

International Panel on Exiting Violence

CHAPTER 1

FOR A COMPARATIVE, ANTHROPOLOGICAL,
AND CONTEXTUALISED APPROACH
TO RADICALIZATION

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CHAPTER 1

For a Comparative, Anthropological, and Contextualized Approach to Radicalization

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RADICALIZATION: A GLOBAL SOCIAL REALITY?

In recent years, the radicalization process leading to (violent) extremism has become a global social phenomenon affecting most states and their nationals. In the Western world, this notion has become widely associated with terrorism, and particularly assimilated to the “jihadi” type of extremist threat, which became a global crisis following the attacks on 11 September 2001. In Europe, the successive terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005) placed this issue at the forefront of the public agenda. Furthermore, the worldwide spread of jihadism reinforced the dual feeling of fascination and rejection towards this new “wave” of violent radicalism. In Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and the Caucasus, jihadism instituted itself as a large-scale revolutionary movement, integrating, in most cases, local agendas into its global discourse. In the Middle East, the Iraq war leading to the fall of the existing regime and the escalation of the Syrian Civil War as of 2013 have enabled the emergence of the Islamic State (ISIS) and of a new wave of jihadism. Europe has endured since 2015 many outbursts of terrorist violence, resulting in both a disturbing number of casualties and a psychological toll among civilian populations, followed by corresponding political reactions.

The intelligence and law enforcement agencies frequently thwart attack schemes, highlighting the parallel and ongoing mobilization of violent actors and law enforcement agencies. Relayed by mass media, the multiplication of attempted terrorist attacks deepens the feeling of vulnerability in our pacified societies, while, at the same time, changing the perception of terrorism as a “risk” that, if not “acceptable”, is at least more integrated in daily political and social life. A form of partial “normalization” of the phenomenon is established, as defined by the sociologist Emile Durkheim, because this violence now affects all societies in a regular and sustainable manner (Ferret 2008).

The fact that terrorism is now considered in terms of “risk” and “management”, that public policies are crafted around the issue of “radicalization”, and that social behaviors are adapting demonstrates that Western societies are now considering these issues as long-term systematic problems rather than as isolated social anomalies. The ensuing adaptation of the legal and technical mechanisms gradually banalizing the exceptional measures throws into question the traditional balance between public freedoms and protection needs, often tipping the scale in favor of the latter. Indeed, surveillance is taking a new place in the emerging security economy based on a more precautionary and anticipatory rationale, in an effort to identify as early as possible those who may potentially pose a threat to society.

Beyond the scope of those who directly commit terrorist offences, we now seek to understand and intervene with respect to people “in the process of radicalization”—that is, individuals developing extremist visions of the social world that could lead to violent action. However, this ambition is

far from simple and requires a better understanding of the dynamics and processes, but also of the limits and sometimes fallacies, that this issue encompasses. That is where comparative analysis is of great help, as it can allow us to connect phenomena sometimes distant in space and time, and to compare variables (social, religious, political, etc.) at different scales, either socially (individual, group, society) or geographically (cultural areas, states, transnational networks, local spaces). It thus provides us with the necessary distance to better grasp the new forms of political and social violence beyond the growing social fears and legitimate emotions.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE PLURAL DEFINITIONS OF RADICALIZATION

“Radicalization” is often perceived as a fashionable notion, in part because of its growing use in media coverage. Yet, one would be hard pressed to state a clear definition of what “radicalization” is. Today, the term has multiple meanings. Despite having permeated into everyday language, it is still frequently the source of many misunderstandings (notably because it is used in different circumstances and for different purposes in the media, and in scientific, political, and social fields). Contrasting these plural definitions provides a better understanding of “radicalization”: what it is and what it is not, and how the various groups define it.

Farhad Khosrokhavar has long studied the emergence of this terminology, its uses, and the associated attempts at theorizing its meaning. He contends that, since the 11 September 2001 attacks on American soil, the concept of radicalization has become pivotal. He conceives it as a process through which a person or a group adopts a form of violent action directly linked to an ideological extremism that is based upon political, social, or religious beliefs and that challenges the established political, social, or cultural order (Khosrokhavar 2014). In the scientific literature, radicalization is often considered as the articulation between an extreme ideology and a more or less organized form of violent action (Bronner 2009). Without radical ideology, this violent action can take multiple forms (delinquency, violence possibly linked in some degree to a situation or a mental disorder, more or less spontaneous urban riots, etc.); as for radical ideology, it can remain entirely theoretical, and, for many individuals, it does not lead to violent action. Radicalization, in its strictest sense, happens when there is a conjunction between these two elements (Khosrokhavar 2009, 2011, and 2014).

Thus, we discover a duality to radicalness, which neither of its two components possesses alone: on the one hand, extremist ideology, and on the other, extremist action, which draws inspiration from said ideology but cannot be reduced to its simple implementation, as it has its own specificity. Once the process of action is engaged, it follows a separate trajectory, guided in part by the eventualities and necessities of its own realization.

We should note that the domain of terrorism greatly overlaps with that of radicalization¹. When referring to terrorism, we seek to encompass and explain the tendency of groups as well as of some states to use ideologized violence (Wieviorka 1988 and 2012), although the notion of radicalization, with its focus on individuals and smaller groups, excludes state terrorism. The notion of “terrorism” does not revolve around the fact that individuals become radicalized and embrace violence, but rather, and quite significantly, around the political and social meanings of the phenomenon. When addressing “radicalization”, the sensitivity of the sociologist shifts towards the individual,

1. Terrorism, a relatively long-established term (coined in 1794), historically referred to the doctrine espoused by partisans of the Terror and exposed the modalities of the power of the State (the partisans of the Terror held the reins of power from March 1793 to July 1794) and not an opposition to it. During the Ancien Régime, the struggle against the State and the violence against the government was rather expressed through the notion tyrannicide. It was only during the nineteenth century that the notion of terrorism took the meaning of struggle against the government and the State through violence.

their subjectivity, and the modalities of their subjectivation and of their adherence to the group. It also focuses on the interaction between the group and the individual in a game of back-and-forth involving individual psychology as well as the dynamics of the group, its proclaimed ideology, the charisma of its leader, and the level of emotional attachment of its members to the leader. Stepping away from violent radical Islam for a moment, such processes can be observed in other social and cultural contexts.

Violence emerges through various types of radicalizations in various domains, be they religious (the Catholic faith has had its dark hours, with the Inquisition and the persecution of Protestants, for example), political (taking into consideration genocidal rationales, such as in the case of the tragedy in Rwanda, but also violent acts perpetrated by various right-wing or left-wing extremist groups, or ethno-nationalist violence), or social (proto-political urban riots, the violent actions of some anarchist alter-globalist groups, etc.). For instance, Pérez-Agote's work (2006) on Basque nationalism has demonstrated how violence became structured because of the stifling by the Francoist Regime of a Basque culture experienced through a unique language and traditions, resulting in the creation of groups such as ETA in the late 1950s, which initially favored military confrontation with the Spanish state, and then developed *Kale Borroka*, a singular and autonomous form of street violence studied by Ferret (2012 and 2016).

This conception of radicalization emphasizes a combination of extreme ideology and forms of violent action. However, more often than not, the term "radicalization" is used to describe the conservative religious influence displayed in the behaviors of some social groups, or even some distressed neighborhoods. In this context, "radicalization" does not encompass acts of terrorist violence, but various sectarian behaviors, disharmonious interactions with the other segments of society, or with the global society, as well as some disagreements on social and political values (e.g., the place of religion, women's rights, the sources of judicial and political legitimacy, etc.). When applied to Islam, "radicalization" tends to become synonymous with "communitarianism", "re-Islamization", or "Salafization", in reference to the doctrines and orthopraxes widely spread in the Western World since the early 1990s.

