

STAGES OF THE RADICALIZATION AND DERADICALIZATION PROCESS



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INTRODUCTION

Introducing the process of radicalization will require us to rely on Costanza's definition¹ : "The path of radicalization is the process or progression which enables to understand how an individual or a given group moves through time towards radical beliefs, in a volatile social environment which is constantly evolving". In addition, those radicalized beliefs lead to violence. Since Horgan's article "From profiles to pathways and roots to routes"² written in 2008, researches have ceased to revolve around the question "why?" to focus on "how?" radicalization occurs, giving up the idea of finding common grounds but instead studying the process of radicalization "step by step"³. Indeed, Horgan considers that when comparing the weaknesses of profile studies, trajectory-based studies allow to better understand the dynamic of progressive involvement of individuals. In that particular case, trajectory-based studies enable to understand why an individual is getting involved or disengaged, and which factors are explaining this evolution.

At the international scale, academicians have suggested several schemes to explain the radicalization process. However, editors of the report "How to prevent radicalization: a systematic review", from the International Center for Criminality Prevention (ICCP/CIPC), noted that most of the schemes are characterized by a unidirectional vector suggesting phases or steps of radicalization linked to a causal order⁴. This implication does not conform to the complexity of the radicalization process. Although some authors integrate the group component in their approaches, most of them attempt to explain the radicalization process primarily as an evolution focused on the individual, adding in a second or a third step the group dimension. Those schemes agree on the fact that the radicalization process involves an individual change determined by external factors.⁵

Further critics have been addressed. Indeed, academicians based their schemes on case studies of past radicalization in order to explain retroactively the radicalization process of individuals.⁶ The correlations defined in those models are empirically difficult to establish.⁷ Although some individuals have experienced the same phases, they do not necessarily radicalize. It is therefore not practicable to consider a causal relationship. Moreover, many of those schemes lack empirical data proving their validity in practice. Most of them rely on secondary sources to formulate their conclusions, restricting themselves to theory.⁸

¹COSTANZA, W. An interdisciplinary framework to assess the radicalization of youth towards violent extremism across cultures, Georgetown University, 2012, p. 26. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1520334378?accountid=28979>

²J. HORGAN, « From profiles to pathways and roots to routes: Perspectives from psychology on radicalization into terrorism », *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 2008, 618 (10), pp. 80-94.

³COLLOVALD A. & GAÏTI B. (dir.), *La démocratie aux extrêmes. Sur la radicalisation politique*. Paris, La Dispute, 2006.

⁴CIPC, *How to prevent radicalization: a systematic review*, December 2015, p. 50.

⁵CHRISTMANN, K. *Preventing Religious Radicalisation and Violent Extremism* London, 2012.

⁶VELDHUIS ET STAUN, *Islamist Radicalisation : A Root Cause Model* Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael October 2009.

⁷KUNDNANI A. *A Decade Lost : Rethinking Radicalisation and Extremism* . London, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.claystone.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Claystone-rethinkingradicalisation.pdf>

⁸CIPC, *How to prevent radicalization: a systematic review*, December 2015, p. 50.



Introduction

Those models are built on particular cases involving radicalized (Muslim) men. It is a problem as they neglected the diversity of their radicalization trajectories even though their points of departure may be the same – also called “statistical discrimination” by some researchers. The schemes of phases use some general features, for instance signaling the unobservable potential of radicalization.⁹ Relying on this type of model, some individuals may match to these common features without necessarily being in a process of radicalization. Those “false positive”¹⁰ can cause a discriminatory and oppressive treatment based on religious affiliation, origin, or even some behaviors, thereby making them groundlessly suspect of radicalization. Besides, those patterns exclude any reference to macro-societal variables, especially concerning western governments’ roles and actions overseas conducted in a perspective of a “war on terror”.¹¹

Additionally, it is important to emphasize that those researches have been conducted before the spread of Daesh propaganda. Although some similarities exist, Daesh’ discourse and recruitment process differ from Al Qaïda’s.

Concerning this report, the study of 300 radicalized individuals within the framework of the CPDSI National Mobile Intervention from April 2014 to August 2016 enabled to pinpoint some of the particular features of the process of radicalization of those directly affected by “the contemporary jihadist discourse”.¹²

⁹SCHMID A. P. Radicalisation, de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation : A conceptual discussion and literature review *ICCT Research Paper*, 97, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.academia.edu/download/31064974/ICCT-Schmid-Radicalisation-De-Radicalisation-Counter-Radicalisation-March-2013.pdf>

¹⁰VELDHUIS ET STAUN, *Islamist Radicalisation : A Root Cause Model* Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael October 2009.

¹¹KUNDNANI A. Radicalisation : the journey of a concept 2012, p. 5. *Race & Class*, 54 (2), 3 25. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0306396812454984>

¹²Among the 300 individuals, 200 were following Daesh.



APPROACH

Sample

For this hereby research, we have decided to focus on individuals who have contacted the CDPSI between January 2014 and August 2016, and whose case does not lack more than 5% of data necessary for the study. Their follow-up has lasted at least until December 2016.

Data Collection

There are two types of data:

- Individual and collective data gathered through the follow-up conducted by the CPDSI. This data has been collected from their discourses in the context of our disengagement programme. It consists in a gathering of semi-directive and non-directive individual interviews with the youngsters and their families, as well as collective semi-directive interviews as part of a talking group. In the majority of cases, communications on social networks from their computer and cellphones could have been exploited by the CPDSI multidisciplinary team (thanks to the trustful relationship of close relatives who asked for our help, or sometimes directly provided by the radicalized one at the end of his/her follow-up). Viewed and shared videos have also been analyzed.

- “Implicit data” giving access to ideals and promises of the “jihadist” discourse luring youngsters during their radicalization process.¹³ Individuals responding to the “jihadist” offer do not necessarily raise awareness regarding those elements, and this is the reason why they do not express them explicitly once interviewed. To access these implicit data, we based our work on, but not limited to, the study of recordings of conversations between recruiters and youngsters, the arguments used, the videos shared, as well as the analysis of the individuals’ life phases, their ideals before being radicalized, the traumatic elements they have experienced, and the conversations with their relatives.

In other words, we have been collecting data on what has originally conditioned the engagement of the young people that have been monitored, starting from the assumption that “to become authoritative, a discourse must make sense”.¹⁴ We could do so because we have followed them up on an average duration of one year and a half. In addition, we had access, thanks to families’ participation, to data on their conversations and personal stories.

¹³Contrary to the majority of searchers and journalists who can study “jihadism” only through testimonies from individuals already radicalized, Internet, or interview once incarcerated, the specificity of our work remains in the « implicit data » we could gathered.

¹⁴BOUZAR D., (2006). *Which education in face of religious radicalism?* Ed Dunod.

Data Analysis

To apprehend the radicalization process (and its exit) of the 300 youngsters of our sample, we conducted a study based on a qualitative social anthropological approach.¹⁵

It consists in a thematic analysis of the data collected through our assistance programme to study the steps of the radicalization process and categorize the different commitment motives.¹⁶

The use of a qualitative thematic approach can widely be explained by the context of intervention of the CPDSI. Indeed, the access to these unpublished data allowed a deconstruction of every individual journey at both explicit and implicit level.

