.
Tanthimat	organisation, referred above all to the regional structure of terrorist movements.
Tali'a	Vanguard, a word from the Qutbists and the Jihadists to describe those who anticipate the revolutionary process of the re-birth of Islam.
'Azm	separation, isolation. Micro-language deriving from the Takfir wa-l-higrah group.

Further information on these and other terms are to be found in John Esposito's The Oxford Dictionary of Islam Oxford University Press, 2003

English texts of book references are translated from the Italian editions.

PART I: What is the threat?

In the sciences, even the most exact ones, not always does one plus one equal two. Overall, this is true for those humanistic disciplines that impact on politics and society. Undoubtedly, the combination of the disciplines that deal with the contrast and the radicalisation of terrorism belongs to this category that sometimes appears to be evasive, while in reality it is only complex. This complexity begins with the terms: ‘terrorism’, ‘uprising’ (insurgency or revolution) and ‘radicalisation’ which are concepts that are not easily encapsulated in hypotheses, exactly like in mathematics. To such an extent that the experts have given up on delivering a unique, exhaustive and global definition¹.

If we consider for a moment, though, even in mathematics the abstract definition of a ‘zero’ becomes difficult for those self-same mathematicians. Despite this, however, since Arab-Indian culture introduced the ‘zero’, into Greco-Roman mathematics, we have managed with decimals to establish the basis of mathematics and of modern calculus. It is from there that we have departed to go to the moon, even if we continue to have problems with the philosophical definition of ‘zero’ or of ‘unity’. Something similar happens with the discipline of security: researchers are still debating the concepts of ‘terrorism’, ‘uprising’ and ‘radicalisation’ but in the meantime, states and International Organisations have generated imposing judicial and operative apparatus with the aim of preventing, contrasting and responding to the phenomena of terrorism and radicalisation. The practice seems to move more quickly than the theory.

As opposed to mathematics, though, which is a global discipline, governments, security bodies, the legal sector and even universities seem to persist with theoretical models of conflict that fragment the threat and the risk according to binary logic. Radicalisation, terrorism, uprising or insurgency, piracy, street gangs, drug trafficking hooligans or organised crime, are defined with a binary logic based on with which government they are confronting one threat at any one time. From here, anti-terrorism, anti-piracy, etc. It is as if we wanted to do mathematic calculations using only numbers with a dot or without a dot, only those which are odd or even. Numbers are not neutral. What is important is how you combine even and odd together.

Not only terms like radicalisation or terrorism, to limit ourselves to these, are observed from a specific point of view: that of the ‘goodies’, let us say are the even numbers, which usually have arranged alongside them the control resources of the system. On the contrary, the others, the radicals are odd, always the ‘baddies’ par excellence. It is from here the idea that radicalisation must seem to be fought against, as if none of those who today are to be found on the side of the ‘goodies’, some time ago, maybe when they were eighteen years old, were not to be found on the other side, in those confused trenches where people try to change the world. Often causing damage, naturally. But not always.

All this is very healthy, obviously, because terrorists do not usually wait for philosophers and researchers and therefore the security kinetics has its logic prevailed upon by the philosophy of definitions. But from the other side this healthy pragmatism also presents some risks, because philosophy is not only an idle exercise. In paradigmatic terms the concepts of radicalisation and

terrorism, however, need to be defined implying much vaster problems than their own exclusive pragmatic ambit, made up of police operations, intelligence and preventative and oppressive laws. Inside these philosophical reflections, even if less visible, there are questions that usually encroach upon intellectual territory of fundamental rights, starting from those of human rights and freedoms, including those of freedom of opinion, not to mention the sticky field that is hidden inside the concept of 'legitimacy', both legal and political. Not only: if we extract ourselves from binary logic, between radicals and moderates, the goodies and the baddies, probably one realises that the contrast with this phenomenon incites governments and civil society to take on the socio-political and religious requirements that are certainly not the role of the police force or the judiciary. This binary behaviour, the fruit of an idea of modern society that still has not managed to attain a post-modern reality, to the fluid society of Bauman, conceals not few risks. The judiciary and the security forces (police and army) in these binary systems are obliged to take on political, ethnic or even religious problems, which are presented in the guise of security, from the veil to gay marriage. They are matters which should not interest bodies independent of the state, not even when governments use them for electoral campaigns. Usually, when this happens and executive organs are obliged to assume improper positions because of the weakness of their decision makers, the democratic equilibrium is affected in a dramatic way.

They are very sticky ambits where the politics of states, already in mutual conflict, cross over in a way that is not always harmonic with those rights of the citizens and collective and individual liberties. Even if in the frame of unavoidable urgencies established by the contingency, made up of daily operations of containment, prevention and repression of many threats, the combination of these disciplines remains straddled between the need to control and that of freedom, between the exploitation of power and the need for truth and overall between potential conflicts of constitutionally independent powers. That was true in old traditional societies, where systems of competitive control had well defined national borders. But it is even more so today, in a fluid post-modern society, where power has been detached from political decisions and where world interconnection of networks has multiplied the protagonists on the scene and produced gigantic masses of means available to everyone, radicals and conservatives, criminal and law and order forces, 'goodies' and 'baddies'. To such a point that the masks almost do not enable us to understand the distinction between one and the other.

All this cannot be undervalued by the politics of security. When this happens, many innocent victims are lost in the field, even if before or after truth and freedom re-emerge, like in the case of illegal operations by the American NSA against citizens and governments in all the world or in the instrumental use of justice with political objectives. There are many of these examples, on every latitude, without exceptions.

In this ambit, under the technical profile, the issuing of a threat and the analysis of the risk require that we do not lose sight of the complete situation where every particular acquires meaning only in its own context, like in a puzzle. All the factors in play must be carefully calibrated, like in a mathematical equation. In other words, it is worth going beyond binary logic so that the institutions survive in a competitive comparison and guarantee fundamental freedoms for their citizens. So to use our calculator we need to make the odd and even numbers available, like for walking we normally need two legs, the right one and the left one.

The question that we ask in the following pages is very important, seeing as it challenges European politics on the subject of contrasting that global phenomenon that improperly goes under the name of

radicalism. The question which we want to answer is this: what should be contrasted in radicalisation?

I.1 Radicalisation between Reformism and Revolution

When you work with primary human elements like freedom, faith or law, placed on the Cartesian axes of the state and the individual, you cannot certainly trust to mathematical formulae. Even if these, as we will see however, can help. Metrics, at heart, is one of the auxiliary disciplines to security. Perhaps, paradoxically a science like alchemy would be better adapted for these calculations, because in this antique esoteric discipline the researcher of the philosopher's stone could not exclude putting himself up for discussion with respect to the subject being discussed. The gold that he was looking for was within himself, at least this is what traditional alchemy tells us. That is, outside of the metaphor, it is worth exiting from the binary approach to build a systemic and dynamic model. This means that when we are speaking about security, radicalisation, uprising, terrorism or the other thousands of forms that assume a threat (organised crime, drug trafficking, etc.), we are also concerned with our freedom, a most precious subject that concerns us close up, both as researchers and as men of institutions or representatives of civil society. One of the risks of binary politics is that fighting terrorism or radicalisation, as we will see, can be used by invasive and illiberal governments for politics of repression of civil liberties and as an instrument to break the relationship between state and nation. The other side of this risk is that radicals decide to resort to extreme measures to obtain results that would otherwise be judged impossible. They are the cases in which societies fall apart, lose their national sovereignty and their control of governance of the tangible and intangible resources that they possess. In other cases, paradoxically less serious for society as a whole, these unbalanced politics themselves become a trigger that can conduct radicalization to complex forms of threat, from terrorism to street gangs. In conclusion, there are cases in which radicalisation that conquers relative layers of society can actually bring about the failure of organised state and institutional systems, from the chaos in great world capitals that in part or completely escape from the state's authority, to violent revolts on a large scale, to rogue states. This is a scenario which is not reassuring.

The historical debate on this subject is spoilt by an excess of securitisation, which is what we will call the 'T' factor, where 'T' stands for terrorism. The prevalence of this factor with respect to that of rights and freedom is one of the reasons for which many institutions and many researchers fail in their recipes and analysis. The prevalence of the 'T' factor is due in primis to the fact that the state, through these forms of transitory organisations which the governments are, exercises a disproportionate almost absolute monopoly in this matter, which in some cases can actually be turned against them, as we will see. Without maintaining an equilibrium in the two poles of binary logic in the description of a systemic and dynamic model, anti-terrorism or the politics of fighting radicalization risk being transformed into a pure political manipulation of power. Nothing new historically, naturally, as whoever studies today's politics understands, for example, the instrumental use of this matter creates many regimes, from Egypt to Saudi Arabia. And we stop in the Middle East out of kindness to our homeland, seeing as East Europe and the Balkans are too close to

guarantee us a calm valuation. Let us not speak about the so called “war on terror”, with which we have expanded the ‘theatre of war’ beyond every physical border thus generating new threats for our domestic societies.

The debate has a double fault in origin: the first is the lack of comprehension of the role of radicalisation the form of which legitimates political expression. And the second is the inadequacy of anti-terrorism measures in contrasting the phenomena that torment security ambits.

Radicalisation is an attempt, legitimate or not, to transform reality. In this there is no threat, if not for whoever does not want to transform their reality obviously (also in this case legitimate or not). The government being the major protagonist in political security, obviously everything that tends to transform political and social relationships, can easily be transformed into a threat for it, but this does not mean that it is for other subjects. There are many cases in which a change of government is necessary. In these cases, anti-radicalisation can be transformed into an escalation driver towards violent forms of action, terrorism, uprising or other forms of criminality. Therefore radicalization must be put into context, to be understood.

In many documents of national and transnational institutions, from The EU to The United Nations, radicalisation is inclined anyway to acquire characteristics which are always negative. This instead is not an expected instance. It is required to acknowledge that it is possible to be radicals in an absolutely positive sense and that when this happens, it is not task of the magistrates or of the LEAs to intervene, if not in the purpose of prevention. The States prosecute crimes, not the ideas or politica changes.

When they prosecute ideas, then the policies of counter terrorism or radicalism became an instrument in the hands of the ongoing government game of poker and they lose their credibility.

Many radicals have changed the world in a better way precisely because their radicalness, their engagement (which many would change into “disengagement” in the picture of “securitisation” politics of political activism) has stirred the things up in an unfair and reactionary political system.

Nelson Mandela, for example, was certainly a radical in the face of the South-African politics of Apartheid, just like Menachem Begin when he was leading the Jewish Irgun. “We fight therefore we are”, was the motto of the Irgun and this is a clear indicator of the potential relationship between political radicalism and violence in extreme contexts. Yet many today recognise Mandela and Begin, who then were rightly considered radicals that hindered the laws in force (and in the instance of Begin even considered terrorists for their attacks against the British forces and the Arab militias), to be among the ranks of great moderate statesmen of their countries. The irony of history.

It must be clear that Mandela and Begin cannot be in any way compared to the vicious terrorism inspired by Bin Laden that circulates today around the Middle-East. But their examples tell us that it is necessary to proceed cautiously when speaking of radicalism or terrorism, foreign fighters and freedom fighters, uprisings and similar arguments.

Radicalism is a multi-form phenomenon that does not have a universal character but is instead definable and circumscribable only if contextualized.

A good example of radicalism evolving towards a form of specific threat is offered by the interview carried out with Ibrahim Bu Yasir in Dublin in 2014 and the strategy of containment adopted by the Irish Garda.

“My name is Ibrahim Byisir, I was born in Libya in 1962, I came here to Ireland since the Hanger strike 1981 in August, and I’m here since then, and I consider myself an Irish man, but I am a Muslim first. Being an Irish it wouldn’t get me in paradise but Islam it will get me in paradise, that’s the key for the gate to paradise.... Islam it’s one nation, and we have no borders. If I have an Italian Muslim, he’s more brother to me than a Libyan communist, the ideology facts unite the Muslims, and we as Muslims Ummah we don’t believe in borders, we are all the same. If the call of Jihad comes to any Muslim land we believe we’ll stand up for it. Whether they are in America or they are in Bosnia, or in Mali or in everywhere..... Gerry Adams, which I have a great respect for and I met personally several times, he was a terrorist, Yasser Arafat, Bin Laden they said he was a terrorist, but one day we’ll see people having his picture on the t-shirt, because the political view will change.... And Bin Laden is a great man, he’s intelligent. What Bin Laden said 20 years ago, 15 years ago, he said, I will destroy the American economy, which he did.”

Bu Yasir was also flagged on a UN terror list but the local police decided not to act against him because *"We can only move on him if he breaks the law here, or if a warrant is issued for him in a country that has an extradition treaty with Ireland."* The Irish LEAs and a number of social services controlled Bu Yasir for a long period of time and this was the reason why his radicalness never exploded into forms of violence and his International recruitment activity was stopped:

“I was prosecuted by the Gheddafi regime and the American government and the legislation of Al-Qaida and Taliban Act, which came after 9/11, that didn’t allow me to walk, not to have an account, to travel, I would be under surveillance 24/7 and I suffered a lot as a family man and as a business man and as an activist; I used to be a journalist, used to have a charity. I went to Afghanistan around 9/11, and I went to many places actually I went to Sudan, here, I went to Bosnia ecc. It’s a part of the charity work it is called Islamic Relief Agency, it was the first Islamic charity organization in Ireland at that time, in 1995, I registered it, I financed it and I ran it. What I did it was for myself and for the sake of my beliefs and I don’t want to show off; I am lucky that I am in Ireland and not somewhere else, maybe I would be locked up if I was in America or France or some other country.”

Many Muslims in Europe share such extreme ideas derived from the foreign policies of our countries and from the conflict of identities they perceive, as shown by the interview carried out with a former fighter in Afghanistan called Abu Abbas (London 2014):

Sergio Bianchi: *Could you be more specific like 7/7 incidents for instance?*

Those people that did that in Woolwich People, or that were involved in 7/7, or 9/11, I believe that people need to look to why they are doing it, the causes behind it, this is the only way we can stop such things happen, so we need to look at the causes behind it. These are not people that woke up one day and say I want to go and fly a plane into a building or to take someone’s head off, rather they are motivated by something, something pushed them to do those acts, now if we listen to what they said, they were complaining about the foreign

policy that the West has in Muslim lands, the support of the puppets rulers, and the support of Israel, so until you solve this problem, this things will continue to happen. The West keeps on trying to cover up the issues regarding the foreign policies of what they are doing in Muslim lands, whether are the rapes, the killing of virgins and killing of the Muslims, they are trying to cover this up and they are trying to blame this on the issue that these people are (...) have jobs, or they come from second class, families ecc ecc. But the issue is that when you go to homeless or to people with families where they suffer from poverty, you don't find them going around killing and ripping people's head off, rather they are involved in drugs or these other issues.

But they believe that the people in the lands are being oppressed, and they want to remove the oppression.

But this technically is not their land, right?

See a Muslim believes that the whole world belongs to Allah, the issue that we have a document that says I am British, Somali or Afghani, is just a travel document. Is not something that we have eligence to, our eligence is to Islam, to the believers, the Muslims. So this is something the West needs to understand, so a Muslim in America, he is my brother, a Muslim in Afghanistan, he is my brother, a Muslim in Cuba or whether he is in South Africa or Australia, they are my brothers, and this is the Muslims identity, the message of Allah –peace upon him- is that Muslims are like one body, united by our own Deen, by the religion of Islam.

Do you condemn the authors of 7/7 ecc...?

(.....) at the same time we condemn all those people who were killed in those illegal wars in Afghanistan, all those Eastern families that have lost their sons, their women, their fathers, through this illegal occupation of lands, all these Muslim families who have lost relatives in the drones attacks in Pakistan, all those Muslim families we send condolences to, all those families affected by this illegal wars, and we condemn all those powers, those foreign forces whether is America, whether is UK, whether is Australia whichever force is we condemn all of them for committing those crimes in Muslim lands.

What's emerging from these two interview is the 'dark side' of the Islamic-inspire radicalism in Europe, the first step of a process that may lead to terrorism or other forms of violence.

However these extreme cases are also useful to highlight the constraints police forces and judiciary have to consider in such cases to prevent the escalation of radicalism toward terrorism.

Proportionality of the measures undertaken by authorities to prevent the escalation of radicalisation towards terrorism is a key concept of this work and Bu Yasir or Abu Abbas are plastic cases that

successfully illustrates this prevention methodology. Indeed neither one nor the other have been involved in criminal acts and both recognize a clear sense of belonging to their hosting member state.

Both examples show that we always need a complete threat and legal analysis to measure the risk, which integrates the motivations, the modus operandi and the targets and this part of the analysis provides then the framework for the most appropriate counter-measures, that must be proportional to the threat.

Traditionally it is believed that radicalism is an ideological phenomenon, which is targeted most fiercely with the politics of prevention, while violent radicalism is a security problem, of which terrorism is a severe variation². Mainly this is true, since radicalisation is an ideological process, individual or group, while violence marks a clear line of tendency towards crimes such as terrorism. But this is not always effective. The European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation reminds us that the term "violent radicalisation" came into use only after the carnage in Madrid in 2004 and *"It is not widely used in social sciences as a concept but it obviously refers to a process of socialisation leading to the use of violence. However, the term can be misleading because the socialisation process itself does not have to be 'violent'... In addition, the word 'violent' also needs further qualifications"*³

Indeed in reality if we de-contextualize the phenomenon, this element of violence is not enough to delineate the risk and threat profiles and to define the boundary lines between legitimate and illegitimate radicalisation.

The renunciation of violence is an universal principle of law, guaranteed by international agreements and by laws in force in most countries of the world. Moreover, it is a moral value and a target written in the DNA of humankind as part of natural right and of the prevailing habits. In spite of this, governments, states and individuals cannot always legitimately renounce exercising strength or violence. In consideration of the possibility of legitimate use of force, when this is *"forced by the need to defend themselves from illegitimate violence"* as is stated in art. 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

In many penal codes of Member Countries, if not in every country, further distinctive causes in virtue of which an action that is forbidden are expected, as it represents a crime in its general meaning, and it could become licit as there is a norm in a set of rules that authorizes it or imposes on it or because it is legitimated by precise distinctive causes. For example, elements like the already quoted right of practice, legitimate defence, the necessity determined by a threat from others and many other instances are part of so called exemptions, which the Italian penal code considers as 'circumstances' in article. 59, last comma.

² In Europe radicalisation in *"the process of adopting an extremist belief system and the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence and fear as a method of affecting changes in societies"*, Elaine Pressman, Exploring the sources of radicalization and violent radicalization: Some transatlantic Perspectives, in *Journal of Security Issues*, 2 (1), pg.2. This is also the line adopted by the EU Commission in different communications.

³ *Radicalization Processes leading to Act of Terrorism. A concise report prepared by the EU Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation*, 15-5-2008.

The point that escapes many of those that place the “T” factor (terrorism) improperly at the heart of every matter regarding radicalism is that being a radical in Rome or Berlin is a quite different thing from being a radical in Damascus or in Cairo. What makes the difference is that in Rome and Berlin freedom and law, key factors in political legitimacy and the foundation of the law, are in force.

The freedom of the socio-political system is the code to interpret radicalism and its relationship with violence. From here we start to cross the boundaries of binary methodologies.

The political, ethnic or religious diversity of any radicals at these European and Western latitudes can be expressed in legitimate forms of opposition, even the most radical ones, as we have seen in the case of Bu Yasir or Abu Abbas. Freedom is a benefit available that usually makes violence unnecessary, and that is true even when radical ideas might deviate radically from prevailing opinion. In fact, in some ways radicalism can even be considered to be a sign of the system functioning well as it prevents the evolution of radicals towards terrorism or violence, offering licit paths to those rebel energies that may be a source of positive social transformations.

The instance of whosoever wants to radically transform the socio-political conditions in countries where freedom is not in force is quite different. In Egypt after the military coup, for example, protesting even peacefully meant risking one’s own freedom and life, as happened to the followers of the legitimately elected president Morsi. The same happened in the Syria of Bashar al-Asad and in many other countries where authoritarian systems are in force, in various shapes and forms.

With this we reach the point of the relationship between radicalisation and violence, which cannot be considered only in its abstract dimensions.

What does being radical mean when living under such regimes? The question is not false, because it forces us to consider our own history.

The armed partisans in fascist Italy or the various elements in The Von Stauffenberg conspiracy in Hitler's Germany. How would they be considered by the research centres of that time, if they had completed statistics on radicalism?

Would young Western Jews that between the 30's and the 40's enlisted in the Hagana to protect the Jews in Palestine and build their country be considered mercenaries, too? Were they freedom fighters, foreign fighters or terrorists?

We could apply the ancient expression ‘*viri vi repellere licei*’, that establishes the current set of rules of the member countries and of international institutions regarding legitimate defence in cases of unfair aggression that produce an injury (a concept much wider than violence) even putative to the agent or to third parties. Indeed, the idea that the passive subject of aggression can be more than someone that protects himself, even a third party, in favour of whom he intervenes legitimately to defend an asset of others is by now part of the law in many countries. On the Italian right, there is a talk about the power of “defensive rescue” as integrating legitimate defence.

If violence, even private violence unauthorised by the legitimate authorities, is defensive and proportionate, aimed at protecting defenceless populations or universal principles of freedom and justice and it is turned on the attacker with respect to a present and enduring danger, it is a fact that requires a judgement quite different with respect to the instance of fighters in groups classified as terrorists that use violence in an indiscriminate way as an active tool of war.

“Enough running. If you run away they kill you, if you stay they kill you. Then we have established to defend ourselves.”-

This is declared by Lahdo Hobil, head of the Syriac Christian organisation that sends fighters and trainers from Europe to Syria and Iraq to protect the local communities exposed to the massacres committed by ISIS. (Lahdu Hobil, 2014).

Can such declarations be classified as terrorist or inspiring war crimes? Can we ask these men and women, (of Syriac or Syrian origin, Christians, Sunni, Shiite or pertaining to whatever other minority) that have daily information of the danger experienced by their families, their relatives and friends in their countries of origin, to look the other way and pretend nothing is happening? This is a tangible example of putting the needs of civil societies, states, governments and laws to the test.

The point that we want to highlight with these examples is that different dynamics in comparison with the radicalisation process, and the different profiles of the threat cannot be ignored if we do not wish to get exit strategy plans wrong or, worse, if we do not want to contribute in pushing young men further towards terrorism, young men who might otherwise have been friends to freedom and society.

These examples confirm the need to have tools available to measure the difference between radicalisation and its potential ‘dark’ outcomes, the intensity and the profile of the threat, simultaneously to the elements of quantitative nature. They make it clear to us that radicalism, as a phenomenon, is not inseparable from the more general socio-political context and it can acquire a modus operandi substantially different depending on the general conditions in to which it works and on the finalities that it sets out. Only on these bases are effective and calculated exit strategies definable.

Radicalism is a multi-form phenomenon that does not have a universal character but is instead definable and circumscribable only if contextualized within the competitive dynamics of society at large. That is to define the critical aspects of radicalism, those that bring towards the multifaceted ‘dark’ side, we always need a complete threat analysis, which integrates the motivations, the modus operandi and targets.

The former Israeli PM Mr. Begin, who he was then awarded the Nobel prize for peace expressed this concept very clearly with romantic worlds when he recalled the dramatic experience of the foundation of Israel:

“Who will condemn the hatred of evil that springs from the love of what is good and just? Such hatred has been the driving force of progress in the world’s history...And in our case, such hatred has been nothing more and nothing less than a manifestation of that highest human feeling: love”⁴

⁴ Menachem Beghin, *The Revolt. Story of the Irgun*, Bnei-Brak, Steimatzki, 2007, pag. XVI.

I.2 Traditional Models of Analysis for Radicalisation Dynamics

Many of the studies and research on extremism have shown how difficult it is to strictly profile this phenomenon. This is particularly true for the very specific form of so called ‘Islamic-inspired Radicalism’. The first studies on terrorism, mainly the ones with a psychological profile, dating from the 1970s and 1980s, aimed at pinpointing the presumed ‘terrorist personality’. Another tendency underlined the sociological aspects, trying to find the ‘social roots’ of terrorism or even mixing the two factors. On the other hand, recent studies on terrorist profiles have emphasised that the only thing common among all those who end up in the ranks of ‘Jihad’ is ”normality.” They could be anybody. Some are Westerners, (like the attackers of 7/7 in London or Richard Reid), others are rejects (like Kamel Bourgass,) and others are foreign students (the classic is the Hamburg cell of 11/9); there are even some recent profiles of wealthy terrorists (Omar Sharif or Sayyid Badat,) and poor ones too. Some seem to be well integrated into society where they live, while others, like Siddiq Khan, are decidedly excluded. Some have clean records, some have criminal records, like Mukhtar Sa’id Ibrahim, Muhammad Bouyeri and others. Some are single, some have wives and children. Men and women, old and young. There is just no profile of the so called Jihadist terrorist which can be adapted to so many variable case histories.

This has obviously made the task of the analyst very difficult.

This is why there are differences in the national strategies in Europe. In some countries a list of unacceptable individuals and collective behaviour has been compiled which can lead to deportation even though such behaviour is not specifically defined as criminal.

In different American and European instruction manuals on how to prevent radicalisation, there are naive references to words such as Islamic, Salafite, Jihadism, Wahhabism or Muslim Brotherhood to define the threat or define certain everyday religious behaviour as an early warning danger. They forget that millions of citizens believe in Salafi and Wahhabi ideas and they are among our best allies in the Persian Gulf. The Muslim Brotherhood is one of the main targets of the neo-Jihadist controversy in the Arab world as well as being the best allies of some of the more moderate regimes ranging from Morocco to Tunisia, Turkey and Qatar. Recognition is not given to the huge contribution towards the fight against terrorism made by The Muslim Brotherhood for example in Syria or in Libya.

An analysis carried out by the Dutch Ministry of Justice suggests analysing the process of radicalisation by starting from three inter-related factors:- the individual – inter-personal dynamics – the effect of special circumstances. This approach had supposed that radicalisation emerged when during a crisis of identity the inter-personal dynamics grafted a new direction onto the actors. According to the analysts, it is within this framework that the narrative and the vocabulary of a new, political-religious identity allows access to radical narrative.

In this process ‘frame alignments’ between the individual and the group develop.

Pressman⁵ has developed a model in which the ‘attitudes’ of those individuals exposed to the ‘high risk’ of radicalisation are examined with the help of ten indicators which are judged on the basis of a scale of importance regarding the dynamics of radicalisation. Among these indicators there are some defined as ‘essential’ and others as ‘middling’ and others of ‘little importance’. Each indicator is structured on the basis of a scale. Among the top essentials are ‘acceptance’, ‘equal opportunity’, ‘integration’ and ‘acceptance of social values’.

Wiktorowicz⁶, who analysed the group of English ‘muhagirun’ underlined his theory of the analysis of social movements. The starting point, for Wiktorowicz, is the ‘cognitive openings’ which put the previous identities of an individual in a crisis and therefore leave him ‘open’ towards accepting new profiles. The cognitive willingness to analyse and to accept messages from the group of the al-Muhagirun could be the result of an individual in crisis whose system of current values, above all those of the Muslim community, are not able to give him an answer. Wiktorowicz lists a series of the factors which produce ‘cognitive openings: economical (loss of job, rigid social mobility), social-cultural (sense of inadequate education, personal experience of racism and humiliation), political (repression, opinions on foreign politics, torture and political discrimination) and personal.

Through the work done by the Department for Communities and Local Governments, a dynamic model of radicalisation based on five points has been developed⁷. The first step towards radicalisation begins with a search for identity during a period of crisis. From this cognitive opening the previous balanced behaviour is repudiated. The second step is social alienation, strengthened by experience of racism and Islamophobia, and from which not even the penitentiary institutions can be excluded. The third step is when there is an attempt to reconstruct an identification around the presumed, true Islam, above all in Western societies. This step is followed by a fourth element which is the lack of an adequate religious instruction. “The most vulnerable are the religious novices who are exploring their faith for the first time” Finally, the fifth step is the potential answer: The European/English Islam can be an alternative to radical Islam. “While the politics of identity play a role in the radicalisation process, European/British-Islam remains an important tool for de-radicalisation”.

After two years of research in the USA and abroad, The New York City Police Department (NYPD) developed a model showing how apparently irreproachable people evolved into potential terrorists through what they call Jihadist-Salafist ideology.

⁵ Elain Pressman, *Countering Radicalisation: Communication and Behavioural Perspectives*, The Hague, Clingendal Center for Strategic Studies, 2006, and *Exploring the sources of Radicalisation and violent radicalisation: Some transatlantic perspectives*, op.cit.

⁶ Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West*, Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield, 2005

⁷ Tomas Precht, *Homegrown terrorism and Islamist radicalisation in Europe. From conversion to terrorism. An assessment of the factors influencing violent Islamist extremism and suggestions to counter radicalisation measures*, Oslo, MoJ, 2007 and also Mina al-Lami, *Studies of Radicalisation: State of the Field Report*, London, Royal Holloway University, 2009

This model has been adopted by the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the American Senate⁸, and used by numerous agencies and European institutions, including the Danish Ministry of Justice. Though in a more structured form and with a different layout the NYPD model largely coincides with the analysis and proposals put forward by the ‘Prevent’ strategy of the English Government in the revised, 2007, October version and following.

It is a model divided into four theoretical parts which are briefly summarized here below:

1 Pre-radicalisation is the starting point, the individual and subjective condition from which the whole process can be unravelled. Here the sociological, psychological, collective and individual reasons can be found as to why a person is vulnerable to radical literature. These original causes can be identified as split loyalty of second and third generation immigrants, membership of gangs and with a certain familiarity with violence, exposure to social conflict, family ties or relations with other individuals who have suffered serious, real or alleged persecution because of their ideas or identity etc. The analysis shows the threat evolution increasingly passes from the immigrant factions to the socially disadvantaged of the West.

2 Self-identification is the phase through which each individual, influenced either by external or by internal factors, begins exploring radical literature and cutting himself off from his previous identity. In this phase, these vulnerable people begin to mirror themselves on radical figures and adopt their ideology and literature completely or in part.

3 Radicalisation can be carried out through internal osmosis or external osmosis (contact with other radicalised individuals). This can lead to religious conversion, to the decision to change one’s life. The polarity of this decision, ‘towards good or towards evil’, towards being more responsible or becoming more violent largely depends on what kind of literature is read.

Part of the radicalisation process is indoctrination: this is the phase where single individuals gradually intensify their knowledge of radical literature and come to the conclusion, with no further questions asked, that something must be done, action must be taken for the cause. Whereas the first two phases are substantially individual processes, which can simply lead to cultural enrichment or to a form of passive, peaceful radicalism, this phase implies association with others who think the same way and becomes a true danger signal. In particular, it is threatening when combined with takfiri ideology which becomes aggressive and intolerant towards those who do not approve of radical literature.

4 A final step of these models is represented by the so called Jihadisation. It is the phase where members of a certain cell agree to participate in terrorist attacks. The use of terms such as shahid to define oneself or to access the resources of structured terrorism (training, contact with terrorist groups, purchase of IED or weapons etc.) is what is important in this phase. It is from here that the operative phase begins: planning, preparation and execution of terrorist attacks.

This model works with a matrix system which could have very important practical consequences. In fact, besides the dynamic process, constructed in four phases, it provides for some elements of matrix assessment, which permits specific indicators to be defined and profiled.