Fadila Maaroufi, when analyzing the spread of a literal Islam in Brussels, follows such an approach, leading her to examine communitarian dynamics, the effects of which initially appear paradoxical. For individuals, this communitarianization is charged with meaning, despite translating into a strong social pressure, group injunctions restricting freedoms, stereotyped gender social roles, and a male supervision of female behavior. For these reasons, Maaroufi manifests surprise at the vigor and success of re-Islamization centers. Nevertheless, this does not fit precisely the framework of analyzing terrorist radicalization. It is rather a perspective helpfully questioning the inherent violence of power relations between men and women in the context of an Islamic religious extremization. In the latter case, the scope of the notion of radicalization is widened beyond terrorism to admit a larger object. Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh (2015) thus suggests apprehending "radicalization" as a process entailing a significant departure from established social norms (the *status quo*) and a pursuit of extremist points of view. This challenge to the *status quo* can be political, religious, or social in nature. These points of view may or may not constitute a basis for the use of violence. Thus, it is impossible to stipulate that the ideological or cognitive dimensions of radicalization are automatically linked to its actional dimension.

There is no basis to claim that all radical thinking leads to violent action. Thus, it is necessary to properly make the distinction between radical ideas and radical action, and between radicalization as a personal psychosocial phenomenon and as a political process leading to violent action against society or institutions. There are many contemporary examples of emerging groups or social movements undergoing extremization (by departing from the "average" social point of view) and using radical mechanisms while rejecting violence. In his work on the Spanish "Indignados

Movement” as well as various other movements ongoing in Spain, Jerome Ferret (2014b) has shown the existence of a “rejected violence” in such processes, which can nonetheless be classified as a form of “radicalization”. Thus, there is a space for nonviolent radicalism in a dynamic of confrontation against the state, although there is still potential for violence.

AVOIDING CULTURALISM: TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CULTURE OF VIOLENCE

The notion of radicalization should not be associated exclusively with Muslim countries or extremist groups that claim to belong to a political Islam, whether in the West or elsewhere in the world (India, Thailand, China, etc.). The radicalization leading to (violent) extremism is exerted throughout the world in the name of various ideologies, secular and religious. We could cite neo-Nazi or neo-fascist extremism in Europe, white supremacism in the United States, but also environmental extremism (specifically ecoterrorism, a subset of “deep ecology”) or anti-abortion extremism (the followers of which have killed doctors providing abortions to women in the US).

However, radical Islam has been at the center of a vast majority of studies on radicalization, due in part to the impact of the September 11th attacks on US soil and the turmoil of the Middle East, with the invasions of Afghanistan (since late 2001) and then Iraq (2003), and the civil war in Syria. Furthermore, unresolved crises play as additional factors, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or Islamic radicalism in the West, where Islam is not yet perceived as an indigenous religion. It is apparent that a terrorist attack committed “in the name of Islam” is experienced by the population as much more threatening than, in Europe, Corsican, Basque, or Irish terrorism, and in the US, anti-abortion terrorism, or alt-right terrorism directed against the federal government. The symbolic dimension of Islamic terrorism is thus integral to the perception of the threat in the West; yet there have been fewer casualties in Europe following the 2005 attacks in London than from other forms of terrorism or violence (e.g., French organized crime in Marseille). Islamic terrorism, even at the hand of radicalized Europeans, is perceived as foreign to Western society and culture (hence the disquieting aspect of “domestic Islamic terrorism”, which embodies a threat to, but also a betrayal of, the European or North American identity).

This approach also questions the models on which the collective rules of social life are built: community-oriented (with the risks of communitarianism) or integrationist (with the risks of denying cultures). However, this dichotomy may be oversimplifying radicalization, as individuals have radicalized in societies favoring either one or the other model. The effects of re-Islamization endeavors, which eventually create a system, are undoubtedly of more interest, notably because of their influence on the evolution of relations within the family.

Studies on radicalization can carry the risk of considering the “average” (elevated as a norm) as the standard by which to measure the legitimacy of ideas and action. Historically, it is through the often-radical departure of some individuals or groups from shared societal norms that processes leading to societal change were initiated. In a nonviolent register, the resistance and the radical action of Gandhi or Martin Luther King come to mind. It follows that radicalization can create room for reflection on social change and the transformation of the norms of a society. The question of violence, its place, its legitimacy, and the modality of its use, then becomes political, and some ideologists integrated it very clearly in their architecture of thought. This last approach puts an emphasis on the very frequently political nature of radicalizations, which are motivated by a desire for social change, with or without recourse to violence or particular types of violence (e.g., against certain categories of population, following specific rules, etc.). Over-psychologizing the analysis of these dynamics can lead observers to depoliticize the commitment, militant in nature, of some individuals.

Similarly, the absence of automatic links between the ideological or cognitive dimension and

the actional dimension should not be taken to mean that no such relations can exist. Today, the issue of the permeability between those two dimensions is the subject of much debate to determine if religious ideology or re-Islamization groups—often referred to as “Salafi”, despite sometimes following different orthodoxies—constitute a gateway to violent radicalization. Samir Amghar (2011) summarized fairly well the stakes of this debate. He acknowledges that some terrorists have gone through a “quietist” Salafism before joining violent groups. For him,

Frequenting Salafi circles for any length of time can ... lead individuals dissatisfied with the quietist nature of Salafism to engage in violent political actions after leaving the movement. In this context, it can operate as a structure of Islamization providing a pre-socialization to politics and jihadism. Salafi preachers, whether in the Western or Arab world, regularly inveigh against the political, moral and social values of the West. Even as they defend a quietist view of Islam, their interpretation of jihad has served as an ideological matrix for proponents of a holy war in Europe. This is why jihadi preachers have long used Saudi theologians as an ideological reference to justify their actions. However, while the Salafi theologians had an ambivalent attitude towards the use of jihad during the 1980s and 1990s, they lifted any ambiguity after the September 11 attacks by denouncing all forms of political violence and terrorist actions.

The potential permeability between “quietist” Salafism and “jihadism” remains ill-understood. Some, like Gilles Kepel (2015), point out the importance of this ideological variable, while others, like Olivier Roy (2016), highlight that many known terrorists did not belong to a Salafi community, but rather tend to have converted late in life, often whilst having little religious culture. There is empirical data to support both theses, which can be viewed as complementary and weighed depending on the fields under study and the results they provide².