This approach is based on anthropology and enhanced with other social sciences (psychology, sociology, geopolitics, history). It allows to understand how “radicalized” individuals welcomed the “jihadist” ideology, and how they have changed their behaviors and cognition over the process of radicalization. This research does not seek to find an explanation to the “jihadist” phenomenon nor to an individual becoming a “jihadist”, but instead to suggest a comprehension of their paths. After analysis, we could define eight motivational engagement profiles¹⁷ (our qualitative approach has been confirmed by a quantitative approach¹⁸, through a statistical analysis developed by Professor David Cohen’s¹⁹ team, see report “RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS”).

We developed a table summarizing the interactions linked to individual and external factors, with regard to the steps of the radicalization process, potential risk to lead to violent extremism. We concluded with the proposition of a global scheme which aims at taking into account the different micro and macro interactions that have been defined through the testimonies we gathered.

For more details, please see report “RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS”, especially regarding:

The principal macro and micro variables of the 450 radicalized individuals, including 350 who have been arrested at the border to join Syria;

Significant variables “in the making”, i.e. known variables of the family (social, psychological, medical, historical, personal, familial, etc.) that may have helped the young individuals in their de-radicalization process;

¹⁵POPE C., MAYS N. (1995). Reaching the parts other methods cannot reach : an intro-duction to qualitative methods in health and health services research *BrMedJ* ; 311 :42-5.

¹⁶BOUZAR D., MARTIN M. What motives bring youth to engage in the Jihad? *Neuropsychiatr Enf Adolesc* 2016;64(6):353-59 [French] ; BOUZAR D. A Novel Motivation-based Conceptual Framework for Disengagement and De-radicalization *Programs Sociology and Anthropology* 2017; 5(8): 600-614.

¹⁷BOUZAR D., MARTIN M. What motives bring youth to engage in the Jihad? *Neuropsychiatr Enf Adolesc* 2016;64(6):353-59 [French] ; BOUZAR D. A Novel Motivation-based Conceptual Framework for Disengagement and De-radicalization *Programs Sociology and Anthropology* 2017; 5(8): 600-614.

¹⁸BOUZAR D, MARTIN M. What motives bring youth to engage in the Jihad? *Neuropsychiatr Enf Adolesc* 2016;64(6):353-59 [French] The qualitative analysis and quantitative factorizations are significantly linked (Chi2 = 150,99, p = 0,0005).

¹⁹Professor David Cohen is leading the childhood and adolescence psychiatric service of the Hôpital de la Salpêtrière in Paris. A scientific research convention is signed between the CPDSI and his service.



Approach

- The comparison between the variables of 100 jihadists opposed to 100 pietist Salafists, both groups coming from middle class families.

To work on the qualitative dimension of the report “Processes of radicalization”, 100 young people and their parents from this sample have accepted to answer our questions. Those interviews were done for the purpose of this survey and helped to complete the data we already had through these two years of inquiry.

Those interviews are sealed under a complete anonymity; neither last name nor first name, birthplaces, addresses nor any other identifying data is given. They all have been integrally transposed, and the audio recordings have been archived on external non-networked hard drive. Thus, no storage of personal data has been realized in order not to infringe internal CNIL rules and relevant community directives.

SEMANTIC WARNINGS

We had to make some semantic choices in the redaction of this report.

1) The term “jihadist” or “jihadism” when used to designate individuals linked to extremist groups using violence and defining themselves as being related to Islam is bracketed as we do not validate their communication strategy. Even though it may be the purpose of these terrorist groups is to be perceived this way, their plans, actions and behaviors do not fall under jihad as a religious Muslim concept as defined for centuries in Islam. The youngsters defined under this term did not necessarily take action but planned to join the “jihadist” group.

2) We will use the terms “radical” to qualify both pietist Salafists (who are non-violent) and “jihadists” (who are violent). Indeed, some processes are common to both movements. Agreeing with some other researchers, this term is to us unsatisfying: the term “radical” refers to the notion of “roots” which is not the case of “jihadists”. Still, it enables to qualify the discourse heard and then transmitted by the young people interviewed before they chose a violent or non-violent path.

3) We use the terms “opting out” for those who forsake their group and the use of violence, and “deradicalized” for those who moved on with regard to the use of violence and its ideology (“only divine law can regenerate the corrupt world”).

The use of the terms “radicalization exit” and “deradicalization” mean: taking into account the individual’s characteristics, his experience and commitment motive (whose logic has been recognized and deconstructed through an emotional, relational and ideological approach) and letting him realize through his own questioning the gaps of his first commitment in order to build a new commitment compatible with the social contract.

4) For language convenience, and also because psychologists estimate that the adolescence age is extending until the thirties, we will often indistinctly employ the term “young people” to designate individuals from this sample.

5) In this report, we have chosen to conceive radicalization in terms of process which involves different dimensions (emotional, relational and cognitive). We have analyzed the interviews in order to point out the logic of this process, by taking over the diverse incremental steps of those young individuals. These little steps are often resulting from inter-active factors at the micro and macro levels.

PART I. THE ANXIOGENIC EMOTIONAL APPROACH IN THE PROCESS OF RADICALIZATION

*"Ignorance leads to fear. Fear leads to hatred.
Hatred leads to violence."*

AVERROÈS

The explanation patterns of the radicalization process unanimously emphasize a feeling of discrimination in radicalized individuals that has often turned into "a feeling of persecution towards Muslims", presenting it as a factor facilitating radicalization, or even as one of the main causal factors. The use of violence is then presented as the result of frustrations and the only way to act within society. Radicalization would be linked to the repression or the social isolation of marginalized sub-groups.²⁰ However, this thesis has been challenged following the involvement of individuals coming from upper classes. Some researchers have considered that "no heavy socio-economic variable is able to explain radicalization alone, no more than it is central in the involvement process".²¹ The psychologist Serge Garcet notes that: "if we had been able to study individuals from the beginning of their individual transformation process, when the (ideological) discourse is still external to their identity, the interpretation of the feeling of relative deprivation could have been different."²² Besides these very contrasted results, what about the recent involvement of young people within "contemporary jihadism"?

A finding is constant in the analysis of our data regarding radicalized individuals, including those who do not stem from immigration and/or an underprivileged social class: the feeling of discrimination reaching the point of a feeling of persecution on a recurring basis appears on a loop in all discourses from radicalized people, including both pietist Salafists and "jihadists". The issue is then to know whether this particular feeling is causal to radicalization (the feeling of discrimination would cause frustration and defiance towards society and would trigger a yearning for revenge), an effect of radicalization (the "jihadist" discourse would deliver a world view demonizing the enemy whereby Muslims are persecuted because they possess "the truth") or if both could hinge on each other. In order to adjust the means by which professionals will have to take into account this information in accompanying young people in terms of prevention or rehabilitation, it is crucial to determine whether this feeling of discrimination shared by "jihadists" is automatically reflecting a personal (or collective) experience prior to the radicalization process, or if it appears as the result of a cognitive change triggered by the "jihadist" discourse.

In part 1, we will see how, before 2010, this characteristic was analyzed in former explicative models to explain the radicalization process. In part 2, we will highlight how this feeling of discrimination appears in the study of the radicalization process of the young individuals we have followed for two years.