⁸ U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs, *Violent Islamist Extremism, The Internet and The Homegrown Terrorism Threat*, Washington 8-5-2008

These matrix factors are:

- Opportunity: which means the places where the process of radicalisation can be facilitated. Certain locations such as sport clubs, prisons, mosques, together with internet networks, attract the most attention.
- “Triggers”: those aspects of Jihadist literature which mark out the passage from orthodox to other unorthodox (khawarig) dimensions.
- Catalysts: for example trips to areas of conflict, training and membership of extremist groups.

The model adopted by The NYPD is very practical and for this reason Agenfor in Italy has successfully applied it in previous research on the phenomena of radicalization within EU-Prisons.⁹ However there are a number of risks connected with it, which we have experienced in our field of work, particularly when it is used as a rigid matrix and its dynamic nature is simplified through threat indicators that may mislead the analysts. In fact, Tomas Precht states: *“The four phases are separate although there are overlaps. There is no logic of progression or timetable associated with this process. The radicalisation process can happen over a few months as well as over several years and individuals might enter or re-enter some of the phases and then stop while others go all the way to the critical 4th phase of acts of committing terrorism. The important point is that there is no determinism in the series of actions and events, although there is a likelihood of increased group bonding and small group dynamics in phase 2 and 3 serving as an accelerator.”*¹⁰

We add to this that also the terminology contains some critical elements, as we will see in the next paragraph, which need to be updated.

The most critical element of this model of The NYPD, which has become a global standard in some way in the analysis of relationships between radicalisation and security, is the fact that it does not go beyond binary logic. It photographs a situation but it does not explain the dynamic to us, the forces that move the process and its implications. It is not by chance that it is a model defined by a police body, which is however part of the process, even if it might pretend to be an external observer.

I.3 A New Model of Dynamic Analysis of Radicalisation

Nevertheless this model highlights that no one is born radical or is radical for life, and this is a very important starting point to understand radicalisation. Nor does it follow that the handling strategies which today go under the name of de-radicalisation, disengagement or repentance have a meaning if taken abstractly. Consequently, handling strategies correctly could be significant if they start from a clear risk analysis and are based upon facts and metrics within an appropriate context and clear cutting regulation.

What is more, it makes us aware that alleged radical ideas are not, in actual fact, necessarily dangerous for Western or Eastern societies unless these ideas take on the aspect of a specific,

⁹ Sergio Bianchi, *Jihadist Radicalisation in European Prisons. Experimental Project for the Identification of Jihadist Radicalisation in European Prisons*, Rimini, Agenfor Publishing, 2011 (project co-funded by the EC – CRYME JLS/2007/ISEC/551)

¹⁰ Tomas Precht, op. Cit., pg. 33

circumstantial threat/risk or of a specific crime. Ideas are indicators and rarely crimes. Paradoxically, as experience in Arab prisons has shown, Salafist ideas (which to our way of seeing things could seem to be radical and probably are as such) can be an antidote against violent radicalisation because they may assume a quietist approach. Here we enter the difficult binary subject of winning hearts and minds, which is one of the main issues in traditional counter uprising models when challenging pseudo-Islamic uprisings at every level and it is always very near to the danger of creating poisons rather than antidotes.

The main problem represented by current analysis is given by the fact that it is always binary, static, descriptive and rigid and as such it does not provide a comprehensive model to understand and prevent dynamic phenomena. Terrorism, or that galaxy which goes under the term, is clearly one of the components of a live and dynamic organic system, which replaces and varies its factors. But in itself it is not exhaustive for the entire range of the threat. In an overview of the global analysis of risk, terrorism is a tactical aspect of a much more strategic global threat than terrorism itself. It is not enough then to describe the factors of this process afterwards if we do not have an adaptable model of analysis that is dynamic, comprehensive and adaptable like the phenomenon itself.

This difficulty is born from what we outlined above: the analysis of security, unfortunately, is conducted in most part by governmental bodies and agencies, which have great difficulty recognising all the factors in this dynamic, since they are tied to their role of being dependent on the government of the moment and from the rules of engagement of their system of reference. This may lead to paradox as in the case on Menachem Beghim, who was wanted as a terrorist during the British mandate in Palestine and then became a Nobel Prize for peace after the Camp David Accord.

This case plastically express the major difficulty of binary logic, which today forms the bones of almost all multi-bilateral politics, from The EU to the agencies of The UN. The excessive dependency of these agencies on the temporary viewpoints of the member states also puts the politics of multi-bilateral agencies at risk, which on the contrary to working properly, with a transnational role and legitimacy could be the most appropriate subjects for exiting from competitive and binary logic. Also for them, like for NGOs and state institutions, there is a problem of freedom, independence and respect towards governments and populations over which they exercise control.

The National Agencies of security systems serve established governments and, on the contrary, radicalisation raises the problem of transforming established power. These politics often place the cardinal principles of Western democratic systems, independence of the judiciary or that of the executive, in serious jeopardy.

Like the security forces, the judicial system is called on to prosecute crimes. In the case of radicalisation, on the contrary, these crimes do not always exist, unless they construct monstrous contrivances that persecute ideas, as has unfortunately happened in many cases. Also for this reason many anti-terrorism investigations in recent years have fallen apart in a debating chamber or in court, when governments have not resorted to special measures like extraordinary redemptions, extra-judicial killings or detention without trial. Some cases of legislation on 'hate crime' or religious behaviour belong to this distorted ambit, cases which tend to punish penally whoever expresses opinions or whoever behaves differently from the majority, without committing specific offences against recognized people. The case of the veil for Muslim women is one of these. In fact, much of

this legislation is easily manipulated by groups and lobbies, which tend to threaten other parts of society in an inappropriate way, altering free social dialogue and restricting individual liberty. The difficulty of passing from a path based on proof and evidence, typical of those traditionally conducted by executive power, to initiatives in the political field and opinions, has demonstrated that not always do the agencies of state maintain the level of independence demanded of them; that they institutionally should go beyond the ties that connect them to the government of the day. That of ‘terrorism’ is a brand that even research centres and university faculties, like many International organisations, use with a certain facility, to please the government of the day and current ideologies labelling such organisations with a nature that is in direct contrast to competitive social dynamics. These initiatives are often neutral. As politics of stability exist, we know today that precise politics of destabilisation exist, the so called ‘creative chaos’, the heart of which are often the strategic doctrines of the countries that apply them in societies which are ever more interconnected.

The state and governments that operate in a determined moment are part of the dynamic and competitive system inside society in an international scenario, even when on the contrary they pretend to be only external judges. This is the crux of many misunderstandings around the subject, which are unfortunately aggravated by the weaknesses often demonstrated by multi-bilateral organisations or by civil society in presuming a fully independent profile with respect to national or regional interests.

It is like in proportional mathematics if we were to search for factor ‘X’ without having a common denominator, even with a vague idea of the product of mathematical averages. As far as it is paradoxical, it is this that is at the basis of the most part of analysis of the problems of relationships between radicalization and terrorism or radicalization and subversion or radicalisation and criminality.

The models of analysis like that of The NYPD, the socio-psychological approaches or quantitative research on foreign fighters, just to have a specific means of comparison, repeat the military strategy errors of Robert MacNamara during the Vietnam war, when Vietnamese guerrillas were analysed by the office of System Analysis, which took apart and reassembled the process with Cartesian methods, not adapted for understanding the complexity of the uprising taking place¹¹. The idea of these reductionist approaches is that everything, that is the relationship between radicalization and threat, whatever it is, can be defined using analysis of the parts, according to a military model of analysis that goes back to the British Commonwealth military planning methodology.

The problem is that with radicalisation we are on the contrary in the ambit of social systems that present a high grade of complexity and where governments, the security forces, military forces and those of the judiciary are part of the organic system in play as well. They are not external entities. The activities of all the protagonists contribute to the dynamic of the system, according to the 1920s competitive model of Mikhail Tukhachevski.

The first data, the vagueness of the mathematical averages in the system of dynamic proportions, is given to arbitrary use of the term radicalisation. This is considered only as an ‘enemy’, from the point of view of the government and established powers, often also disdaining the needs of the state, which are the expression of the nation. Competition, in the best liberal theories, is a powerful factor of change and growth. It does not surprise us that monopolies do not like it, just as we are not

¹¹ H.R.McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, MacNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That led to Vietnam*, New York, Harper, 1998

surprised that anti-terrorism and similar are monopolies of the security agencies. Therefore, radicalisation from this point of view always becomes a threat (and it certainly is for many governments) and it is never considered a factor of development, an opportunity, a way to reconnect state and nation (and it certainly is for the opposition to the government). In reality, as we now know well from the analysis of Gene Sharp¹² and the Einstein Institute, radical forms of opposition to established power can be a powerful factor of social transformation, of democratization and freedom. This factor is so important that foreign powers can exploit it to manipulate political factors in third countries and this paradoxically can become a push factor towards domestic forms of terrorism.

Therefore radicalisation, which is a variable of sociological proportions, is part of a general sociological process that can have positive or negative aspects depending on the point of view from which you consider it (the logic of competitive systems, indeed). From the point of view of established power that does not love social dialectics, it can represent a threat, but for citizens and civil society who maintain that they are oppressed, legitimately or illegitimately, it can also represent an opportunity. Not only: the self-same radicalisation can become an instrument of conservation for internal and external forces to the system, via appropriate manipulative actions. That is what normally goes under the name of ‘political defiance’ or destabilisation, internal stimulus moves or international actions.

The same thing applies to the ‘violence’ factor, as far as the ambit is more restricted. In general terms, violence is a variable that takes us towards terrorism and crime. Therefore, we are in the ambit type of LEAs and the judiciary. But we cannot exclude at first glance that, given determined circumstances, violence can be judicially discriminated. The laws of all European countries foresee this, both for states (the just war) and for individuals (legitimate defence, for example). There are even cases in which violence can have social approval. For the same Gene Sharp and his followers, *“the merits and limitations of general alternative techniques of struggle will need to be evaluated, such as conventional military warfare, guerrilla warfare, political defiance and others”*¹³.

Violence, terrorism, insurgency and similar, are tactical aspects of the process and must not be confused with its strategic nature, that resides elsewhere, as we will now see.

There is however the missing factor of proportion which is necessary to be able to define the model and help us to define the product ‘X’, our risk index. This is what we are missing in the analysis conducted up to this point.

As everyone who deals with revolution knows well in other possible manifestations of radicalisation like uprising and counter-uprising the response of the state and authority is one of the determining factors in understanding the phenomenon itself. David Kilcullen, one of the major experts on uprising, has expressed this idea with simple and clear words in his ‘Counter-uprising’: *“In practice –and understandably, since insurgents kill our people daily while unemployment and corruption do not on a minute-by-minute basis- most military commanders prioritize kinetics (fighting the insurgents) and deal with other issues mainly through periodic (weekly and monthly) inter-agency*

¹² Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, London, Serpent’s Tail, 2012

¹³ Gene SHARP, OP. CIT., PG. 75-76

*reviews. In doing so, they tend to treat, or even exacerbate, the symptoms of instability, while neglecting its causes.*¹⁴

Therefore, there is a fundamental factor that they call ‘state response’ to radicalization that cannot be considered in the dynamic proportion. Some examples: the state which in its own politics of security violates unrenouncable laws and principles of human rights and of fundamental freedoms, also for reasons of (real or presumed) anti-terrorism, transforms itself into a principle protagonist of the kinetic process of the radicals towards terrorism and revolution. How many radicals became terrorists within prisons, where they were perhaps held for ideological crimes, and where they endured torture and severe violence? We should also pay attention to the case in which the state, its agencies or public politics, apply correct responses, but do not manage, however, to communicate their own actions adequately towards the groups involved and therefore they are perceived to be unjust, repressive and illegitimate by large groups of the population. It is not only an operative question, but also a question of perception of events. The state that abdicates its own sovereignty in areas of the country, in cities or part of it, opens clear spaces to competitive hostile systems, like in the case of the mafia or of radical groups that take possession of Mosques or ethnic or religious communities. The state that demonstrates discriminatory forms toward specific groups and does not manage to guarantee equal treatment for all its citizens or equal access to services and opportunities clearly offers its flank to services and opportunities to other competitive systems, which in the most extreme cases can also have the objective of destroying the state itself or determined governments. There are many examples some of which we will now examine.

We understand that subjects like these are not always at the centre of interest of police forces that conduct investigations or try to stop terrorists ready to commit atrocities. But the capacity of the state and of its agencies to not appear unjust, Islamophobic, violent and disinterested to the motives that activate radicalisation, is undoubtedly one of the factors that make up what we have defined as the ‘state response’ and therefore for these agencies, who have a precise public responsibility, much more is required beyond their normal role, which would normally be that of prosecuting whoever commits crimes.

Radicalisation is then like a ghost that is reflected in the state and in the government of the day, on the basis that it shapes itself and assumes the best form for its own survival and action.

If the radicalisation and terrorism dynamic requires that we go beyond binary logic and therefore also the factors of government or authority response is integrated and proportionate, therefore the model will assume the following formula:

$$Rx:SR=V:RD$$

Where Rx (=risk) is our ‘X’ in the proportion; ‘V’ is the level of violence applied by the parties and ‘RD’ is the level of radicalisation, be it legitimate or illegitimate. Finally, ‘SR’ is the level of response of the state to the action of radicalization and to the violence emitted in the circuit of the parties.

¹⁴ David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, pg. 54

The mathematical rule tells us that the product of the averages is the same as that of the extremes. Therefore if we do not assign numeric values to the various unknowns in the form of algorithms, indicators studied closely, we have the product of the proportion, which is we understand how the combination of the determining factors can cause the threat, whatever that is.

If the violence circulating in the system is low (let us say simply $V=10$), the level of radicalisation is high (example $RD=100$) and the response of the state is of low intensity ($SR=10$), we will have the following outcome:

$$Rx = 10 \times 10 / 100 = 1$$

The level of expected risk therefore will be equal to a numeric value 1 (low), even in the presence of a high level of radicalisation. And the situation in which radicalisation is institutionalised and channelled into politics, participating in the democratic process, in elections and in the competition of ideas. This example enables us to understand that factor RD is not a threat in itself.

If, on the contrary, the level of violence circulating in the system is high (let us say $V=1000$), the level or radicalisation constant (for example $RD=100$) and the response of the state is of high intensity ($SR=1000$), we will have the following outcome:

$$Rx = 1000 \times 1000 / 100 = 10.000$$

The level of expected risk, therefore, will be equal to a numeric value 10.000 (very high), therefore maintaining the level of radicalisation unaltered. It must be clarified that the factor SR is not necessarily a repressive action of the state and its organs against radical movements. On the contrary, it is a factor that has to do with global instruments of persuasion, of administration and coercion, seen in the two logic framework of 'aggregation/disaggregation' of the various parties that make up the calculation. The numeric factor is built in such a manner that we can also consider other under segments of state action, beyond those which are kinetic. For example, and in fact noted by descriptive analysts that one of the elements that eases the passage from radicalism to terrorism is given by the action of recruiters of terrorist movements, like those of al-Qa'idah or other forms of State-sponsored terrorism, inside the network of Muslim protest in Europe. To take the competitive systems of the radical ambit apart, favouring those of a low revolutionary tendency, granting (or not) political viability in the public space to radical movement is part of the state response metric, which must be considered inside the variable SR with a method that does not consider only repressive actions, the number of arrests or people charged. Therefore the SR factor, like all the others, is measured with a complex metric based on an algorithm, then summed up to a numeric value, which includes the action toward radical movements but also eventual inactions towards the external triggers/push factors of terrorism or the capacity to stimulate competitive elements in the enemy field.

Let us take another example, among the many available: if the violence circulating in the system becomes low (let us say $V=10$), the level of radicalisation high (for example $RD=1000$) and the state response of high intensity ($SR=1000$), we will have the following outcome:

$$Rx = 1000 \times 10 / 1000 = 10$$

The level of expected risk, therefore, will be equal to a number value 10 (relatively low). This example is interesting in itself because it underlines how a controlling proportion exists, however, between high levels of radicalisation and non-violent action of the parties. The introduction of violence to the system, from wherever it might come, always alters the proportion. The factor “V” (violence), like all the others, it is also the product of a complex considered algorithm system. The product does not indicate only physical acts of violence, but also the various tactics that radicals can assume in different contexts and moments of confrontation with governments, sometimes even to stimulate the repressive action of police forces. Inside the factors we reinterpret classical violence, violent manifestations in the streets, also terrorist attacks, terrorism and uprisings, but also actions of civil disobedience that bring people to acts of sabotage and to other illegal forms of protest like threatening the press or the industrial sector, drug trafficking or organized crime.

This new and innovative model of analysis of security systems with respect to the themes of radicalisation has many advantages with respect to the systems used up to this moment.

We will summarise some of them, indicating possible evolutions in research in the future:

- First of all, the model embraces the natural dynamic of the process of radicalisation and, on the basis of the behaviour of various behavioural factors, none excluded, it defines adequate models of dynamic prevention that go beyond antique binary logic. What must be developed are the algorithms to obtain the considered values for the various factors and the relative toleration limits with the aim of prevention. The metric analysis, typical of intelligence systems, of criminology and counter-uprising, can be combined here with the multi-discipline nature of the various sciences applied up to this point to research on radicalization and anti-terrorism with descriptive models in Cartesian form.
- Secondly, the focal point of the activity is moved from the kinetic centre, from the action and legal initiative, to that of analysis relative to the competitive factors of the process. The objective of the action becomes a multiplicity of initiatives with the aim of giving responses to ‘grievances’ of radicalisation, from one point of view and up to where possible, and from the other to subtracting and channelling the energy of the radical system to institutional ambits through politics that act upon the capacity for aggregation of external factors. In this sense, as we will see, terrorism is not the greatest threat that a mistaken process of radicalization can generate in modern European societies.
- Thirdly, all the protagonists in the process acquire their own role of being parties in the cause, while in static and descriptive models there is a substantial difference between the ‘goodies’ (the state and its agencies) and ‘baddies’ (radicals and opposition). This opens up a collaboration between public and private in initiatives of prevention and recuperation. Security must be perceived as a public good and therefore responsible of security policies are LEAs as well as NGOs, public and private organizations. Overall, it emphasises the positive

role of models of policing at a community level, avoiding that LEAs and judicial powers being pushed into improper political actions of defence of the government against legitimate opposition. Politics on one side and security on the other. The guarantee of a state against pathological radicalisation is given by the dynamism, resistance and resilience of civil society and by the mobility and adaptability of its politics, more than by the quantity of protection available and by the quality and loyalty of its own security forces.

Overall, the greatest difference of this dynamic model with respect to descriptive analysis consists in its ability to recognise and legitimise the social and political grievances of radical movements in the process of the function of democratic exchange.

As terrorism and uprisings tend to move the battle onto asymmetric ground, in the same way society defends itself on this asymmetric ground bringing the weapons of democracy and social cohesion to the field. We know from experience in counterinsurgency that is extremely difficult to win militarily if we don't get the support of the civil society. From a tactical point of view this is the essential difference between Kobane and Tikrit.

We aim in some way to "protect" the radical expressions of civil and political society from external forces that can exploit and render them violent and dangerous for society. We reserve pluralism as a resource accepting the competitive challenge and putting our own capacity to attract the radicals to reformism into play. This model restores all the factors in play to their proper roles avoiding therefore that encouragement of a political nature can be marginalised with the insulting term of terrorism or that institutions responsible for security and justice denaturalise their institutional and independent roles in function of the political parties and of the government of the day.

I.4 Religious Phenomenology and Orientalistic applied to security

The analysis of the specific phenomenon of Islamic inspired radicalism, going beyond the formula of "dynamic proportion", can take advantage of the use of other instruments that are clearly innovative with respect to the descriptive methods in use in the ambit of security strategies.

The first is that of science that goes under the name *religious phenomenology*.

Many present day analysts are unfortunately influenced on the themes of the relationship between religion and terrorism, in more or less veiled forms, by a prejudice toward the role and the function of religion in society, which since Comte's era through Marx right through to the various structural theories, continues to play a central role in academic circles. This has many advantages but unfortunately also some disadvantages. In reality, beyond the contrasting 'positivist' analyses (sociological or in their more complex forms semiotic-structural very fashionable today) and faith based (be they of Muslim or Christian origin), there are many other ambits of research that the security sector has explored little or not at all. But seeing as security belongs to the field of

humanistic sciences that focus on comprehension of human behaviour, we retain that a multi-discipline unencumbered approach oriented to encompassing this complexity is indispensable.

Religion is part of this complexity, if we want to judge phenomena in an objective way, without preventative ideological filters. From the beginning of time religion and security, faith and power, the search for god and identity cross paths in the history of man. Religious phenomenology is the science that studies the relationship between man and god in its historical manifestations, in the light of a specific anthropology. It is a method of investigation of religious fact, or of the sacred, as Rudolf Otto, Geerd Van der Leeuw, Mircea Eliade or Carl Gustav Jung have more correctly written, which crosses comparative historical analysis with its hermeneutic aspects, recurrent in forms of structure, archetypes and symbols. This discipline has explored in time with success The “Homo religious”, that is the archetype of a modality of universal symbolic existence that straddles the borders of religion, intended as specific historical manifestations, and defines global behavioural ambits.

According to Eliade, a thread of connection exists between a prehistoric sepulchre of homo sapiens who painted in red ochre the skulls of the dead, or a current political or sporting manifestation made up of flags, colors and secular symbols, which is given by a modality of existence of a man with the capability of abstract intelligence, able to ask questions, to collect and elaborate symbols in the light of its conscience of transcendental entities that give a real sense of the daily. The religious one would, therefore, be a peculiar way to give sense to the universe, to history, to events and people, according to symbolic processes that collect reality in their own transparent dimensions, which reveal our relationship with mystery and the unknown. In this sense narratives may have a number of elements in common with myths.

Phenomenology of religions can offer a lot to behavioural research and to contemporary sociology and psychology. In the case of the radicalisation of religious inspiration it can be a valid auxiliary to the analysis of the various narratives, to understanding their structure in social events and also to the capacity to transform every day events and grievances into symbols and narratives, able to operate on a historical and political plain.

The second innovative investigative instrument is ***Orientalism***. It is in fact surprising how Eastern disciplines, like religious phenomenology, have been little used in this branch of humanistic science which is security. On the Orientalism and the Arabism, in particular, we seem to have been lingering for decades within the antique anathema of Edward Said¹⁵, who wanted it simply to be at the service of imperialism. A political verdict that does not correspond to this fact at all. In reality, it is banal enough to affirm that the comprehension of Eastern culture and languages, the reading of communications of radical and terrorist movements, listening to their music or videos and the collection of their sermons, contextualized in the big historical and cultural processes of those societies, is an almost indispensable pre-requisite per for whoever wants to confront the subject of terrorism or of radicalisation and Muslim inspiration. After all, each researcher knows that an interview conducted in the language of the interviewee offers greater opportunity to understand rather than a translated interview. The approach provided by the Orientalism can help the discipline

¹⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalismo*, traduzione di Stefano Galli, collana Nuova cultura (n. 27), Bollati Boringhieri, 1991

of security and identify the phenomena contingent inside the great historical trends of specific scenarios.

With this ‘model of dynamic prevention’ of terrorism or of the threat in the broad sense, availing ourselves with research methods of the religious phenomenology and the Orientalism, we are today equipped with much more advanced and less arbitrary instruments than those of the past to understand how to negotiate strategies of prevention aimed at specific phenomena and contrast the escalation of radicalisation towards revolutionary phenomena, terrorism and destructive tactics.

The model can help us avoid security politics being downgraded to functional ideologisms to illiberal politics by single governments interested in eliminating the opposition, either legitimate or illegitimate. Or avoiding that pre-concepts with a discriminatory, ideological or racial background, are insinuated in the analyses of security as happens when evident and creeping Islamophobia becomes a criteria of justice.

The necessity to assign considered weight to the various factors, on the basis of functions to obtain numeric values, obliges analysts to enter into the merit of single factors. Names are not enough, they are only the number plates, to define a factor of the proportion and successfully complete a risk assessment. To assign different weights we are obliged to enter inside the phenomena, to understand them from inside. Like the old alchemists.

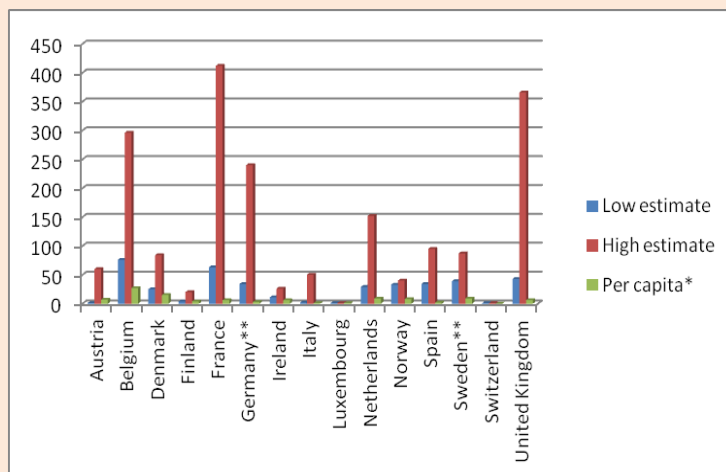
1.4.1 The case of Foreign Fighters and this risk of spreading from the “theatre of operations”

If we use the instruments outlined up to this point for the threat analysis we can immediately detect dangerous contradictions in Western prevention policies. Let us take the case of the Foreign Fighters as an example of these dangerous reversals of prospective.

Europe and the Western countries are rightly concerned by the phenomenon of European fighters in Syria, Iraq and other third countries. The numbers reported by various research centres are certainly shocking if compared with analogous conflicts in the past, such as Afghanistan, Iraq or Burma. The Foreign Policy Research Institute¹⁶ evaluates to this day between the 6.000 and 12.000 volunteers passing across the Syrian territory, coming from approximately seventy countries. London's King's College more cautiously gives their number as 8.500 units¹⁷. Among these there are about 2000 Europeans, a really significant number:

¹⁶ Foreign Policy Research Institute. ‘Foreign fighters in Syria and beyond.’ FPRI [symposium and webcast,] 23/10/2013 <http://www.fpri.org/multimedia/2013/10/foreign-fighters-syria-and-beyond> ; Sly, L. ‘Foreign extremists dominate Syria fight.’ The Washington Post, 2/10/2013. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/foreign-extremists-dominate-syria-fight/2013/10/01/5871685e-2ae7-11e3-b141-298f46539716_story.html ; IDC Herzliyah, Foreign Fighters involvement in Syria, Ms. J. Skidmore ,ICT, Winter 2014; Wong, K. ‘Foreign jihadists surpass Afghan-Soviet war, storm Syria in record numbers.’ The Washington Times, 10/10/2013. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/oct/20/foreign-jihadists-surpass-afghan-soviet-war-storm-/?page=all>

¹⁷ <http://icsr.info/2013/12/icsr-insight-11000-foreign-fighters-syria-steep-rise-among-western-Europeans/>



(Estimate Of Europeann Fighters in Syria at December 17th 2013. Source ICSR, elaboration Agenfor Media)

The phenomenon of foreign fighters escalated in 2014 parallel to the International Media campaign following the UN Resolution 2178.

In 2014 the estimated number of foreigners that are supposed to have joined Sunni militant organizations in the Syria/Iraq conflict raised dramatically, according to ICSR's latest news¹⁸, exceeding 20,000 -- of which nearly a fifth were residents or nationals of Western European countries.

Table 1: Western Europe

Country	Estimate	Per capita*
Austria	100-150	17
Belgium	440	40
Denmark	100-150	27
Finland	50-70	13
France	1,200	18
Germany	500-600	7.5
Ireland	30	7
Italy	80	1.5
Netherlands	200-250	14.5
Norway	60	12
Spain	50-100	2
Sweden	150-180	19
Switzerland	40	5
United Kingdom	500-600	9.5

Cecilia Malmström, the former European Commissioner of the DG Home Affairs, has also raised the alert: *“Often set on the path to radicalisation in Europe by extremist propaganda or by recruiters, Europeans travel abroad to train and to fight in combat zones, becoming yet more radicalised in the process. Armed with newly acquired combat skills, many of these European ‘foreign fighters’ could*

¹⁸ The figures were produced in collaboration with the Munich Security Conference and will be included in the Munich Security Report -- a new, annual digest on key developments in security and foreign policy.

*pose a threat to our security on their return from a conflict zone. In the longer term they could act as catalysts for terrorism. The phenomenon of foreign fighters is not a new one, but as fighting in Syria continues, the number of extremists travelling to take part in the conflict is rising. And as the number of European foreign fighters rises, so does the threat to our security.”*¹⁹ On this basis the Commission has implemented a multi-annual specific plan to face the phenomenon²⁰ and all governments, Western and Eastern, are working on the subject.

Through The UN resolution 2178 (2014), adopted unanimously during a meeting that heard from over 50 speakers, the UN Council condemned violent extremism and decided that Member States shall, consistent with international law, prevent the “*recruiting, organizing, transporting or equipping of individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning of, or participation in terrorist acts*”. In that context, the Council, through the resolution, decided that all States shall ensure that their legal systems provide for the prosecution, as serious criminal offences, of travel for terrorism or related training, as well as the financing or facilitation of such activities²¹.

This phenomenon²² raised a ripple of press information and soon the legal concept of “Foreign Terrorist Fighters”, that represented the basis of the UN Resolution 2178 (2014), was transformed into the more simple slogan of “Foreign Fighters”, without connotation. Using just the pick of the media, in various European laws have then been introduced legislations that attack fundamental rights to protect the national security such as the freedom of movement of persons, the confidentiality of the data or the same freedom to defend who is hit by unjust violence. In a number of Member States today individual can be arrested just because they want (intention) to travel to Syria, without specific evidences of terrorism involvement or crimes committed. Even intentions stolen via internet or through indiscriminate tapping are criminalized. Is this the right path? One of the results of this approach is that communities and families tend not to collaborate with the institutions and this represent a serious problem for prevention and investigative activities.

Yilmaz, a Dutch foreign fighter filmed during a military training exercise in Syria, said in an interview collected in 2013:

These brothers cover their faces purely for security reasons, they would love to show their faces and tell the world why they’re here and what they are doing, but if they would, it would have huge huge consequences back home, for exampla myself the police went to my house a couple of times, when they want to travel they get questioned, my sisters at schools people say “oh you’re brother’s this, you’re brother’s that..” so these people, they don’t want to look scary, they don’t want to terrorize people whatsoever, the only reason why

¹⁹ Brussels, 15.1.2014, COM(2013) 941 final

²⁰ <http://ec.Europe.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I084145>; http://Europe.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-18_en.htm ; http://Europe.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-18_en.htm

²¹ http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/SCR%202178_2014_EN.pdf

²² T. Atlas, “Foreign Fighters Flocking to Syria Stirs Terror Concerns” (2013). Europol, *Te-Sat 2013: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report*, 25 April 2013, <https://www.europol.Europe.eu/content/te-sat-2013-eu-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report>; Opstelten, “Letter of 13 March 2013 from the Minister of Security and Justice to the House of Representatives of the States General Containing a Summary of the March, 2013 Edition of the Terrorist Threat Assessment for the Netherlands (DTN32)”, National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism – Ministry of Security and Justice, 13 March 2013, <http://english.nctv.nl/publications-products/Terrorist-Threat-Assessment-Netherlands/index.aspx>; For he the UK <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/79a998e0-ab69-11e3-aad9-00144feab7de.html?siteedition=intl#axzz2wrwdMqMy>

they're covering their faces is because they love their families back home and they want them to live their lives in peace and they don't want any negative consequences upon the family, of them being here.