We will tentatively conclude by stating that, if the adherence to an ideology and/or a fundamentalist re-Islamizing community can in some cases be a factor in pre-violent radicalization, that permeability is by no means automatic³. In fact, quietist Salafism plays an ambivalent role, as it can mitigate and regulate the behaviors of individuals already engaged on a path towards violence by providing an alternative, or, should it be the case, by inciting them to disassociate from jihadi circles. Indeed, a number of programs aimed at disengaging from violence rely on this repertoire

2. For Rachel Sarg, the recent dispute between the two French researchers Olivier Roy and Gilles Kepel—pertaining to the value or lack thereof of the religious factor in explaining the trajectories of new terrorists, which led to the famous phrase ‘radicalisation of Islam, or Islamisation of radicalness?’—has shaped the public debate around the responsibility of the religious factor in jihadi radicalisation. This controversy, about which we abstain from taking sides, does have the merit of bringing forth the issue of the religious motives and ‘cultural background’ of jihadism: are certain beliefs and world views a fertile environment for radicalisation? This immediately raises the question of how ‘religious’ and ‘religion’ are defined. On the one hand, many radicalised trajectories have shown that the gateway to radicalisation is not found through ‘religion’, nor Salafism in particular. Individuals can start on this path through political violence, and afterwards seek a religious rationale to justify their involvement. On the other hand, from a social sciences standpoint, this question implies the existence of an accepted definition of the ‘religion’ object. Time and time again, sociologists of religions attempted to define it (through substantialist, functionalist, or reductionist approaches, ...), yet there is no consensus on a universal definition that would be able to encapsulate this object into its own universal category. However, rather than attempt to assess the nature of the religion object and its responsibility in radical trajectories, various studies have strived to grasp the paths of engagement, the modalities of their construction, and their subjectification around expectations, beliefs, feelings as well as life projects. Yet, what separates an ordinary believer from a ‘radical’ rather lies in the nature of the relation to their beliefs, values, and ideas. Radical adherence is characterised by an unconditional belief in assertions which prevents intra-individual competition (Bronner, 2009). The key to this issue may not be tracing the origins of the involvement of religious factors as much as shedding light on the mechanisms leading to that extreme belief in assertions and on the ways to re-establish some conditionality and critical perspective.

3. This also applies to an ideology like Basque nationalism: Ferret (2014).

of religious orthodoxy to divert some jihadists away from violent action. Such programs are implemented mainly in Middle Eastern countries and face additional challenges in Western countries where more stress is put on leaving behind entirely certain beliefs conflicting with Western democratic values. Furthermore, it should be noted that some individual processes of radicalization leading to jihadism operate through direct socialization rather than any lasting affiliation with fundamentalist communities.

As outlined here, the utmost caution should be exercised when considering the issue of radicalization. The very notion finds itself at the center of much debate and confusion precisely because the actors in the field do not always discuss the same phenomenon. Depending on whether the ideological/cognitive dimension and the actional dimension are treated jointly or separately, both the framework of the issue and the social and political modality of its management may vary. In addition, there is a public appetite for mono-causal explanations. In this context, how should we apprehend the radicalization processes and the resort to violent action?

FOR A COMPARATIVE, ANTHROPOLOGICAL, AND CONTEXTUALIZED APPROACH TO VIOLENT RADICALIZATION

As the notion of radicalization has emerged, many theories attempting to explain it have been put forth, focusing in turn on macro factors (cultural or social determinants, local or international context, etc.), meso factors (relational dynamics, group effects, etc.), or micro factors (individual psychology, cognitive processes, etc.). These studies point out, in turn, the breakdown of social ties⁴, or political factors, and their perception by radicalized actors (Crenshaw 2005).

For those involved in the social sciences, there is a need to explore in a broader perspective the forms of activism and then investigate the deep motivations of extremist actors, in particular by asking questions about the long-term consequences of stigma, humiliation, insidious forms of rejection or exclusion, as well as of anomie and the loss of utopia in society⁵. Radicalization is a process which takes place between the short and medium terms, or occasionally in the long term: some adolescents excepted, one does not become radicalized in a few days. It is a longer process, often involving at least several months of “maturation”, that begins with some imperceptible changes to the individual’s ways of thinking, socializing, and displaying affection, the significance of which the entourage cannot grasp. At the end of this process, when the individual, or in some cases the group (some individuals together), is “ripe”, the short-term prospect may be radical action.

From a psychosocial perspective, a counter-intuitive approach highlights that adherence to radical Islam or a violent group can be attractive for vulnerable youth in search of meaning and direction. The conversion to radical Islam can be seen as a positive turning point in their lives, providing them with newfound values, religious practice, prohibitions, and clear goals—all things that may have been lacking in their previous lives, marked in some cases by delinquency, cannabis use, and excessive partying. This process leads to a gradual crystallization of radical beliefs. As noted by the psychoanalyst Fethi Benslama (2016), the contrast between their former and their new life is all the more striking because this religious impetus is most commonly preceded by a period of apathy, self-deprecation, and shame.

Exclusion and lack of recognition are not simply individual injustices, they constitute forms of

4. See, for a summary of theories on radicalisation, especially regarding Islamic extremism, Khosrokhavar (2009).

5. The intelligence and enforcement strategies often understate the relevance of this dimension, when in fact radicalisation must not be analysed solely in terms of security considerations, but rather encompass the whole social body. The role of social sciences may be to decentre the debate, which might otherwise be exclusively focused on enforcement, and underline the economic, political and even socio-anthropological dimensions of this phenomenon from a global perspective, in which the symbolic and actual dimensions of globalisation undeniably play a role.

oppression, with dangerous consequences for the whole of society. Low self-esteem, which shapes the way these individuals see themselves, results in a sense of humiliation, frustration, and anger that can turn into a desire for revenge. Recruiters exploit this feeling of exclusion and humiliation, and turn it into hatred for society and its components. What they offer is a reversal of values, where the one who felt excluded can now become God's chosen and rise to the rank of hero—albeit a “negative hero” who inspires fear rather than admiration, as Khosrokhavar (2015) points out. Nonetheless, to those resigned never to receive any social recognition, this is a means to escape anonymity and insignificance. Those who previously denied them recognition and consideration become infidels living in sin, pleasure seekers doomed to go to hell. Conversely, the radicalized converts, who endured their contempt, are now granted a moral superiority. They earn respect from their new comrades-in-arms and are invested with a sacred mission: terrorizing and subduing all those who had scorned them. The subjects are encouraged in this path by the admiration and the fear that it arouses.

By converting to radical Islam, the subjects acquire an ambitious vision and goals, transcending the limited horizon and alternatives available in their old life. This new position allows them to bolster their self-esteem and alleviate their undermining feelings of inferiority. Radicalization provides a way to mitigate a situation of vulnerability, suffering, and depreciation that may be related to a social context or a psychological condition, which is why adolescents are disproportionately affected. During adolescence, individuals wrestle with questions about their identity and their place in society, leaving them all the more receptive to jihadi propaganda. It preys on their aimlessness and their quest for meaning, giving them ideals, a collective dream, moral prohibitions, a simple set of values, life rules, an identity, a new name, and a sense of community. It is a comprehensive offer, providing adolescents or fragile individuals with structure, directions, and life goals, which allow them to offset their shortcomings and harden themselves in face of the world. According to the new vision of the world with which they are presented, there is but one source of truth, and the dichotomy of good and evil is clearly defined. This has a soothing effect for all those lacking directions and authority.

Therefore, beyond the stated argument of assisting persecuted Muslims, the conversion to radical Islam highlights the desire of individuals to redeem themselves and escape their condition. Radicalization represents a means to alter the course of a life seemingly all but predetermined, to forgo the status of victim and rise to the rank of agent of one's own destiny. Radicalized women go through the same process, paradoxically reclaiming control over their lives by choosing to leave their country, marry a pious fighter and voluntarily assume a subservient role.

It seems that assuming this subordinate status while joining as a fighter in the name of Islam may be a way for them to transcend their condition and reclaim their position as subjects. Hence, radicalized women should not be seen merely as victims. Denying that their involvement might stem from their own volition and agency would be no different from saying that these women can only be slaves to the wills of men, which they are not by any stretch of the imagination. As with men, their radicalization can be linked to familial factors, trauma, or vulnerability. At first, the process gives the individual a feeling of safety, insulating them from the rest of the world, away from society, family, school, and environment. This sense of belonging to another realm and the promotion of alternative world views empower someone who felt lost to find some direction and build a substitute identity.