²⁰I. SOMMIER, « *Radical involvement, disengagement and de-radicalization. Continuum and fracture lign. Social link and Politics* no 68, fall, *Radicality et Radicalizations*, 2012, pp. 15-35.

²¹G. BRIE et C. RAMBOURG, « *Radicalization: Scientific analyses versus Political Use* » Analytical synthesis, ENAP, 2015.

²²GAR CET, "A Psycho-Criminological Approach to Radicalization: The Model of 'Cognitive Self-Transformation and Meaning-Building in Violent Radical Engagement'", *Liege Law School*, 2016.

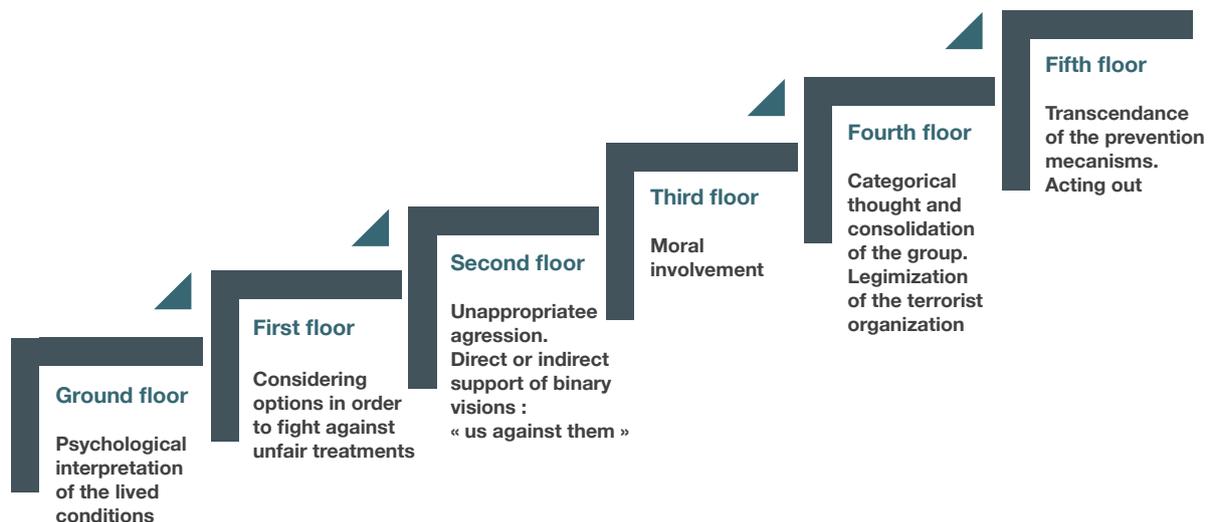
I.1 - THE FEELING OF DISCRIMINATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE RADICALIZATION PROCESS IN PRIMARY EXPLICATIVE SCHEMES.

In this paper, we are reproducing the three most interactive models:

- The model of Moghaddam²³ which presents the process from three types of factors: individual, organizational and environmental;
- The model of Wiktorowicz²⁴ which underscores the importance of groups; and
- The model of Sageman²⁵, who puts into perspective feelings and personal experiences, a political interpretation of the world and an organizational interlinking.

Each of those models is mentioning a discrimination feeling experienced and evoked by radicalized individuals.

The Iranian psychologist Fathali M. Moghaddam presents this process as an ascending step-shaped model, which comprehends six evolution phases.



Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Fathali M.Moghaddam

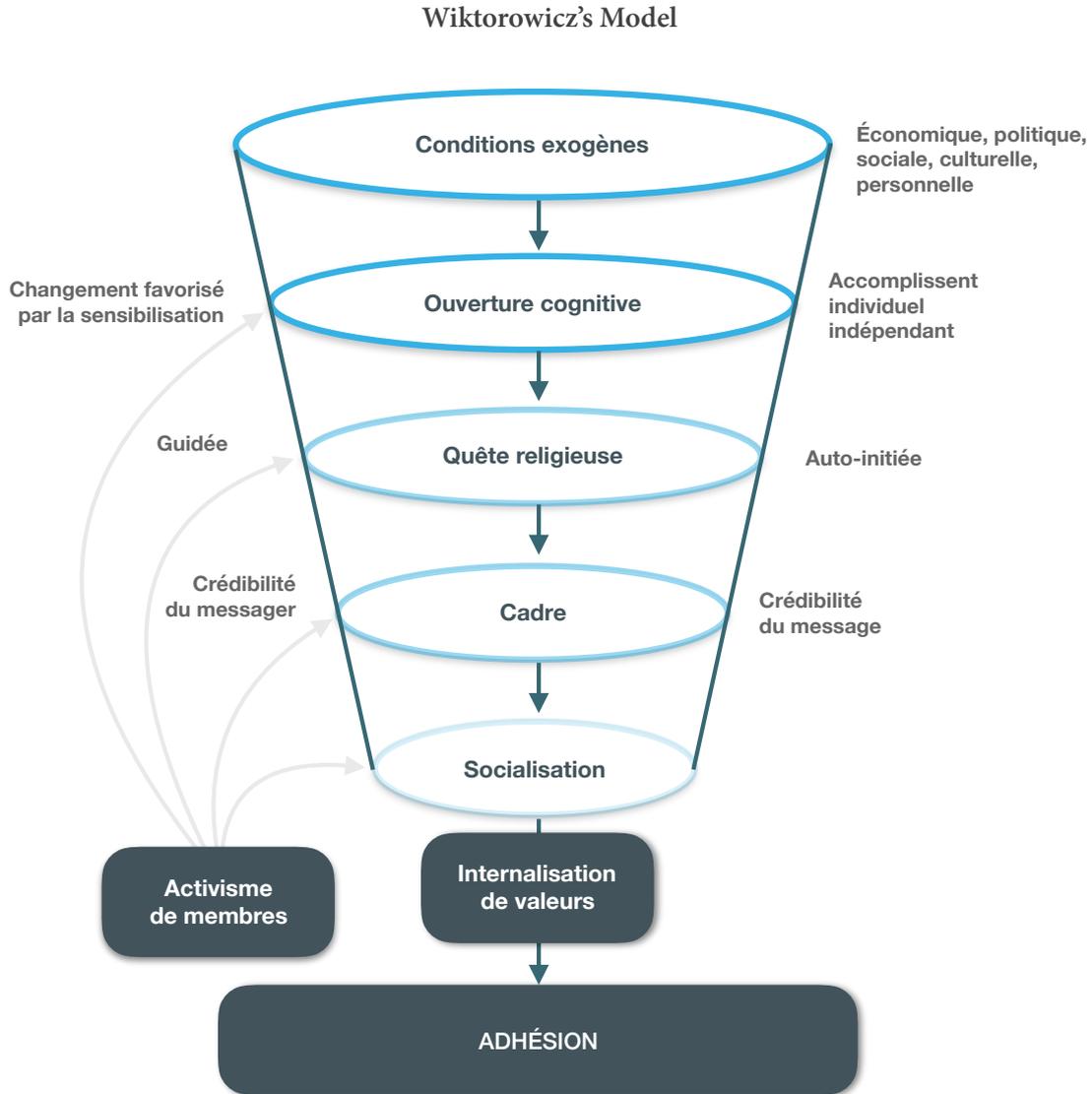
²³MOGHADDAM F., (2005). « The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration », *American Psychologist* Vol. 60, No. 2: 161

²⁴WIKTOROWICZ Q. (2005). A genealogy of radical Islam. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* ;

²⁵SAGEMAN M. *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

Wiktorowicz's model

is based on social movement theory. As a departure point of the radicalization process, he suggests an injury or an existential or identity crisis that would be accentuated within the framework of social and political infrastructures and ideological superstructures.



Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Wiktorowicz

Sageman's model

Marc Sageman (2004, 2006, 2008) is one of the first to advance a model to understand radicalization. He comes up with four factors that explain or help to understand this process:

1. The feeling of moral outrage caused by perceived rights violations. The situation and the conflicts in Muslim regions such as Irak, Palestine, Bosnia, Kashmir etc., as well as other local contexts in the Western world are becoming the origin of a moral outrage for some individuals.

The perception of local humiliation is merging with the perception of global humiliation, building a personal interpretation of the Muslim conditions in the world.

2. A singular interpretation of reality where violations represent a war against Islam. This interpretation of local or global reality is perceived by some individuals as a war against Islam. In this case, it is not merely about an intellectual interpretation, but about an emotional one which encompasses a diversity of issues: Middle Eastern conflicts, discrimination experiences, the tendency of media to emphasize marginal Islamist discourses advocating violence while ignoring the pacific stance of the Muslim majority, etc.

3. Resonance with personal experiences. Such an interpretation of a war against Islam finds even more resonance in Europe, considering the daily troublesome experience of many European Muslims. Anti-Muslim remarks, as well as the fact that the Muslim community perceives itself as a victim of social, economic and political injustice and of discriminations, illustrate this experience.

4. Mobilization through networks. All these factors and situations influence the world view of some young Muslim individuals and strengthen their feeling of frustration. However, very few of them are radicalizing. This process of radicalization can start and magnify via the Internet, especially through social networks. Diverse networks provide a discussion forum to which multiple individuals can connect, share the same standpoints and support each other.

In each of those models, the authors set a feeling of injustice or discrimination felt by the radicalized individuals from their personal experience or the one of their group, as preexisting at the start of their radicalization process. Moghaddam talks about the level of “the ground floor” in his scheme, also called “subjective perception of privation, injustice and social immobility”. Wiktorowicz²⁶ judges that what is triggering “the cognitive opening” leading to radicalization (a process by which a person is becoming more receptive to new ideas and visions of the world) are anterior conditions of an economic (loss of employment), social and cultural (humiliation, racism, discrimination etc.), political (torture, political discrimination, repression) or personal (death of a family member) nature²⁷. Sageman evokes the “feeling of a moral outrage caused by perceived rights violations”²⁸.

Through our sample analysis, we will encounter this feeling of discrimination from the very beginning of their trajectory. However, the latter is not necessarily appearing as the result of a personal or a group experience, but can be the result of the radical group discourse, subsequent to an anxiogenic emotional approach. Naturally, a personal (or collective) discriminatory experience facilitates with even more efficacy what we have called «the anxiogenic emotional approach of the “jihadist” discourse”. It is not a matter of questioning the fact that discriminatory experience facilitates radicalization, but to understand how this discriminatory feeling is shared by radicalized individuals that have not experienced it. **The space and use of the discriminatory issue in the “jihadist” discourse narration explains that radicalized**

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸*Ibid.*



individuals coming from middle or upper class deeply shared this feeling even though they have not experienced it themselves. It constitutes also the basis on which the radical group members will unite or even merge. Knowing how to deconstruct it is then fundamental to professionals in terms of prevention and reinsertion.

This is what we will illustrate in the following.



I.2 A SYSTEMATIC ANXIOGENIC EMOTIONAL APPROACH LEADING TO THE INTERNALIZATION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PERSECUTION FEELINGS, INCLUDING FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO DID NOT DIRECTLY EXPERIENCE IT

This anxiogenic emotional approach is emanating from individuals who, in most cases, are themselves radicalized, through talks and videos supporting a world view where nobody can be trusted. Those diverse elements can be transmitted through direct way or by the intermediary of exchanges via the Internet: forums, e-mails, exchanged videos, or miscellaneous websites (including some that are not created by radicalized individuals themselves). However, exchanges through the Internet do not imply the absence of direct contacts within physical groups. However, it is seldom that physical groups introducing themselves as “Saalafist” or from “contemporary jihadism”, like Al Qaida used to, do not communicate through the web.

These conversations and videos generate anxiety in the person receiving them as they are based on both true and false information associated with social and political dysfunctions: critics regarding the production system (drugs, vaccines, food, etc.), the political system (financial scandals and corruption of elected representatives), geopolitics (lies about domestic and foreign policy etc.), as well as the media system suspected of not being independent. In addition to these dysfunctions, conspiracy theories play a key role, especially regarding secret organizations hosted in Israel - the most powerful of them being “the Illuminati”²⁹. Based on these theories, secret societies understand that only the “true Islam” is powerful enough to fight them; and to drive away individuals from Islam, they supposedly insert many subliminal signs in all aspects of our society (advertisement, banknote production, firms’ logos, television shows, music video, etc).

The anxiogenic emotional approach takes also place through theological discourses which use Muslim notions like the Tawhid (Unicity of God), the Shirk (Associationism), or the principle of “Al Wala Wal Barra”³⁰ (principle of Alliance and Repudiation) in order to convince the individual to exclude himself and others, at risk of not being considered a Muslim.

Progressively, the one receiving this information happens to consider that interlocutors that transmitted it are the only one he can trust. He then quickly adopts a position making him feel like the rest of society is rejecting him because he would have too much “discernment” and would perceive hidden truths. Every group being suspicious of the outside cuts itself off from the rest of the world. Gérard Bronner researches show that the essence of every social life rests on mutual trust between humans.³¹

²⁹The Illuminati have appeared in conspiracy theories with Dan Brown’s novel « Angels and Demons », first part of the “Da Vinci Code” that has been published, publicized and made into a movie (from the story of “The illuminati of Bavaria”). The Illuminati of Bavaria was a group of five members as part of a secret society created in 1776 by the time of the German Enlightenment. It quickly faded from the memory before a Canadian agent discovered in 1950 a document erroneously dated from 1871.

³⁰This concept was born with the development of the Wahhabi ideology. It does not have any previous existence.

³¹BRONNER G. *The Radical Thought: How ordinary men become fanatics* Paris, Denoël, 2009. *The Democracy of the gullible*, Paris, PUF, 2013 ; *The planet of men. Re-enchanting risk*, Paris, PUF, 2014.



If we are able to live together, we then have the feeling that predictability characterizes to some extent our collective life, and the other is expected to adopt similar behaviors. The anxiogenic emotional approach aims to destroy this basis to substitute it with the idea that being suspicious of fellow humans is necessary as the latter would be blind, or even accomplice of occult forces which possess power. This “paranoid perspective” is progressively going to increase isolation vis-à-vis our society, reinforcing the cohesion within the group.³² A feeling of discrimination and subsequent persecution will systematically overwhelm the relevant young individual, no matter his previous situation. We are now about to see how this invisible emotional approach, forgotten in the classical schemes of radicalization, is operating through many ways.