These alarms via the press are not useful either for understanding or for defining and countering the threat and may lead also to wrong political decisions and boomerang effects.

The fact that somebody goes to war zones cannot be considered a threat in itself. This form of indiscriminate criminalization of individual behaviour is a mistake. We must discriminate among different motivations and behaviour.

Firstly, we must reveal that it is not enough to sum up the numbers of young people who go to Syria, to deduce that this is a threat for national security of a determined European country or for Europe in general. Yilmaz again explain this point of view, that we have to consider in our analysis:

Do you have any inclination towards doing any source of attacks inside of Holland?

No. I came to Syria, for Syria only. I didn't come to Syria to learn how to make bombs and to go back. That's not the mentality we have. We came here basically, and I know It sounds harsh, but many of the brothers here including myself we came here to die, so us going back is not part of our perspective here, I mean it's a big sacrifice and there's a lot of work to be done, so why should I even think about Holland or Europe, it's a closed chapter for me.

Interviews with foreign fighters have been conducted also by France Culture during February 2014 and confirm our findings: "*Les jeunes Français contactés par France Culture "sont tous des djihadistes partis en Syrie pour mourir en martyr", explique Omar Ouahmane à France24.com. "Ils veulent sauver leur âme en mourant dans le Sham (le Levant) pour aller au paradis", ajoute-t-il. Wassim Nasr, journaliste à France 24 et spécialiste des mouvements djihadistes, précise que ces djihadistes français "sont tous sincères" : "Ce ne sont pas des psychopathes mais plutôt des idéalistes prêts à mourir pour leur cause." Les hommes contactés par France Culture "aiment la mort et ne s'imaginent pas revenir en France", explique Omar Ouahmane, alors que les autorités françaises craignent le retour dans l'hexagone des djihadistes de Syrie. Un des combattants français interviewé lâche même, hilare : "Nous, aujourd'hui, on a des papiers européens, moi si je veux je rentre en France et je fais tout péter !" "Ils ne reviendront pas", croit savoir Omar Ouahmane, mais s'ils le devaient, "ils s'imaginent à Paris avec leur kalachnikov, pas en passager lambda dans le RER".*"²³

The quantitative data is one of the factors to be considered to assess the threat but in some cases numbers may be manipulated just to advance political agendas. Numbers alone are not enough also because nobody can check it. On the contrary, the uncritical diffusion of this data, without qualitative evaluations, can contribute to throwing petrol on the fire of radicalisation because attracts more volunteers and radicals.

YILMAZ: To be honest I thought that was going to be one of the first questions you would ask me but, I was waiting for this question, what people should understand is that not everybody that comes from Europe or wherever they come from, be Asia, Europe or America, Canada it doesn't matter, it doesn't mean per definition that these people, automatically that as soon as

²³ France 24, 18-2-2014

they cross the border they are part of Al Qaeda; a lot of people think “he left his house because he’s radicalized, he left his house because he’s disturbed, he left his house because he’s emotional” ecc ecc... these are standard things that the media try to feed the people. One of these things that they’re trying to do is whoever comes to Syria as a foreigner is by definition Al-Qaeda, in my case there’s no such thing. The brothers of Al-Qaeda they’re here, they’re fighting, it’s known, everybody knows this, but me being in Syria fighting does not mean by definition that I’m part of Al-Qaeda.

I think the main goal of many of the people here, including the Syrians themselves is protecting and defending the innocent people of Syria. I mean it’s almost three years now and enough is enough, when is it going to end? When I speak to the people they smile, but at the same time they’re asking me “When is this going to end? Can we go back home?” So that being the first and the most important objective is that getting this people back home. Second of all, and also very important for most of the fighters here is Islamic Law: we want the world of Allah to be uppermost, we ourselves came from the West, we understand the system of the West, we’ve seen with our own eyes what the West is doing in crisis situations like this, we don’t want this anymore. An Islamic State, built upon Islamic principles, will always defend the rights of the innocents and of the people living in its borders, so this is what we want.

Usama Hasan is an other leader of the British salafi movement that experienced jihad al qittal in Afghanistan and contributed to recruit young fighters for different wars. Many of them are today returnees. Mr. Hasan offers us a quit complete picture of the different attitudes of returnees:

“ So what happened to the people you sent to Bosnia and Afghanistan when they came back,because few of them have been killed, but what happened to the others?”

“The people who went to Bosnia and Afghanistan to fight and then came back to Britain, followed a similar pattern to people who take part to armed causes in Jihads around the world, from around the Arab world for example, most of them came back and settle down, probably got married had children, found a carrier a job, probably being activists in Muslim groups, preaching and being involved there with mosques and Islamic centres etc; a small number of course were killed, a small number maybe got disillusion afterwards and left us in completely, and others became even more hardcore radical and became basically al-quaeda sympathizers or members and would radicalize the next generations, because what we’ve seen since 9/11 and the attack on Westerns on like 7/7 bombing in London 2005, for us I thought it would never happen because our generation we travelled thousands of miles to Afghanistan and Bosnia, someone to Syria, to fight Jihad, we were very clear in our minds that Britain was not a place of Jihad that’s what we grow up, went to school and university, had a job, we supported the local football team, I’m always been a passionate Arsenal fan, still am, London is where my favourite Arsenal football team play, it’s not a place of attack, so I honestly thought that all the British Muslim also the next generations would think like that, they would never even dream of attacking Britain, so the July the 7th bombing, that’s when there was a massive wake up call to realize that something has gone very very seriously wrong. That when me and some of my colleagues realized that some of the Salafi ideas that we had promoted, some of the extremist ideas... I think we did a lot of good work also, but we also promoted extremist ideas which led to very terrible evil, it was our duty to put that right; and by the way you could say well, for the last four years before 7/7 there were other

terrorist plots what about those? We actually naively believed the conspiracy theories around that, because we could actually deal with the fact that real British men who wanted to attack Britain or America, it was easier to say “oh no, it’s a conspiracy theory, the media is lying, the media is controlled by Jews and Christian and they are always lying about Muslims anyway, I don’t believe that, no one true Muslim would kill innocent people”. And even after 7/7 these conspiracies still circulated, they are still circulating now after the Woolwich killings, there are people including Muslim Universities students who have put on the internet that the Woolwich murders were a first flag of operation, it’s not real, it’s because the Islamic mind-set sees that as occult where you have a narrow blinkered view of the world and you can’t accept anything which comes from outside, so even when you’re confronted with direct evidence that the world is not as you’re saying it is, that all Muslims are good and pure and non-Muslims are bad and evil, then you have to reject facts as well, and conspiracy theories are a good way to reject those.”



YPG Recruitment campaign in Europe

Moreover the qualitative part of the analysis must consider that collaborating with resistance movements or fighting legitimately in a foreign country with which one feels a bond, is not necessarily a crime, a criminal act or a form of terrorism²⁴. It is certainly a form of radicalism that should be monitored and investigated, for the very good reasons mentioned by Usama Hasan, but it should not be hysterically criminalised, in a way that hides other prejudices and other dangers. Throughout history there are countless examples of volunteers or foreign fighters Muslims, Christians, Kurds, Jews, Ukrainians Russians, Irish and other types, both religious and national.



²⁴ Inside the project EURAD we have treated this subject extensively in a report available in <http://www.agenformedia.com/assets/files/Policy%20Paper%20Foreign%20Fighters%20GB%20IT%205.pdf>



We need to take into account that only rarely have these statistically represented a threat for the country of origin. There is not one piece of news of the Jewish Russian mergers in Israel in the movements of the 1930s were classified as a terrorist network (like Irgun), which then carried out attacks in Russia. Those young people left The Soviet Union because they wanted to reconstruct the Eretz Israel in Palestine and their motivation certainly did not take them back to The Soviet Union, where they had even lived terrible dramas and towards whom they would have had many motives, for revenge.



Johann Cosar the Swiss Sergeant leading the Syriac Forces in Syria and other volunteers in Qamashli

The same applies to European Christians, who today want to defend and protect Eastern Christians in the places of origin of the preaching of Jesus taking up arms with the militias of Sutoro or of the Majlis 'Askary of al-Hasakeh, in Syria or similar militias in the Ninive valley in Iraq. Or in large parts, the Kurds Germans, Swedish or Swiss, who want to build their own state between Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran fighting alongside a movement that is judged to be of terrorist nature (PKK-YPG), but that finally received the support of the EU parliament²⁵.

²⁵ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/document/P8_RC\(2015\)0240_EN.doc](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/document/P8_RC(2015)0240_EN.doc)



1. Brett, a Westerner who has joined the Iraqi Christian militia Dwekh Nawsha to fight against Islamic State militants, poses at the office of the Assyrian political party in Dohuk, northern Iraq February 13, 2015; 2. A foreign female fighter who has joined the Iraqi Christian militia Dwekh Nawsha to fight against Islamic State militants sits at the office of the Assyrian political party in Dohuk, northern Iraq February 13, 2015. The only foreign woman in Dwekh Nawsha's ranks said she had been inspired by the role of women in the lightly armed Kurdish YPG militia, but identified more closely with the "traditional" values of the Christian militia. 3. Scott Wolfe (front), a 30-year-old Westerner from the U.S., holds a gun as he walks in front of Kurdish fighters on the outskirts of Kirkuk, Iraq February 26, 2015. 4. Westerners who have joined the Iraqi Christian militia Dwekh Nawsha to fight against Islamic State militants, take a photograph together at the office of the Assyrian political party in Dohuk, northern Iraq February 13, 2015. 5. Scott, (C) a Westerner who has joined the Iraqi Christian militia Dwekh Nawsha to fight against Islamic State militants, carries his weapon at the office of the Assyrian political party in Dohuk, northern Iraq February 13, 2015. 7. Scott Wolfe, a 30-year-old Westerner from the U.S. who said he has joined the Kurdish peshmerga forces to fight against Islamic State militants, poses for a picture on the outskirts of Kirkuk, Iraq February 26, 2015

And what should we say of the young Ukrainians of the extreme right who depart from Italy, perhaps together with the neo-fascists of 'Casa Pound' or of the French mercenaries like Bresson, to enrol in the militia of Pravi Sektor? Or of the same pro-Russian Ukrainian immigrants and of the Serb Cetnic-veterans that enrol instead with the independence militias in Donetsk²⁶. Certainly these examples do not fill the pages of the newspapers and this then is determined by the nature of the theatre of war and by the logic of geopolitical alliances.

In January, former Marine Patrick Maxwell returned from Iraq after spending a few months fighting with a Kurdish militia against ISIS. Maxwell left the Marines in 2011 and worked odd jobs, including a stint as a security contactor in Afghanistan. Last fall, he was selling houses in Austin when he decided to go to Iraq. When the State Department and Special Forces spotted him with

²⁶ these movements have been identified by Agenfor in the report today available in summary form
http://www.agenformedia.com/assets/files/ITALIAN%20FOREIGN%20FIGHTERS%20IN%20UKRAINE_V5.pdf

Kurdish fighters, they urged militia commanders to keep him out of combat, so Maxwell left. When he arrived in New York with all of his gear, Maxwell expected to get arrested for fighting with the Kurdish peshmerga. But no one stopped him.

Maxwell is just the latest in a parade of Americans who volunteered to fight ISIS in Iraq and Syria. More than 100 Americans are currently fighting in Iraq, according to the New York Times, while just a handful of Americans are fighting in Syria. Included in the fight are many veterans like Maxwell, including 28-year-old Jordan Matson; Brian Wilson from Ohio; and Jeremy Woodard from Mississippi. Woodard served in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the CBS story, but now he, like his fellow vets, is on his own and without the backing of the U.S. government. This raises a big, murky question: Is it legal to go overseas and fight ISIS? *"The U.S. government only cares what direction you're shooting at and who you are shooting at,"* said Matthew VanDyke, founder of Sons of Liberty International, a nonprofit group that hires veterans to train Assyrian Christians to fight ISIS in Iraq. *"As long as you're shooting in the right direction, at bad guys, they don't really care."*

Why for Muslims should be different? If we are speaking about Muslims and determined countries of regional or imperial competition, on the contrary, the European and American research centres always make a distinction, the press is always attentive and fear is spread as an art form. But often the reality is different from the image mediated by the media.

Eric Harroun, who joined the Free Syrian Army but was accused of fighting Jabhat al-Nusra, an al Qaeda affiliated group. He was separated from his unit during a battle, and only linked up with al-Nusra fighters to get back to his unit. He never joined the group. Harroun was arrested in March 2013 after meeting with FBI agents when he returned to the U.S. He was charged with "conspiring to use a destructive device outside the United States," which carries the penalty of either death or life imprisonment. He was later charged with conspiring to support a foreign terrorist group, which carries a sentence of 15 years in prison if convicted. Harroun ended up pleading guilty to conspiracy to transfer arms as part of a plea deal and was sentenced to time served. He died in April 2014 of an overdose at his Arizona home.

All these stories wat to raise awareness on the complexity of motivations behind the phenomenon of foreign fighetrs. It may seems cynical but we have to recognize that if somebody fight, die or survive in Syria or somewhere else for a number of legitimate or illegitimate reasons, this is not something automatically connected to our domestic security, despite all spasmodic headlines in the news. The 'Foreign Fighters' exist on many latitudes but this is not a risk analysis. It is a verification. It is often enough that someone has a long beard and should mention religious problems in society or wants to fight against dictators or against governments allied of Western powers for an analyst to automatically set off a terrorism alarm in Europe. Too easy, too 'media based'.

The reasons for which a young European with radical ideas goes to Syria, Libya or Iraq and gets involved in a war situation are many and complex and even more complex are the motivations that bring him back home. Some decide to volunteer also following the glamour raised in the Western countries by international media regarding the violence, true or presumed at the same time, of a

number of regimes. Among the Syrian foreign fighters there are football players²⁷, former rappers²⁸, adventurers²⁹ and legionnaires, criminals, all mixed with idealists and freedom fighters³⁰. Often they vary over time: in a first phase, he may go for humanitarian reasons, but then, in a second moment, he decides to fight and this can represent either a turn towards terrorism and insurgency or a road towards abandonment of that self same radicalism.

1.4.2 ABU MUNTASIR TESTIMONY

Abu Muntasir was the forerunner of the foreign fighters movement in The U.K. in the eighties. He gave us an exceptional testimony from within, that may help to highlight the complexity of the internal dynamics of this process from a different perspective:

“Now, the problem is, at that time when I started about thirty years ago, there weren’t very many people to guide us, to advise us, but always more than enough people to admire us, encourage us. So I began a campaign to photocopy articles which I prepared at home or from magazines like al-Da’wa magazine, and then post it through letterboxes and all over the country. I used to drive and push the letterboxes, or go to mosques on Friday prayers and give out that photocopy stuff. Even stuff from Ahmed Deedat who wrote a lot of political stuff against Christians – and I would now say, and I still say, in quite a crass unsophisticated manner – very argumentative but, you know, he was impressive because we didn’t know much. People were of a low calibre in terms of knowledge expertise.

It carried on like that until the Afghan jihad took place, or the Soviet invasion.

So, I remember all these activities that were going on from the Muslims, against Hafizullah Amin at that time. Then Babrak Kamal came at the head of a Russian column of tanks, and so on. And we were incensed and upset because, by that time, Afghanis were coming to this country to talk about the atrocities being committed by the Russian troops. And we were also aware from a few news reports.

Yeah, I mean this is long – an Afghani gentleman here from Afghanistan and he was often going round giving talks through focuses and Islamic societies about the situation in Afghanistan. We were told about how the Russians had come, the communists were there, and they’re godless people. We were young Muslims, and naive and shallow in knowledge, and jumped to conclusions like ‘communist by definition means against god’. So, they are our

²⁷ An example is available in <http://www.euradinfo.eu/index.php?id=81> For the relation sport and jihadism please see also <http://www.euradinfo.eu/assets/files/POLICY%20PAPER%202013%20SPORT%20AND%20RADICALISATION.pdf>

²⁸ Please see the Interview with Deso Dogg in <http://www.euradinfo.eu/index.php?id=80>

²⁹ Two LA gang members are shown in a video distributed by MEMBRI, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/4170.htm> Credibility of this video is an open question...

³⁰ Good example of this tendency are Manuar Ali and the Sutoro forces, as described in our report.

natural enemies and, on top of that, they are also killing innocent defenceless people. And the atrocities were painted quite graphically to us.

So, we were enthusiast.We wanted to do stuff.So, then the Afghani input was there – “Look how they’re killing our people and they’re, you’re not doing anything about it.”

We said, “We can.”

Why shouldn’t we? Of course, leading up to that was the usual concern of going there, giving money and raising funds and donations for charitable purposes. Not fighting at all. It fell on me more or less to then find a way to go and discover how to be involved in the physical jihad al-qital. Fighting with the Soviet, sayf.

To cut a long story short, now, because there’s now many years in between, I had a person who took the shahada became a Muslim guy, an ex-BNP guy – actually a National Front – in those days we didn’t have BNP. So, a National Front guy – Yes, a rightist. A far-right guy who hated Muslims, especially Pakistanis, called them Pakis and ‘don’t want you in this country you smell’ and this kind of stuff. So, he – He used to go and have his meetings in the pub or whatever. He gave me his Mein Kampf actually, Hitler’s book.

Anyway, so he became a Muslim, then he went to Madina to study and, through him, I found a contact – because by that time he knew I was a fiery speaker and, you know, really going up and down doing lots of work to support Islam. Da’wa as well as jihad. So, he established a contact for me who happened to be Waliullah Gulam, who is the nephew of Sheikh Jamil al-Rahman, who was the leader of the Arab mujahidun. He is an Afghani from Kunar, in the province in south west of Afghanistan, bordering Pakistan mainly.

Waliullah Gulam was in Germany – he was based in Germany – but he was studying at the time with this English gentleman’s colleague, so he came to visit me at my mother’s house.

And then, from him, I got the contact for another person, called Imad Uddin Bakri, a Sudanese, a very large gentleman, capable. He was a veteran from the Afghan jihad.

So, Waliullah Gulam was my first contact, from Sheikh Jamil al-Rahman’s group, the name of which is Jama’at al-Da’wa ila al-Quran wa-l-Sunna. He gave us a contact in Holland to meet Imad Uddin Bakri. We went there, spent some time there, and I got the approval letter, called the taskiyya. So I could take that letter to Pakistan and they could trust me that I am a dependable, proper person, not somebody infiltrating.

That is how I got my clearance. I went to Pakistan to Peshawar, went to the camp, the contacts, everything from Holland, and so on. They took me on board, were very welcoming. And that’s how it led from there.

We went to Afghanistan across the border, training all sorts of –

How many foreigners were there?

At that time there were loads. Mostly, because I went to Arab camp, we had a lot of Arabs: Algerians, many came from France; we had Malaysians; from Maldives; Indonesians; some Pakistanis, of course. But many Arabs: Saudis, many of whom were just young boys, one of whom was just 17 whose dream in life was to be blown up, not to blow others up, but to be blown up. Things have changed now I think.

Anyway, they were genuine people, very warm, welcoming and genuine, in the sense that they were sincere in devotion. They believed – and I believed – that what we would do is an act of worship whether we were supporting the case of victory or not, obtaining victory or not, even if we spent 24 hours at the battlefield, because the hadith, the Prophetic narration says: “Man ja hadha fi sabil allah fu aqa naqa, wujibat al janna.” / “Whoever fights in the frontier, even for the short interval of the milking of the camel [pull twice the teat, that’s a second] for him, paradise becomes obligatory.”

So, for us it was a matter of worship. And we used to believe or understand these things were true because it was in our text. But the way of interpreting that and applying it needs to be modified with the aims and principles of the faith, something which was poorly understood in those days and probably not understood at all nowadays. So that’s how we did it, we went and we trained and then we got taken to the front line. We begged. Actually, I begged to be taken to the front line, because we spent so much money, our time is limited, I am working at the same time, I remember telling you, in one of the companies in Britain –

British Telecom.

BT. Yes, it was British Telecom in those days. It’s changed its name to BT now –

So you actually had a double life: on holidays you were mujahid and in the normal life you were a British Telecom employee?

Yes, and with full consent and full knowledge of them I used to go. My line manager would know when I was going, book my leave. I would take my annual leave and normal holidays: Christmas was a nice time to go you get extended leave –“

..... I went from college and university – King’s College, where we just came from today, gave talks, and talked about, you know, how we should go and fight, and the women or the sisters were wonderful and supporting as usual, out of the goodness of their heart. Many Muslims all over the country. In fact, most help was rendered to us from the non-salafi, non-Ahlul Hadith Muslims. We were not sectarian even in those days, although we shouted a lot about the saved set – seventy three groups in hellfire, seventy two in hellfire and one going to paradise – and we made all these things very prominent, the concepts, but we were not

vehement against another group. Like: “You are from Ikhwan, we won’t speak to you because you are deviant or these groups are so-and-so, they are heretical.” We weren’t like that. In those days we weren’t like that. It became like that later on. But we had a lot of support. Everybody admired us now for not just having the beard or being young people praying. It was more a case of, not just for da’wa: they’re actually fighting for the Muslims, they care for the umma –

So the community was supporting you?

Yes, very much. It was easy to go to mosque, and we did. I was involved in this enterprise, if you like, for fifteen-sixteen years, and we raised hundreds of thousands of pounds. People gave their jewellery. If it was not criminal or criminalised, people gave jewellery, money, cash and so on. On the spot, £40,000 was nothing for these people to give. We would also take – because we are from Britain – whatever available at that time that was technologically superior: night-vision binoculars or something. These kinds of things we would take with us and supply.

So, over the course of the years I sent hundreds of people myself –

Hundreds?

Yes, hundreds.

Many of them have been killed.

Yes, because it was not just to Afghanistan. Of course, it shifted to Kashmir, shifted to Burma, because of the Rohingya. So, I fought in the jungles of Burma because of the Rohingya problem. I went with the mujahidun based in the borders, in the camps of Bangladesh, unbeknown to the Bangladeshi government and police, obviously. And there is something unknown, some of the Bangladeshi soldiers, the border defence force, used to support us, without authority from higher up. There was support all the time from people because people are Muslims and they want to support the oppressed against the oppressors –

So you fought also in Kashmir and Burma. Okay, but the training was always in Afghanistan?

Yes. Training is always in Afghanistan again. A bit in Kashmir as well, in what’s the place we used to go to, where’s that place – Muzaffarabad. Very famous. Muzaffarabad was a big camp. Lashkar-e-Ta’iba was my group, Hafiz Saeed was the leader, still is. And by that time, also we had Bosnia and Chechnya come onto the scene. So I organised jihad to Bosnia as well, without going myself. And Chechnya. So I know people, personally, friends who have come to my talks, or you can say pupils or students who took me for a sheikh or a whatever, the courageous man who is not –

In Chechnya, one of the guys, he is writing the blog in the website in English, is somebody else I knew. Brothers have gone to Philippines, as well, and joined the Moral Liberation Front. So, because of my influence and my encouragement – I would say a lot to do with my influence in the early years – Muslims have gone from Britain not just to Afghanistan. But that was the seed and the base, the training place for all over the world.

I was always connected to Bosnia. We had an understanding at one time with some people in Britain that, if a young man wanted to go and fight, we'd facilitate it, but also partition the work up. So, I would take on, I mean, he would send, people wanting to go to Kashmir to me, and I would send people wanting to go to Chechnya or Bosnia to him.

So what was the process, you provided money? Political support? Connections?

Yes, connections. I would write a letter of authorisation, of taskiyya. I said, "Obviously, I know this brother. He is from England, he is a good lad, you know, he wants to go and fight. Make sure he does get to fight. After all, his time is limited, you know, they are coming from abroad."

So I'd facilitate by encouraging my personal link with Hafiz Saeed.

Abu Muntasir is not an isolated case, as Mr. Usama Hasan told us during his interview:

My name is [...] Hasan, I was born in Nairobi in Kenya, my parents are original from India and we all moved to Pakistan at the partition, from Kenya my parents came to London when I was just under five years old, so I grew up in London, and feel very much as a Londoner, as a British person. My parents are also from very devote Muslim families, of India, from Scholani families, specially from the [...] School of Delhi, so my father, grandfather, great grandfather and great great grandfather were all [...] scholars, so about my mom's father and ancestors also; so I had a very devote Muslim upbringing along with my four brothers and sisters in London, and what that meant to us, we'd recite the Quran daily, I went on to memorize the entire Quran between the age of 5 and 11, so while I was still in primary school in the finally I completed the memorization of the entire Quran in Arabic, we did of course our five times prayer, daily study of the Quran, fasting in Ramadan, Tarawih, extra prayers every night during Ramadan ecc.. /(..)

So from the age of thirteen I was regularly going to the classes, training sessions, karate, kick-boxing, martial arts as well, a lot of talk of Jihad in our study circles, also the them versus us, the umma, the Muslim nation being a first priority, the obligation to establish the khilafah, the caliphate, which we actually borrowed from Hizb ut-Tahrir, Salafi's tradition didn't told much about khilafah politics, but we listened to Hizb ut-Tahrir and their rhetoric sounded good, based on the same sources Quran and Sunnah, the scripture, you have to establish the caliphate just as you have to have a long beard and women have to cover up etcetera etcetera. So I dealt with two very different lives, one of them public school boy and university scientist and professional later but at the same time a radical community activist and in Imam, I started lead the prayers almost at the age of thirteen of fourteen actually, and

Friday prayers at the age of eighteen or nineteen, so I've already served as an Imam for over twenty-five years. I went to three of the top university in Britain: Cambridge, King's College London and Emperor College London and I served as President of the Islamic Society at all three also, and with our Salafi Group one of the things we did was we made connections via Holland and other places, Salafi groups in Holland and Denmark, we made connections with Pakistan and Afghanistan and we sent people over there to look at the Jihad that was going on, in 1990 I travelled to Afghanistan via Pakistan with two other leader of our group and spend a week with the Salafi Mujāhidīn in [...] eastern Afghanistan, training to use guns and things, spent day and night at the frontline so it was a brief taste of the Jihad against the Afghans Communist Forces, the soviet has just withdrawn the air before but for the Mujāhidīn the Jihad continue against the communists, regarding this non-believers, and that only ended with 1992 when the Mujahidin took Kabul and executed the President Najibullah. Now, I would involve this for a long time I was also very lucky to receive training in Quran and Hadith and learning Arabic, I translated several books from Arabic into English, especially Hadith and Quran, some of them have been read from tens of thousands of people; but I read very widely I had a wide interest in mathematic, literature, history etc, very western and very Muslim at the same time, there were a lot of contradictions within myself which I felt and I knew I had to normalize, especially when I was working in the British industry and acquiring leading professional experience. The things came to a head after 9/11 but before 9/11 our group sent dozens of fighters to Afghanistan and sent maybe a hundred to Bosnia in the mid-nineties, I myself wanted to go and fight in Bosnia but I never got the chance but I knew at least a dozen people personally of my friends who went to fight in Bosnia, one of them never came back, we was an Africarabian black convert to Islam from Britain who sacrificed his life he was killed in Bosnia and we regarded him as a Shahid, a martyr, a hero, who gave his life for the people of Bosnia. Now one wing of the Islamic movement of Jihadi of Afghanistan in Bosnia, later became Al-Qaeda, so because of our experience with Jihad etc, we had some sympathy unfortunately with Al-Qaeda, especially because of the anti-American and anti-Israeli rhetoric. Like most islamists, like all islamists we were all very anti-Israel and very anti-american because of Israel, it would be blamed the unequal conflict in the Palestinian problem on America, saying that one sided in the conflict and back Israel; unfortunately there was a lot of sympathy for Al-Qaeda, but after 9/11 where thousands of people were killed I'm sorry to say, I myself like thousands of Muslims around the world I celebrated the 9/11 attacks because we felt this was blowback for the evil West or for the Americans that we so hated at the time.

So you personally celebrated the 9/11 attacks?

Yes unfortunately, I am ashamed to admit that but it's true, in thousands did around the world: Pakistan, Nigeria, Palestine, Egypt. There were public demonstrations of celebrations of that. You see there were grievances from 1982 the Sabra and Shatila massacre in Beirut, which was carried out by Christians of the Phalange Militia, but the Israeli army was complicit, Ariel Sharon, the general who later became the president of Israel, would of course implicated by an Israeli court himself, as being partially responsible for the sabra Shatila Massacre of thousands of Palestinian woman and children an man, mainly Muslim ones. Of course in 1995 was the Srebrenica Massacre during the Bosniak war, 8,000

unarmed man a boys were gunned down and slaughtered by the Serbs soldiers. (...) that this was a global war against Muslims and the West, and the West America, Europe, did nothing to intervene in Palestine or Kashmir or even in Bosnia, but they're going to Iraq and Kuwait in 1991, because the Oil interests were staked there, so they waged war when it seemed convenient. The strong sense of grievance, 9/11 felt like a revenge, finally Muslims were not humiliated, were not subjugated, had actually hit back.

Foreign policy played a very important role in all the decisions and in the behaviour of the Salafi organizations in England?

The foreign policy arguments I've been hearing since the Seventies, and it was a very convenient argument of the Islamists to fit in into their narratives which was that this is a global war, perpetual war between Muslims and everybody else. There are verses of the Quran which we would reveal about conflict between Muslims and Jews and Christians, which says "Jews and Christian will never be happy with you until you follow their leads", we would play it directly to today's situation and say "look, this is proof the Quran is true and that the Western European and Americans are mainly Christians, they are allied to the Jews, Israeli's and others, they hate Muslims and they are against them. Other world event, which did not fit this narratives, such as the Iran-Iraq War, a very long and brutal war in which millions of people died, where Muslims killed each other, were actually conveniently ignored, we knew about the thing but it didn't fit our narratives so we didn't spend too much time on that, or we knew Muslims were persecuting Christians in Indonesia and Pakistan, in Egypt in Nigeria and other places, but we did pay attention to those we only focused on conflicts where Muslims were being harassed and attacked by non-Muslims so Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia; we knew about Burma, Eritrea, in Ethiopia, about Darfur, Zagreb, the Balkans in the eighties, we knew about the problem in the Balkans before the Bosnian War kicked off, we knew about Muslims in Greece, Bulgarian facing discriminations so the idea that Muslim were minorities and persecuted everywhere was a very strong narrative.

War experiences may result in more radicalisation for certain individuals and this may be a serious threat for our security. However the experience of war can also turn the former 'baddies' into new 'gooddies', because the war has the brutal capacity to destroy all false illusions.

Many ex-fighters returned from war contexts are today amongst the most fanatic enemies of Islam and Islamist in Europe. Others are pious quietists Muslims and work to counter radicalization and extremism. Others, like Bu Yasir, are still radicals and support violent theories but don't represent a real threat for our security, so far. There is then an other category, the so called professional freedom fighters, who decided to dedicated part of their life to 'save the world', like Sam an-Najjar, that we interviewed in 2014 in Ireland³¹.