The jihadis' desire to escape the world and their lives is reflected in their ultimate aim: the staging of their own death, which should supposedly secure their passage to heaven. Paradoxically, the media coverage of their death is meant to show their existence to the world and enshrine the moment when they decided to leave it, as if they wished for no one to ignore their sacrifice. As Olivier Roy points out, “the terrorist's death is neither a hazard nor an unfortunate consequence of

their action, it is at the heart of their project” (Roy 2016: 8). Albeit central, death is not the ultimate drive behind their conversion. Rather, conversion is primarily an attempt to give a new meaning to their lives and extricate themselves from a materialistic and individualistic society that no longer lets them dream. Mainly, radicalization presupposes taking risks, seeking adventures, facing dangers, and trying to give another meaning to one’s life. Although the motives are plural, those who have gone to Syria often invoke their desire to join a cause and help persecuted Muslims. The need for spirituality, excitement, and the sense of belonging to a group at odds with society plays a significant part in their choice. This commitment represents a way for the individual to take revenge for an array of traumata experienced within society. In short, undergoing radicalization is chiefly a means to break away from one’s life, build a new environment, and project oneself into an idealized version of the future in which one will finally know fulfillment. Considering death as the end of the project—and the radicalization process as a nihilistic one—would be omitting the significance of what paradise and the afterlife represent for the believer. Through radicalization, one can offset one’s shortcomings and build a substitute identity which one will wear like armor, creating a feeling of invincibility. This is precisely the reason why reversing the process can prove so difficult: for the radicalized, forsaking their convictions and their beliefs means becoming vulnerable again, facing doubt and fear, the judgment of others, and the self-questioning of their actions. Finally, it is necessary to stress the importance of both the sense of belonging to a group and the links that the radicalized individual forges with its members. For one who suffered from a feeling of loneliness and exclusion, leaving behind a group which rapidly became a surrogate family can be a terribly difficult feat to accomplish from an emotional point of view, especially, as is often the case, when siblings are involved.

A high proportion of the young Europeans radicalized share similar territorial origins: peripheral districts and suburbs in France and working-class towns in Belgium, the Netherlands, and elsewhere in Europe. In these territories, where mass unemployment is the rule and social success the exception, and from where the few who meet with success depart as soon as they can afford it, adolescent socialization is built around concentric transgressions. In the vast distressed neighborhoods surrounding Paris, Lyon, or northern Marseille, groups of like-minded youth unite around micro-territories corresponding to territorial subdivisions as defined, in most cases, by policies of urban planning foisted upon the population. For part of the youth in distressed neighborhoods, permanent transgression—from petty incivility to organized delinquency and petty crime—has become a way of living, of being, and even an identity, as being a source of trouble for one’s family and neighborhood, and for the authorities, the police in particular, allows one who is “nothing” and does nothing to become a subject.

That transgressive culture does not constitute a counter-society, for lack of the intellectual and financial means to become one, and thus can exist only in a relationship of “aggressive dependency” towards social models simultaneously desired and despised when it comes to consuming products which can be obtained only through crime, whether theft or illicit traffic. Such a mind-set predisposes youth to every manner of waywardness, every excess that can maximize their nuisance to a society experienced as hostile, discriminatory, exclusionary, as well as hypocritical due to its empty promises.

Transgression is always one small step away from resentment, so it is little wonder that many youths cross the line between the two. Yet most of them simply keep trying to climb through the window of a society that barred its door. However, some will go further and enter more or less lengthy processes of “anti-social” radicalization: among them, some will go to prison, but many will cross paths at some point with radical Islam, which has become the predominant and often only political agenda widely promoted in distressed neighborhoods. When this potential for resentment and revolt is met with a radical ideology, whatever its nature, the result is always explosive,

and the jihadi lure experienced in our societies does not contradict that rule.

Nonetheless, if most studies on the radicalization phenomena converge on one point, it is the variation of trajectories leading to involvement: there is no standard profile of a radicalized individual. The most recent studies with a focus on radicalization mechanisms have tried to develop models explaining these phenomena, but all ultimately found the same lack of common characteristics, thus highlighting the multiplicity of factors and profiles involved.

DIGITAL INSTRUMENTS: AMBIGUOUS MEDIA IN THE PROCESSES OF RADICALIZATION

Today, the various psychosocial processes of radicalization unfold in new contexts utilizing the instruments of the digital world. In this regard, the Internet and social media have become one of the dimensions of “modern” culture in the service of a neo-traditionalism conceived as the future of humanity. In fact, the viewing of radical content on the Internet and the online recruitment tactics employed by different radical groups and movements have often been judged the main root of the phenomena of violent radicalization.

Benjamin Ducol (2015) presented an illuminating analysis of the role played by new media in the introduction of some individuals to violent extremism. He argues that the advent of the online media sphere is synchronous with its almost immediate investment by violent dissenting movements, which were easily able to turn that new space into a key platform to spread their ideas and rally people to their cause. Whether for white supremacist groups or the first generations of jihadi mobilized in the Bosnian region, as early as the early 1990s, the internet became a catalyst for fringe political actors who were otherwise rather muted in the public sphere. Because of the various advantages the Internet offers over other media (decentralized communication, lower costs, circumvention of the traditional media gatekeepers, worldwide audience), many dissenting movements wasted no time in seizing the Web as their preferred communication platform, but also, and more importantly, as a key space to forge a common underground identity, a shared dissenting narrative, and an “imagined community” whose members share a converging adherence to a logic of political struggle fought beyond the traditional and democratic framework for dissent.

Already an indispensable tool for violent dissenters and terrorist movements⁶, the internet keeps evolving, and thus constantly renews the ways and means to present, circulate, and interact with the ideas, beliefs, and visions held by the actors of political violence in all its forms. There are worlds between the advent of the BBS (bulletin board systems) used by American neo-Nazi groups or the static websites promoting a “jihad” in Bosnia, Afghanistan, or Chechnya in the 1990s, the jihadi or white supremacist forums in the first decade of the 2000s, and the social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter) or their encrypted (Telegram) and live (Facebook Live) counterparts used today by actors of violent underground dissent.

As shown by Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh (2015), ISIS relies massively on the Internet to recruit foreign fighters in Central Asia to swell their ranks in Syria, Iraq, and increasingly Afghanistan, with radical groups investing significant resources into their social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, blogs) to promote their ideologies in Russian as well as in regional languages (such as Tajik, Uzbek, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz). The Russian Facebook counterparts (VKontakte and Odnoklassniki) have thus provided a bridge between the jihadi recruiters and the populations of Central Asia. In this region, marked by wide-spread illiteracy, the radicalization toolbox also includes “night letters” (*shabnameh*)—CD-ROMs with footage of sermons, training camps, or victories in combat—and

6. As an indication of the interest expressed by the actors of violent dissent movements in the digital sphere, while the white supremacist David Duke asserts that the Internet should facilitate a ‘global revolution of white consciousness’, for the Egyptian Ayman al-Zawahiri, currently leader of al-Qaeda, ‘more than half the battle is in the [digital] media space.’

increasingly, as is the case in Afghanistan, propaganda in the form of text messages sent directly on mobile phones. There, the Internet has proved particularly effective in radicalizing thousands of people, because it can provide friendship, acceptance, or a sensible purpose to those who are socially ostracized and susceptible to recruitment.