I.2.1 The anxiogenic emotional approach is relying on dysfunctions of production, societal, political system

Radicalized individuals from a non-Muslim family have rarely started their radicalization process by directly adhering to a theological propaganda. Most of the time, they have been sensitive to conversations related to conspiracy theories which question and criticize the production, social and political system. They date back the beginning of the change of their world view to the moment they adhered to conspiracy theories, simultaneously via the web and their acquaintances (playgrounds in middle school and high school, friends, relatives, etc.). Conspiracy theories convinced them that dysfunctions of the production system are not simple individual mistakes, but the result of a project designed by secret societies which possess power and seek to hold onto it. Those secret societies, the Illuminati, paid by Israel, would buy and dominate every government.

“ There are videos of Beyoncé in concert where you can see that she has yellow eyes. They also say that she is an Illuminati and that she sold her soul to the devil. Many things like this (...) We were in complete panic. For example, there is a girl (a classmate) who bought a new necklace in the shape of a triangle. We told her “Are you insane? Don’t buy that! Throw it away right now!” etc. Then, there are the presidents who have sold their souls to the devil. Even rappers and guys from the streets who are valued have also sold their souls to the devil. And it’s the United States that lead all these things. The foundation is in the United States and they are the ones who are leading. I remember there even is a photo of a big guy dressed with the American flag. He has puppets attached with strings. And those puppets represent all the other countries. Everybody was sharing that picture and then they told us we couldn’t drink coke anymore because it hides a message. It was important not to buy any more American brands because it gave money to the Illuminati. They are the ones plotting everywhere in the world.”

(17 year old girl, atheist family, middle class,
convicted for participation in a terrorist organization)

³²HOFSTADTER R. *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York : Vintage Books, 1967) , Robins and Post, Political Paranoia.



Based on these conspiracy theories, the secret societies have for purpose to destroy monotheist religions to prevent people from knowing “the truth”, inciting them to stay passive, understood as a form of “indoctrination by the Illuminati”. In this testimony, the young girl explains that she was affected by the video because it primarily concerned one of her favorite singers. We will not quote all the testimonies but the conspiracy videos targeting youngsters are using every aspect of their referential universe to better entice them: singers, video game characters, movies, etc.

“ *The more you learn about plots, the more you're told that it is aiming at destroying religions. They said that in fact, scientist researchers were illuminati members too and that their final goal was to find and destroy the good image of religions, to hate any form of religion. And that day, they will bring a proof or a text, I don't know, which would prove to all religious people that their own religion is wrong. And that every human beings have been wrong since the beginning and that true religion was “that one” (the one introduced by Illuminati) that must be practiced by all: the one of Dajjal³³(...) I was sure they were working to destroy every religion and bring the Antichrist. When I converted, I immediately believed in the false Messiah who wants to come. So, I believed they were preparing his arrival. In a certain way they were perverting the world with their music videos and all their stuff. And as they had sold their souls to the Devil for fame, they had to work for him, so the work they had to do was about preparing the arrival of this false Messiah. I could see in their video clips the presence of propaganda stuff, like the triangle with the eye in the middle. From there, we already know there are conspiracies in the world. I have looked for other conspiracy theories on Facebook, when I started to be radicalized... But, at the very beginning, that was the first plots I've heard about. And this had nothing to do with Muslims and all that kind of thing.* ”

(Same girl as stated above)

The link with the Muslim world comes up quickly through several perspectives: regarding politics linked to Palestine and the goal of Illuminati to destroy Islam.

“ *In fact, it started like that... Almost everyone is like that (believing in the existence of Illuminati). There are even non-Muslims who are affected. They think there are Illuminati members in the world. And, then, it started like that. And then it was about Palestine: people there have been slaughtered for nearly 60 years and no one is acting on it, and no army is going there. We've been told that the heads of countries were in a cult (the Illuminati) to destroy every religions. And they were preparing the arrival of the Antichrist. They were working*

³³Al-Dajjal is for M the equivalent of the Antichrist for Christians. He will appear at the end of times when the Prophet Jesus comes (“Issa” in Arabic); Al-Dajjal means in Arabic “liar”, “imposter”. Dictionaries define him as a “seditious and damned person who confuses spirits, hearts, the good and the bad, who hides the true face of something in basking it, who errs everywhere.” According to the hadiths, al-Dajjal is described as the greater negative force of the End of Time who will impose evil in the world once the occurrence of all extraordinary events described by the predictions. Traditions say that the al-Dajjal will erect as a seducer fooling people by presenting them a lie as the truth and the truth as a lie, good as evil and evil as good.

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for him, in fact they were being sacrificed. They gave their souls to become famous. A music video caused quite a stir. I think it was Katy Perry and her video clip was shot like in Egypt and at some point, there was a guy who came to see her and she was the queen, like Cleopatra. He came with a necklace on which it was written "Allah". And she crushed it to pieces, the necklace... This sparked a controversy and Muslims asked to remove the video. They said there were pyramids in her music video but it was in Egypt, so that was normal. They said it was a conspiracy from Illuminati...

(same girl as stated above)

Despite the fact that "jihadists" are not interested in the issue of Palestine as this latter does not fight for a great Islamic State ruled by divine law but for matters of land instead, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is used in "jihadist" propaganda:

Back then, (at the beginning of my radicalization and the first time I met ISIL members) I was watching videos, mainly about Palestine. The slaughters happening there... It was still essentially about Palestine. I have watched hundreds and hundreds of videos, I spent my days listening to pro-Palestinian music, watching videos about slaughters and children dying there; so I could feel affected. And then, I learned more about Syria and every country at war. Not necessarily... There was Myanmar too, well... about every massacre in fact, sort of genocides which were ongoing, so I started with this. And then, I found out about 19HH videos (Omar Omsen, "jihadist" recruiter) in the recommendations. So, I took a look and then as I found his voice quite bewitching, I kept watching these videos and I almost memorized them all, as I wanted to learn everything he said, every hadiths, every pieces of Qur'an (Quran), everything like that... I wanted to learn as much as possible... So much that I forgot about historical contexts...

(16 year-old girl, condemned for proselytism of terrorism, attempted to leave for Syria on 3 occasions, now stabilized, from an atheist family, lower class)

About Palestine... At the beginning, it was only about "sharing videos", "liking", "making donations", and then "giving flyers to people so they could be informed" ... And then, it was about "going to Palestine for humanitarian work". A There was this song from a video "I am a coward, forgive me Palestine..." that was in my mind, all day long. Afterwards, when I felt guilty enough, it was about Syria.

(15 year-old girl, attempted to leave for Syria on 2 occasions, monitored by the juvenile court judge, catholic family, lower class).