³¹ Sam Najjar, *Soldier for a Summer*, Dublin, Hachette, 2013



Married with two children, Sadik Mohamed lives in the deprived El Príncipe district of Ceuta, an area believed by the Spanish authorities to be a recruiting ground for Al Qaeda groups fighting to topple the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. They say that at least nine young men from here and nearby neighborhoods have traveled to Syria to fight. Three of them, named only as Rachid, Piti and Tafo, died when they blew themselves up, killing and injuring dozens of people. The others have not returned. *"They go determined not to come back, and calmly tell their friends and families of their intention to sacrifice their lives,"* says a police analyst. Sadik Mohamed set off for Syria on April 29, 2013, saying goodbye to his family and promising to return soon.

In Morocco he took a flight from Casablanca to Istanbul, and from there to the border town of Hatay, then crossing from Turkey into Syria where he was taken by militants belonging to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) to a camp near the city of Al Atarib, some 30 kilometers from Aleppo. Three days after leaving Ceuta, Sadik Mohamed met with the men running the Al Atarib camp, who asked him where he came from, and required him to hand over his passport, clothes and cellphone, as well as money for the cost of his Kalashnikov. In return he was given a uniform and boots. *"They are stripped of anything that links them to their past: it makes them easier to handle and reduces the likelihood of them deserting,"* says a Spanish police source. Police say that he was then assigned to an ISIS unit made up of around 20 men. Over the course of the next 40 days, say police, Sadik Mohamed was put through intensive military training and religious indoctrination, and was kept under observation. His group allegedly included volunteers from France, Portugal and Germany, ISIS's policy being to avoid including more than one member from any European country. *"They don't really trust them. They even insert veteran Al Qaeda fighters posing as volunteers to keep an eye on them. As the training progresses, European volunteers are graded and classified according to their trustworthiness and fanaticism,"* says a police source. *"Volunteers are not really given much training, and it's very basic: how to assemble and use a Kalashnikov, read a map and handle a radio. These guys are basically cannon fodder being sent in to fight against conventional forces,"* says a senior member of the security forces.

Sadik Muhammad was among the fighters that on July 22, attacked the notorious high security Abu Ghraib jail - where US forces tortured dozens of suspects during the occupation of Iraq - by driving trucks loaded with high explosives and setting off car bombs that ripped holes in the prison's walls. Over the course of the 10-hour battle, dozens of terrorists armed with Kalashnikovs and supported by mortar fire then poured into the grounds and freed more than 500 prisoners being held there. They are stripped of anything that links them to their past so they will not desert". His experiences during the assault on Abu Ghraib, which left 23 Iraqi soldiers and several terrorists dead, changed his mind about continuing to fight for Al Qaeda. Sadik Mohamed is believed to have traveled to Iraq from Syria in a military truck, but says that he did not know he was to take part in the attack on Abu Ghraib. He returned to Aleppo, in Syria, unscathed, attributing his good fortune to God's protection. That said, it appears that Sadik Mohamed was able to leave the camp on a number of occasions, making his way to the town of Al Atarib, where he met up with other Spanish nationals

and Moroccans that had been assigned to other units, and who would share news about comrades who had been killed in action or who had taken part in suicide missions. During one of his visits to Al Atarib, Sadik Mohamed reportedly spoke to his wife and sister by telephone, who had already reported him missing to the authorities in Ceuta. Sadik Mohamed has reportedly told Spanish police that after coming under repeated pressure to take part in a suicide mission, he finally realized that he wanted to leave the camp and return to Spain. He apparently heard other volunteers talk of men who had been killed, unaware that they were driving a car bomb, which was set off by remote control or a timer. He is trying to paint himself as a victim who escaped in fear of his life" Once in an ISIS camp, escaping is no easy matter. The biggest problem that Sadik Mohamed faced in getting out of Syria was recovering his passport, which he had handed over to ISIS leaders. Arriving in Turkey without papers could land him in serious trouble, although his sister and wife had told him to go straight to the Spanish Embassy. Sadik Mohamed apparently told Spanish police that he knew where ISIS kept the passports of volunteers and was able to recover his. At the beginning of January, after a number of failed attempts, with the help of an unnamed friend he was able to make it from Al Atarib to the Turkish border, managing to hide among the hundreds of people making the crossing on foot, and then heading to Antioch, where he took a flight to Istanbul. According to Sadik Mohamed, his jihad was over. From there, he then flew to Málaga, where police detained him at the airport passport control. *"He had gotten rid of anything that could incriminate him; his phone didn't even have a SIM card,"* says a police source. *"This is the first time, as far as we know, that a Spanish national has returned home from Syria or Iraq after receiving military training and religious indoctrination,"* reads the court order requiring Sadik Mohamed to be held in prison ahead of his trial for belonging to a terrorist organization. *"It is a miracle that he made it out of there alive,"* says one police officer.

An other interesting case of repentant returnee is that of the Moroccan Rashid Lemlihi. IN an interview he explained why he decided to travel to Syria:

"I used to feel pain whenever I saw or heard about the suffering of the Syrian people. The news, satellite channels and internet websites carried such news day and night and depicted how they were being killed and displaced in their own country... Anyway, I travelled to Syria...to help..... :...I spoke with one of my neighbours who went there before me and encouraged me to go. I was in touch with him via Facebook and on the phone to co-ordinate and make the final arrangements before the start of journey. The journey started from Mohammed V Airport in Casablanca. They asked me about my destination, I said I was going to Turkey ... The plane landed and my Moroccan friend was waiting for me. He took me in a four-wheel drive vehicle to the Syria border..... When I arrived in Syria, I was taken to a living quarters which they call "guest house." It's in the form of three large housing buildings, each consisting of three large floors featuring large reception areas, fully equipped air-conditioned bedrooms, flat TVs, satellite internet, and all types of delicious foods and drinks. I was just amazed. I spent two months there. I then met many Moroccans. Each had chosen the group or faction he felt comfortable with and wanted to fight for... My friend was a member of ISIL... (...)which I didn't feel comfortable with. I had my own harsh criticisms on Twitter and Facebook of that group and its movements when I was still in Morocco. I felt that even Syrian citizens in the Aleppo countryside didn't feel comfortable

with the group and were not pleased with us...They are simple citizens who want to live in peace and security, away from the daily infighting of groups and factions in Syria. I was in real pain when I saw that

The discovery of the reality of the war become for Rashid an opportunity to reconsider his illusions:

I was afraid to die for a cause I no longer believed in. I thought I was wrong because I left my family and children and rushed to Syria where I was shocked with the daily infighting between people. I didn't cover all these distances to come and fight. I started to feel that my presence in Syria was a big mistake, and I had three options: stay until I die for a cause I no longer felt comfortable with or believed in; travel to Turkey or to another place where I would live alone until I died; or return and bear the consequences. Finally, after some thinking, I decided to return...I told myself that the Moroccan authorities wouldn't arrest us, but would only ask us some questions about the journey and its motives and then we would be released. However, I was arrested at the airport, and I was taken to prison pending trial.

Today Rashid has a different perspective: *"Don't run after illusions and don't believe videos in which Syrians appear calling for assistance and support." Militants use man's death as a recruiting tool for Syrian conflict. When I was there, many young people active on Facebook using aliases asked me about jihad and fighting in Syria. I told them: "Don't come. Stay in your country because I regretted coming in search of a mirage." There's nothing in Syria except factions and groups fighting each other. This type of fighting is not accepted by any mind or logic. These are the words of someone who lived the experience. Don't be deceived. Going to Syria is an adventure of unknown consequences. As to reward, there is none... The only reward there is death.*

The testimony of Abu Muntasir represents probably the most elaborated and valuable answer in the direction of repentance clearly showing that war experiences may be a road towards abandonment of that self same radicalism:

So that was the process. But then when you came back, things changed step by step.

Well, things began to change while you are there. Because my first misgivings, if I can say, happened when Hekmatyar – one of the current leaders, still a current leader of a large group of Hanafi Pashtun mujahidun – attacked. I remember there was more than a hundred of our mujahidun killed in the Kunar province. Here are Muslims, we came from all over the world to fight for the Muslims, whether we are salafi and talking about 'can you wriggle your finger or do rafa' raising your hands in prayers or not'. Yet we were not there to fight against Hanafis or – even Shia Sunni wasn't too much in our radar. So, when they attacked, we were puzzled. I didn't know what was going on, why? What? What we never had in our heart was to take part in Muslim and Muslim conflict, so when that happened – and that had

been before my involvement in Kashmir – I said, “Well, we are not going to be part of this anymore.”

Of course, during that time, when you go you are always being told about how you will conquer the world and jihad will spread – you know, everything, and people come, the camp came to me and said, “Oh Manwar, Abu Muntasir, you’re from England, are you going to go back and start jihad in Britain?”

“I mean, what are you talking about?” These ideas never occurred to us. I mean, Britain? So I was saying, “What the hell are you talking about?! We came to fight for Islam, God’s word to be high” and, “Why jihad? How is that? Jihad in Britain?”

You know? Kashmir, yes. Hindus are reportedly oppressing or killing; Palestine yes, Holy Land and look at Israeli idea; Britain? What are the British government, army, police doing to Muslims in Britain? Why there? We never could connect with it, ideologically, practically, politically. We had all of that, but that is where it started. There are people who want us to fight for the sake of just gaining power and control, ascendancy over other people in the name of Islam.

I saw and witnessed, of course, various groups. I actually made contact with people during the Rohingya, Burmese mujahidun in Lahore, because I woke up one morning thinking, “That language sounds familiar, I can half understand it.”

They were speaking Rohingya language. Because I was born in Chittagong in Bangladesh, I read, write and speak Bengali fluently even today. So, as I said, I can half understand. It was not Bengali, it’s not Urdu, it’s not Arabic, it sounds – what is it? So, I woke up and I discovered they are from Chittagong. They said they were from Chittagong, refugees, Rohingyas. And there are five more, there are ten more. My god, the camp is full of Rohingyas. What’s going on? And then they tell me – his name was Siagi something – and he told me, “Don’t you know what is happening in Rohyinga? And here is what the Burmese government is doing, blah blah blah.”

And we are saying we are fed up of Kashmir, Afghanistan (we had now shifted to Kashmir because of Muslim against Muslim fighting factor). So, we started then things changed. Then, you go to Kashmir and you witness other things. You witness the amount of, not corruption, but how Muslims are just being Muslims as they are, where they are, whether they are Sufi or a certain style of praying or –

Somehow, we somehow made big issues of tiny things in England, like the Puritans did in 17th century, you know, about what to wear and celebrate. Well, you go to Afghanistan and

Pakistan, and we find that Muslims are just being Muslims and we don't make an issue about that. Then we became idealistic, it became about supporting Muslims.

So, while I wouldn't speak to or go to a local mosque in Britain because they are not the right type, there I would go and find and maybe die – for the sake of God, of course – with people who are mostly not even interested remotely to be one of you, a salafi. 70% of the mujahidun in Kashmir were Hanafis, Hizb ul-Mujahidun. Most of the mujahidun were Afghani Muslim fighters, they were just refugees fighting, normal people. And not salafis, just normal Muslims. Hanafis, Sufis, sticking tight.

So, that was the realisation: what are we doing here? Are we trying to help them get rid of oppressors? Are we truly trying to make the word of God supreme? Because that is the definition of jihad: he who fights jihad fights to make the word of God supreme. It is not about valour or courage, it is not about booty, or gaining, occupying, or to show bravery. It is about making the word of God supreme.

Well, it's not happening in Afghanistan, what with Muslims fighting each other. It's not really happening in Kashmir. We are ending up being pawns in the hand of people because, clearly, even when we went to Afghanistan, we knew of the ISI and American involvement. That's the point I was trying to make to one of the colleagues in King's College that we just met: that we went and we fought, but we do so by ignoring certain things, because we are driven by passion and idealism. We want to fight for the cause of God – our hearts are sincere, people are suffering – why wouldn't we help them? I'm young, I'm energetic, I've got strength, I can do.

But why give up so much? Because, one, we are idealistic, two, because we did not know how to be fruitful, meaningful, or do things that are rewarding – where you are given the conditions around you. That's the change that happened over a really long period of time.

So, Kashmir we are upset. We are seeing most people are Hanafis, most people are just want to be left alone, want to get along without being told, "You don't pray like this, you pray like that instead. That praying is not good enough." Praying is a choice. Thirdly, there are a lot of Kashmiris who don't want to be free; they are quite happy to be with India. And fourthly, Pakistan actually has a hand in this. They are playing a game, you know, because they're coming along and – the Pakistani army used to give us covering fire. They set their artillery positions up, start firing shells, and we would go in undercover. They'd constantly deny of course. India's complaining away, Pakistan saying, "Oh no, we don't know anything, we're doing nothing, we have no camps." I'm sitting there, giving talks in Lahore in Muridke, I'm in Muzaffarabad with the Pakistan minister, we're standing on the platform with

Kalashnikovs, and the government is denying, saying there is none of us there. You know, utter lies.

We were part of a process of lying. Now, this is what the problem starts. As a Muslim who seeks salvation, forgiveness of God, paradise, life eternal and happiness and bliss, we are told – theoretically at least – be just be honest, be truthful, be charitable, all this kind of things. Even in those days, although as we aged we mellowed, we still had this understanding, our need to be sincere and kind and truthful and charitable.

But I'm lying. I am part of a process of lying, deceiving. You need to justify now, why you are allowed to lie, because of a greater good or avoiding greater harm. What is this greater good? We could never pinpoint it. And it is not as simple as saying, "Oh yes, I am bring from death." No. You're not. You're bringing in more harm. The real reason why – the local commander in Kashmir had to restrain me – maybe it wasn't very effective in some cases – because I, with my British mates, wanted to go and take on this Indian border outpost because we could see it. I could see them. I could see the Indian troops, and we are all the way from here, and I go back to BT again to work and sit there coding programs. I want to have a go at them. He said, "Oh you can't, you can't." So, I plotted with my local group and said, "In the depth of night, we gonna go off and kill those Indian troops come back," and you know. We were like that. But what stopped it? It stopped because local commander said, if you go and do that at the border, all that will happen is that the Indian army will come and take it out on the border villages, and poor, innocent villagers will suffer. What you wanna do that? But we were doing that any way.

So greater good is for what? We were not avoiding Muslims not getting killed. Even when we went in three days to go in inside Kashmir, plant a bomb or take out a jeep or a truck or what have you, mostly we were told we should target donkeys or mules, because a mule was about a hundred thousand rupees or something, you know, very expensive. Totally reliant, Indians were totally reliant upon the mules: you kill the mules and you disable the Indians. Better than killing ten Indian soldiers. But even if you did that, very remote, then still there was a backlash on the local Muslims.

So, what is this greater good, and avoiding what greater harm? Because there is a Pakistani involvement. There is global politics, so we are getting disillusioned. Then, we come back and we see the local phenomenon of young brothers. By that time Islam has spread and salafism has spread, a lot of stuff has gone on and people are naively being led up to believe that by fighting, joining a particular group, they have got almost like a paved road to

paradise or something. When all the corruption was there in leadership, which I saw in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, I understood why local Afghans would, you know, didn't take too kindly to the presence of Arab mujahidun. Because I saw with my own eyes on many occasions how the local Afghans were treated when the Arab mujahidun was with them. You know, being superior, looking down, ordering them about, having privileges for themselves. All of this we ignored, but – and there was a payback day, later on – this wasn't Islam. It is not Islam, that you punish them, that you exploit them, that you treat them badly or harshly, as second class or third class citizens. You're in their country as guests and you're there to fight for God.

I remember the fuss that was kicked up because one day we were in a camp and people were freezing to death. All I had was a salwar kameez, you know, the Pakistani baggy trousers. That is all I wore. I was freezing, there was snow outside. I was freezing cold. Our clothes got wet because our rucksacks were placed on the ground it was wet. I was shivering cold at night. So I went around tent to tent, about one in the morning, and I found some blanket lying around, so I took that blanket from there and used that to – it was not for me, it was for someone else in my tent because he was, like at night time, he would've caught pneumonia. The following morning the commander comes along and says, "Who stole that blanket?" Because apparently it was somebody else's blanket. It was an empty tent though! Fine, we shouldn't have stolen, blah, blah, but the punishment given was – the entire group was punished, the Arab leader and local Afghani mujahidun, the treatment was atrocious.

You know even for talking once – we had training showing us how to dismantle this machine gun the Ziko-EC, the anti-aircraft gun, and they were speaking in Afghani Arabic stuff, and so I was translating to the other British guy. He understood even less Arabic than me. So, my Arabic was poor, and still is not very good, but I could half understand. I was telling him in English, but the punishment? Do press ups, and made me do twenty press ups as well. Now why? Not that I can't do it, but why? If we need to instructions, we need translating.

Now that kind of merciless pitiless disciplining went on, all the time, in the camp. Somebody smoke, make him stand up in the camp and humiliate him for half a day, make him stand under a tree. And why? Because he smokes and smoking is haram. A young lad of 16. You know, this kind of things went on.

Anyway, so those things were on your mind: the politics of it, the reality of the Muslims. All of these things. And by the time Burma happened, it's like you're already disillusioned. What is it for? Fi sabil Allah – in the way of god, to do what? Let Pakistan have Kashmir? Help

Americans against Russians? So that Muslims can fight Muslims? So there can be backlash upon Muslims in the name of jihad?

Jihad is not, to all practical purposes, achieving anything. It didn't achieve anything anywhere. More misery, more death, more harm. We go to Burma: the reason I left Burma was not because of Terrorism Law 2000, not because I suddenly become an angel or love all people. I left Burma because the same thing began to happen there. So that when this time round, all over the paper, the Rohingyas, the mujahidun – Facebook was full of these comments, I couldn't be bothered. It's not cynicism, it's just impractical. You know? What you want to do? Just to go and fight there? Because they don't know how to sort their own problems out. Because I went to the camps there in the jungles, and there were all the platoon commanders lined up and they took special notice of me – and it was just me on this occasion – and I said don't take my picture, because of back home and security and I don't wanna get in trouble, and they were video recording everything and so on. They had just come back from a fight, and they had fought a rival Muslim organisation. I say, "You have been born brought up in the jungle, for God's sake." There 12-13 year old kids coming to me with grenade launchers and guns and everything – 13 year olds – and telling me, "Oh, you're from England take me back with you, I want to go to school."

They are young people they have never seen any life except to be born in the camp, in deprivation, in squalor, and being taught to fight and kill. They were only 15-16 year olds, killing each other. The commander of whom we supported, and we supported the commander because they are the ones leading the fight and they need special support more than just grassroots people. We sent hundreds of thousands of pounds that we raised. We carted him around from Newcastle, all over the North, South, mosques. Rohingya mujahidun commanders and stuff. It was the same with the Bosnian, you know, Abu 'Abdul 'Aziz, same thing we did here. Hafiz Saeed came to England with me as well, went on hadith conference.

We do all these things and we see all their sons and daughters privileged. So this commander in Burma, his son is going to Malaysian university, we're sending ten thousand pounds, and they're just having happy lifestyle, they have houses in Takka or Chittagong or someplace, or Kuala Lumpur and the Jaba – young boys, and they come back and they look at me. I remember, the commander looked at me, eye to eye contact we made, and I put my eyes down, and he said, "Our enemy is –" and then mentioned the rival Muslim group. The rival group I know, as well, who they are because they were my first contact in Pakistan.

I said, "Is this what I'm here for? Is this what jihad has become all about?" It turned from one thing to another by the time we went to Kashmir and, now we are in Burma. Look at what

has happened. There was a Scottish Muslim brother who had arranged to – was sent to Malaysia to bring weaponry and mortars and shells and stuff like that and he couldn't. Then we tried to arrange an air drop from Malaysia, because some of the Malaysian army some of them were supporting, when a ship load of arms come from Pakistan. The Pakistani army actually sent it to Bangladesh, smuggling in arms for the Burmese mujahidun, either people are trying. But then some storm came up and it blew off course and blah dee blah.

But we are saying, it is the same thing in Bangladesh now, Muslims are trying to fight Muslims. Our commanders were sitting around, not doing anything. They are having a cushy life, young boys who want to have normal life, they want to be left alone and be able to go back to their villages and cultivate, or college, university, and we are coming and contributing to the mess, playing the game for our personal satisfaction of worshiping God. Do you not know how to worship God where you live? That is the question.

Yes, it is heartbreaking to see dead people, and dead people die in horrible violence, but why isn't it heartbreaking to see that happen to a human being? Why only if it is to an Israeli or a Serbian or a Russian soldier, that we – sorry the other way around. Why only if it happens to a Muslim? Why isn't it if it happens to a Jewish boy or a Serbian or a Russian soldier? This contradiction we couldn't tolerate any more. Islam never taught that we can quote and talk about Prophet Mohammed (PBUH, aleyhi salat wa salam) you know taking part in 55 combats, 20-19 expeditions and jihads and what have you, qital. He was never with a heart like that. At least, that's not what I get from studying the Quran or the hadith or the sira, shari'a. This is not how it was, that a man or a woman or a person should feel happiness and elation at death or misery or hurt or harm of other people.

Is that what God loves? So He created us to hate each other? He made us to be how we are and gave the Prophet Mohammed and the Companions, who fought and died and suffered and sacrificed so we can become people who are enemies of humanity, who want power through it, who want to rule? Why? Who cares who rules as long as there is justice? And I felt, scholars have said similar things.

So, it's a process. You see corruption. You see the need of people. You see how detached from reality – then you see all the other factors, the esoteric factors I call them. The most significant thing that needs to happen in the lives of people – I think what happened to me, so I can only recommend it – is Muslims who are agitated and hurt by the conditions of Muslims in the world, because of propaganda or direct information, need to read more. That is all that happened to me. Think and read more. Other books, read your enemy's stuff, consider your

enemy's position, think about the enemy's mother who has lost the soldier, their son, like this. And you begin to understand –

A similar story stemmed from the interview with Hasan, an other former fighter from Afghanistan:

So when did you change your approach and decided to abandon the Salafi path, and why?

I'm not really an ex-Salafi I'm a post-Salafi, somebody who grown in the hope which children developed from Salafi roots, too much wider and deeper understanding of Islam. For me it's been a gradual journey in and out, but then many points along intellectually and socially personally, so for example one of the question marks in my mind about Islamism was, in 1992 when the Mujahidin defeated the communists in Afghanistan, the next step was in our vision, that Afghanistan was going to be an Islamic state, there would be peace and everything would be perfect there because they would establish Islam, eventually expand and unite with Pakistan and Iran and other country and eventually spread the Islamic State around the world, which would became the Caliphate; of course what happened was you had a gracious civil war, all the great Mujahidin leaders Hekmatyar, Rabbani, sayyaf and all this people fought each other viciously and Hekmatyar forces shell Kabul more than the Soviets ever did for example, and we felt very let down and disappointed and betrayed by what the Mujahidin groups did in Afghanistan, until the '96 of course when the Taliban came and disarmed them, and that's why so many Islamist have "loved" Talibans because they supposedly set up an Islamic State. I was aware of critics of political Islam for the first time, so for example "the failure of political Islam" by Olivier Roy, that famous book, and other writings, for the first time I saw that there were devout Muslims who critic political Islam, in the Seventies and Eighties was going to become the default because all the active groups were Islamist, it was very easy to think that all Muslims are Islamist because there's no alternative, when I started hearing different alternatives and of course I have a strong intellectual curiosity you know I studied mathematics and physics, philosophy and all this things in Western Universities, I did my own thinking I did a lot of reading I was very blessed to have access to the Quran, Hadith and I saw that Salafism have a narrow opinions of everything, including politics, and in the Islamic traditions about forty centuries of very wide discourse, on almost every single issue even on a simple issue like beer and wine, there are differences of opinions on everything, so you know small group of early Salafi scholars said the only wine which is forbidden is date wine and grape wine for example, and they said beer it's from barley, it's not haram, it's a minority view but it was there the fact that the Islamic tradition had an openness which allowed you to explore different views. For me that's very intellectually satisfying and then of course the mysticism and the Sufism properly understood is very spiritually satisfying where is the Islamist groups often have so much anger and revenge and harshness, many people burn out and the Prophet talked about that phenomenon, they burn out and they leave, so many people do that also and I felt also not spiritually satisfied by the very narrow and superficial messages of Salafism, but also graduating after University, I spent eight years at top British University between 1989 to 1997 and during that time I had very few non-Muslim friends unfortunately, even though in the school before that I had Jewish and Christian friends many Jewish friends, because I

went to top private schools which were attended by more Jewish students, it was the first time where I actually met a lot of Jews and had friendships at school, but at the University I couldn't deal with the mixed culture, I didn't know how to talk to women, all the partying that people did, the alcohol and this and that... so for me and many thousand of Muslims students still do that in the Universities of the West, is to remain only in the Islamic society, gender segregated so again you're concentrated on the prayer and worship and on preaching, the only relationship with non-Muslim was that in lectures when you're studying together or when you try to preach them, to convert them to Islam, when I got a professional job in British industry, I worked in professional industry for eight years, I worked around the country I saw Britain outside London for the first time, the countryside, the very different influences there, and then I realized, the Islamic hate we were taught that all Muslim appearing good and all non-Muslims are bad and evil was just clearly nonsense because of course by this time many Muslims are corrupt and many non-Muslim are clearly very good and nice and ethical and wonderful people, and so this kind of personal relationships really helped change my thinking, I also got married in 1995 we've been married for 18 years now, she's a British Muslim like myself, she is from a leading Jamaat Islami family, my father in law is one of the leaders still of the Jamaat Islami in Pakistan, but he is perhaps the most enlightened member of Jamaat Islami actually, so my wife was from a Muslim Brotherhood Jamaat Islami background and ironically she was more liberal and more balanced then I was in her approach to Islam, so for example she listens to music and watches a lot of music and this and that, you know as a Salafi I never listened to music until I the last five years, only five years ago I started listening to music because I was brought to believe that I was Haram and wrong and evil, that's the Salafi approach on this; I forced my wife, and I'm sorry to say, to give up to music, to not watch too much television, to wear the Abaya, she still wear the scarf, but she never wear the Abaya but the Salafists insist on that, and I forced her to wear it for many years which she didn't like but she didn't feel capable of resisting me or my family because she moved to live with me and not the other way around, now over the years and the interaction with her family, her sisters cousins this and that taught me a lot of things and listening to her father which has a different view of Islam, having Sufi friends, meeting Sufi Sheiks, reading, all of this helped change my thinking, but especially after 9/11, my first hadith as an adult was immediately after 9/11, I was there for the first hedge in Mecca, it was a very emotional hedge because the war in Afghanistan had started, but I believe that my spiritual Journey taught me a lot and I realized by this time that our messages of hate and anger were wrong and every chapter of the Quran begins with the name of mercy of God and the famous Hadith tradition, the Hadith says that God says **"my mercy overcomes my anger"**, Ibn Arabi the great Sufi mysticarium from Andalucia, he comments on that Hadith over and over again to say that the basic principles of God is mercy, is compassion, is generosity, is love, is forgiveness, and I realized all those things were true, and all this terrorism was so evil and so wrong, the Bali bombing, the Madrid train bombings then the Beslan massacre, in Cecenia, and by this time I had two young children also, which affects you powerfully being a parent looking after them, and it was the many "non-Muslim" doctors at hospital who saved my wife's wife and my children's lives, because my four children were all born by caesarean section, all emergency caesarean, and my wife could have easily died in all those pregnancies and same thing to

my children, and it was the lovely doctors and nurses of all faiths and backgrounds and nationalities in Britain, with a free healthcare service who saved my family and looked after them and I realized all of these benefits we had in Britain like free healthcare, I spend eight years at university, paid by the government, no fees whatsoever, I spent a year teaching in Pakistan also in 2003, I saw so much corruption there.

The interviews collected with formers in 2013-2014 prove that what counts, at the end of the evaluation using traditional anti-terrorist instruments (which however remain a partial instrument for fighting these phenomena, as we will see later), is what that young person really did in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan or somewhere else and how this experience affects his life when he comes back to Europe. Even looking at European counter insurgency it is very important to understand (and therefore we are on a more refined level of analysis) what the objectives of his group of origin are and how these can be grafted eventually with the many indigenous grievances of identity. If this young person is stigmatised as a terrorist (disincentive) by the hasty politics of the media or the LEAs or glorified (incentive) as a hero from his own community of origin for brutal acts and the committing of crimes, certainly this will have helped that young person to take real steps toward terrorism, violence, insurgency and other forms of crime, seeing as at this point he will have an important network at his disposition to make extreme choices. The famous ticking bomb. This is probably what makes the difference in the evaluations of various types of behaviour: when we are speaking about Muslims everything comes back to al-Qa'idah, which is an effective global terrorist threat, but a profile substantially different from that of radical movements, even if they are profoundly anti-Western in some cases, and also substantially different with respect to what is generally intended by terrorism.

The serious problem of these analyses is that they are not examined in context, seeing as they do not conceive the nature of the threat and are therefore unable to make an evaluation of the risk. As we will now see, the threat is not represented by a single phenomenon like terrorism, for which there is a specific agency (anti-terrorism, for example) that must give an answer. Rather nature of the threat is complex and subsequently requires a complex response.

To evaluate the effective weight of factors in the field, we must ask the question: why would a young Swiss man of Syrian origin who enrolls in the Sutoro (Christian police of Qamishli, Siria) not be considered a terrorist threat for Europe, while a young Syrian with British nationality who enrolls with Jysh al-Hurr in Aleppo is considered a threat in Manchester?

1.4.3 WAR SPACE

But unfortunately there is worse. The threat is never a generic fact, but rather a specific event, defined and temporarily delimited, with borders and clear connections, based on reliable data and reasoned origins from different sources. Recently the Israeli centre ITIC³² published a report relative to Arab foreign fighters in Syria. The Israeli research experts placed Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and

³² ITIC, The Phenomenon of Foreign Fighters from the Arab World in the Syrian Civil War, Most of Them Fighting in the Ranks of Organizations Affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Global Jihad, May 2014 in <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20646>

Gulf countries on alert regarding this threat. An easy prediction. But our Israeli colleagues did not detect the contradiction in their own data. The most part of Arab foreign fighters come from North Africa, from countries like Tunisia, Morocco and Libya. How come as never before the level of alarm for these countries is lower with respect to for example Egypt or Saudi Arabia if in the first countries the number of fighters is higher? Why should a Libyan or a Moroccan go and fight the “Kuffar” in Syria? Was there not enough conflict at home? ITIC does not tell us, but it is easy to suspect that the uprising campaign that has also involved regional and international powers against the bloody and sectarian regime of al-Asad is not irrelevant in the choice of many young radicals.

If the war spreads the theatre of operations spreads too.

Analogously EUROPOL asks³³ why Syria has become the destination for many European fighters rather than countries such as Afghanistan, Mali, Somalia or Yemen. The answer that Europol gives is not convincing. It is believed that the Turkish-Syrian border accessibility is one factor why more European volunteers travelled to Syria. Simple but unrealistic. In reality, we know that some fighters who go from Europe also via complex paths, passing through many European states (for example, Portugal) via Africa and then into Syria, with the aim of not leaving traces of their movements. Others go into Syria from Mali, from Pakistan or from Yemen, for example. These contradictions in the analyses, even the most well considered, are an important point in our study: the extended nature of the concept of ‘theatre of operations’ the international dimension of the conflict is to do with the politics of the single states, the factor SR.

The Orientalistic approach enables us to understand this crucial passage to define the profile and the nature of the threat.