While researchers collectively recognize how important a role digital spaces and the Internet play in the violent radicalization phenomena, little consensus has been reached on the exact nature of that role when it comes to radicalization and violent dissent⁷. Simply put, it would be rather unsound to suggest that the Internet is the one and only variable contributing to the violent radicalization of individuals. Public perceptions of the internet, marred by some “technodeterminism” and many stereotypes ascribing a placating effect to it, tend to cast it as an all-powerful conduit operating as a “hypodermic syringe” on those who are vulnerable or succumb to the propaganda material spread by violent dissent groups. This mono-causal interpretation of a social media-induced descent into radicalization tends to be discarded today in favor of a broader perspective embracing the complex influence of digital spaces in the path to violence⁸. Presently, several authors even tend to agree that radicalization phenomena are not caused by the Internet itself, although it can be a conduit or a catalyst. Therefore, knowing if the Internet and digital media play a role when it comes to violent radicalization would matter less than reframing them in their proper context and exploring their effects further.

There are two aspects to this reframing. In the first place, “autonomist” interpretations of the Web, which regard the digital sphere as independent from the real world, must be eschewed. Recent studies, multifactorial by nature, have shown that the trajectories of violent radical involvement usually find their impetus at the junction between the real and the virtual worlds. Whereas these two spheres are commonly considered as separate or even hermetic, in this domain as in many others, they actually are extensions of one another.

In the second place, we need to disaggregate of the relative influence in each individual path to radicalization of the virtual spaces, and of the way in which individuals “use” and “expose themselves to” radical discourse and content online. To that effect, Ducol (2012) outlines three major archetypes of the roles the Internet can play in the path towards radicalization and involvement in political violence: that of initiator, conduit, or continuum.

7. Until recently, the literature on virtual spaces and radicalisation resulting in violence, the vast majority of which is more descriptive than analytic or explanatory, was focused on describing the content circulated online and the spaces where radical right-wing (De Koster and Houtman, 2008; Bowman-Grieve, 2009; Caiani and Parenti, 2016), jihadi (Torres-Soriano, 2010; Ducol, 2012; El Difaoui, 2013), or nationalist (Northern Irish: Bowman-Grieve, 2010; Basque: Ofir and Weimann, 2012) underground dissent identities are collectively forged. Despite the important volume of scientific literature accrued on this topic (Meleagrou-Hitchens and Kaderbhai, 2017), few academic studies delve specifically into the role played by digital media in the processes of radicalisation and involvement of individuals in violent dissent activism (Lennings, 2010; Koehler, 2014), and even fewer studies approach the subject with firsthand empirical material (Conway, 2012: 13).

8. There are several avenues of debate around the role of the Internet regarding radicalisation leading to violence. Some authors tend to highlight the transformative role of digital spaces when it comes to phenomena of violent radicalisation, whereas others would rather nuance or even put into perspective the influence of digital spaces in the processes of violent radicalisation (Benson, 2014; Archetti, 2015; Ducol, 2015a). To this point, the most exhaustive studies available demonstrate the lack of obvious correlation between the democratisation of digital media on the one hand, and a significant spike in attacks executed by lone radical actors on the other (Gill et al., 2015). While there are some cases of ‘self-radicalisation’ and ‘autonomous radicalisation’, as illustrated by the case of Anders Breivick in Norway (Ravndal, 2013), or that of Roshonara Choudhry in the United Kingdom (Pearson, 2015), they are the exception rather than the rule.

RADICALIZATION AS A WAY TO (RE)BUILD A FAMILY: BETWEEN RADICAL ISOLATION AND EMANCIPATION THROUGH RADICALIZATION

Radicalization also appears at the core of the logic of social integration of the individual in the world. Beyond all the elements mentioned until that point and their various possible combinations, the construction of meaning is often at stake. However, that meaning is not just individual: it also falls within the surrounding environment, including that of the family, in a dynamic way (continuity or discontinuity). Thereby, the socio-anthropological dimensions dealing with the family may be noteworthy in the processes of radicalization. Between the macro scale of international relations, the meso scale of hate groups, and the individual scale (where meaning can be lost and reconstructed by real or potential violence), the issues of disaffiliation, affiliation, and re-affiliation are plural and wide-ranging.

First, it should be noted that some processes of radicalization may simply begin with education and primary socialization within the family. Early childhood socialization can indeed result in extremization. With this mode of radicalization, there is no alienation from the family but, on the contrary, a perpetuation of the family model, if not project. The progression towards violence or even martyrdom can thus be well received in such a family sphere. This can be observed, for instance, in some Palestinian families who justify the violent actions of their progeny by the greatness associated with self-sacrifice. Martyrdom becomes something that builds the family credit and can contribute to its social standing within its community. To take another example, the widows of martyrs, extolled by the Islamic State's propaganda, are *de facto* elevated to a higher social standing within the jihadi community and receive substantial material and social support from the community to mitigate the absence of the lost husband. The children of combatants or martyrs may also feel pride about the heroism of a father erected as a paragon of selflessness, bravery, and moral righteousness. This idealized paternal figure subsequently becomes a role model of violent radicalization to emulate and, in some aspects, possibly outdo. In this jihadi neo-rationale adopted by the family, external communitarian logic takes precedence over the family's internal organization, or rather shape it as a functional and instrumental institution in a societal struggle. In fact, ISIS has promoted some family models and led population policies with the explicit intent to populate the new caliphate in order to form a new generation of combatants. In the Western world, this mechanism of family transmission can also be found in some Basque or Corsican families.

Furthermore, as rightly underlined by Pérez-Agote (2006), the influence of family memories and transmissions must be taken into account in the Basque case, because it sets radicalization not only as an individual and familial synchronous process, but as an intergenerational one. Logics of honor, revenge, and struggle against an enemy (e.g., the state, the West, the Shiites, etc.) can transcend generations, with the radicalized individual ultimately being the bearer of this burden integral to the (reconstructed) memory of the family. He is the perpetuator of this "history", and thus also the legatee of an "inherited radicalization", as described notably by Kortam (2017b) in a study of the Lebanese fighting in Syria to avenge years of Syrian occupation in Lebanon and the parents who were killed or tortured by the Syrian regime during that time. Among the interviews that she was able to conduct was that of Othman, a Lebanese engaged in Syria who had previously fought the Syrian regime under the command of the Tawhid Movement in the 1980s, when he was just a child. His involvement has never been primarily rooted in revolutionary or religious principles. His only desire has been to lay waste in Syria as the Syrian regime and its allies had done in Lebanon during the civil war. Hence, at one time, he fought along the Free Syrian Army, at another along the Al-Nusra Front, and with other groups with sometimes diverging political objectives. Othman's involvement and the struggle against the Syrian regime can be understood only through the lens of a desire for revenge derived from the hatred accumulated during the war and through

years of personal suffering. Because he was a Sunni Muslim, Othman's father was murdered by a Christian party in Chekka during the inter-confessional civil war in 1976, while his brother died in Tripoli fighting alongside al-Tawhid Brigade against the Syrian regime. Othman followed in the latter's footsteps and joined al-Tawhid to avenge their deaths. His commitment is imbued with a single meaning for him, that of a concrete revenge. Jihad, as he says, has its believers and its conditions; but he himself is not religious and does not try to show otherwise, even when among his fighter peers.

Closer to home, there are questions to be asked about the education and the values that children receive in some families. If this family education creates a withdrawn, conflictual, or even hateful relationship between an individual and global society, then the process of radicalization no longer appears during adolescence, but early childhood. It has been observed that education dispensed to children by some individuals or families is not leaning towards Salafism, but emphatically towards "jihadism", with the notable use of videos produced by the propaganda apparatus of the Islamic State as teaching tools. In recent years, a relatively new phenomenon has emerged: Western families emigrating to Syria and Iraq with young children, who are often born or raised in violent contexts and socialized from infancy to the jihadi lifestyle of radical groups. In such cases, there is no longer a process of radicalization; rather, radicalness becomes an integral part of the identity of the young individuals who have never been exposed to alternative elements in building their personality. Thus, radicalization becomes synonymous with primary socialization. Presently, Western states are faced with ethical, social, and safety issues raised by a number of families returning from Iraq or Syria with children and adolescents (some of whom received further socialization to violence in the form of military training). These new groups constitute a challenge inasmuch as any intervention, whether punitive (e.g., imprisoning the parents) or social (e.g., removing the children into the custody of the state) in nature, might be perceived as an attack on the "jihadi" family order and strengthen its different members, whether parents or children, in their radicalism. The issue of the intergenerational family transmission of memories seems to be fundamental when it comes to the new generations—that is, children of former "foreign fighters" or otherwise "radicalized" individuals. The ways in which these children and young adolescents, with their education in and socialization to armed jihad, may eventually reinterpret their values will undoubtedly provide insight into and a better understanding of how to exit violence.