Aline (young adult, non-Muslim family) has been sensitive to this same type of anxiogenic and non-theological words too. When tracking her radicalization process³⁴, she dated it back to her first knowledge of conspiracy theory. This was quickly followed by videos on Muslims persecution:

“ *In fact, this girl (the one she tried to leave with for Syria several months later) has never talked to me directly about ISIL, but these videos led me to it... At first, it was about conspiracy theories. To sum up, they were warning us against the whole society, telling us that every successful individual was corrupted. It was therefore necessary to protect ourselves from the others to preserve our discernment and prevent us from being blind as well. The videos were denouncing the corruption of politicians and singers. Gradually only, the topic of Muslims persecution came up. I was mainly watching videos about people being slaughtered because I wanted to choose a job in the humanitarian field.* ”

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

This major testifies to having converted after having seen the videos of Omar Omsen which "proved" that the discriminations towards the Moslems constituted the proof that only Islam made it possible to fight against the secret forces:

“ *I remember how clear the message of this video was: Muslims were persecuted everywhere in the world. It included France. In one hand, he Prime Minister wears a kippah when he goes to the dinner of the CRIF, and on the hand, he makes speeches asking Muslims to stop wearing the veil! It's obvious. And everything is like that... The principle of secularism is not for everyone. They prevent our sisters from work to lead them to sin. They have to feed their families! That's the evidence they don't want us to be Muslim. They are afraid of us because they know we are strong enough to fight them, and we are the only ones able to fight them. Sometimes, they even try to rewrite Quran: they call it "the Islam of France". Have you ever heard of the "Torah of France"..? When I watched this video, I realized something: si the whole world has something against Muslims, that's because Muslims are stronger than they are. And I wanted to be one of them.* ”

(21 years old, Catholic family, lower class, convicted of apology for terrorism)

It is no coincidence that we discovered in the majority of our youngsters' history conversations both TV shows "the Signs" and "the Arrivals" which link up the anxiogenic emotional approach and the arrival of the religious discourse. Indeed, the current level of corruption of our world - and its domination by evil entities - represents for them the sign the End of Time is coming (hence the TV show "the Signs"). Furthermore, to resolve this expected end of the world, the authors of this TV show assign youngsters to an ultimate solution: believing in the arrival of three characters expected by Islamic scriptures: al Dajjal (Antichrist), al Messih (le Messiah)

³⁴Recordings from Aline's decrypted retro-analysis contained in the White book "The Disengaged" in annex.

and al Mahdi (the last descendant of the Prophet who is fighting alongside the Messiah against the Antichrist in Damas during the last fight of the end of the world). Those three characters are prominent in the show “The Arrivals”.

Those two TV shows, which are not made by jihadists but by Muslims inspired by conspiracy theories are now used as a platform between conspiracy theory and “Muslim radicalism”.

Videos and conspiracy theories represent efficient tools allowing radicals to attract youngsters by using the same language, without revealing at first their actual purpose. They go through conspiracy theory in order to exchange with young individuals familiarized with the latter. They listen and reassure them. Once the bond has been established, they can advise them.

“ *I’ve been told that Mohamed Merah didn’t killed the Arab military men. It was not him. It was people paid by Cazeneuve who wished to cause Islamophobia to rise. So, they told me it was the Mossad that was paying Cazeneuve and controlling France. It was then necessary to take action against Jewish people in France and finally to launch an assault like Merah. Now, I realize it was contradictory!* ”

(17 year-old girl, atheist family, middle class,
convicted for participation in a terrorist undertaking).

“ *At the beginning, everything was logical with Illuminati. There are plenty of videos explaining how dark forces are governing the entire world. We tell ourselves that it’s true, that the attacks of the September 11 have indeed been operated by Bush under Illuminati’s authority. My Salafist sisters, with whom I talk every day, were also sharing those videos. For them, Koachi brothers and Mohammed Merah have never existed. They are clones invented by governments in cahoots with them. But back then, the more I was exchanging on social networks, the closer I was getting to jihadists without realizing it, and the more they drove me away from Illuminati. They also considered this world as perverted, so I enjoyed talking with them. As we went through the discussions, I understood that they were the ones who launched the attacks, but it was the only solution to put an end to this rotten society. They became my heroes. I had photos of Mohamed Merah, I was so proud of him, I wanted to marry him. Today, I don’t understand how I went from the Illuminati conspiracy to Daesh. At the beginning, I was protecting Muslims, saying it was not them. At the end, I was proud that Muslims were the ones launching the assaults. I don’t understand the logic. They spend one year brainwashing you, saying there are plots everywhere in this world. And eventually, they tell you that there isn’t any conspiracy, and that they are the ones behind. And you just accept everything. I still don’t know why or how.* ”

(15 year-old girl, atheist family, middle class,
convicted for attempted attacks in connection with terrorist activities)



“ Concerning the attacks, it was the same idea. I was persuaded that Zionists hired by France launched them so Muslims would look bad. But gradually, I finally learned about the truth, but I am unable to figure out why this wasn't enough to free myself from them. No, I stayed tied to them. I reached a point where I was so dependent of the group that I didn't care about the appearing contradictions... I couldn't untie myself any longer; I always found excuses to their actions. I was telling myself that mistakes happen. Members of the group could adopt a bad behavior but it wasn't challenging the project they had. I still believed in emirs and their ideology based on a utopian, egalitarian and fraternal world. Gradually, I evolved in my ideology.”

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of *Livre Blanc, Les désengagés*)

1.2.2 The anxiogenic emotional approach uses a religious dimension

Secular and sacred registers are sometimes associated within argumentations leading, in general, the future radicalized individual to an absolute defiance toward any information coming from outside of the group. Thus, the nature of the source (conspiracy theory or Islam) is credible for the recipient and provokes a deeper change of opinion.

“ When the resumption of this (conspiracy) theory was made by brothers or people considered as having science³⁵, it took a fundamental essence ... It was not a simple theory we could debate on... It was information from brothers who were in Afghanistan, on the ground, or which was coming from a website made by brothers. We respected tremendously those brothers. So, by extension, we respected what they were saying.”

(28 year- old adult, Muslim family, lower class, convicted for terrorism)

“ There is always a mix between the spiritual, the group and the conspiracy theory. We assigned particular scandal information to a brother that has told us, or such information was found on a website made by brothers... It was not just a simple theory on this or that specific plot, but information from this or that specific plot coming from brothers on the ground... Or else, there is a Sheikh that would have talked about this or that plot... We don't know which Sheikh... but it gives another dimension to the discourse; the mere fact of evoking Sheikh... it gives another dimension to it, it's mingled to spiritual, to mysticism, to signs of the end of the world... There was always an intermediary who enabled to bestow considerable

³⁵Term employed for “knowledgable about islam”

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importance to this conspiracy theory, it wasn't a simple theory on which we could have an opinion or an analysis, where we could agree or not, it took on a sacred sign because of the intermediary. The brother or the Sheikh is not only analyzing news, he brings you a hadith or another, and his discourse is unquestionable, you can't question it... The conspiracy theory, when it appears, is always supported by this aspect that is unquestionable, that you can't answer back to it: ah you saw that, it's on the internet...; no, you're told: wait, brothers on the ground have said that.... When you want to reconsider these words, but as he added a hadith, you feel like you're questioning the hadith if you question the arguments regarding the plot. If you question certain things, it's like you were questioning your faith... You reach a point where you're convinced that you need to believe in the conspiracy theory to be a good Muslim.

(32 year-old man, Muslim family, lower class, convicted for participation to a terrorist enterprise).