In traditional Islamic culture the war space is clearly defined with respect to that of peace. The concepts of ‘dar al-Islam’ and ‘dar al-Harb’ were in force in the Shariah and in the fiqh, which are parallel to the Western term ‘theatre of war’.³⁴ In traditional Islamic culture, military or legitimate jihadist activity could be exercised only inside specific institutional rules (defensive nature of the act, political legitimization of the Imam, principle of Fard Kifayyah, etc.). In these spaces laws and distinct behaviour were in force that protected overall the civilians and imposed rules of art necessary in war.

The 1900s is the century that signalled the end of these rules, with the emergence of globalisation and the division between power and political decision making.³⁵ When a Predator, a Reaper or a drone can hit terrorists in any place in the world controlled by an operator in Syracuse, New York, what is the theatre of war? But these are only exceptional cases. There are more subtle operations of subversion, of the Arab Spring, of Ukraine, where an interconnected world of unlimited virtual spaces, financial fluxes without any democratic control an opaque media on a world level, extend all concepts of ‘theatre of war’- ‘dar al-Harb’.

This is the reason that Syria is today for many young Europeans of Muslim faith more attractive than Yemen, for example. To be attractive a ‘theatre of operations’ must involve a broad scenario at least on a regional basis in terms of territorial borders, but also on a global scale in the virtual space where

³³ TE-SAT 2014, European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2014, in https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/europol_tsat14_web.pdf

³⁴ U.S. Department of Defence, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, U.S. States Govt. Joint Publications 1-02, Washington, Dept. Of Defence, 2001

³⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernità Liquida*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2002

media and politics of the empires of communication operate. The competitive meeting is perceived between nations, regional poker players and global empires. They certainly fight in territories, where fighters die and civilians remain trapped, but overall in an intangible space of financial fluxes and in the virtual space which is communication, Media and geopolitics. It is the politics of the states and the complex interconnected system between regional and international strategies in global virtual and physical spaces that makes Syria or Iraq more attractive than other places. It is the self same blood, copious and red. Violence and radicalisation, too. But what makes the difference is the perception of the extension of the theatre.

It is a classical scenario where a series of factors of competitive systems cross, the drivers of which can be expressed in forms of incentives and disincentives represented by the financial resources of the Gulf countries (competition between regional poker players like Iran, Turkey, Israel and Saudi Arabia), by Western interference and the contrast with the emerging powers of Russia and China, by the presence of enormous aid incentives to co-operation, by geography of the energy infrastructure or primary materials and, finally, by the media coverage (the virtual theatre that offers the global dimension sought by movements of this type). This is the reason why some deaths are less important than others, while the Bahraini blood is not interesting for the media and so on.

Within this extension of the theatre of operations the great risk for European security is hidden, the real risk. If it becomes legitimate to kill women and children at a wedding in Pakistan pushing a button from the seat in the 432nd Wing of the U.S. Air Force from the Creech Air Force Base, of Indian Spring, Nevada in order to eliminate terrorists, the risk is that Europe too becomes a theatre of war. If we violate our own cardinal principles of constitutional and political legitimacy to prevent terrorism, then it becomes difficult to contrast radical narrative with democratic principles. The politics of states, like the narratives and media communication too, together with geo-political strategies of the regional and international players become magnets for radicals, creating a vicious circle. It is understood that these alarming analyses (the newspaper titles) partial and binary (not to say mistaken) become part of the competitive system themselves at the time they enter into the politico-media circuit (and circle).

Therefore a dynamic analysis of risk attempts to identify the threat profile and that which is important to give a considered weight to the various factors of “radical dynamic proportion”.

I.5 Religion between Power and Radicalism

The principle question is effectively simple: what should we do so that Islamic or Islamist radicalism is channelled into the institutional ambit and not transformed into terrorism and uprising?

Firstly, we need to understand that religious radicalism is a phenomena that has its own peculiarities, even if it fits into the overview of the phenomenon of more general radicalism. Religion has a universal character, like the theatre of operations assumes an increasingly universal character in the global society. This is profoundly different from the case of a fight for independence, like that of the Tamil Tigers or of Ireland. God does not allow borders.

The peculiarity of this phenomenon must be precisely identified in the ambit of a specific context that has its own historical profile which represents the basis of political legitimacy.

- What is to be understood as “Radical”, “Violent Radical” or “Terrorist” among the different Islamic-inspired groups in Europe and within the current debate? How can we connote and differentiate between the majority Muslim European communities?;
- To what extent may other Islamic narratives of the ‘Islamic camp’, prevent phenomena of terrorism or uprisings, that is to say activate collective or individual ‘come-back’ mechanisms (repentance) in the dynamic process of radicalization?;
- Who are the characters, the milestones, the semantics and the stakeholders of this potential alternative to ‘terrorist ideology’ and to what extent can they support, strengthen and re-align EU-Muslim communities to better represent the Islamic community as a whole and reject dangerous forms of radicalization leading to terrorism?

Firstly, we have to admit that religious belief and even some forms of religious zeal cannot be considered as danger signals, as Rand Europe correctly points out in one of his recent prison surveys. The American-Jewish analyst, Josh Lefkowitz, in the wake of studies of Hamm, writes: *“But overwhelmingly, individuals convert to Islam in a quest to add meaning and direction to their lives. Disillusioned with mainstream society, these disaffected individuals are attracted to the sense of community and purpose that Islam offers. As Alain Grignard, a senior official in the anti-terrorism division of the Belgian police, has commented, converts ‘are people searching... for a sense of solidarity’. And, as a chaplain at Folsom Prison in California explained, the results are often quite positive: ‘You can see the difference almost immediately. You see the difference in their behaviour, in their tolerance to others...The recidivism rate for true conversions is 15 percent, compared to 70 percent for the general population.”*³⁶

This quote brings us to what sociology, politics and security experts have known for a long time. Religious belief can provide stability and a sense of responsibility to people who find themselves in critical situations. In some way, therefore, the same religious roots are like radicalism: they can supply stability or can, on the contrary, become a factor of struggle.

Religion can also function well as a source of inspiration for values expressed in public, in politics, indeed, and this may in no way be associated with forms of radicalisation, perhaps only because it contradicts the secular parameters that are dominant in many Western countries. Sincerely, it is difficult to understand why the term ‘islamiyyun’ (Islamist), that is Muslims that are inspired by the Koran and by their faith in their own political actions, must be associated with danger, while perhaps the term ‘Christian-Democrat’, that is the activists of the political movement inspired by the Gospels, reflects moderation. In both cases religion is the factor of inspiration of the political actions in the public domain, in both cases the scenario is on a world level, the ‘Ummah’ or ‘Humanity’, and the two profiles must be respected in the same way, without discrimination.

³⁶ Josh Lefkowitz, *Terrorists Behind Bars*, Terror Watch-The NEFA Foundation, May 5, 2008

I.5.1 The Religious Paradigm

Very often we believe that the role of an advanced society is, as Daniel Pipe writes, to “protect Muslims while rooting out Islamists”. But this is a prejudice of a political nature, absolutely unfounded if measured on the level of freedom of ideas and of beliefs. A Muslim can also practise politics, obviously, and be inspired by his faith in his actions, like anyone else, Daniel Pipe included. There are tens of Jewish movements in Israel and the surrounding area of a Jewish nature in the state of Israel and very similar to those under discussion of the role of the Shariah in countries with Muslim majorities. Why can we accept that the discussion around Judaism as the basis of the state of Israel can be carried out without the nightmare of the ‘T’ factor, terrorism, while any discussion of an Islamic nature of the establishment in a country of Muslim origin always implies the launch of themes of security? In reality, the two things are not very different from the prejudice that accompanies the debates on the Christian roots of Europe, where the call to religion is always associated with obscurantism. The result is that in Europe today, ethical themes are becoming a battlefield too for many religious radicals and extreme secularists. All this because we are operating with prejudices.

In the great monotheistic religions, based on revelations and prophets, man installs a relationship with god based on the word, the logos, which is the medium between eternal truth and our hearts. The Torah, the Gospels and the Bible like the Koran too are the visible manifestations of the truth of history for believers. Conforming to these revelations (*tanzih* or *wahy* according to the model of revelation), to the history of the prophet (*sirah*), and that which the prophet and his companions said (*Ahadith*) and what is collected in that doctrinal body that goes under the name *sunnah*, is the objective of the faithful who believe and fear god (*al-Mumin*). The Islamic tradition its fundamental pillars (*Fusul al-Islam*), a complexity of rites (*Ibadat*), moral norms and codes (*fiqh*, literally law) that go under the name *Shariah* have been built on these presumptions. Inside this concept, which in its linguistic root recalls the idea of the path to be followed (from the root of *shara3*), is at the same time an echo of the norms, of moral prescriptions (*Akhlaq*), but also “*the expression, over time, of individual and collective faith for the conscience that tries to get close to the source which is God*”³⁷. The Shariah was used in all possible ways in the various reformist and traditional currents. From here the ambiguity that is hidden in establishment calls, also recently, in many Arab countries, also as the suspect wraps up every attempt to activate identitary reforms in Western Muslim communities. The Shariah may be interpreted as a rigid law, according to consolidated methods in traditional schools of thought or in reformist Salafism in a literary way. But it may also be an instrument of profound renewal, as happened in the Sufi movement or in many Islamist phenomena, starting from the Shiite, much more flexible and permeable than the Sunni ones. Ramadan, one of the most illuminating Islamists of contemporary Europe, wrote: “*renewal is not the modification of the source, but a transformation of the thought and of the eyes that read that are effectively and naturally influenced by new social political and scientific environments, in which we live. A new context changes the horizon of the text, it renews it and gives it an original theme that offers answers never before imagined*”³⁸.

³⁷ Tariq Ramadan, *L'Islam in Occidente. La costruzione di una nuova identità musulmana*, Milano, Rizzoli, 2003, pag 50

³⁸ Tariq Ramadan, op. cit., pg. 58. Text freely translated into English from the Italian version

These two poles of the mythology of the Shariah are essential to understanding the two faces of Islam, religion of government and struggle. Two absolutely legitimate faces. And they are also fundamental in understanding how to assign specific values to the various radical narratives, distinguishing the terrorists from the reformists; that is that which is legitimate, for us what might seem right, from that which instead is dangerous, even if perhaps it is close to us. Legitimacy, danger, radicalisation or terrorism: we will see now how these elements combine inside larger paradigms.

It is, however, very important to understand that in societies with Muslim majorities, similar to Muslim communities in the West where they are minorities, the problem of the conjunction of faith with the daily and the political is very real and present, also when the communities or the state becomes secular. In fact, this Islamic tradition has given life not only to laws, codes and practices of faith, but also to a symbolic, expressive, linguistic and behavioural universe, strongly connected with the social structure of the various countries where Islam has become the majority faith or has however assumed an important role. This makes religion a ‘secular’ phenomenon in some way. It breaks the barrier between that which is ‘sacred’, in a communal sense, from that which is ‘profane’, intended only in its negative form ‘not sacred’. Intended in this sense, the religious phenomenon remains profoundly ingrained in the identity character of the minority Muslims in the West. It is what Davutoglu, in the wake of phenomenology logic of the school of Van der Leeuw, has defined as “The Islamic Paradigm”. Davutoglu defines aspect of paradigmatic Muslim phenomenology in its uprising like this: *“From a hermeneutical perspective, the first impact of the Qur’an was a semantic re-formulation and re-systematization using the same semantic tools (concepts and words) of the same language. This led to a comprehensive imaginative revolution establishing a new set of links between linguistics and mental imagination.”*³⁹ Faith, government, public and private behaviour have been interpreted and expressed in the historic process via codes that today we define as religious, because they are rich in meaning, according to a model of ontological unity which is at the base of Islamic epistemology. This does not mean that politics depends on religion or vice versa, as some of the parties in cause simplify too much. It simply means that the various complex social and cultural processes occur within semantic and gnoseologic categories and that they are defined by this general framework of tendency, more than by the single ideological-religious elements in a strict sense⁴⁰. A symbolic universe that has grafted itself onto culture, language and very varied ethnic groups (Arabs, Turk-Mongols, Indians, Europeans, Slavs, Chinese, Africans, etc.), in a geographical sphere that goes from China to Morocco, from North Africa to Europe. Since the first Arab knights carried the *tawhid* on the point of their lances, politics and faith, philosophy and science, morality and economics have been permeated by Islam, which has been for billions of men one of the codes by which to read the world and the meaning of life, of society and of their relationship with the state and the universe. It is by way of these codes of the ‘Islamic paradigm’ that also revolutions have assumed their specific forms, via the modelling of specific languages and categories of thought.

We must not be surprised however today, in the heart of the XXI century, to hear during manifestations in the streets slogan like ‘*Allah huwa al Akbar*’ (God is the greatest), which traditionally belong to the religious universe and not to the political universe. As we should not be surprised by the re-proposal of traditional models of tribal authority for example in the terrorist

³⁹ Ahmed Davutoglu, *Alternative Paradigms. The impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory*, London, University Press, 1994, pg.52

⁴⁰ Ramadan expresses this self-same concept using more religious language: “walking towards the source should not be confused with the source: if this last absolute declaration out of time, everything in the walk must be considered over time, change, imperfection, being immersed in the reality of men, in their rich humanity like their worrying lies.” (Op. Cit. pg. 57)

structure of al-Qa'idah⁴¹. The permeability between the two levels, the political and the religious, is a clear dimension of the paradigm, which is a primitive dimension with respect to political and religious manifestations given in a determined context. The same language of communications of the terrorists, like in many radical reform inspired movements, are filled with religious terminology that to the eye of a Western observer can raise perplexity. Terms like Taghut or Dajjal to define a political adversary, or shahid to characterise terrorists who commit suicide or fall in battle, Dabiq, Muwahhidun, Safawyun, Salabiyyun, Murtaddin, Kuffar, etc., belong to this symbolic universe with its historical dimension, like too the black flags of shahadah of the Sunni movements or the green of the shi'ah, which recall the sacrifice of Hussein and the mystical family (ahl al-bayt), the great beard without the moustache, the short traditional clothes, the index finger raised high and the great mass prayers. There is something elementary and absolute, without meditation or even tactics, in these radical paths that go way beyond forms of terrorism in the political matrix. It is indeed a semantic modality that is derived from that primary paradigm, even before a modus operandi of structure of a political or military character, with which it would be an error to confuse them.

This has however practical tangible consequences on the level of modus operandi.

The great revolts in the streets of the Arab world, from medieval times to the 'Arab Spring', start off from inside the mosques, from Libya, to Egypt, to Syria, because religious centrality goes way beyond Islam intended as an official religion. The mosque is historically, also in Europe, one of the places where politics is elaborated, beyond being a place of prayer, of teaching and of social cohesion. It is a profound code, a paradigm, which we need to understand if we want to understand the difference between a Mosque and a church and explain why a revolution can start from a Mosque while from a church this is not normally the case, at least today. What emerges in these phenomena goes a long way beyond sociological analysis, the debate between political analysts or the detailed analysis on the internet, which is only the external part, the shell, what the great eastern thinker Massignon saw in the destiny of Ishmael, the older brother of Isaac, who became the successor.

We need to have seen these revolts from inside the Arab Spring to understand what really happens in these moments and how religion, faith, politics and the dynamic of the mass mix, to become a revolutionary phenomenon of sacred character in the heart of the modern era. Daily symbolic acts are striking and move history in those moments when maximum sacrifice is required to overturn the power relationship. The relationship with the transcendent, the knowledge that death is not the last word on your life, the power of blood, the call to a transcendence without mediation supply man and the masses with extraordinary strength, much superior to that of the single individuals who activate the insurrectionist and revolutionary process.

This is what happens on the historical plain when radicalism turns into revolution.

An example from all those which we have witnessed throughout these years following the various Arab revolts in the field.

⁴¹ Karl D. Jackson, *Traditional Authority, Islam and Rebellion*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980

Between 24 and 25 February 2011 the city of az-Zawya, in the Western region of Libya, rose up. The revolt started in the Mosque, at the end of Friday prayers, as had already occurred in Derna, Benghazi, Misurata and Tripoli in these days. We were there.⁴² While the muazzin minaret was hammering away *Allah huwwa al-Akbar*, a haggard group of the faithful went into the square almost unarmed and challenged the kata'ib, Gheddafi's security forces, who closed and surrounded the square armed to the teeth with automatic rifles. It seemed to be an impossible challenge. A young man was hit with an AK 47 while he shouted slogans. Instead of running away, he stripped naked in the square to show his injuries. He knelt down in prayer, refusing obstinately to be assisted. "I want to go to heaven", he repeated. The human sacrifice and the shedding of blood transformed this political protest into a sacred rite. An antique element emerged from what seemed to be the start of a normal political demonstration, like many others seen on TV. Under the blows of Gheddafi's militia the "martyrs" fell one by one in the square and pools of blood formed around them. It is at this time that a sort of collective hysteria mixed with sacred fury took hold of the masses that were protesting and enabled them to commit absolute acts, accepting to give their lives, without mediation, without any element of rationality. Their index fingers pointing to the sky accepting the will of God and the acceptance of the Qadir, destiny, the public prayers while the bullets flew around them, the call of other people to join the protest, became an unavoidable call for those in the faithful that up to that moment had remained at the margins. The blood, the shuhada' and death, the funeral, like in antique sacrificial rites, transformed a political diatribe into a sacred rite, where collective hysteria was mixed with politics. Those that in the video images washed their hands, their faces, their knives in the blood of martyrs are normal citizens. There is the doctor, the lawyer and the artisan, that here though, on that dramatic 24 February 2011, all became exalted full of mystic fury, ready to die, without any braking element without any deterrent.

The day after all the city of az-Zawya was in the square and the government militias fled temporarily.

These are all elements that students of history, religion and psychology of the masses have known for some time.

Today we are surprised that inside political demonstrations, which should therefore stay in the 'secular' ambit according to current opinion, religious phenomena emerge of this type, with slogans and buzz words inspired by the Koran and Islam. There are even those who want to see a peculiarity in Islam as a religion, as if analogous phenomena had never characterised the history of all the great religions. It is part of the double standards, for example, to emphasise the role of Islam in terrorism of the religious matrix inside the Muslim community, and perhaps gloss over the role of Catholicism in the revolt in East Timor against Indonesia. There terrorism was a central element to the uprising, too, also like the call to the catholic faith the identitary role of the church which has at its base the revolutionary and independence narrative, with many foreign fighters from Europe and financial and lobbying networks of protection on a world scale. But in this case the public perception and the security agencies did not want to establish a connection between the Catholic religion and terrorism, which would certainly have been inappropriate, also considering the fact that the Indonesian military is made up of in large part Muslims.

⁴² The film of this analysis is today available at <http://www.agenformedia.com/the-arab-spring-analysis.html>

In reality, our surprise regarding the role of religion in politics, that is the presumption that Islamism is always tied up with terrorism, is firstly and overall fruit of a different interpretative paradigm, which has its roots in the dichotomist nature of the epistemology predominant in the West and in secular societies –and perhaps secularist-, fruit of a complex historical process. But secondly, it is the result of the fact that global competition between nations, regional powers and global empires tends to create competitive logics at every level, to polarize and create complex deployments.

There is a tendency in the mainstream EU media to openly or subconsciously associate and then blame the religions (and particularly Islam that is a very emerging and dynamic religion nowadays) for the proliferation of terrorism and extremism.

The semantic concept of ‘Islamism’, which is perceived as a threat, connotes exactly this aspect of the analysis. In the meantime, little or nothing is being done to address the almost inevitable and growing wave of Islamophobia in Europe or to address the grievances stemming from the political positions of the Islamic-inspired activists, because they are labelled as ‘Islamists’, foes.

If we want to understand a sense of the profound difference between religious radicalism of Islamic inspiration, terrorism or uprising and learn to isolate radicalism from the risk of exploitation, we cannot trust political exploitation or only security systems or judiciary power.

We must understand what the threat is.

Acts are predominantly global, in civil Muslim society and must therefore depart from the recognition of the legitimacy of Muslim reformism and its history, re-evaluating the positive function of ‘Islamists’ who can also be activists for democracy and freedom, in the name of their faith. Culture is an essential factor in this battle that has the aim of bringing from one part or the other the entire population, inside our cities or on the global level. We will return to this argument.

If the definition of the threat requires dynamic analysis of competitive systems, the incomprehension of the sub-systems that make up the theatre of operations becomes a strategic error.

I.6. Radicalisation and Competitive Control

We must still however understand effectively what the “X” is that we are looking for. What is the threat that radicalisation holds within itself? The response that we have from The EU documents, like many other analyses of the most well regarded study centres is almost unequivocal. The threat is terrorism. Firstly, we have to understand if we are really certain of this. Interviews conducted in the framework of the project Eurad like analysis in the field realised in 2011 underline how terror tactics are certainly possible for a destructive evolution of radicalism, but in itself this is not a threat intended in its own analysis of risk.

It is a little bit like confusing your finger which is pointing at the moon with the moon itself.



As far as there are no mutually accepted definitions of terrorism, as we noted in our introduction, teaches us that those phenomena that go under this name are normally defined as *“a politically motivated violence against civilians, conducted with the intention to coerce through fear”*. And therefore a *modus operandi* of the threat in the analysis of risk. The horrendous assassination in Woolwich is an example of this type of *modus operandi*.

Logically in this framework, the terrorists are conceived as a pathology of the system and for this reason we do not speak with them. The protagonists of terrorism are usually avant-garde who operate unconnected (disembodied) from their society of origin and the war against terrorism is therefore an operation of uprooting the more or less significant pathological nuclei of society. A movement like the Red Brigade in Italy, just so as to make a comparison with a case much more structured than that of Woolwich, even in its heyday did not have more than 2000 units. Therefore phenomena with little social relevance, as far as they were important under the profile of human damage and social outrage caused by their actions. In the classical form we were dealing with paramilitary hierarchical secret, organisations, built to strike at power in a symbolic way, also with extreme violence, but without vast popular support, even where they claimed to have it.

It is difficult that terrorist phenomena like these are able to pass from the tactical level to the strategic. Normally they remain as one of the *modus operandi* of an obscure enemy and of a destructive energy which, however, it has in itself in many different options, of high or low intensity. The symbolic ambit of movements like the Italian BR or the various ‘proxy’ of Islamic inspiration, stay however select and segregated, in the best Leninist tradition or that of Western neo-Nazism. At most they are a phase of a much greater process which equips itself with different techniques and tools. This process is eventually the threat, of which terrorism can be a possible manifestation in determined temporal and territorial ambits.

The violence of these groups is part of a model aimed at guaranteeing resources for secret organisations and shocking the population and the powers that be with the aim of attracting attention because of their limited hold on the popular masses and their limited objectives and limited territorial reach. From here their danger evolves dictated by the need to commit shocking acts, paying no attention to the number of civilian casualties caused. The secrecy besides is not easily connected with phenomena of the masses or with ‘popular’ political projects of these groups, so much so that in many cases terrorism is a manifestation of attempts to overthrow the state, overall in the ambit of the extreme right or throughout history of many Islamic inspired movements. Through this comparison, both symmetrical and asymmetrical, these groups try however to influence governments, like in the case of the attack in Madrid on the part of al-Qa’idah right before the Spanish political elections or they try to highlight social contradictions, like in the case of the BR in Italy. Usually these traditional terrorist groups possess a geographical, national and local base, however limited, at least in the al-Qa’idah model.

From this point of view, terrorism is correctly considered a problem of the LEAs and of the judiciary and fighting it is based in the analysis of cases and the search for evidence, with the primary

objective of identifying and catching those who commit crimes or decapitating the secret structures with combined actions between intelligence services and police. A good example of this method is given by the hunt for Bin Laden on the part of the American government, which resulted in his capture and death.

Unfortunately the first contradiction emerges here with respect to this analysis of the threat. In fact, al-Qa'idah has not been weakened with the decapitation of its leader, instead it has extended and branched out according to a Rhizomatic model. That is because in an organisation like al-Qa'idah the terrorist profile has already assumed global dimensions, with new models based on a 'leaderless leadership', and therefore the decapitation of their leaders has not always had decisive effects. On the contrary, in some cases it causes the proliferation of ever more fragmented and dangerous movements, for the famous law of 'dissipative structures'. The 'qa'idization' of every revolutionary phenomena of Islamic inspiration is also very dangerous because it obliges the LEAs and the judiciary to enter the sticky field of repression towards every phenomena that has a similar ideological character. In reality, seeing as al-Qa'idah is a network phenomenon that utilises every local grievance of the Muslim community spread throughout the world, the 'securitisation' of these operations toward local subjects can become a detonator, if it is not practised with multi-model agencies.

The modus operandi of Al-Qa'idah, based on 'glocal' networks and formed like eggs for the 'franchising of terror', helps us to understand besides that terrorism is not the only modus operandi of a threat represented by possible 'obscure' evolutions of radicalisation. There are many others. There is for example another undesired effect that the dynamic phenomenon of radicalisation can produce beyond that of terrorism and on which it is worth shedding some light at a European level.

It is a largely undervalued and underestimated effect by the Western and Arab centres of analysis that goes under the name of insurgency or, if we prefer, large scale subversive phenomena. Haroro Ingram has analysed the results of the latest 'small wars' conducted by the West and arrived at a significant conclusion: *"The ongoing withdrawal of coalition forces from Afghanistan punctuates an era of 'small wars' that stretches beyond the "9/11 decade" to the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War. Although asymmetric military contests between established authorities and irregular guerrillas are among the oldest of military phenomena, the modern period of small wars represents a departure from this history. Before this period, irregular guerrillas tended to be overwhelmed by their stronger and better resourced adversaries. Modern small wars, by contrast, have seen significantly higher rates of insurgent victory. Between 1775 and 1945, about 20% of insurgencies were successful. After 1945, the success rate of insurgencies has doubled"*.⁴³

The 'Insurgency' is therefore another of the ways in which the destructive dynamic of radicalisation can manifest itself.

The difference between terrorism and insurgency is also relevant for the aims of the politics of prevention and contrast. "In this popular perception, shared by many Western legislators and policy-makers, although not by terrorist specialists, terrorists are seen as unrepresentative, aberrant

⁴³ Haroro Ingram, Three Lessons from the Modern Era of Small Wars, ISN ETH-Zurich, 2014 in <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?lng=en&id=180191>

individuals, misfits within society. (...) The insurgency paradigm is quite different. (...) Insurgents are regarded as representative of deeper issues or grievances within societies. Governments seek to defeat insurgents primarily through marginalizing them from their support base, protecting the people from guerrilla intimidation and “winning the hearts and minds” of the broader population, a process that by necessity often involves compromise and negotiation. (...) We see insurgents as using violence within a carefully integrated politico-military strategy, rather than as psychopaths. In this paradigm, insurgency is a whole-of-government problem rather than a military or law enforcement issue. On this basis, we adopt a strategy-based approach to counter-insurgency in which the key objective is to defeat or marginalize the insurgent’s strategy rather than to ‘apprehend the perpetrators’ of specific acts.”⁴⁴

It is the scenario of ISIS, this new form of tactics that aim to build a global theatre of operations, passing from the secrecy of al-Qa’idah to the internet campaigns of ‘Da’ysh’ and connecting the local struggles of the different Wilayat (regions of the Islamic Khalifate) with those of the world (the example already given of the Foreign Fighters and of the expansion of the theatre of operations) inside an only apparently traditional Islamic paradigm.

On the contrary of terrorism, as noted, *ISIS* has a ‘glocal’ nature in that it uses every local grievance in a global way, creating a system of services able to operate with a base of high intensity and adapting its tactics to the context. This aspect of analysis helps us to clear up why in this substantially new framework for European politics, traditional methods of anti-terrorism struggle to fight a tactical framework like that of the global Islamic movement. Terrorism is an individual tactic or of little groups, structured and military, but very limited with respect to the territory of the grievances, while the insurgency, the ‘dawlah islamiyyah’ of *da3ysh*, is a tactic on a global scale, seeing as it expands the field of operation to the whole world, it jumps with ease from local spaces to virtual ones and cannibalizes, as do certain micro-organisms in coral, each local phenomenon has its own aims. In the single theatres these new phenomena can fight, practising terrorism, but also managing the politics of welfare, governing making alliances with communities, ties with social groups and tribes on a local or global scale, supplying justice and guaranteeing order, besides taking on the traditional instruments and the innovative ones of communication and networking. In a world theatre of operations the threat is represented not only by the fact that someone can blow himself up on the underground, but also by the fact that our banking system, our mafia and organized criminals of every type, the marginalisation of our immigrant communities, our prisons, our servers, our young people suffering with a crisis of identity or our shared common goods (from aeroplanes to fertilizers), can become part of the ‘theatre of operations’.

If it becomes legitimate to expand the theatre of war to operations like the ‘*Stuxnet worms*’⁴⁵, or “*DuQu and Flame*”, launched against many energetic centres in the Middle-East, or the “Gauss virus”, which has withdrawn financial data in Lebanon, we should not be surprised if terrorist groups in Iraq and in Lebanon may have used Skygrabber, the software of the Russian SkySoftware with which they intercepted the Predators, or that Twitter might have been used by the terrorists of Lashkar-e-Taiba in the Mumbai attack as a tactical tool. Like in the case of the Foreign Fighters, the extension of the theatre of war and the violation of our founding principles bring new dynamic threat profiles that break traditional borders those between ‘war’ -‘*harb*’-‘*jihad*’ and ‘crimes’-‘*Jarimah*’ or ‘*Terrorism*’ -‘*Irhab*’ or ‘*violence*’ -‘*Unf*’.

⁴⁴ David Kilcullen, *Insurgency*, op. cit., pg. 186-188

⁴⁵ David Sanger, Obama Order Speed Up Wave of Cyber attacks against Iran, New York Times, June 1, 2012

The new global semantics cut across traditional paradigms. These global phenomena, contrary to the traditional ones of terrorism, have the ability to integrate with every type of grievance at a local and global level, to make every type of alliance, well beyond ‘ideologisms’ of origin, making a home for themselves inside the contradictions of our society and using every aspect of the system. ‘Think globally act locally’ is their motto.

Terrorism and uprising are two of the many ways in which radicalisation can emerge when it enters global scenarios. They explain to us the *modus operandi* of determined phenomena, but they do not clear up the dynamic of why determined radical phenomena at a particular moment decide to adopt different tactics, both those of low level (protest, violence, etc.) and those of high intensity (terrorism or uprising, indeed).

Another point that should be underlined in this framework is the dual nature of every element of civil society. In the uprisings, rather than as occurs in terrorism, the distance between radical civil acts at low intensity (protest, general strikes, civil disobedience, sabotage, incitement to violence) and paramilitary acts (attacks on the infrastructure and buildings of power, on the forces of order, targeted killings, illegal trafficking to take control of part of the territory or of social groups) is shorter with respect to the initiatives of secret terrorist groups with military profiles, which are hierarchical and structured. The uprising, on the contrary to terrorism, needs public support, to be visible, therefore it must be well planned with porous structures, public, professional and Rhizomatic. Naturally this dramatically exposes civil society to a reaction from the government, whose violence is usually a detonator for the mobilisation of the masses that bring about a change of the same government (that which we have seen to be the factor “SR” in our calculation), be they dictatorial or democratic.

A good example of this is social media or the NGOs.