The family sphere can also be recognized as a space of radical socialization through the mutual influence that can develop between family members around a project of violent action. Such cases have less to do with family as an institution and a space of socialization than with family as a space for interactions. Family can be a favourable environment in which to reinforce radical ideas and contrive violent actions because it can offer social proximity, solidarity, trust, and a tight bond between its members⁹. Notably, many attacks or attempted attacks have involved siblings or cousins. We can mention the Kouachi brothers (2015 Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris), the Tsarnayev brothers (2013 Boston Marathon bombing), the El-Bakraoui brothers (2016 Brussels bombings), the Abouyaaqoub brothers (2017 Barcelona attacks), and so on. Networks of violence can thus appear as family endeavours in which siblings, cousins, and even parents can be involved. For Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh (2015), in the traditional societies of Central Asia, where extended family plays an important role in building identities and providing support, there have been many instances in which husbands have influenced their wives and children, encouraging their family to join them in war zones such as Iraq and Syria, as well as some cases in which women have rallied youth for war in the name of "jihad". Recruitment appears to follow a principle of proximity, with friends, classmates, neighbours, and parents being targeted. It permeates the social network

9. For the Basque case and socialisation through street violence, see Ferret (2014).

through social gatherings (e.g., family celebrations), the spaces where the men conduct their activities, the home, and gatherings of neighbourhood women.

Other hypotheses could also be developed, positing that it is the process of radicalization which induces new family structures, rather than the opposite. In that case, individuals' shared radical world views lead them to engage in a romantic relationship and start a family. The planning of violence is then an integral part of the family project, whether it is merely one of its dimensions or its very root. When "foreign fighters" leave their country of origin, they are often motivated by a neo-familial logic. Thus, while these emigration dynamics are guided by a plurality of motives, they are frequently tinged with the ambition to (re)build a family: individuals following other family members, seeking a wife or a husband, pursuing a romantic adventure, or rejecting Western male and female roles; couples planning to start a family in the land of the caliphate, or to educate their children in an Islamic environment. In a broader perspective, these people also seek to reaffirm themselves in a community logic of family or quasi-family. With jihadism comes the promise of a neo-kinship, the members of which call each other "brothers" and "sisters". While some family factors may contribute more or less directly to an individual's radicalization, family dynamics can seemingly be the ultimate and idealized end of the radical project (e.g., pursuit of a "new surrogate family"; idealization of a family utopia; desire to be wed, to live, and to start a family in the caliphate).

Family thus appears simultaneously as an instance of potential socialization to radicalization, as a space of interaction where family members can develop shared radical views, if not violent actions, and as an end in and of itself of the radical commitment. From this standpoint, the marriages contracted via social networks by young adolescents constitute a paradoxical dynamic of adherence to a jihadi model of neo-family, which draws from a form of traditionalism (e.g., strict division of gender status, parental project, etc.) while remaining very much contemporary when considering its motives and modes of expression (e.g., escapist or emancipatory rationale, pursuit of security, use of digital spaces, reinvented religious frame, etc.). Hence, radicalization no longer appears as an end, but as a space to invest and a way to belong. Its dynamic is instrumental, aimed at meeting the needs for affiliation and for security of one's identity. In this perspective, the organizing principle of radical identity and action seems less prominently dependent upon ideological variables.

Family is also a factor in other processes within which it does not intervene as a direct instance of early radicalization. Individual radicalization then operates beyond the family and its values, and often breaks away from the original family model. Thus, individual radicalization can be approached as an attempt to recreate a sense of belonging even as the family itself, as an institution and a relational space, is subjected to forms of deinstitutionalization. The family is becoming more diverse and uncertain in Western countries (e.g., recomposed or homoparental families, homogenization of the roles of children and parents, etc.)—in other words, less standardized. Some individuals no longer find in it a stable and safe environment. It can even become the scene of violence, or a space lacking the regulation needed for one to build a purpose and a history for oneself. In her work, for instance, Marie Kortam (2017a) delved into the cognitive environment of young French individuals involved in the Syrian revolution and the various stages of radicalization that led to their involvement.

Using a case study of Élodie, a young woman living in the French city of Saint-Denis, Kortam demonstrates how a trajectory of radicalization can find its impetus in a relatively chaotic personal and family course of life, marked by several breakups, by a form of disillusionment regarding the traditional family model, and at the same time by the pursuit love and belonging. Élodie's trajectory is characterized by constant attempts to take charge of her own destiny, to navigate and surmount her family's history of conflict in order to cement her own legacy. While striving for control of her life, she was beset with traumata and conflict. Prostitution, drug abuse, and alienation from her family

reflect the indescribable suffering that her family experienced. During her childhood, starting at the age of six, she was witness to her parents' increasingly conflictual relationship, due to extramarital affairs on both sides, until their eventual divorce. For her, everything started with this separation. In this tense and unstable environment, she developed learning difficulties and began to withdraw from school. As a young teenager, Élodie joined a gang of five girls in Sevran, near Paris. Several years later, through this gang, she was reintroduced to a young man whom she had known in elementary school and who became her "great love". Another girl in the gang, three years her senior, smoked hashish and drank excessively. She caught the attention of Élodie, who started to follow her lead. Together, they started smoking nearly twenty joints per day, and drinking half a bottle of whiskey each per night. Élodie still lived with her mother but spent most of her time away from home. When she turned 17, she completely dropped out of school. Her intimate relationship at the time aggravated her situation: although she was seeking attention and tenderness, even hoping to find true love, she was the victim of domestic violence at the hands of her partner. In addition to beating her, he went as far as to keep her locked in against her will for several days. Because she was in a relationship with a youth from the cité, Élodie began to be labelled as a "whore". Caught in a spiral of stigma and shame, and under the influence of drugs and alcohol, she began to see herself as she was portrayed by others and slept with several men at a time. This in turn reinforced her feelings of personal anguish, until the day when a man offered her money to sleep with him. She liked the idea and subsequently engaged in prostitution. To avoid returning to her mother's house, Élodie befriended Rami, an alcoholic living on the ground floor of her mother's building, with whom she then spent many nights getting drunk. One day, she discovered that she had become pregnant from a one-night fling. Despairing and ill, she tried to commit suicide, after which she was admitted to a psychiatric hospital, only to attempt to take her life again upon her release. After some time, things started to look up for Élodie. She found employment in a café, where she met her new boyfriend. With his support, she quit drinking alcohol. Despite her chaotic, complicated, and grim past, Élodie does not share the sense of rejection often characteristic of the radicalized youth. Quite the opposite, hers is a process of self-discovery and assertion. She spent her time in search of a man who could protect her, respect her, and be loyal to her. Above all, she wanted to be seen and appreciated.