When the anxiogenic emotional approach is using religion, the discourse can equally use religious dietary restriction (some youngsters receive a list of prohibited industrialized ingredients that would all contain pork gelatin, which would prevent them from eating any aliment other than biological fruits and vegetables), absolute mixity interdiction, elements linked to the story of Islam (wearing black color clothes like the prophet, signs of the imminence of the end of the world..) or a traditional dress code presented as a fundamental obligation (niqab, kamis...) in order to scare the youngsters. Interdictions are so numerous and absolute that everything which is not associated to the strict practice of religion becomes illicit (forbidden by God).

I became paranoid about food. I irritated my family because I didn't want to eat any pork, meat, vinaigrette, mayonnaise, crème fraîche, etc. My mother had to cook a different dish and it was tiring her. I was 18 but I was the youngest and I couldn't even open a can. Moreover, I was watching her to check upon the cleanliness of the cutlery that she was using for my food. Same for barbecues, two were required with two different grills. The smoke of their meat should not reach mine. Even "halal" meat was not licit to me. I didn't want to buy some in supermarket anymore. I only perceived a ritualized meat when an imam close to my scholars was cutting the animal's throat. When I explained this, I had a tendency to go into details, shocking people. I was explaining that the animal should be laid down on the left side, in order to come carefully closer, hiding the knife behind the back not to scare the animal before cutting it throat. It is necessary to be merciful towards animals. The Muslim person who slaughters has to say Bismillah (In the name of God) and sufficiently sharpen its knife to cut off the chinstrap.

(Peter, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

The fear can take different forms: the fear of the other sex, the fear of not being up to what God is waiting for, the fear of hell, etc.



“ “ *She (my new sister) was always telling me terrible stories about what my sisters had been through with men in the past. She showed me videos explaining that the French State and its inhabitants were all pervert, basing herself on advertisement, music videos, TV, etc.; which were tarnishing women’s image. It made me sick and led me to be scared of boys. I didn’t see them as other than devils or sexual perverts who could rape or hurt me however and whenever they wanted to.* ” ”

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

“ “ *Before, I couldn’t shake women’s hands. I found it hard to accept their presence. The worst part was when I had women instructors who wanted to give me orders. At the beginning, it was hard. I was too scared to go to hell. Regarding my young age, it was a bit ridiculous to have this type of reasoning with women of the age of my mother or grandmother. My previous group had repeated many many times that it was preferable to put a nail in his head than to look at or touch a woman... As I was committed to a secret mission, women were to me the worst temptation... We could not even look at or talk to them as it was making us weaker.* ” ”

(Brian, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

“ “ *My father is suffering a lot from the fact that I refuse to spend time with my family. He wished I could come in holidays or family weekends, spending birthday parties and celebrations with them. It was very hard for me because there are so many sins and temptations. They drink alcohol, put on some music, dance... They do not mind mixity and mix me with female cousins of my age. They don’t understand that it is impossible for me to stay in that position. I can’t accept it. I feel so bad and count every second how many sins I just committed. People don’t realize how difficult it is to remain pure in this world. Infidels are not realizing how difficult it is not to be influenced by their behaviors. Overnight, I could become an infidel again, blind to the world surrounding me. Allah could stop giving me light if I’m not up to his expectations. He determines the level of the authenticity in my heart by the number of my temptations. I do my best to try to break free from the devil that is inside me but this is still difficult. I have to fight every day so my bad side does not overcome the other one. Sometimes, I try to explain to my father this heavy task that I have that consists in fighting the devil inside me, but he thinks I’m insane and advise me to seek treatment. (...) I avoid every temptation not to get any closer to sin. I also pray a lot, sometimes all day long because I know that the devil is nearby and tries to tempt me in many various ways... As a result, I don’t go out very often and usually stay in my bedroom. I am comfortable there. I feel safe. I am not listening to music anymore but the Quran or anashids religious songs (those sang by “jihadists” which are actually warrior songs). It is beautiful. Sometimes I am about to tear up when I’m listening to Quran. The music I was listening to was perverse, distracted me from God, and directed me to the devil. I am not watching movies or TV shows anymore because there always are scenes*



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leading us to drugs, alcohol or sex. I would rather focus 100% on religion, and not to think about anything else. I can't go to the beach in summer, because there are women in bikini. Catching the sight of all these women is a too big temptation to me. As I live in the South, I make many detours in summer to avoid beaches. If I was tempted by a woman, I would directly suffer from "a loose of faith", as it can lead to fornication and that's a sin. I shouldn't soil my mind with bad thoughts. Daily, I do my best to look down not to look into women's eyes. This is why I love women wearing the sitar. We can't even guess what their eyes look like and it is protecting me.

(Mathieu, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

I was scared every time to do something that would have led me to hell. I think it's because of all the interdictions that I have withdrawn into myself. I have become very paranoid about the world surrounding me. I was seeing everyone as Illuminati, governing everything in the shadow, like traitors, swindlers, demons...

(Morgane, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

The Dawla (the Islamic State) persuaded me that God would never forgive me. Yet, I didn't do anything wrong. So, I had to give my best to obtain the right to access heaven. However, I had what they call "declines in faith": I couldn't stop listening to music or watching TV, and some days I didn't even pray, I was not wearing the scarf whereas my brothers and sisters were telling me that I was not allowed to remove it even if my parents were hitting me. It was worrying me even more, because I thought God was going to punish me because I was listening to my parents more than Him.

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

The slaughter of the Syrian people in total impunity by Bachar al-Assad constitutes for terrorists one of the sign of the imminence of the end of time. From the point of view of radical Islam discourse, Syria is the current theatre of the global apocalyptic prophecy announced by scriptures. Terrorists state that "the Mahdi"³⁶ will emerge from the "jihadist" legion currently at war in Syria. It is thus over there that the final confrontation will happen, "the third world war", before the end of the world. And only will access to heaven the "Truthful" who would have fought within the Madhi's army. Others will be doomed to hell. Every "Truthful" who dies as a martyr could bring with him 70 persons to heaven. It is a part of the anxiogenic emotional

³⁶Name given to the descendent of the Prophet who will appear at the end of time to help the Christ to save the world and bring back order and justice.

approach which is relying on reinterpreted religious elements allowing youngsters to leave and delegitimize any individual remaining in the Western world.

“ I had the feeling to live in a world which was not adapted to my values. Going out was of no good to me. I considered that it was good for the body, removing toxins, but I saw no good outside. I saw people in debauchery. I was always thinking about signs of the end of time. Everything that the prophet, Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa salam (Peace and blessing on Him), had predicted was becoming reality. For example, about clothes, he said that we would see people dressed while being undressed, and that we would see their shapes through their clothes. I live in the South, and as soon as there was a ray of sunshine, I was scared to go out. I wished I could cover all women’s bodies and putting them a veil. I wasn’t allowed to look at a woman. I constantly see minor signs of the end of the world, but still no major ones. Every day that goes by was bringing me closer to the end of the world. There will be an end, it has been proved scientifically. This ending was close because those signs were not existing 1400 years ago. I had to protect myself from all those fitna (dissensions between Muslims), it was the best attitude for a Muslim even though it was driving me away from my family.”