Usually these subjects, like the media too or finance more specifically, appear as entities neutral to the social system. In reality they are not, seeing as the uprising, overall an urban uprising, has the characteristic of knowing how to use all means available, at least as well as the government. The case of MV *Mavi Marmara* and of the Turkish NGO IHH is indicative of this new way of using organisms of civil society for traditional struggles between states, where the accusation of terrorism, humanitarian aid, the relationships with great multi-lateral organisations and the foreign policy of ministries are founded in a singular way finalised in political struggle. The strategy of ‘political defiance’ is not only a means of overturning a dictatorship, but also an instrument of regional or world power to overturn democracies or legitimate elected governments but competitive on the geopolitical level.⁴⁶

But the most surprising example of this dual function of the organisms of civil society is that of social media and role that this plays, for example, in the Arab Spring or in the most colourful uprisings. From one point of view, we are speaking about great virtual highways through which radical movements that revolt have been able to make networks and communicate to bring to the field the actions that have overturned dictatorial governments, according to models of ‘political defiance’ experimented by Sharp and his “students” and followers. But from another point of view, the same instruments have clearly been used by foreign governments to manipulate the revolts.

⁴⁶ See the chapter ‘External Assistance’ by Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, London, Serpent’s Tail, 2012, pag. 78-79

Today it is in the public domain that great American companies like ‘Google’, in fact, may have dual roles. On one side, they can be great companies that guarantee primary instruments for their lives and their freedom to all the citizens of the world, as we experience ever day. But by the back door, the same companies can assume a determining role in acts of political and industrial espionage, like in the case of NSA, where they help the United States government to spy on our European leaders, our businesses and our citizens in geo-political world disputes. Like the NGOs, also the big telecommunications groups can put themselves at the service of foreign radical subjects to create communication bridges while governments under attack block the internet. It is in fact what was done by the engineers of Twitter and SayNow (Google group) with the voicemail system set up by The United States to bypass the block actuated by the Egyptian government⁴⁷ in the last phase of the Mubarak government, often together with worldwide hacking groups⁴⁸.

The so called ‘political defiance’ is therefore another aspect of the threat. Perhaps one of the most dangerous, seeing as it mines a sense of independence and freedom of subjects that were traditionally outside of the politico-military context under dispute. The trend is always the same: as the concept of ‘theatre of war’, extends causing the distinction between ‘civilians’ and ‘military’ to crumble; just as the LEAs or the judiciary can lose their institutional profile and retreat to a partial role of parties and governments, violating fundamental constitutional principles; as a means of transport, an aeroplane, agricultural fertilisers or a pressure cooker can become ‘arms’ in an asymmetric war, in this way the free spaces of the internet or representation in civil society can be transformed into resources in a difficult war for the control of resources and, in a final analysis, of the state

All of this helps us to understand that the nature of the threat is deeper and more dangerous than the manifestations that we have dealt with up to this point.

For who has experience in the field, the ‘obscure’ and destructive phenomenon of radicalisation cannot be limited to these two aspects. There are many others that help us to understand how the logic pursued up to this point by the EU and The United Nations are partial, if not indeed mistaken.

The dynamic of radical movements of the rightwing movements in Italy in the 70s, for example, helps us to understand that the relationship between radicalisation, terrorism and uprising has a global character that cannot be understood within the binary logic of the sector. Many of those young radicals that fought at that time in the squares, ended up on the most disparate paths with the most varied social repercussions. Some became political leaders or important business men, journalists, human rights activists or intellectuals⁴⁹; others finished in terrorism of a different political colour, bloodying the streets of Italy with their struggles; others finished in the world of drugs or organized

⁴⁷ John Naughton, *How Twitter Engineers Outwitted Mubarak in one Weekend*, Observer, 6-2-2011.

⁴⁸ Chavala Madlena, *Telecomix: Tech support for the Arab Spring*, Guardia, 7-7-2011

⁴⁹ Thus confirming what wrote the Gen.(R.) Mario Mori, former Official of the Italian Counter-intelligence, then founder of the Anti-crime of the Police and of the ROS, before managing the SISDE, the civilian Italian Intelligence: “The terrorist is not a criminal as we mean in the common meaning of the word, it is a person that, beyond his ideological conviction, that some instance and in determined historical conditions can also bring to aberrant consequences, possesses nevertheless very strong cultural talents and even spirituals, however never ordinary.” Speaking of those terrorists that he more than anyone contributed to fight, he wrote: “Having known many young men of which I could appreciate the intellectual subtlety and superior intelligence, and having seen how much today their life is influenced by mistakes made in the youth in the misleading hope of building a more fair society, I have reached the conclusion that in the period the years of lead got lost one of the best parts of a generation that could have given an important and enduring contribution to the growth of the nation.” Mario Mori-Giovanni Fasanella, *Ad Alto Rischio*, Milano, Mondadori, 2011, pag. 47

crime, maybe even passing through ‘political kidnapping’ and the kidnapping of people in search of money. There is also who became an informer, who became a mercenary, who still fights today on the most disparate fronts or who simply got lost in some small corner of the world. If in this phase there had been the effects of globalisation and similar connections to those of today, maybe the politics of success deployed in the field by the LEAs of that time and by the intelligence community would not have had their desired effect. In contrasting phenomena of this global scope and depth the LEAs, the intelligence services or the judiciary are subject to normative and methodological ties, to roles of competence, which render this global challenge in great part beyond their scope, as far as they remain fundamental stakeholders in the process.

All this to simply say that the results of radicalisation can take us in many directions; that the threat has a global character very different from single tactical methods and that in reality we are facing a complex phenomenon with unpredictable variables that oblige us to adopt a complex model of analysis.

The society we are now facing is much more complex than that of the past. It is still made up of traditional components such as states, governments and populations, within which yesterday like today collaborative and competitive dynamics operate. The global expansion of these spaces has, though, created new phenomena like mass migration, global connectivity tangible and intangible fluxes on a world scale. Not only have the borders been expanded, but also the protagonists in the theatre of operations have multiplied. In a recent interview with the ex Italian Finance Minister, Giulio Tremonti, explains that for example today financial fluxes have lost every relationship with the state, the territory and world. The bank of International regulations, Tremonti reminds us, calculates the volume of business in circulation as 100 trillion dollars. “*it is not a number. It is folly. ...if wealth flies over the top of the territory, who controls it?*”⁵⁰ many sociologists speak of post-modernism: “*we warn (without really understanding it, and many of us refuse to recognise this) that power (that is the capacity to do) is separate from politics (that is the capacity to decide what to do and with what priorities)*”.⁵¹ In a recent publication⁵² the jurist Sabino Cassese raises serious concerns on the democratic legitimacy of multi-bilateral legal practices.

Therefore to understand what moves radicalisation in one direction or another, well beyond the effects and the tactics of this phenomenon, we must resort to a global and dynamic model, seeing as binary instruments (LEAs against terrorism, for example) or sector based (psychology, sociology, etc.) are too static to collect the complexity of this phenomenon. The model best adapted to capture this complexity is that of ‘competitive control’ defined by Kilcullen in his most recent work⁵³. Kilcullen applies these theories to urban guerrilla movements. “*Within the behavioural space bound by its rule set, an actor can apply a spectrum of means ranging from persuasion through administration to coercion. Arguments and inducements to support the dominant rule set are at the persuasive end of this spectrum. These include propaganda, political and ideological mobilization, social pressure, and identity manipulation. But as we have seen, often the most persuasive element is the feeling of security, predictability, order and cohesion that comes with the adherence to a*

⁵⁰ Giulio Tremonti (intervista a), *Quel che oggi temo di più è un asse Mosca-Berlino*, “Sette”, 18-2014

⁵¹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernità Liquida*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, pg.VI

⁵² Sabino Cassese, *The Global Polity: Global Dimension of Democracy and The Rule of Law*, Sevilla, Global Law Press, 2012

⁵³ David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains. The coming age of the urban guerrilla*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2013, pgg. 125 sgg.

*dominant actor's norms. In the middle of the spectrum, administrative tools –justice systems, mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms, essential services, social and economic institutions– make it easier for people to follow the rules, and give them tangible benefits for doing so. At the coercive end of the spectrum are punishments that impose costs on people who break the rules. These include punitive violence as well as expropriations (fines, penalties, or seizure of assets), expulsion and exile, or imprisonment.*⁵⁴

We can apply these considerations to the ambit of analysis of radical risk, to find our incognito *Rx*, the base of the calculation. Borrowing these models, and the relative software and algorithms, we can insert in our calculation the variable represented by a considered numeric value that is given by the complex dynamic of the relationship between government and oppositions that compete to win the loyalty of their citizens, therefore the control of tangible and intangible resources, with incentives and disincentives.

In this radical framework, individuals or movements try out or challenge the government, its laws, its norms, its control. As a point of principle neither of the two parties is legitimate or illegitimate in its demands. In this framework the government is not necessarily 'right' or 'legitimate' only because it has reached a determined power equilibrium in a determined period, just as it is not necessarily the opposition that is 'unjust' or 'illegitimate', only because it has a lower level of control over tangible and intangible resources in a determined phase.

The request for change, typical of radical movements, like the demand for conservation, typical of government supporters, can happen in many ways with many instruments, both on the persuasive and administrative levels, but also on a coercive level (repression/crime). Control of the immigrant community on the part of religious groups that want to overthrow the government or do not recognise the authority of the state (not only that of the government), the imposition of behavioural rules external to those of state organisations (Shariah courts, informal banking systems, special taxation, etc.) or the adhesion to foreign policy contrary to that of the national interest (foreign, fiscal or military policy, etc.) are established in the first two ambits. The justification of drug trafficking on a religious basis (the admissibility of drug selling at *Kuffar*, for example), the organisation of forms of organised crime on an ethnic religious basis with the aim of exploiting human trafficking, illegal trafficking of various natures, or the recruitment of fighters on various fronts, these on the contrary are established in the coercive ambit, with which some radicals try to win over for example the European immigrant community or to gain access to resources for their struggle.

From this point of view, there is not much difference, if not in the *modus operandi*, between ethnic-religious street gangs, ethnic-religious organisations, violence of ultras or movements defined as terrorists. Beyond the single crimes, in fact, all these profiles challenge the institutions and established power with the ultimate goal of controlling tangible and intangible resources in determined theatres of operations. In fact, the ultras in the stadiums in many countries and in many revolutions, from the Balkans to the Arab Spring, are used as armed instruments to move power relationships or to stabilize regimes, as our researcher James Dorsey has shown in many of his publications.

⁵⁴ David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains*, op.cit., pg. 133

This can happen through mass mobilisation, like in the Arab Spring, peaceful or violent, or with diplomatic instruments, like in the confrontation between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. We are, however, always speaking about variants of the competitive model.

Once this dynamic was inside national borders and had well defined political and administrative canons, reflecting the respective power relationships in the territory. Globalization has extended this scenario, fragmented the protagonists and multiplied the means. There are an impressive mass of powers and technical means available today like never before throughout history.

What we are seeing today is a dynamic of competitive control between various governments, at a local and global level, towards groups in their relative populations, intended as populace of specific nations, local or transnational minorities or communities, for the control of tangible or intangible resources on a global scale.

The polar direction of radicalism (its destructive and reformist part) is given by the level or not of loyalty of an individual or of a radical group towards the state and one's own nation, before that towards a government or a group/identity of origin. Radicalism and the conflict are not threats a priori, if judged on a large scale. Seeing as radical movements can become innovators of the state, favouring with them the entire collective (we can use the concept of 'populace' or that of 'nation'/'homeland' instinctively here as opposed to those of 'individual', according to models outlined by Bauman but inherited from a long German sociological tradition with the dichotomy Gemeinde/Gesellschaft).

Let us go back to the example of Mandela and Apartheid or of Begin and the Irgun. Even if they used types of instrument available in the given conditions, they were accused of terrorism, banditry and violence. They certainly committed crimes based on the laws of the time and for this they were justly pursued by the LEAs and by justice for how they were interpreted at the time, by the Boer government or the English powers. The final result however is that a radical group in these cases challenged the local government of the time, it used the resources at its disposition in and produced historical changes for the majority of its own population, passing from being terrorists and criminals to established statesmen. Firstly, because they were able to control the fundamental resources which are consensus and the loyalty of their own citizens. They have inverted the role of 'goodies' and 'baddies', a fundamental operation in modern revolutionary techniques characterized by the use of the media which can act as an instrument of uprising or counter-uprising.

In a conflict between governments and radicals, the actions of the LEAs, of the judiciary and of the intelligence services is certainly of great importance. They can for example guarantee room for freedom, if such bodies are loyal to the state, before the government. They can isolate competitive internal dynamics with respect to external interference, guaranteeing the principle of national sovereignty (usually such operations are difficult for these bodies because the virtual sphere is porous, as opposed to physical borders and every attempt to block competitive initiatives supported from abroad brings with it the risk of becoming an enemy of freedom of opinion if we accept to play in the same field with cyber-operations). But, however, the point is that both LEAs and the judiciary are some of the factors in play in the system of equilibrium and control. Whoever, on the contrary, plays a fundamental part in the equilibrium of the control system, even being a part of it, is civil society, which is in some way the active subject towards which control is exercised by the

contestants that manipulate it. The famous silent majority, which must not be confused with who claims to represent it: the NGOs, CBOs, CSOs or various associations, which in relation to their level of dependency on power can, on the contrary, be one of the preferred instruments for utilizing radical grievances. This true civil society, the majority of the population that the two contestants try to mobilise and polarise in the phases in which radicalism evolves towards revolutionary phenomena, can even ally itself with foreign players, as happened in Ukraine recently or as happens ever more frequently in uprising operations on a world scale. It is an active subject because it is not only the prey of radical and conservative groups that compete for it. Civil society can choose to be on the part of a government or who opposes it even radically on the basis of complex systems of incentives and disincentives. It can remain passive, but it can also cause a revolution, shed blood or cut off heads.

We may like it or not, but the support of large parts of the Sunni population and tribes for ISIS in Iraq and Syria is the major challenge to counter the local insurgency.

The law or legitimate violence of the state can do nothing against a populace in revolt. Therefore, the capacity to conquer the majority part, in all its complex articulations and groups, is what renders the action of both the government and the radicals effective and legitimate.

This delicate equilibrium that supplies legitimacy to the dialectic and to the contrast today is much more complex in as much as various civil societies that operate in the frame of nations are not only part of a specific competitive equilibrium, that between single governments and their populations. The theatre and the means today are so vast that also governments outside of the nation or external powers of great impact (media, finance, international organisms with sanctioned powers, etc.) can become parties in the competitive system. Sanctions on a country, for example, have the objective of altering the balance favouring one of the parties in the struggle with an external action. Fear and security may also become part of this competitive system to define alliances and enemies. Therefore, as for radicals there is the necessity to create global networks (from anarchists to communists, up to international groups of parties and proper insurgents), also for governments, acting like protagonists inside multi-bilateral systems is of great urgency. They must be capable of supplying adequate tangible and intangible resources, to maintain the equilibrium of the system and contrast the use of its opponents and of their potential external allies.

This is therefore the real threat profile, its 'obscure' heart: a civil society disconnected from its own government that can resort to all the tactical options available to retake control of the state, both by its own force (and this generally brings beneficial change to the country) but also resorting to external resources (and here the criticality is opened, seeing as the system of interests at that point becomes complicated).

Radicalisation/De radicalisation, terrorism/anti-terrorism, uprising/counter- uprising, crime/anti-crime are all functional instruments of a threat which has its roots in the ability or not (strength and weakness) of a determined power (government) of acquiring and maintaining the loyalty of the

population over whom it operates its own authority, in the highly competitive ambit of internal and external relations.

PART II: Religious Muslim Reformism

Islamic inspired radicalism is not different from other forms of radicalism that have preceded it and will follow. Also the ‘islamiyyun’ want ‘to improve the way’, like many before and after them. According to the conservatives that in the competitive system are usually on the part of maintaining the system, usually those who improve the world create damage, and this is proved by many experiences, even if it is not always true. In some cases they have improved the conditions on the part of the population, at least for a temporary period. However, to change the conditions given that the radicals possess various resources inside the paradigm, we must understand if we want to earn the loyalty and positive energy that come from these communities and movements. Contrast is not enough, anti-terrorism, counter-uprising or deradicalisation to confront these competitive phenomena on a world scale. If we place ourselves outside of our normal viewpoints maybe we understand the complexity of the factors in play better and what is necessary to contrast the destructive results of radicalism and favour those of reform.

What we have in front of us today is a threat – broadly speaking- which carries with it, in its own language, in its own instances and in its own symbolic universe, the need to change entire continents and for whom terrorism or the symmetrical military encounter are only tactics in limited theatres and with variable times.

As an example, ISIS challenges our fundamental principles and builds its success on the social failures of the dictatorships, firstly, and the democratic seasons then, the so called Arab Spring. The message of the khilafa is very simple: we are the only viable alternative, because the other have failed. No matter if we have a program, because distrust is so high that there is nothing left.

We consider the methods of some of these groups unacceptable (and they are as such), but their grievances are often seen also by other groups of their enemies as legitimate, as long as they are pursued by different means. That is because these grievances graft themselves onto paradigms in part shared by a great part of society or of the community of origin (“Islam is the alternative”). Not only: often these narratives are placed inside traditional legitimate historical contexts of the experiences of large social and intellectual groups of society, who use narrative and analogous language to legitimise their own political actions. Finally, and this is decidedly the most serious aspect for us for Western governments and multi-bilateral organisations, our counter-narratives are often judged to be unreliable, biased and illegitimate, even by those who oppose terrorism or religious matrix uprisings, because they go against their own practices with principles that we claim to defend (the famous double standard). Cases like those in Algeria or Egypt, where in the presence of electoral victories of Islamic movements, Western (intended broadly speaking, including also multi-bilateral organisations) had responded supporting a military coup d’état, certainly do not help to spread the democratic narrative as an alternative to that of ‘hakimiyyah’. It is not objectively easy to use

narratives based on human rights and civil freedoms as an antidote to hatred to win the hearts and minds of groups at risk- admitting that this is the objective – when the regimes that are supported diplomatically, financially and militarily by the West can practice torture, illegal arrest, kill demonstrators, close the means by which free information flows and effect military coups d'état against elected presidents. In front of the wake of blood of As-Sisi in Egypt or the impunity which Israel enjoys in the repression of its civil Palestinian population, everything becomes more difficult.

“For Muslims in much of the world, there is no middle way: only a stark choice between jihad and acceptance of permanent second-class citizenship in a world order dominated by the West and infused with anti-Islamic values. For many self-respecting Muslims, the choice of jihad rather than surrender is both logical and honourable.”⁵⁵

Similar sentences can be easily heard from the Shiite leaders in the Gulf countries, in Turkey or Lebanon.

If we want to halt the elements which are most dangerous for us on the Islamic competitive inspiration range and then take possession of greater parts of the population (both in countries with Muslim majorities, on one side, and in European Muslim communities, on the other), we must combine with great precision the revolving threads of reformism inside the paradigm which Davutoglu writes about and place them inside the most general context of society in which they operate in their relationship with politics.

To speak with someone we require a common language, before even thinking of making alliances or war. Only then can we make alliances, this certainly helps us to uncover many forms of violence and struggle.

First of all, we need to eliminate any pre-conceptions from the field. There are often analysts and journalists who naively refer to words such as Islamic, Islamists, Salafi, Wahhabi or Ikhwan to define the threat or describe certain everyday religious behaviour as a danger sign indicating radicalisation or terrorism. They forget that millions of citizens believe in Salafi and Wahhabi ideas and are among the EU's best allies in the Persian Gulf.



Similarly, organizations such as The Muslim Brotherhood, who are labelled as 'terrorist' today by the Gulf or Egyptian governments, are in reality one of the main targets of the neo-Jihadist controversy.

Moreover, it is a fact that they have proven in Europe to be an effective political alternative to radicalisation and terrorism and are sincerely engaged in the electoral game and in the democratic process, despite the repression of many regimes.

The Ikhwan are the target of a violent campaign of terrorist groups and anti-democratic regimes, like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. In these superficial analyses, recognition is not given to the huge contribution and efforts towards the fight against terrorism made by these movements and their contribution to democracy.

⁵⁵ David Kilcullen, *Insurgency*, op. cit., pg. 219

This is particularly true for the Muslim Brotherhood as well as for peaceful Salafi-inspired groups in Europe and in other parts of the world. Perhaps the most tangible example of this new trend of the Muslim Brothers is that of the Finsbury Park mosque in London.

In the years when Abu Hamza al-Masri ran the Finsbury Park Mosque it was a training ground for suicide bombers and a recruiting centre for the terrorist strategies that went side by side with Al Qaeda. After its closure and the arrest of Abu Hamza in 2004, the UK government, who had no idea how to control the supporters of the terrorist imam, decided to lean on the MAB (Muslim Association of Britain) to "retake possession" of the mosque and generate a new socio-religious context. Since February 2005, thanks to the collaboration between the UK authorities and MAB, Finsbury Park is a model mosque, a centre for the community's activities that attract thousands of people, many of whom are directly concerned with troublemakers who were linked to the old management. The MAB is one of the operative segments of the complex galaxy of MB in the UK and it has been able to play an extremely important role across the entire country.

II.1 ISLAMOPHOBIA AS A PUSH FACTOR

The proliferation of a way of thinking that criminalises all Islamists at large is dangerous because it promotes religious and political prejudices and acts as a touch paper to marginalised members of EU and Eastern society established in Europe who may already be vulnerable to radicalisation⁵⁶.

The brand 'Islamists' is a short cut used by those who do not want to change.

There are countries like China where in the name of anti-terrorist laws the local community of the Uyghur minority is denied fundamental religious rights.⁵⁷ They cannot wear long beards, or "Arab" clothes, partake in the Nikah (traditional wedding) or the Talak (religious divorce). China invites its own citizens to inform anonymously in return for money on subjects which are clearly an offence to freedom of religion and education.

China is an extreme example, however also in Europe Muslims are hit by subtle discrimination and this weakens the resilience and resistance of the communities against terrorism.

Hasan, the former leader of the British salafis, remembers in his interview the importance of discrimination in his decision to become engaged with foreign fighters recruitment:

My self and two my elder brother would accompany my father all around the country when he used to go and teach the Quran at [...] mosques and in Islamic Centres, this is in the seventies and eighties, so we had a very devote Muslim home, which was also very Salafi, my parents are from a salafi background, my father studies in Saudi Arabia so we had a very strong Wahabi Salafi influence in terms of our practice, at the same time at school we were growing up in eighties Britain with a lot of racism there were race riots, violence in the country, there was a lot of open racism all around including at school, a friend in the

⁵⁶ An interesting investigation on the conditions of Muslim women in England published in <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-politics/10804880/Islamophobia-People-grab-our-veils-call-us-terrorists-and-want-us-dead-What-its-really-like-to-be-a-Muslim-woman-in-Britain.html>. this investigation helps us understand how the so called 'battle of gender' the pre-conceptions of secularists on the role of women can become an element of marginalisation

⁵⁷ http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/5-8-14_Briefing-Religious-Restrictions.pdf, we realised a report on the condition of Uyghur in China in 2010 today in <http://www.agenformedia.com/xianyang-uyghurs.html> the Chinese state response to identity grievances uyghur, we sustained then that, caused a terrorist escalation that we are seeing today.

primary school who we were friends with great guys but would casually make casually remarks against black people against brown people, because that was just British culture and that left loathing impression on me, especially seeing my parents especially my mother subjected to racial abuse by a ticket inspector on the train, that left deep scars which is not nice for immigrant family to experience (...)

I didn't feel connected to Britain as a Nation as I did to Pakistan, we went to Pakistan almost every year for the Summer Holidays, we spoke Urdu at home I still speak Urdu with my parents, it felt very important to keep that in my Muslim identity, we went via Saudi Arabia every year or every two years so I've been to Mecca and Medina, the holiest places of Islam over thirty times perhaps I lost count, three times for Hajj but many times for the Umrah. The sense of Muslim identity was very strong, our family actually did not get British passport until later on, we could have got our British passport in five to ten years of arriving in Britain, but it took over fifteen years before I got my British passport, and my parents waited another ten or fifteen years before doing that, because they always thought they were going to go back to Pakistan, they never thought of Britain as their home, and they thought one day they're going back to Pakistan where they were from, because my generation had faced so much racism, we were told "you're not welcome here", and Islamophobia started increasing from the Eighties onwards, then we bolt into this Islamic scenario that you primary eligence is to the Ummah, which Salafi group and Hizb ut-Tahrir quoted very strongly and they said "they go for the blasphemy, they're wrong, they're un-Islamic, it's wrong to say you're British". The Muslim brotherhood people they (...) to give them credit they would they were the only one saying "you must be British, you're integrated, you're here to stay, you have to adopt the values", later I realized they were right. So the racism and the strong sense of Muslim identity were two factors which contributed to us not to integrating our Muslim identity with European values.

The sense of alienation and estrangement reinforce a new distorted Muslim identity in Europe, perceived as 'anti-Western', antagonist. In all interviews carried out in the course of the project this is a common element that operates as push factor toward the escalation of radicalism:

Abu Abbas, former Fighter in Afghanistan, interview carried out in 2014:

However very Muslim agrees on the fact that alcohol is bad, prostitution is bad, gambling is bad and these things are ills of society, and the solution for this is to (...) the Sharia of Allah upon the people, and obviously the Shari'a project (...) we're trying to explain to the people (...) these thing goes (...), whether it be prostitution, whether it be abortion, whether it be gambling, and we are trying to explain to the people that these are corrupting your family, these are corrupting society, they are using your daughters, using your sons, and the solution is not coming from this people in charge whether is the UK government whether is American government, the solution must come from the Quran and the Sunna, and Shari'a of Allah.

Advising someone that what they are doing is wrong I don't believe breaks any law, in this country and in many countries they believe in freedom of speech, you should be able to express yourself the way you wish. How comes it is allowed for the people to insult our messenger Mohammed Allah, to insult the Quran, to insult symbols of Islam such as the Hijab, the beard or the Muslim dress code. By why if we say to the non-Muslims or disbelievers that what they are doing is wrong and it is against the Quran of God, we are labelled as extremist, we are labelled as terrorists, and no one else except what we say;

We have to be tolerant to (...) corrupt, whether is drugs, whether is alcohol whether is prostitution, we need to accept that, but yet they cannot accept anything from Islam.

We're doing this as being Muslims, as Muslims our obligation is to forbid evil, is to do Dawa to the non-Muslims, so when we see something wrong the messenger Muhammad Allah said to us, he said "try and change it with your hand, if you don't have the ability to do so, then say something with your tongue, if you don't have the ability to do so..."

We are doing this as Muslims, as Muslims we have certain obligations upon us like commanding good and forbidden evil, like inviting the non-Muslims to Islam; the Messenger Muhammad -peace upon him- he said "Whoever of you sees an evil must then change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then he must change it with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then he must change it with his heart. And that is the slightest effect of faith."

So as Muslims we should try and do the best, the best which is to change it with your hand. You living a country where you don't have (...) so the next thing is that we say something with our tongue, say to the people this is going to corrupt you, this is going to take you to the hell fire, you don't want your children to grow up like this ecc..

The difference between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, or all these other governing bodies and non governing bodies is the fact that the Muslim solution is not coming from his own mind, is all coming from the Quran and Sunna, (...) in the Shari'a of Allah therefore alcohol should be banned. (...) prostitution and promiscuity and teenage pregnancy in this country this government says "we should give them free condoms to the youth so that they can do it safely!", rather the Muslim know what time the people should marry, why is UK have the lowest rate of marriage in the UK, people are doing what they're supposed to be doing in marriage, they're doing it anyway, that's why they have so many broken families, so many single mothers, rather we give them the Islamic solution, and our the solution is not coming from our own mind.

Like I said before how comes that people who proclaims freedom of speech and freedom of expression when they insult our Deen, when they insult Islam, when they insult our Prophet Muhammad –peace upon him-, when (.....)

When a Muslim condemns foreign politics for example, or he wants to condemn the culture of the West, he is labelled as extremist and no one listen to what he says, he doesn't have freedom of speech. Rather he is arrested or taken to prison ecc. How does one side can see whatever they wish, when the Muslim wants to respond, he has no freedom of speech.

We don't say to go around and intimidate people, we go around and explain to people that what they are doing is wrong.

We don't want to be mixed up with the Muslim Patrol, Muslim Patrol was a separate organization and they did what they did, but we're not going around intimidating people, you can see it in many our videos, we are speaking to the people explaining, why we are doing what we are doing.

For the issue of the (...) prostitution many of the habitants of the area they were agreeing with us, they said “ we complain to the police, the police didn't do anything, we complained to the MPs the MPs don't do anything, what are we supposed to do? so we said that we were ready to occupy those areas, ask to anyone in the UK are you happy with the drug dealers, people sticking needles in their arm, condoms on the floor, prostitutes outside of their homes. No one will accept that.

We believe that the Shari'a of Allah should govern over the whole world. Not only just the UK, not only America, not only Saudi Arabia, not only Algeria, not only the Arabs, the whole word belongs to Allah, and the Shari's should be (...).

Jihad is part of Islam, so when you say Jihadist in UK it doesn't mean a Muslim that believe in Jihad, cause any Muslim believes in Jihad.

The lack of sense of belonging among many young Muslim radicals find in racial and islamophobic attitudes a sort of detonator towards extreme positions.

Munir Zamir, a former recruiter for Hizb at-Tahrir expresses this feeling with clear words in an interview made in 2014:

Identity and foreign policy - this seems to be a key issue in your journey and discourse. Can you go a little bit deeper?

I think, when I refer to identity, I can hopefully summarise that by saying that, even in this day and age, in the 21st century, there are ongoing debates about whether you are British

first, Muslim second, Muslim first, British second, and the one caveat behind this debate is what about the word Pakistani.

So, even when I was growing up, we were aware of these issues, that people want to apply these labels and these tags to you but some of them don't always play out in the real world experience. You have so to call yourself a British Muslim. For those movements that I was involved in, it was already confrontational, and something that made them aggressive and angry: the fact that, how dare somebody place the term British before the term Muslim?

Another aspect of this regard about identity is that if you said, "Look, brother, I am a Muslim, and I'm Pakistani," the immediate response – and this is what I went on to do in my recruiter hat as well – the immediate response to that would be, "There is no such thing as a Pakistani Muslim. You're Muslim first, Pakistani second."

So, when I talk about identity in that regard we're talking about the separation of the concept of citizenship and nationality and the replacement of citizenship with nationality with Muslimness.

So the unresolved issue between watan and umma.

Yes, absolutely.

Which is part of the Hizb ut-Tahrir discourse more than anybody else.

So, the argument that nationalism is man-made. That umma is divine. The auspices of umma.

What about British policy, for what concern identities of minorities. Do you think somehow this multiculturalism – so, the concept that you can have communities side by side without being integrated, without having the feeling of being British or European – played a role in your story or in the story of different jihadi or radicals?

It plays an absolute and pivotal role in the story. It plays a role, in my mind, it plays a role in the minds of many Muslims living in Britain because the fact is that when you have mass economic migration from former colonies, and the only way in which you can appease and address the management of these people in your country is to give them what they want. What did Muslims want when they first came to the UK? They wanted economic stability, livelihood and education, but then they realised they needed a mosque to pray. So if living with multiculturalism you are able to facilitate the needs of these migrant diasporas, but you're not able to actually offer them what we call now racial, social... cuts off

A mosque and a temple, so on and so forth, in the same neighbourhood, then if it didn't lead to equitable understanding of employment, education and lifestyle and the ability for these people to have successful lives. So, multiculturalism created a vacuum. It created a vacuum by saying, "I can go to the mosque, I can pray. I can watch and read those sources and

those things that appeal to me. But I do not have to engage in what we call Britishness because the British don't accept me any way."