According to Rachel Sarg (2016), if there is no standard profile for radicalized individuals, it is nonetheless possible to identify common threads in terms of attitude, personality traits, or family background. The multifarious individual trajectories leading to a process of radicalization often display turbulent and unsafe family environments marked by significant conflicts and sometimes violence. The "absence of fathers", "chaotic environments", and "fragmented" and "dysfunctional families" are frequently referred to as characteristic of the home situations in which radicalized individuals grow up. Sarg, through her participation in the implementation of the plan to prevent and combat radicalization in France, translated into effect by the creation of departmental units tasked with monitoring radicalization and accompanying families¹⁰, provided the tools to confirm that, in a majority of cases, the minors monitored pursuant to a report suffered from educational and emotional deficiencies. These elements are often among the only common threads identified by the various professionals in charge of overseeing these youth, along with family and parental difficulties in most cases.

DELVING MORE DEEPLY INTO THE FAMILY DYNAMICS AND RELATING PHYSICAL SPACES TO THEIR PARTICULAR HISTORY

10. Circular from the Ministry of the Interior, 29 April 2014, "Prévention de la radicalisation et accompagnement des familles".

These elements might yield insight into the trajectories of some radicalized individuals who do not have any migratory origins—either recent or remote. The allure, for individuals seeking a stable environment, can lie in the perceived normativity associated with the jihadi family models and the idealized sense of security that they seem to provide. This dynamic is accompanied by various processes of idealization (e.g., the jihadi Prince Charming, the Pure Woman, etc.), which can sometimes lead to some disillusionment. Once faced with the violence entailed in the jihadi lifestyle, these family units ultimately do not last, but, for a time, they provide a space in which to invest, which paradoxically creates the room for one to break away from previous family models, seen as inadequate, while simultaneously embracing a logic of neo-traditional extremization of these models. This avenue explains some factors of radicalization, shedding light on what can drive some radicalized youth born in families without any particular burden, from a social standpoint, towards radicalization in spite of the absence of any recent or remote migratory history (i.e., they are neither descended from immigrants, nor, apparently, have they had prior connections with Arab culture or the Muslim religion). For the individuals who fit this profile, the stake lies instead in an exploration at a specific moment in their personal journey—in an identity or narcissistic defect that the family environment cannot remedy.

A final way to glean insight into the role which family variables might play in some trajectories of radicalization can be found in the ambivalent distance that some children adopt regarding their parents. This behaviour is evocative in other ways of the issue of deinstitutionalization of the family. This trend pertains to families with past migratory trajectories, relating to memory dimensions and issues of deprivation of intergenerational transmission (cultural, religious, linguistic, etc.). The parents, often first-generation migrants who came to find work, had integrated into their host societies by fully complying with the institutions. In many cases, their faith had become marginal, and religion was often set aside in the family education in order to further their aspiration to have their children integrate in turn. They often have led lives marked by arduous work, as employees in the agricultural or industrial sectors, lives of sacrifices to secure a better future for their offspring. However, in a context of economic crisis, their presence progressively grew unwelcome by some, and they were faced simultaneously with unemployment and various forms of social and economic marginalization. Along with such marginalization, they have suffered from forms of territorial relegation, racism, or belittlement. The descendants of this first generation of immigrants are often very well integrated and have benefited from modes of social advancement which have abated most of the differences from other segments of society. They do not define themselves primarily by their migratory origins, or by their faith, but rather by their social and professional standing. Withal, some descendants of first-generation migrants have also experienced the devastating effect of the economic crisis, struggling to enter the labour market and suffering from the associated forms of marginalization. Among the latter, some are intent not to emulate their parents' attitude. In fact, they consider that their parents and/or grandparents were abused and humiliated by the social system, and are resolved not to reproduce this family model of subjection. At the same time, also feeling objectively and subjectively rejected by the social body, they idealize their migratory origins, which they invest with meaning in a disruptive move away from the family religious culture. As underlined by Amghar (2006), for instance, "the new prevailing relation to the Islamic faith among these youth is not the replica of their parents' communitarian religiosity. While the religious affect of the latter was based on ethno-national rationales governed by a traditional relation to faith, the former refuse to reproduce the patterns of the first generation". This results in a form of generational revolt, a distancing from parental models, creating gaps where some dynamics of radicalization can flourish.

The second or third generation do not wish to reproduce the parental models. They consider that their parents have been humiliated and reproach them for their lack of insurgency or mobilization; they seek to avenge these family affronts, which are subject to growing generalization until

they eventually include “all Muslims”. This process of detachment works simultaneously through a rejection of society and its methods of functioning (seen as based on unshared values such as mass consumption, obliviousness to human relationships, etc.), and through a quest for origins, as regards their ancestral country and culture. Precisely, they often criticize their parents for having forgotten or shelved these roots and not having passed them on, withholding a constitutive part of their children’s identities. Then, frequently, the re-Islamization dynamics proceeding from such disrupted family trajectories cross paths with community religious entrepreneurs. Fadila Maaroufi’s observations in the distressed neighbourhoods of Brussels demonstrate how re-Islamization entrepreneurs strategize their action to drive a wedge into families where such gaps exist, questioning family models and offering a form of communal alternative presented as respectful towards origins. Violent radicalization does not appear to hinge upon any other dynamics, but steers them towards extremism.

Historical situations and events have an influence on individual consciousness. The individual develops temporal, spatial, and affective relations of proximity to them, and links these three dimensions. In the sphere of the family, the individual and family history can cross paths with the long history of the state and of global political relations. This issue is central to Perez-Agote’s work (2006) on Basque nationalism. The ban on Basque culture and language during the Francoist dictatorship, in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), gradually crystallized resentment. Many Euskara-speaking adults grew somewhat resigned and stopped using the Basque language outside private spaces. Even at home, many were the families who abstained from speaking Euskara so that their children would not be caught speaking it in public. In any case, these families adopted ambivalent stances on instilling a Basque nationalist sentiment into their children. Therefore, unsurprisingly, the practical solution to that dilemma was, in many instances, a degree of silence within the family, as any alternative, whether promoting or suppressing this symbolic universe, would come at a dire cost. With regard to the transmission of the Basque language, the same dilemma unfolded among more committed Basque nationalist families. On the one hand, the Basque nationalists were aware that speaking Euskara at school could cause problems for their children, but on the other hand, they did not want the Basque language to disappear. In the case of families in which Euskara was the native language, the predicament was even greater, especially when the parents had a poor command of Spanish. Therefore, various positions were adopted regarding the education of children. Some encouraged or even forced their children to speak Euskara at home (and not in public), while others chose not to transmit the language. For the children, the repression of the language translated into a rising perception that the symbolic universe of their family was being nullified, in particular within the school system, and more broadly within the public sphere. This organized exclusion of Basque culture in society by the Spanish political system was, along with the frustration and fear that children witnessed in their parents, one of the catalysts of radicalization.

Thus, in the 1950s, the Basque language became a fulcrum around which youth radicalized in the Basque National Party (BNP). From this situation, a potent social movement aiming to cultivate the language emerged. It represented the first step in the process which led to the creation of clandestine *ikastolak* (Basque schools), where teaching the language was possible. Although the Francoist regime had intended to suppress the Basque language, what it did, in reality, was to prompt the swift rise of its constitutive, symbolic, and political value. In 1952, the *Euzko Gaztedi Indarra* (EGI), the youth wing of the BNP, was established. By 1958, some members of the EGI started to radicalize not on an ideological basis, but as a reaction to the inactivity of the old guard—the nationalists who had lost the war. They formed a study group, *Ekin* (“engage” in Euskara), which rapidly issued multiple complaints against the stranglehold exercised by the BNP and proclaimed the need for direct action. In 1959, the ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*, “Basque Homeland and

Liberty”) was founded by these young individuals.