The way I came to understand this was, "Well you hate me any way. In fact I'm only in your country because my father filled a labour shortage for you after the fall out of the Second World War. So, let's not beat around the bush, your majesty. We are the victims, we are still the victims of imperialism. But now we are victims in your country. And you give us multiculturalism to make us feel better."

But you see that multiculturalism only makes you feel better for a certain period of time. Once you leave the mosque and once you've done your prayers and once you believe that you are living a harmonious life, in your own community, you still have this host population to deal with. So racism, discrimination, inequality, misunderstanding, fear, conjecture, stereotyping: were these problems addressed in multicultural phase? No. Who addressed them for us?

First, salafism came to the UK and managed to give a lot of people a particular slant on Islam that made everyone more insular and more conservative in their understanding – to say we feel the need to integrate less now. Even if there was a desire to do it, it made it more difficult. And then the second: even if you did try it, as I said, if you looked at macroeconomic structures, the social structures and deprivation, in all these things you looked around and said, "Why are we living in the poorest areas of this country? Why are we the poorest in terms of educational attainment? Why do we achieve less? Why do we go on to do less?"

So these issues around multiculturalism – by 2001, it was finally the Oldham riots in the northwest of England. There were all these riots. It was only then that the British government started to realise that perhaps multiculturalism hadn't achieved everything we wanted it to. So, as if by magic, overnight, we swapped the word multiculturalism for the word "community cohesion", and all of a sudden started to talk about diversity and shared values. When, at the end of the day, if I don't buy a British identity ticket, if I don't buy one, one: I don't know how to feel British, and two: even if I buy the British ticket, your systems and structures will alienate me anyway because you don't want – the argument is, you still discriminate, there is still systemic discrimination in this country and in Europe.

Recently prof. James Carr of the Department of Sociology, of the University of Limerick, conducted an extensive field research concerning experiences of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland⁵⁸. Therefore the findings related here break new ground in our understanding of this phenomenon in the Irish context and in Europe in general and its impact on the escalation of radicalism among young Muslims.

What is clear, as in other international contexts is the colocation of Muslim identity with that of 'terrorist', of 'suspect'. We have to think on the manner in which political parties, particularly those looking to make political capital; and indeed media outlets construct this image of a homogenised threatening Muslimness, despite of course of the huge diversity across Muslim communities. The findings evidenced from research in Ireland over the past four years evidence the reality of how erroneous stereotypical associations of Muslimness with 'terror' impact upon the lives of ordinary Muslim men and women.

The first phase of this study carried out by Prof Carr comprised of a survey of Muslim men and women and commenced by asking all those who took part if they had experienced some form of hostility⁵⁹ in the period from January 2010.⁶⁰ Just over half of all participants indicated that they did experience some form of hostility in that timeframe. Given that this study centres on anti-Muslim racism it was necessary to go a step further and ask a question to validate the centrality of a participant's Muslimness in these experiences. The reality is stark. Over one-in-three (36%) survey participants felt they had been targeted on the basis of their being identified as Muslim.

The manner in which this hostility manifested varied. Participants reported experiencing physical assaults (22%) ranging from being struck, having hijabs forcibly removed, to being pushed, spat at; some reported being threatened or harassed (20%). A white Irish male revert to Islam recalls his experiences of physical forms of abuse: "I have been pushed and have had people spit in my face, for being Muslim". Fewer participants (14%) indicated that they had property damaged. Those who detailed how this manifested referred to tyres being slashed, having eggs thrown at their home inter alia. Unlike other jurisdictions, attacks on Muslim property such as mosques did not feature in this study (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia 2006). Arguably, this may be the result of the paucity of recognisably Islamic structures in Ireland. The predominant form of hostility experienced was verbal assault (81%). The verbal abuse meted out to the participants in the Irish context, as will be further elaborated below, frequently makes direct reference to the contemporary

⁵⁸ We thank prof. James Carr for his contribution to this paragraph. This study employed a range of research methods. A mix of differing research methods was utilised in order to draw on the strengths of various research tools that, together, could provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon at hand than either method could in isolation. Firstly, a survey that aimed to demonstrate levels of anti-Muslim racism was deemed vital for providing an evidence base of the presence and effect of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. Secondly, I also engaged in one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions in person with Muslim men and women. Together these methods developed and added depth by providing an understanding of the subjective experiences of anti-Muslim racism and the perceptions and practices held by the various participants towards the reporting and recording of this phenomenon. Used in conjunction, the various research methods employed in this study enhanced and helped to validate the conclusions of this study. In total three-hundred and forty-five Muslim men and women⁵⁸ took part in this research; incorporating participants from multifarious ethno-national backgrounds, ages, genders (47% female, 53% male) and aspects of Islam.⁵⁸ All participants were over the age of eighteen.

⁵⁹ Participants were first asked if they had experienced hostility anytime from January 2010 in the form of: physical assault, theft, graffiti (home or work), damage to property, verbal assault, threats or harassment since January 2010. I placed an emphasis on ascertaining the extent to which people felt that they were or were not selected because they are Muslim; if participants answered 'yes' to any of the aforementioned options, subsequent questions enquired whether or not they felt that this happened because they were identified as Muslim.

⁶⁰ The survey was distributed in September 2011 and closed in June 2012.

form of racialised Muslim identity, indicative of an internationalised prejudicial image of Muslims and Islam.

As with data on anti-Muslim hostility, there is also dearth of official information on discrimination as experienced by Muslim men and women in Ireland on the basis of their religious identity. Reflecting the questions of hostility, participants were asked about their experiences of discrimination in the period from January 2010.⁶¹ One third of all participants indicated that they had experienced anti-Muslim discrimination. As with anti-Muslim hostility, experiences of discrimination are heavily gendered with Muslim women (40%) almost twice as likely as Muslim men (22%) to experience anti-Muslim discrimination. It is worth noting at this point that there are striking similarities between the experiences of participants here in Ireland with those present in international evidence of anti-Muslim racism.

The following examples detail experiences of religious profiling by the Irish State. Aatif, a male Muslim participant explicitly presents the core of the concept of ‘suspect community’, a term originally coined in reference to Irish communities in the UK during the troubles, wherein a person is assumed to be a ‘threat’ or suspect on the basis of an association with a group identity, in this case Muslim.

...there was a Garda car unmarked...outside the [masjid] for weeks watching us, we knew this and I accepted it, at times maybe it was a bit annoying...from my memory now this is back in 2003/4 after 2004 they stopped [surveillance], obviously they were satisfied we weren’t harbouring any terrorists, I don’t know??!! I mean what else can I think?? (Aatif, Irish Muslim male)

Ehan describes his experience and that of his friends as they were leaving an anti-war protest. Although attended by many, Ehan noted how they were “singled out... [because] we just happened to look different”. When the time came to leave....

...we went to the car park to sit down and turn on the car...we’re just reversing to come out of the car park and head back...with the rest of the crowd and then Gards came. Two Gards in plain clothes and then two others in uniforms were standing in the near distance...they came to us and I could see most of our colleagues...going; it was just our car left in the car park near the Shannon airport...I was sitting in the back, so two guys [Gardaí] came in the car...inside the car and we just took it easy...they’re [asking] what’s your name? Do you have an ID on you? You know, whose car is this?? Where did you get it?? Where do you live?? When did you come to Ireland what do you think of Saudi Arabia?? What do you think of Hezbollah?? (Ehan South-Asian Irish Muslim male)

The impact of practices such as these that pathologise Muslim identity, positioning it as being inextricably associated with a ‘suspect’ identity permeates beyond the immediate context. Indeed,

⁶¹ Participants were asked if they had experienced discrimination in the following spheres: at work, looking for work, in/accessing education, accessing health services, restaurants, public transport, obtaining accommodation, accessing financial services. If participants answered ‘yes’ to any of these options, subsequent questions enquired whether or not they felt that this happened because they were identified as Muslim.

the repercussion of such profiling can inform broader experiences of hostility and discrimination being meted out to Muslim men and women. Repeatedly throughout this study, survey participants recalled how they have been subjected to taunts of "Muslims are terrorists"; "Suicide bombers!"; "Taliban, go back to your cave." This association was also clear in the experiences of hostility and discrimination that were reported at the hands of fellow patrons in various modes of transport. These experiences chimed with instances of anti-Muslim hostility elaborated above. Consistent across these lived experiences is the continuing the theme of Muslims as a suspect group:

I was on the bus in Jan '11 and a man kept telling the bus driver there was a suicide bomber on the bus. (Irish Muslim female, survey participant)

[I]n the public transport people refused to sit beside us once they identify us as Muslim etc. (Arabic Muslim female, survey participant)

In June 2011 - at the Luas station, an older man said to me and shouted, "she has a bomb in her bag", "she has a bomb in her bag", because I was wearing (burqa).
(Arabic Muslim female, survey participant)

Muslim women are referred to as 'bin Laden's wife'. The following quote details experiences of both verbal and physical abuse experienced by a female Arabic Muslim survey participant:

Been called 'filthy Arab', hijab pulled, drenched with beer Tuesday August 2010... Weekend March 2011... Empty can [was] thrown at me from moving car while yelling 'F-ing terrorist' Midweek afternoon Sept 2011

Recent anecdotal evidence suggests that anti-Muslim hostility, informed by international events continues to blight the lives of some of Ireland's Muslim communities. Meagher's (2014) newspaper article written around the time of the murder of James Foley demonstrates through a discussion with two Muslim men in Dublin:

"Most people are good to me...but every single day I get called a terrorist by someone, usually someone in a car who pulls over as I walk down the street. It has got a lot worse this year because of Isis and it's particularly bad now that they are executing western people. I am a man of peace and I abhor what Isis is doing, but some people are looking at these fundamentalists and thinking that all Muslims are like that. And nothing could be further from the truth" (Anonymous Muslim male A).

Likewise a friend of Male A states:

"People have stopped me in the street and asked me if I will condemn the murders [by Isis]. They are almost surprised when I say 'of course I do' – Isis are barbarians who do not represent all true Muslims, and what's more it is mainly Muslims who they are killing. What is very worrying though is the fact that this

organisation seems to be able to reach out to disaffected Muslims in the West as we can all see when we hear ‘Jihad John’ speak”
(Anonymous Muslim Male B)

There are a number of points raised by these participants and it is worth noting some of them briefly here. The first is the continued association of Muslim identity with terrorism and organisations such as Isis; secondly, is the assumption that Muslim men and women are expected to apologise for the actions of a group they have nothing to do with who are based thousands of miles away (similar expectations for an apology were widely noted in the aftermath of the attacks on the offices of Charlie Hebdo in Paris); third for now is the reference to ‘Jihad John’.

The association of Muslimness with terrorism, as inherent in Muslim identity is incredibly problematic and serves to evacuate Muslim communities of their myriad diversity. Media, political parties and governments, particular the arms of government involved in security have a responsibility towards the safety of their Muslim citizens. As such every effort must be made to ensure that all Muslim men and women are not painted with the same brush. Discourses and related policies of securitisation communicate to broader society that it is Muslim identities that are problematic identities, untrustworthy, threatening, thus requiring surveillance. By locating Muslim communities as the domain of ‘extremism’ and ‘radicalisation’, policies that aim to counter terrorist activity set Muslims apart as a suspect group against whom hostility becomes socially acceptable.

All of this creates great confusion, like in the Tower of Babel. It brought no great fortune then as it brings no great fortune today.

II.2 Islam and Reformism

Muhammad Haddad, in his research work on Muhammad ‘Abduh, the father of Arab-Muslim reformism, has stabilised a precise connection between this logical-semantic-imaginative universe and political Muslim contemporary reformism: *“trying to describe a new situation with an antique vocabulary, reflecting the change in the framework of continuity, advancing finding the lost roots of the past, this is how the new paradigm was born, that which they call precisely the paradigm of Islah (reform). They started off looking for a lost Islam, while up to then it had been seen as come an evident and spontaneous presence. Being Muslim was no longer an immediate given and became research in itself. Starting from this moment and in the face of all evidence, modern Islam is to be found in an irreversible process of secularisation. God is no longer a given, but is reinvented to satisfy the new needs of the city of the age”*⁶².

Access to modernity does not necessarily involve renouncing your own faith, your own history and identity, perhaps in the name of important models of the country or foreign culture. Not necessarily

⁶² Muhammad Haddad, *Una Riforma Religiosa nell’Islam è ancora Possibile? ‘Abduh un Secolo Dopo*, Milano, Jaka Book, 2011, pag. 83-84

is the path taken by the West via the French revolution the only road. Being modern, changing your own socio-political conditions does not necessarily mean abandoning religion, your own faith, your semantic based on concepts such as Khilafah, Ummah, Shari'ah, etc., but instead can often be the contrary. As sustained correctly by Haddad, who is a student of the school of phenomenology, religious reform is an experience that values the representation of the sacred readapting it to the needs imposed by the situation lived at a particular time. In the case of monotheist religions this brings about a regeneration of hermeneutic attitudes, as Ramadan has underlined, that is of mechanisms that structure the collective vision of the world. It is that which in Islamic terms we call 'ijtihad'⁶³. Haddad has written: *"like this the so called monotheistic religions do not meet only in virtue of their monotheism, but also overall in virtue of an element that regards the present and the future: the capacity and the inclination to reform and to adapt to the modern conditions of man."*⁶⁴ Islamists (islamiyyun), therefore, those who want to connect Islam with modernity, are reformists, as many other politico-cultural movements inspired by religion in European history have been.

In reality, today in fact Islamists (Islamiyyun) are delegitimized in the public sphere in the West thanks to the use of false ideological paradigms, spread by the media and thanks to the politics of the state that see their position of power threatened by reformism in an Islamic mould. At the base of this prejudice, there is the idea that each interference by religion in modern life is considered reactionary or extremist, fundamentalism indeed. It is not an easy theme to confront, but we need to be courageous in admitting that within these hurried judgments without historical dimensions, from the Orientalistic viewpoint and that of religious phenomenology, there is a striking sectarian prejudice alongside a good dose of Islamophobia. At the base, there is religious discrimination as a factor of socio-political development.

In reality, modern Europe was born in this way, discussing God and religion, using these codes as a medium to access socio-political transformations. The Lutheran reforms half way through the 1500s was not occupied with the Magna Carta Libertatum, which is for more than 300 years before (1215) and not even with Copernican theory (1543), which is contemporary to Luther. Government and science apparently were not on the agenda, according to the canons of the time. We needed another 100 years, the abiura by Gallilei in 1633 and the publishing of The Mathematics Principles of Natural philosophy by Newton (1687) to confirm those heliocentric scientific principles that Aristarco of Samo had formulated almost 300 years before Christ and that are at the basis of science and modern politics. Luther and his reforms instead used a different paradigm to transform the power relationships of the time. They spoke of indulgence, justification through faith, abuse of servants, baptism, the consubstantiation of the mystic body and other sacraments. Luther confronted and broke with Erasmus of Rotterdam for his thesis on the book on free will and with Zwingli for the doctrines on the Eucharist, like today the Salafi Wahhabi impostation might attack the sufi on the cult of saints or on the *ra'y* (theological opinion). Still this religious apparently abstract diatribe, since 1527, the year in which the reigns of Sweden and Denmark passed to Protestantism for the will of their sovereigns, and brought about a gradual geo-political movement inside Europe. It is within this semantic code, according to well defined paradigms, that modern Europe of the nation state and the

⁶³ For the debate on the Ijtihad and its implications for reform, we recommend, Tariq Ramadan, L'Islam in Occidente, Op. Cit., pag. 64-72

⁶⁴ Muhammad Haddad, *Una Riforma Religiosa nell'Islam è ancora Possibile?*, op. cit., pg. 82

bourgeoisie was born in a period of time of over 200 years, with infinite wars, until the guillotining of Robespierre and the formation of modern nations.

Politics and religion are also interconnected factors in Europe today, but quite distinct. In the public sphere, where politics and civil society operate, there are also those who are legitimately inspired by religious values and inspired to promote them with political ends. There are in Europe and in all parliaments, politics and movements with a Christian inspiration, without this generating great scandal, if not amongst their political adversaries. The debate on ethical questions, in all their aspects, is still today at the centre of the most thorny political European questions. Thinking to define movements like the CSU in Germany or the ex DC in Italy as fundamentalist only because they are inspired by Christianity in politics, would be foolish. From the other side, it is also true that no political European movement claims that “God governs the state” or that religious morals become laws of the state, obligatory for those who do not believe or for whosoever simply does not agree with them. The rules of politics are not written by priests or popes, but by the populace via the sovereign instruments of democracy, from which we all benefit, both secular movements and religious movements. This is one of the points of difference between Salafists and The Muslim Brotherhood, for example.

But we do not even need to imagine that civil society, on the other side, is religious for antonomasia, as if movements in Europe like “La Manif Pour Tous” or Christian Democratic Parties did not exist. This is the subtle line between brands of legitimacy.

II.3 Islam and Power

Finally, there is another element of the relationship between religion and politics that should be focused upon, seeing as it runs exactly parallel to the system of competitive theory. In Ramadan’s definition, the Shariah contains two elements: one of traditional character, the moral and normative aspect, and the other dynamic and innovative, the very modern research of the first source. The first of these elements can be understood as Islam as a religious organisation, made up of Mufti, Imam, jurists, shuyukh, Mosques, law schools and Madaris, Dhakat e Khayrat (institutes and charities), norms and laws. The other is Islam understood as Islah, reformism, made up of movements of civil society, political parties, unions and intellectuals, street revolts and civil war. Lastly, also terrorism and uprising.

The error that many in the West make is to think of these two poles as being in competition, the Islamic religion, on one side, and the liberals or secularists on the other. This is a grave error, fruit of an observation corrupted by the Western paradigm, which tends to see everything from its own point of view. On the contrary, inside the Islamic paradigm the two poles of the competitive system are both contained in the Islamic narrative, while the secular movement is represented by those who uses the military to torture, arrest and kill, naturally in the name of anti-terrorism, security and democracy. The ‘baddies’ are us. They are causes which unfortunately increasingly frequently even in Western countries embrace with the support of all types, convinced they are pursuing their own short term geo-strategic interests. But forgetting that in an interconnected world, in Europe there are at least 20 million citizens who have origins in those countries. Those who have Mediterranean fathers, mothers,

uncles and aunts, children, sisters and friends who in closed groups recount the real face of the dictatorships supported by the West where they today are citizens with unequal rights.

A few years ago European immigration of The Muslim Brotherhood played an important role in transforming the Arab Spring. Now resentment of what is happening in many Arab countries can become a time bomb for Europe. This is the real time bomb where terrorism, uprising and foreign criminal networks can penetrate, including foreign terrorists fighters.

Seen from this competitive point of view, the division between these two universes in competition is not between who is more secular, or who respects women's rights more, between who is more a friend of this or that Western power or between who is more democratic. All of this is naturally important, but it is not the heart of the problem. In the Islamic culture of inspiration, what divides the two worlds of this very variegated and rich religious universe is the relationship between power, overall with governments, both in how it materialises in their countries of origin and how it develops in Europe. The relationship with power, intended in a broad sense, is the key to understanding the substantial difference between radical movements (legitimate or subversive) and quietist movements, like *taqlidi* and *tagdidi*, to use Arab terms. This is also a fundamental category for exploring the universe of reformism and radicalism of religious inspiration and realising however that these divisions too are subject to the same dynamic laws of radicalisation: you can be against the system in certain phases, but then paradoxically the self same movement can become in another phase a source of stabilisation, if not indeed a conservative movement. This, too, is a phenomenon well noted by European political sociologists which has great relevance in the politics of conflict.

The relationship with power and the state is key to understanding the nature of radical Islamic movements, much more than their degree of secularism, and runs parallel to their level of democratisation. Inside specific spaces of action these movements are subjected to the law of competitive systems. A movement like an-Nur in Egypt, for example, has moved with a certain ease from supporting The Muslim Brotherhood and therefore the opposition to the pro-Western secular opposition of Mubarak, to opposition of the legitimate government of Morsi and finally to supporting the coup d'état of as-Sisi, which reinstalled 'The Profound Egypt' of the military. The ideological dynamics have not changed much in these phases of transition, but the relationship with Egyptian politics and with regional politics has changed substantially over that period of time. This has been the decisive factor. Similar phenomena are to be found in the complex world of Muslim minorities in Europe.

The relationship of the reformist movements with power helps us to understand the direction of development of radical movements, both reformist and revolutionary. Religious reformism can in fact be used in all directions. Normally the traditional *taqlidi* tendencies, represent an instrument of legitimisation of the existing power, well beyond its adherence to moral principles or to Islamic governance. With the consolidation of the Caliphate dynasties, immediately after the phase of the great Alid schism, the religious-Muslim apparatus becomes a source of stabilisation and political legitimisation in the history of Islam. Caliphates before, emirs, qaimmaqan and sultans, then down until mukhtar of the small villages, will tend to link themselves to Islamic religious organisations as a source of legitimacy and consensus, in exchange for benefits and advantages. It is not very different from what happened for example in the church-state relationship in large part of Italian history. As Rashid al-Ghannushi reminds us, "*the pseudo-modern state has occupied the remaining*

structures of civil society. Mosques, donations, courts (Shariah-prescribed), religious institutions, unions, political parties, charities and the press, are all occupied."⁶⁵ Today this is the official Islam, al-Azhar and the great schools in Arab and Islamic world, to have a term of comparison, or Islam of the Embassies in Europe.

But parallel to this, and from the beginning Islamic history registers the presence of another face of Islam, that which is *tagdidi*, re-newer. Also this particular aspect of Muslim religion is part of classical history, contrary to what many contemporary analysts think. This aspect has manifested itself in the many historical revolts of the imamites, druse, alawites, sufis and mystics, of the mu'tazila and the kharigite, which in the name of more or less heterodox religious paradigms attempted to corrode the internal power established in the name of religious reformism from inside. In some cases, the intense activity of these *du'at* (propagandists) brought about the rise to power of new groups in certain regions, where more favourable conditions existed, often thanks to the military, like in the Egyptian Fatimid Caliphate and other various Iranian, Kurdish or Turkish dynasties. Almost always, though, these religious and social phenomena passed like meteors in the universe of Islamic history, as happened in the example of Isma'ilis.

II.3.1 Wahhabism

The most recent phase in this 'revolutionary' face of Islam is given to that phenomenon that goes under the name of *nahdah*, the modern Renaissance that dated from half of the half of the 1700s. These are the roots of modern radicalism, in all its forms, positive and negative.

The nahdah signals a new phase in the relationship between politics and religion inside the 'Islamic paradigm'. Al-Ghannushi is one of the most lucid contemporary politicians in pointing out this phenomenon: "*Islam existed before the current Islamic movement, but was intended as a preparation for the afterlife, not as a system to shape society*"⁶⁶. In line with his approach, emerges on a global scale a new profile fruit of reformist religious culture, as Esposito and Voll have correctly noted: it is that of *nushata*', the intellectual activists, who are inspired by their faith but operate with essentially political logic in the civil and political sphere.

With the emergence of political Islam and of the 'Islamists' (islamiyyun), the political and cultural significance of the leaders adopts a strong political profile which tends to become more important than traditional figures of Islamic authority, the *Aimma* (pl. of Imam), the *fuqaha*' (doctors of law) or the *Mufti*. Seeing as the significance of politics grows, the model of activist leadership grows, then his hands are dirtied in politics even having a strong intellectual moral-religious profile and a strong reformist charge inside his own movement.

Figures like Ar-Raysuni o al-Ghannushi, to not speak of Erdogan, at the moment, leaders like al-Qaradawy are more popular and more recognisable and exercise a deeper role than the theologians of al-Azhar, who supports the dictator and are therefore unpopular.

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⁶⁵ Rashid al-Ghannushi, *Secularism in the Arab Maghreb*, in *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*, New York, University Press, 1999, pg. 101

⁶⁶ Rashid al-Ghannushi, *Islamic Movement: Self-Criticism and Reconsideration*, in Abu Rabi' I. M., *The Contemporary Arab Reader on Political Islam*, London, 2010, pag. 130

The activist and intellectual politician, which Arab-Islamic society appeared to have forgotten, in this phase has a primary role with respect to religious jurists, experts in *Igtihad* (the *mujtahid*) and of *Fiqh*. Even in a cohesive and consolidated country like Iran, the struggle between Ahmadinejad and the religious leadership, which has brought about the election of Rouhani, with the relative debate around the role of the *velayat-e faqih* (role of religious justice), has been a clear symbol of this polarisation. This is the central point of new Islamic reformism that forms the religious base of a new radicalism projected in many directions.

The first of these phenomena substantially different from traditional Islam was born in the reformist action of Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab, who is the forerunner of this type of activist religious mould that reached its apex with al-Afghani, ‘Abduh, Rida and al-Banna at the start of the 1900s. The roots of contemporary reformism of the Arab political movements is in large part similar and goes back to this fusion between Wahhabism and reformism of ‘Abduh.

The message of Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab is neo-hanbalit which is based on the rediscovery of presumed original sources of the sunnah, cleansed from every presumed historical ‘incrustation’ considered to be deviant and sees in Islam the key to the political re birth of the Arabs.

In its first phase, starting from 1744, it is a typical revolutionary phenomenon that forces an alliance between Muhammad ibn Sa‘ūd (1744-1765) and transforms into a para-political movement, mobilizing Mosques, tribes and Bedouin nobility around the Saudi family to overthrow the dominant and fragmented political system of the Arabic peninsular.

The first Wahhabi state founded in 1918, which has many revolutionary characters, was destroyed by an Egyptian-Ottoman alliance. But in 1924 ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Sa‘ūd took power in Saudi Arabia, taking away from the Hashimite family and khedivè of Egypt the political regional leadership.

Wahhabism, which is strongly yielding to the state reasoning of ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, became the Arab reformist movement of reference at 360 degrees, so much so that also men like Rashid Rida and the Maronite Amin Rayhani (1876-1940) became supporters of this first political-petrol-religious experiment.

That which gave strength in that phase of the Wahhabi movement was a complex interconnected narrative: its apparent origin in anti-colonialism, its anti-liberalism imported from Europe and the hope of saving a Caliphate occupied by obscurantism by a non Arab populace like the Turks has been vacant since 1924. In reality, the ideas of Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab, in the context of the new Saudi reign, were soon transformed into a factor of political stabilization for the monarchy. From the ‘Calvinist’ doctrine that destabilised the official religious authority of that time, mined the legitimacy of the ‘ulama’ taqlidi, traditionalists, and shook the mechanisms of hereditary religious authority of the Turkish Egyptian powers and the transmission of know how, in a brief time, was transformed into a rigid institution of stabilization of the monarchy, thanks to a sort of pact on the basis of which ‘religious clerics’ limited their influence to the education of the hisba, the religious police, in exchange for full support for the state.

From second branches of the Wahhabi ideas, between the 80s and 90s, various Salafi movements were born in the East and in Europe. They are movements impermeable to the thousand year Islamic traditions, which oscillate constantly between quietism and activism, up to the point of giving life to

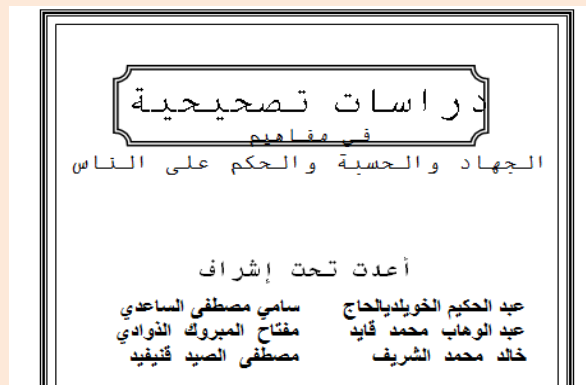
political parties (for example to the coalition an-Nur in Egypt) that compete in elections or in politico-cultural movements that occupy strategic positions in many European Mosques.

With respect to the theme of the threat these movements cannot be judged only with criteria relative to their narratives or their 'ideological' framework.

II.3.2 Islamic Radicalism Alternative to Terrorism

From now on it is therefore fundamental to realise that the 'Islamic paradigm' represents a language inside which the various movement of radicalism of Islamic inspiration can compete even in a strong way, this includes both those which are democratically inspired and those which tend towards uprising or terrorism. If these mutually competitive movements are offered external enemies, on the typical paradigms of Western culture of the secular media, which tends to ally itself with military dictators in Arab countries, these fundamental competitive dynamics internal to Islamic radicalisation tend to conform and entrench themselves in apparent homogeneity.

Perhaps the most important example of this competitive dynamic, which is too infrequently studied by experts of security, is that of the controversy between az-Zawahiri, the actual leader of the component 'Afghan' of al-Qa'idah, and his ex allies of the al-Gama'ah al-Islamiyyah Egyptians (but similar cases are registered also in the Libyan Muqatilah and in many other Salafi movements).



In 1997, following discussions with the Egyptian authorities, the main pseudo-Islamic fighting group leadership in the al-Gama'ah al-Islamiyyah, decided to launch a cease-fire initiative. Since then the Egyptian *tanthim* leaders have begun publishing a series of documents and books which bitterly criticise the cultural set-up of Jihadism and represent an in depth historical revision of their ideas and history.

The first four books, titled *Tashih al-mafahim* (concept corrections), give theoretical criticism in the field of Jihadism without going too far into the value of the organisations.

The leaders of the prisoners take all responsibility for what happened in the 1980s, including the assassination of Sadat, they renounce helping the Jihad against governments in Islamic lands who do not apply Shariah law and put limits on the possibility of non-state authorities appealing to Jihad.

And finally they contradict and repudiate the idea that Islam allows the killing of civilians, Muslims or otherwise, and tourists. The *Tashih* is important because it retrieves the tagdidi⁶⁷ tradition of Islamic history and above all authors such as Ibn Taymiyyah on whom the Jihadist khawariji movement has illegally pressured. The actions and thinking of Ibn Taymiyyah are historical texts beginning with the fact that this very important tagdidi Imam, supported the Muslim governments of the moment against the Barbaric invasions. Another important element is the controversy between Ibn Taymiyyah and the Shiite movements, which does highlight the fact that governing is a secular science which is not included in religious duties. The attack of the *Tashih* against Faraj, the author who supported the idea of Jihad as a religious duty equal to the five pillars (*al Farydah al-Gha'ibah*), is directed and is based on his superficial theology. Both the ahadith, called to support Faraj and the modernist Koranic tafsir, who decided that the famous ‘Verse Of The Sword’ abolishes the ‘Verse Of Pardon’ in The Surah of the Cow have been disapproved.

To establish his own criticism of the Jihadist movement he recalls not only Ibn Taymiyyah, but As-Suyuty and his ‘tafsir’ as well. It is therefore the first, real offensive on all fronts aimed at reclaiming all the traditional rights of Muslim reformism in spite of the Jihad movement which distorts them.