The Basque case perfectly exemplifies how individual and family histories can be interwoven with state history. Many factors led to the rise of violent direct action by the new generation: the fear and frustration experienced by their parents, the latter’s ambivalence regarding the transmission of the Basque language and symbols, the cultural and political inertia of the BNP old guard, and the repression of Basque culture and language in the public sphere. As Perez-Agote points out, intergenerational relations are always valuable when analyzing social change. And a fundamental dimension of intergenerational relations concerns the ones within the family circle. This is the space where osmotic transmissions develop, even inadvertently. Adolescents and youth find themselves torn between the need for a set of specific boundaries and the need to transgress them and go beyond the ambivalent frame set by the family. For these young Basque individuals, Euskara was the language of their parents, but also their own. They criticized their parents for their inaction and resignation in the face of the repression imposed by the dictatorial regime. Despite this criticism, such intergenerational relations are also characterized by strong affective and emotional dimensions, which then transcended the strict boundaries of the family circle to be more broadly assigned to an emotional community of Basque activists. The violent actions led by the ETA were the only public expression of political discontent. The affective identification became very meaningful in the eyes of successive new generations, even beyond Basque nationalist circles, and extending to communities of immigrant origin in other parts of Spain.

In progressive shifts towards violence, individual stories—most often stories of failures and defeats, humiliation and denial—become very consequential. They often interweave with history and vestiges of memory that it has left behind. One could be tempted to cynically say that history always presents the bill at some point in time. Faced with what is perceived as a situation of (colonial or neocolonial) oppression in which the parents were always the victims, the silent losers of history, younger generations can embrace forms of anger which could be construed as legitimate. Such forms of anger have given rise to marches for equality and led to the foundation of associative movements still in existence, but they can also occasion a desire for revenge in the name of a notion of transcendence designed to restore pride where there was humiliation, and to have fear change sides. The jihadism of the youth can thus appear to some as a kind of revenge of the vanquished. However, intergenerational memory processes and the pursuit of “origins” usually fall within the realm of mythical constructs. These youths engage in processes which are reminiscent of the “Born Again” faith in American Evangelical Protestant movements. In the context of Islam, this does not involve the restoration of a family-based Islam, but rather the adherence to a new Islam, simultaneously more erudite and contentious than the faith held by the parents, which then becomes identified as a poor man’s Islam, submissive and almost shameful. The behaviour of these youths is characteristic of converts, with all the excesses of zeal, misplaced pride, and misguidedness which conversion entails. In the early 1980s, Tablighi preachers began to understand the importance of this generational gap, and to this day have exploited it to recruit massively. This “scholarly” resurgence of the old tenets of Islam among the younger generations, while not a direct vector of radicalization, has proven a fertile environment for it. Nonetheless, as previously shown, these *modi operandi* may share a logic similar, as suggested by an in-depth analysis, to the emergence of violence in the Basque Country.

Lastly, to expand on the dynamics considered previously, radicalization can be analyzed as a way for young people to secure their transition to adulthood. Faced with many obstacles in securing a job and conjugality, their adherence to Salafism can be a way for them to progressively step into adulthood. For example, Zegnani (2017) has demonstrated how French youths who join a Salafi community can find employment through the community networks. Often self-employed entrepreneurs, the Salafis provide tangible material support to young individuals bereft of employment

opportunities and social capital. Furthermore, their adherence to the tenets of Salafism frames their pursuit of conjugality and intimate relationships in a religious context, which allows them to circumvent some constraints tied to their ethnic communities (e.g., restriction on unions between Moroccans and Tunisians, etc.). In this context, religious extremization appears instrumental; it does not entail a shift towards violence, although it generally remains under government surveillance and socially marginalized. Radicalization thus constitutes a means to escape the family orbit and gain a degree of autonomy otherwise hard to reach—in other words, to become emancipated from the family and step fully into adulthood. The same kind of logic can be found in the conversion to jihadism, which promises and offers similar resources: the ability to think independently (on the basis of a violent ideology), employment (as a fighter, a logistician, a cook, etc.), grand life ambitions (to save Islam, create a caliphate, spread Islam), a wife or a husband, a house, all within the frame of a normative system which appears explicit and based on community values, as opposed to the dispassionate relationships of Western societies.

Families can also become key actors to help swiftly identify and react to manifestations of violent extremism. They can dissuade family members from joining radical groups. In Central Asian countries, families are incited to notify the authorities if their close members join an extremist movement or visit the territory of ISIS. To that end, Tajikistan introduced legislation on “collusion with extremism”, which applies to individuals who were aware of a case but failed to report it. Parents are expected to notify the authorities as soon as they receive a message indicating that their child is in Syria. If they fail to comply, the family faces severe charges. When families are reluctant to report the case, the neighbours are expected to do so. However, turning families into watchdogs for the state is not the most practical solution. Parents, siblings, and close family members can be pivotal influences in transmitting values, traditions, and positive world views. They can also play an active role in detecting early signs of involvement with violent ideas or actions, in persuading their progeny to stay on the right track. Withal, in Central Asia, the absence of fathers (due to mass migrations and a high incidence of divorce) leads to feelings of resentment and abandonment. And the patriarchal organization of society often leaves mothers powerless to exert a significant influence over their sons. When bereft of its moral authority, the family can no longer play its role in preventing radicalization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The various family dynamics discussed above are still ill understood and insufficiently interconnected analytically. As a consequence, presently, radicalization paradoxically appears as both a product of family deinstitutionalization and a way to build new family models. It represents a critical space where the cohesion of our societies is challenged and confronted violently.
2. Nevertheless, while attempts to analyse violent involvement through socio-economic or educational (i.e., the level of academic achievement) variables have proved unsuccessful—that is, unable to single-handedly explain radicalization—the family is not a more determining factor. In that context, there is much to learn from the field of delinquency studies.
3. Over many decades, researchers have tried to identify the factors behind delinquency, and in particular the key role played by the family, as illustrated by various studies on socio-economic and cultural struggles, family structure or the professional activity of the parents. These studies arrived at the shared conclusion that, when it comes to explaining the mechanisms of juvenile delinquency, “objective” variables are of little use, as they do not represent primary factors. Ultimately, it does not matter if the parents are married or divorced, if parental authority is

shared or not, if there is a form of family breakdown instigated by the absence of one of the parents, it is in terms of relational dynamics that the role played by the family in a trajectory of delinquency—or, we might add, a trajectory of radicalization—must be analyzed (Mucchielli 2001: 224). An area which should yield more answers is that of the dynamics of family relations and their subjective dimension¹¹. These elements strongly corroborate the latest studies on the trajectories of young jihadist, many of whom recount the chasm between their identity and their family, including its values.

4. Rachel Sarg's work (2016) on religious adherence in the prison system has reached similar conclusions. Delving into the family history of individuals in a process of radicalization, she finds that not all of them experienced a chaotic family environment. Thus, it is necessary to refrain from generalizing such factors, notably in view of the lack of reliable statistics collected on a large scale and in various contexts. Radicalization belongs to the category of complex phenomena which cannot be encapsulated with monocausal or deterministic explanations. All the more so as many individuals whose trajectories are beset with family difficulties and wants do not engage on a path towards radicalization. Nevertheless, a certain degree of biographical availability may resonate with and favour radical involvement without there being an automatic link established between family difficulties and radicalization.

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11. Glueck (1950), and Leblanc and Ouimet (1988) have identified links between the quality of parents-children relationships and the emergence of criminal behaviour, in particular when there is a lack of attachment to the parents marked by a sense of indifference or a rejection of one of the parents.

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