In subsequent interviews with the Egyptian weekly al-Musawwar (2002) and with the newspaper Ash-Sharq al-Awsat (2003), Karam Zuhdi, who was president of the Tanthim Consultation Committee (Maglis ash-Shura), and Nagih Ibrahim, the ideologist of the group, gave an in-depth historical review of the history of Jihad terrorism between the 1980s and 1990s, defining their activity as “fitnah”, division, a term which also implies the dimension of religious as well as political and military deviation. For the first time, Anwar as Sadat, whom they assassinated in 1981, is declared a martyr (shahid).

In 2003, again in the ash-Sharq al Awsat, Muhammaad Issam Darbala published his book entitled “The Strategies of al-Qai’dah: Errors And Dangers” and in 2004 Nagih Abd Allah Ibrahim published his “Islam The Challenge Of The 21st Century”. In 2007 Sayyid Imam ash-Sharif published the “Document of Right Guidance for Jihad Activity in Egypt and the World” (18-11/4-12/2007). In 2009 Sayyid Imam ash-Sharif again published a paper entitled *Al-ta’riyyah li-Kitab al-Tabri’ah* in which he rebuts the theories of az-Zawahiri. Finally, in the Quds al Arabi dated 23.12.2009 Muhammad Nasr publishes an interview with Nagih Ibrahim, in which the phases of the revisionist movement are studied and for the first time there is reference to political involvement of these ex-terrorist leaders⁶⁸.

The following year Ayman Az-Zawahiri answered him directly with “Exoneration” in which he argues that such reasoning from a man such as as-Sharif must have been extorted through torture by the CIA and Egyptian services.

The importance of these documents consists in the fact that, taken as a whole, they criticise and contest the positions of Jihadism from a radical but not a violent viewpoint, using a very similar Islamic paradigm but with competitive strategies and objectives. Their criticism touches on the central topics of Jihad ideology and attacks from an orthodox position: the illegitimacy of the “takfiri” positions which lead to assassination on ethnic grounds, to indiscriminate reprisals (al-

⁶⁷ The Arab word ‘tagdid’ means renewal. it indicates an internal cultural tendency of the Arab intellectuals which saw in Ibn Taymyyah (1263-1328) its first, most important innovator and is sustained by a long series of reformers, most of them Sufi, and which resurfaced in the form of social reformism at the end of the last century. It then broke out into the various political movements of the present century.

⁶⁸ Muhammad Nasr, Nagih Ibrahim: *al Gama’ah tagawazat marhalah al-‘Amal al-Musallih did ad-Dawlah ghayr raga’ah wa tabannat wasa’il al-‘Amal as-salami al-Islahi*, al-Quds al-Arabi, 23-12-2009.

mu'amalah bi-l-mithl), to the practice of using human shields and the massacre of civilians, considered co-responsible because they pay taxes; the theological non-acceptance of the Jihad such as fard 'ayn when there is no effective occupation, the lack of respect for those who hold a visa or amana, the lack of protection for guests and tourists etc. Above all the Jihadi methodological basics, beginning with the assumption that only Imam-fighters can interpret and declare Jihad and ending with the intolerance to anyone criticising the Jihad movement whether he be an American or a Jewish ally.

This debate, like many others inside the universe of Islamic radicalism, shows us that the Islamic paradigm can produce many exits, which have substantially different “values” inside our “dynamic proportion” and that they represent different degrees of threat for various objectives, according to the competitive system that is in play.

Certainly, if our objective were the sexual liberation of Muslim women, according to feminist models of the theory of gender, probably the Salafis would not be the best people to deal with. But if our objective is to prevent violence or uprising in strongly radicalised ambits, maybe an integralist Salafi, like the Egyptian group around al-Fadl, could be an interlocutor with whom we might reason.

If we intervene in this Islamic paradigm inserting typically binary logic of other cultural paradigms like those of secularists and military, or we do not ‘protect’ the sphere of freedom and elaboration of movements at a low index of risk inserting colonial logic, we risk only favouring the most extreme components, who need an injection of violence in the system to polarise the conflict.

In this sense the theory of Kilcullen according to which some movements can maintain their threat level only as ‘dissipative structures’, is very interesting⁶⁹ and certainly in line with our dynamic proportion. Taking out ‘energy’ from the system of terrorism and uprising often means making internal contradictions emerge, like in the case of ISIS and An-Nusrah in Syria. This inevitably brings many radicals to discover the contradictions in their own initiatives, as we have seen with the interview of Manuar ‘Ali (Abu Muntasir).

II.3.3 The Muslim Brotherhood

Another of the results of the Wahhabi reformism that of ‘Abduh, on the ‘tagdidi’ front, are The Muslim Brotherhood. Leiken and Brooke in Foreign Affairs have defined The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) “*The world’s oldest, largest and most influential Islamist organisation*”⁷⁰. Founded in Egypt in 1928 also the movement of The Muslim Brotherhood has experienced a complex evolution.

The MB are fundamentally a revolutionary movement, while the Salafist movements are based on primarily conservative models. Moreover, The MB, as we shall see below, in contrast to other contemporary reformist movements, are often characterized by an attraction to action and a constant attempt to turn events into tangible practices, including policy, their religious ideas. Al-Ghannushi rightly reminds us how “Islam existed before the current Islamic movement, but was intended as a

⁶⁹ David Kilcullen, *Insurgency*, op. cit. pg. 195 “*Insurgencies are dissipative structures that depend for stability on a throughput of Energy. The more Energy (violence, grievances, insurgent action, counterinsurgent reaction) circulating in the system, the more stable it becomes and the less effective countermeasures become. Once energy is drained from the system, it becomes chaotic. Its structure begins to collapse, inroads can be made into disrupting it as the underlying drivers can be addressed*”

⁷⁰ Robert S. Leiken And Steven Brooke, *The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood*, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2007 issue

preparation for the afterlife, not as a system to shape society.⁷¹ Today this is the primary goal of MB reformism that has the objective of reforming also the Wahhabi Gulf Monarchies. This is also the reason why political alliances even contingent ones between the parties that are the expression of the two cultural worlds (Salafi and Ikhwani), for example the Justice and Freedom Party in Egypt, led by The MB, and the coalition of An-Nur, based on Salafism, are very difficult. This contingent political tendency can be observed in Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Syria, but particularly in the Persian Gulf. An important corollary of this ideological polarization are the geo-political alignments, which revolve around Turkey and Iran, for the reform area, and the Gulf monarchies for the traditional area. Two years ago we predicted that *“These polarizations are intended to transform the political history and area of operation for the parties in the coming years.”*⁷² This is where we are today.

Understanding the cultural matrix is also very important in terms of contents and narratives.

Through this tagdidi formation, in fact, the MB develop the various forms of *igtiḥad* to the maximum, namely a traditional technique of Islamic law which, in their modernist version, allows a high degree of flexibility and adaptability in the interpretation of both *Shariah* and the *Quran* and *Sunnah*. Kamal Habib, a leading theoretician of the Palestinian movement JIP (Palestinian Islamic Jihad – a terrorist proxy group in Gaza) even expresses positions that are likely to exceed those of The MB in terms of freedom of interpretation: *“This can be understood only by releasing the methodologies used to crucial issues of faith and consensus (in the sense of legal Igma’ -nda), on the one hand, the issues related to real life and to igtiḥad, on the other hand, so as not to bring matters of faith into matters of everyday life, which fall under the umbrella of igtiḥad [...] A proper understanding of Shariah and jurisprudence by the Islamic movement is the key to understanding a complex theory that deals with the difficult questions of our current reality. This is possible through systematic discrimination within Shariah between matters of faith and immutable values on the one hand, and changing the realities of the issues that concern igtiḥad on the other. Islam does not know the end of the story, but it believes in the infinite dialectic between man and reality”*.⁷³

In more orthodox terms, we can say that the introduction or the emphasis on legal concepts such as those of public interest (*al maslahah al ‘ammah*) and mission related to ‘*Dar al Da’wah*’, or the reinterpretation of concepts such as the oneness of God and vice-regency of humanity, which, though they are traditional elements of Islamic legal thinking, here take on a new weight and significance, and have substantially altered the political-theological reflections of The MB compared to both the religious Islamic institutional establishment and the Salafis.

This intangible element allows FM to make the transition towards a political system without affecting its basic principles, creating a separation between the dimension of the democratic struggle and politics on the one hand, and the more intimate and religious aspects on the other.

⁷¹ Rashid al-Ghannushi, *Islamic Movement: Self-Criticism and Reconsideration*, in Abu Rabi’ I. M., *The Contemporary Arab Reader on Political Islam*, London, 2010, pg. 130

⁷² Sergio Bianchi, *THE BROTHER’S SPRING The evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood: towards a new populist Islam?*, Wien, 2012

⁷³ Kamal Habib, *The Islamic Movement’s Approach to Understanding Shari’ah*, in Abu Rabi’ I. M., *The Contemporary Arab Reader on Political Islam*, London, 2010, pg. 178

These elements function as a propeller for the diverse galaxy of contemporary Islamic reformism, certainly not only for The Muslim Brotherhood, though the Brotherhood's level of resilience is much sharper than in any other contemporary movement. These characteristics have allowed the evolution of a very complex cultural debate at the turn of the eighties and nineties, when the new political narrative which now underpins the current action of the movement took shape.

In fact, at the end of the Eighties, within the various movements that make up the galaxy of the global Brotherhood, a new class of intellectuals and leaders emerged, who were to produce a major reformist breakthrough. They are the third generation after the founding fathers, after Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi, and after that of their commentators who knew them directly, such as Abdul Qadir Awda, or Said Ramadan or Muhammad al-Ghazali. It is a generation that grew up in defeat, the first political-military and then ideological, and has been able to capitalize on this and on their own defeats. It is a generation that has chosen not to be drawn into the spiral of hatred and terrorism, and that is why it has refused the choices of intellectuals such as Abdallah Azzam, Omar Abdul-Rahman and Ayman az-Zawahiry, but also the strategies of violent reformists like Sami Al-Aryan, or Abdallah Shallah - theorists within the JIP - which still have channels of dialogue with The MB because they are recognized as belonging to reformist groups, despite being allies of Iran (while The MB tend to have Turkey as their reference at this stage).

The reformists currently in orbit around the MB are significantly biased against terrorism, at least in its majority members, while those outside of that close organizational orbit, such as the JIP, Hamas or reformist branches of shiism reformists, are often transited into terrorism, on a par with strands of the Jihadist salafiyyun. It is, in the end, a generation that grew up with a much greater degree of exposure to the West and cultural globalization, and so could not be content even with the solutions proposed by the commentators of the purist thoughts of the founding fathers such as Muhammad al-Ghazali (1917 - 1996), who were fundamentally prisoners of their own history. This new trend is epitomized by thinkers, activists and politicians such as the economist and former Minister of Pakistan Khurshid Ahmad, the leader of the Tunisian party an-Nahdah, Rashid al-Ghannushi, for some religious aspects the Imam Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who has helped to reform many aspects of the rights of Muslim minorities in the West (*fiqh al-Aqalliyat*), the leader of the Lebanese Islamic Action Front Fathi Yakan, the former converted Marxist Munir Shafiq, who has harshly criticized the decisions of the PLO which he belonged to for years, the Moroccan intellectual Ahmad al- Raysuni, the Syrian Ali ad-Din al-Sadr Bayanuni, the Algerian Nahnah, and, finally, the most important European thinker, Tariq Ramadan. Alongside these, there are numerous academics, intellectuals and technicians with an aura of neutrality such as Abd al-Wahhab al Massri, who revolve around the great research institutions of the Brotherhood in the West and the East, beginning with the IIIT (International Institute of Islamic Thought), the real think tank of the movement, which has had Ismail al-Faruqi as director, an academic close to the Brotherhood who, until his violent death in 1986, first experimented with rudimentary formulae of inter-religious dialogue from Islamist perspectives. Many of the academic intellectuals are teachers in important universities in Europe and in the States. These names often occupy airtime on al-Jazeera, speaking to millions and millions of Muslims around the world.

There are two most important elements that these twenty years of debate have created within the reformism of the MB:

- Democracy has always been perceived by theorists of the Brotherhood as a result of Western imperialism, contrary to traditional theories of government of traditional Islam. This idea, which was also present in many of the first and second generation of the Brotherhood, is perpetuated in the Salafi movements and those of the terrorist network of al-Qaeda. At the end of the Eighties the third generation reformists broke with this cultural pattern. *"Many Islamists associate democracy with foreign intervention and untrustworthiness. But democracy is a set of mechanisms to ensure freedom of thought and of association, peaceful competition through elections, to the authority of government [...] We have no modern Islamic experience able to replace democracy. The Islamisation of democracy is the closest thing to the implementation of shurah the Islamic principle of consultation. Those who reject it have not produced anything but the single party system.[...] Those who have most to gain from democracy are Muslims. They should be its biggest supporters. Muslims can come to power every time there are free elections. The secularists in this phase are in the minority and they are having problems with democracy"*⁷⁴. The leader of the Algerian movement Hamas (not to be confused with the eponymous Palestinian movement) has coined an Arabic neologism to describe this new vision of Islamic democracy: *shuraqratiyyah*, i.e. a form of government that knows how to combine the concept of Islamic democracy, based on consultation and the opposite of that which is dominated by concentrations of power and despotism. In this new vision of Islamic democracy the people, understood as the ummah, are the keepers of a legitimating power that goes beyond the logic of the majority. It is the bearer of values intrinsic to its Islamic nature. It is a new form of populism.

- A different approach to the West, which is no longer just the "Great Satan" of traditionalist journalism of the writings of Qutb and followers. The new intellectuals, such as Ahmed bin Yousuf, wondering who or what "threaten the possibilities for mutual recognition and co-existence between Islam and the West?". All writers of the contemporary reform have a substantial lack of understanding of the profound nature of the West, of the faith that animates it and its deep spiritual roots. There remains extreme difficulty in combining private behaviour and social and family relations in the light of a Western culture based on freedom of choice of the people and in understanding how the relationship between state and religion functions, especially in light of the fact that the Western religion experience is primarily based on the living meeting between man and his God, and not a written law that is presumed to be immutable. Yet, despite all these critical elements that are still present, there is no doubt that the reformists of the Brotherhood have attempted to open a new dialogue with the West which is a harbinger for many possible developments. Even Bin Yousuf, who is one of the political advisers to Hamas, the Palestinian movement said: *"The West has vital strategic interests in the Islamic sphere, especially with regard to the wealth of oil reserves in some Arab states. In light of these concrete reasons for cooperation, one must ask why the West insists on returning to the past and to history for its policy decisions, while the current issues are geo-political [...] The fact remains that there is availability on the Islamic front to open a dialogue with the West. There is also a willingness to clarify the socio-cultural reforms proposed by the Islamic agenda, if efforts have positive responses rather than prejudiced ones. The Islamists consider*

⁷⁴ Al-Ghannoushi R., in: Abu Rabi' I. M., 2010, p. 133.

cooperation with the West as a necessity rather than a luxury particularly in terms of democracy, political freedom and human rights"⁷⁵

It is always with this modernist form of *ijtihad* that many Brotherhood leaders have come to develop models of convergence between democracy and Islam, from which al- Ghannushi and al- Qaradawi have taken on an almost paradigmatic function, especially after 11 September. Contrary to what is often repeated in the Western press, democracy is now a pillar of the narratives and the strategy of The MB in the world, especially in Arab countries, where their analysis of the need to have constitutions and to choose freely, while respecting human rights, have become the slogans of the Arab spring. Reshaping traditional Islamic political models, which are normally based around the Caliphate, on new democratic principles means rethinking large parts of Islamic history in a new light. This is definitely the biggest difference, for example, between The MB and movements such as Hizb al-Tahrir or Salafi and Sufi movements that have long been competitors of The MB on the Islamic scene. None of them knew how to grow as big as the Ikhwan because nobody had the adequate cultural resources to address modernity and make alliances without prejudice. The real innovation of The MB is to conceive of Islam as a total system playing on traditional philosophies of *tawhid*, but within the framework of a flexible system that adapts to many aspects of modernity and politics. In fact this idea of a religion that can also become a manager of society and state - and therefore walks with the legs of men and new communities - is an innovation from twentieth century Islamic reformism, of which The MB is the main result. With The MB, religion is the motor for political and social action in a totalizing way, and this is entirely new in the modern history of Islamic countries, almost a return to medieval scene, when the various religious *du'at*, with all their sectarian interpretations , prepared the way for the Caliphate power struggles. Then, those missionaries were the real revolutionaries, capable of opposing the regime, talking to the people and carrying out murderous conspiracy plots, but also of allying themselves with power depending on the circumstances. The recovery of that revolutionary spirit and of that great flexibility are now the styles that bear the ideology of the Ikhwan, just as they also conceal the greatest risk to their future ability to govern and reform the state in a modern sense.

II.4 Immigration, Radicalisation and National Loyalty

Whether we like it or not, today's debates on security and immigration are also part of the European political panorama. Immigration into Europe of 20 million citizens from countries with Muslim majorities does not allow us to look at foreign policy as an 'external' phenomenon.

During the Arab Spring, hundreds of thousands of young Europeans mobilised for the cause of their brothers across the Mediterranean, as had never happened before. In Europe and amongst the lines of immigrants from the Gulf, in first row Qatar, those political leaderships of the Arab Spring found a sphere of liberty, which then in the revolutionary phase they gave life to the first governments of

⁷⁵ Bin Yousuf A., in: Abu Rabi' I. M., 2010, pp.160.

transition, to many magazines, newspapers and TV. In Europe for example the new strategies of The Muslim Brothers, Libyan Muslims were modelled, between Switzerland and Ireland. In Qatar al-Jazeera TV carried out an essential role of ‘pusher’ for radicalisation, on one side, and of ‘command-and-control backbone’ on the other, linking the territory with the war cabin in Gerba. Al-Jazeera did all this without any terrain in the region of Tripoli, at least up until the regime held firm. We are witnesses to how activist participation on the roads and in the Libyan squares, armed with mobile phones, internet, satellite modems (when the regime blocked the TLC) and commercial video cameras, enabled a continuous feed for al-Jazeera. Both for creating news and images, fundamentals for radicalisation, but also for passing orders, information, logistics and military assistance and co-ordinating the various actions at the front. Often with campaigns of disinformation worthy of the regime itself. In the Libyan war the media or the NGOs increasingly transformed themselves into military forces. In some cases indeed linking up directly with actions on the ground with the allied armed forces. The images that come from the exploration units that were coming off the submarines to show us the territory or save exponents of the opposition, armed with small drones, ended up directly on the opposition networks, like also the images of the POD collected by the AV8 exploring the air craft carriers. Similarly, wherever the activities of the English association Nida’ al-Khayr, financed by a collection of funds in Manchester and completely managed by immigrants who have returned to Egypt and Libya, arrive so do the Thuwwar, the militias, which da Nida’ al-Khayr supported logistically. Nida’ al-Khayr was the Libyan branch of the English Wafa’, managed by Umran Alqattani, a 40 year old who had always lived in Liverpool, England, where he was the President of the Islamic Community of North Wales. It was considered a terror organisation by some MS.

Before our eyes, between Switzerland, Europe and The United States today a new form of cultural movement of Islamic inspiration is taking form which connects the applications of the great South with those of neo-third worldism, the new variant of traditional Islamism.

Again in Southern Europe, under the economic pressure of the recession, thousands of non EU citizens of Muslim faith represent the first line of uprising in protest and conflict in the streets always more competitive on the great social themes, from housing to the right to a minimum salary.

This phenomenon is not only typical of countries with Muslim majorities. Agenfor Media has detected it also inside the Russo-phone and Ukrainian communities, which are polarized on the new Eastern fronts, neither more nor less than as happened twenty years in the Balkan wars. Included in this flux are foreign fighters that go from Europe to fight on the new Eastern front.⁷⁶ Like, for example, the environment of the radical European right between those for and against Putin is polarised, in the same way the European Muslim community for and against Morsi is polarised.

The extension of the theatre of war into virtual spaces and the role of the media in the mobilisation of the masses and the transformation of military techniques, economic interdependence and the multi-directionality of foreign policies are ever more strengthening the participation of the immigrant community in the events that happen in their places of origin. In the era of Wikileaks all actions seem to emerge transparently. The king is naked. A phenomenon of double loyalty is created, on one

⁷⁶ Agenfor is carrying out media investigations on this subject, the first draft is available in <http://www.agenformedia.com/italian-volunteers-in-Ukraine-fighting-for-pravi-sektor.html>

side the hosting countries on the other side the countries of origin. The political processes of the latter tend to have ever more relevance in the political processes of the former.

Therefore for Europe a new competitive scenario opens, which is that of conquering the state of loyalty of the immigrant community, part of the vast competition between radicals and immigrants. Also on European soil new paradigms must therefore be considered in the game of alliances and of competitions, which appear outside of traditional European political debate. Aggregating and disaggregating becomes one of the non-secondary functions of the competition for control and many of the paradigms to which the media try to re-conduct the competition represent only instruments of conflict, like West against East, Christian against Muslim, immigrant against indigenous, etc. each seeks to mobilise his own resources.

The ability to make alliances or not with parts of these community movements of immigrant political activists, which in their turn have inside them dynamic conflicts for control, is increasingly one of the decisive factors for European security. The current anti-terrorist politics, like too the narrative against radicalisation based on anti-Islamism (and also Islamophobia), have little use because they consolidate radical groups and movements which are very different between them.

III. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of what has been put forward up to this point puts European, Western and International politics, on the subject of radicalization and de-radicalisation under the microscope.

The point of departure is that radicalism in itself cannot be considered a threat. Thinking that is an error of perspective.

Understood as a global phenomenon, radicalism is one of the poles of local, regional, national and international competitive systems which tend to activate the most vast socio-political dialectics inside a society. These dialectics can be “constructive” or “destructive” for a society, depending on the results, but also according to how the new equilibriums are consolidated over time and in different phases.

Every organisation tends to become an oligarchy in determined phases of development, even those born with the most revolutionary objectives. This is a process regardless of the nature of the elements that make up the narrative or political legitimisation and that straddles the dictatorship/democracy dichotomy.⁷⁷ The negative or positive polarity of the results of the radical process, contrary to how Gene Sharp thought, is not represented by dictatorship/democracy binary logic. We today know that also forms of democratic dictatorship exist. Indeed, in a fluid contemporary society increasingly

⁷⁷ We cannot cover here that part of the analysis that is based on the sociological theory of oligarchy studied by Roberto Michels, *La sociologia del partito politico nella democrazia moderna*, Torino, Utet, 1912; Vilfredo Pareto, *Trasformazione della democrazia*, Roma, Volpe, 1975

often the democratic narratives may frame new forms of dictatorship of oligarchic élites of various natures. The destructive or constructive nature of the activated dialectics of radicalisation is often disconnected from its narratives and, paradoxically also from its objectives. That depends in reality on the relationship that the radical or group of radicals have with the other competitive pole opposed to them, which is represented in the majority of cases by the government of a determined country or systems that emerge as antagonists (type right/left). This domain is regulated by the ability of its protagonists to respond to incentives and disincentives towards society, this too in its turn a very complex and layered system. For the radicals, but overall for the government, the struggle for control of tangible and intangible resources is a difficult challenge because it challenges that their capacity to give answers to the grievances of their allies is. It is because of this difficulty that the parties are in some cases tempted to take short cuts, which rarely result in useful outcomes.

In modern society, radicals or government (both precarious equilibriums of many subjects and protagonists) fight in a competitive sphere that has as its objective in the medium term the power of the state and the tangible and intangible resources of society. Democracy, dictatorship, terrorism, uprising and criminality in various forms (street gangs, ultras, drug traffickers, etc.), as too media and finance, domestic and foreign politics, are like the air inside which this dynamic eco-system lives. Air is an essential resource for everyone, irrespective of where they go to work in the morning or what they dream about at night. Being like a living organism, society is dynamic, it changes and evolves transforming over time, and overall, it needs energy to feed. At the same time manifestations of threat, its *modus operandi*, evolve and change as a tactical function, they need to increase or reduce the tension to mobilise or demobilize the masses, who are one of the arms in the conflict.

Whether the struggle becomes destructive or constructive depends on the means adopted by the parties and the system of ‘pushes’ and ‘push backs’, ‘incentives’ and ‘disincentives’. The parties in contrast always aim to control the tangible and intangible resources of a spectrum made up of the means of persuasion, administration and coercion, to which both, in different measures, have access.

The threat is not therefore represented by radicalisation, or at least in the same measure in which you cannot distinguish a threat in a government that oppresses its own citizens and that does not supply adequate responses to their needs. The movement or the quiet are not in themselves the threat, if an organism is healthy and if quiet or movements respond to the shared collective needs.

The same tactical operative modality of the two poles, radical and conservative, are strictly correlated. In an open public democratic sphere, it is facilitated by freedom of opinion and participation in public life, radical movements increasingly assume the form of reformist organisations. They maintain their push for transformation, but in a divided system. This naturally implies great conflicts with governments and lobbies that hold majority control of the tangible and intangible resources in determined spheres, which would willingly do without the challenge. By tendency, governments love obedient citizens with little love of radicalism, because they are happy with what they already have. Both parties in this case are obliged to perform and therefore it is this improved scenario where the equilibrium of resources in the field in the struggle between radicals and conservatives brings positive and constructive results. The proportionality of the means is given by the equilibrium and the knowledge that neither of the two parties can have exclusive access and

determined goods without negotiation.

But this is never simple, seeing as it requires the parties in the field great capacity and culture, overall it requires the availability of all parties to accept the eventual logic of the ‘revolving door’, the changeover of élites in power. On the contrary, often the two poles polarise and violence is emitted into the system, intended in the broad sense as we saw before, perhaps hoping to win the contest through the overturning of the games table. In this phase, the conflict tends toward an escalation both symmetric and asymmetric, according to the context, seeing as it is very difficult to take away all the resources from the radicals, as for the radicals it is very difficult to conquer the buildings that encapsulate power. Society always has contradictions within it. In modern society the government, which is the conservative part of the competition, normally has superior military economic and communicative resources, and also control of the most part of administrative systems. But never everything. Today the radicals too who are aligned together with the opposition, thanks to the fragmentary nature of power⁷⁸, have access to great analogous resources and can even through provocation use the superior force of the government to make it commit violent acts and utilize to the maximum its own competitive advantages. It is a dynamic that has emerged repeatedly in the course of the Arab Spring. The option of appealing to some resources rather than others, to reformism or to violence, from that of low intensity to terrorism, repression or civil war, are always available on the table of modern society, where even a pressure cooker can be transformed into a bomb in laboratory under a staircase. It is not the use or none use of certain resources that presents a threat in itself. This aspect if anything has a tactic, in as far as it can bring serious consequences for security. It is as if the resources impact on the competitive dynamic, that can bring about the immersion of the threat in its natural strategy. And this can happen with more speed than we can imagine, as we are taught by the cases of the various Ben Ali, Mubarak or Ianukovic.

For example, it is reasonable to think that a government kills its own citizens who demonstrate or imprisons them without plausible legal accusation because they threaten its own stability, in this context radicals will begin sooner or later certainly to take up arms. The police or military can do little in such cases. The more the radicals are weakened with improper means, which violate the neutrality of the institutions of the state, the more the temptation to resort to extraordinary means grows. The threat can come from a government that uses anti-terrorism arms or the vast resources it has its disposition to suppress civil liberties, hoping in this way to block political change. This brings about an almost automatic escalation in the reaction of radical groups. Blood calls blood, as we know from our experience in the field. Similarly, the threat can come from radical groups that use the local identity grievances of impoverished minorities to activate forms of military recruitment or to start up revolts in the streets aimed at overthrowing the government with the aim of controlling parts of the territory and the national resources.

Among the most destructive forms that this competitive threat can assume, there is that of alliance with foreign powers, to contrast the superiority of the means available to the government that does not respect the rules of the game, or to attempt however to imbalance the competitive equilibrium with extraordinary means. When this extension of the competitive confrontation occurs, we risk taking a route of no return. It is for this reason that amongst the roles of the state and of the national

⁷⁸ Gene Sharp, op. cit., pg. 33-34 defines this modern nature of power as ‘Centers of democratic powers’. “One characteristic of the democratic society is that there exist independent of the state a multitude of nongovernmental groups and institutions”

and transnational techno-structure, (our SR factor), we have included defence of national sovereignty as an essential factor for contrasting the threat. The more the theatre of confrontation is regulated, defined and impartially refereed, the less risk there is that the competition will degenerate into terrorism, uprising or various forms of organized crime, including those which are apparently distant like the ultras.

The threat is not therefore the existence of radicalisation, nor how many, political, military, economic or propagandistic resources are part of the reason. This is not the differential in a world where a commercial airline can destroy The Twin Towers and cause thousands of deaths. Paradoxically the atomic balance between superpowers diminishes the threat, as far as atomic bombs remain a problem for everyone, particularly for those who wants to build it.

The threat is instead given by the fact that the parties in the competitive system, inter-related between them, produce an imbalance, break the rules of the game and move out of the canons of the constitutional pact. At that point it is no longer a problem of whose the fault is, of whether acts are legitimate or illegitimate, of how to contrast the narratives or of how much energy (media, financial resources, etc.) is circulating inside the system. There is a threat of imbalance in the competitive system. When the state, civil society, or the media, like international and transnational organisations too, lose their impartial role and their ability to mediate in conditions of strong conflict- this is the real threat. When impartial actors, like external countries, enter into competitive play transforming the radicals or the government (or their parties) in proxy- this is a threat. From that moment everything is possible, because each of the parties feels authorised to use all its resources available, which are extremely vast and in asymmetric scenarios.

Let us take an example from football, to explain the intrinsic nature of the threat: in the stadiums the threat is not created by the presence of the two teams on the pitch in and not even by the spectators and fans in the stands. We know that the fans shout, they perform Mexican waves and hang banners, sometimes they get into fights too, alongside behaviour which is often decidedly extreme. Beyond how the championship goes, which will contain always winners and losers, even in cases of momentary parity, what can never happen on the pitch is, for example, that the referee takes the part of one of the two teams, that the players take drugs, or that the fan clubs do not allow the adversaries take the field of play, or intimidate them, or finally that the ultras, who are usually a minority of the fans that are in the extreme areas of the curves, become players or still worse owners of the field of play.

The threat is not carried out by the teams on the pitch that are competing, nor by the complex apparatus of the clubs, fans, ultras and federations within ever more complex rules of governance, and not even by the stewards and the forces of law and order put there to provide security. This is the life of football, its beauty for which you pay your ticket to enter the stadium, as is being a fan, even if probably many stadiums are not really Swiss finishing schools.



The threat emerges when it is “Genny a Carogna”, the boss of the ‘Napoli’ ultras filmed here above, who is negotiating with the Chief Magistrate of Florence and giving his indispensable approval so that the Italian Cup final can begin⁷⁹. If an ultra boss, with a shirt on that calls for the freedom of a condemned criminal for murder of a policemen, becomes the authority in the field, it is clear that then there may be battles between different groups of fans, a pitch invasion or everything might go off well, at that point it is only a question of tactics, which are precarious and momentary. Football has already lost.

We should worry about this, not about the discussions on the legal value of the Shariah for the minorities in the West.

⁷⁹ This surreal occurrence was subject of a parliamentary debate after what happened in the Italian Cup Final: <http://www.gazzetta.it/Calcio/Coppa-Italia/Fiorentina/03-05-2014/coppa-italia-fiorentina-napoli-genny-a-carogna-da-ok-poi-fischi-inno-80571036113.shtml>