(Peter, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

A latent feeling of culpability invades the young individual. The latter will then be used by the radical group to convince him “to do something” against this corrupt world. It is common to all first steps of the radicalization process:

“ On dietary concerns, it was the same. I had to be very careful with the brands that I was buying. I was freaking out about everything. Even when I had ketchup, I was wondering if I was allowed to because there is vinegar inside. Between the kind of food I needed to boycott (because they were close to Israel) and the ones containing forbidden ingredients (made from pork gelatin), I was not eating anymore. The slightest movement I was making in France was distressing and made me feel guilty. I lived in a place where I had the feeling that each breath of fresh air was a mistake.”

(Hawa, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

“ I often think about hell to force myself to be a better Muslim. I am always thinking about afterlife. I always want to improve myself with my faith and observance. I would rather be alone than not thinking about God, even for a little while. I feel guilty as soon as I am thinking about something else. Sometimes, I am weak and I am watching series on my computer putting aside



(theological) scriptures. I have the feeling that I am neither a pious nor a good person, someone who has rectitude which inspires respect and honesty. I relentlessly want to please God and I am very scared not to please Him.

(Lamia, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

I wanted to please Allah so badly... It was an obsession. For every gesture, every thought, even for every breath, I was wondering if Allah would be satisfied with me. It would keep my mind occupied all day and all night long. When brothers were dying as a martyr, I was carefully studying the conditions of the assault as well as their intention at that moment because I wanted to understand whether what they did would satisfy God or not. I doubted everything, feeling guilty not to be clearer in my mind, not to possess more science (religious knowledge) to know better what God truly wants.

(22 year-old woman, Arab-Muslim family, lower class, convicted for prosélytism)

The fear of the individual who receives this anxiogenic information also concerns his family's status:

I also got really worried about my parents that would "burn" in hell. They were not Muslim and were perpetrating enormous sins. My brothers (from the radical group) were telling me that I had to sacrifice myself on the earth of Shâm to plead for their souls and protect them.

(Morgane, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

My mother has been depressed for 20 years. She can stay confined at home for months, even without getting the mails. She suffered a great deal as a child. She was mistreated and ended up living in the streets at a very young age. Still today she has nightmares. I can hear her screaming in her sleep in the middle of the night. I felt responsible for my mother's despair. Whenever she was talking about committing suicide it scared and saddened me because this life is not a game. There won't be any return, nobody ever came back from death. Moreover, I was convinced that she would burn in hell for a hundred years. It was tragic to know beforehand that she would go to hell because she was not a Muslim. I couldn't plead for her to go in Janah (heaven) because being a mouslim or mouslima is required. Allah would not forgive the ones who disbelieve Him.

(Peter, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)



1.2.3 The anxiogenic emotional approach which is relying on Muslim principles

The anxiogenic emotional approach is also operating through theology. Many theological angles are used in the radical rhetoric but all lead to individuals to self-exclusion and exclusion of others; the stiffened version of the Unicity of God (Tawhid) and Associationism (Shirk), the principle of the Alliance and the Disavowal (Al Wala Wal Barra) and the notion of “what is adored outside Allah” (the Taghout).

Twisting the finality of Muslim principles enables to emphasize the trustworthiness of both the discourse and the speaker, because it stays on the same “universe of sense”. Danièle Hervieu-Léger explains the importance of the “mutual validation in believing” is even more stronger in modern societies, within which “the clan” does not define the religious as the traditional meaning: “So individuals can stabilize the meanings they produce in order to provide a meaning to their daily life experience, they need to find outside of their sphere a confirmation for validity. Bereft of strong confirmations provided by global codes of meaning guaranteed by institutions (religious or philosophical systems, political ideologies, etc.), it is therefore through mutual exchange that individuals can hope to find the means to consolidate the personal universe of sense they are adopting. In that case, the self-validation can move on to a mutual validation regime of belief founded on personal testimony, exchange of individual experiences, and potentially on searching ways of their collective deepening.”³⁷ By the use of terms like “Tawhid”, which constitutes the core of the common culture of Muslims, jihadists place themselves within a universe of meaning shared by all Muslims.

1.2.3.1. Presentation of the Muslim notions and their utilization by radical discourses

The Qur’anic text is not questionable when it comes to its literal expression, but the meanings we learn from it can differ. It is at this level that the “jihadist” chiefs are exercising their talent. We will take for first example purely religious Muslim notions like the one of the Tawhid (the principle of divine unicity) and its reverse side, the notion of Shirk (Associationism consisting in worshipping other persons than God). While this notion is interpreted in the story of Islam as a principle of unity allowing the gathering with other believers, “radical discourses” are resting on this term to shut youngsters out the world.

The Tawhid, the principle of divine unicity, constitutes the basis of Islam and is even a part of its five pillars. Indeed, it is only required to any person wishing to become Muslim to recite the “Shahada”: “No God if it is not Allah and Muhammad is his envoy”. Unicity is firstly a peace principle for Muslims: contrary to the pre-Islamic era where tribes were waging war on each other to impose their own idol, the existence of a single God must connect humans. The root « slm », which signifies “peace” can be found both within the Muslim salute «salam'aleykoum » (peace on yourself) and in the word Islam (submission to God). The bet of Islam was to unify Arabia’s pre-Islamic tribes around the submission of a single God, and to a greater extent to consolidate relationships with Jews and Christians, named “People of the Book” in the Quran,

³⁷HERVIEU-LÉGER D., *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, édition du cerf, Paris, 1993



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which considers that it is indeed the same unique God in all these three monotheistic religions, linked by the Abrahamic tradition. Muslims associating another divinity to God falls under “Associationism”, a hindrance to God’s unity. It is commonly named as “doing Shirk”, considering that both terms, “Tawhid” and “Shirk”, are rarely used in Muslims’ talks. From their point of view, respecting the unicity of God has to do with not being devoted to other gods, which would be considered polytheism. Some Muslims will ensure, in the name of this principle, not to put Buddha statuettes at home, judging it could cause confusion. Others, more rigorous, will not put any trinkets that would recall directly or indirectly to the 360 statuettes which were dividing the Arabic tribes before Islam³⁸.

These two notions, “Tawhid” and “Shirk”, are constantly used by Salafists, and then by jihadists, but in a complete opposite meaning.

“The unicity of God” and “the Associationism” become the cornerstone of the anxiogenic approach set by those movements, in such a way that the believer is getting isolated from all its relatives: friends, family, leisure, work, sport, other believers, human institutions, etc.)

Indeed, Salafists have transformed the principle of divine unicity in such a restrictive concept that it is becoming a daily anxiety, which in fine isolate them from all the sensations and relations defining human beings. For example, looking at a photo would amount to consider the artist as a creator on the same level as God, and so betraying the principle of Tawhid and therefore “doing Shirk”. In the same logic, listening to music would amount to consider the musician on the same level as God. The threat of “doing Shirk” is generalized. The study of our testimonies shows that anxiety is overwhelming young Salafists in every aspects of their life: they cannot appreciate a football game or a good movie by fear of identifying themselves with a football player or an actor they would end up considering as an icon... They cannot use the verb “to love” anymore including to say that they “love chocolate”, because this verb should be reserved to the worship of God. They must not love their country, whichever it is, because the latter constitutes “the biggest idol” that would drive them away from God. Salafists are exchanging advice to limit the threat of the sin of Shirk, such as avoiding shops by fear to listen to the turned-on radio playing a song, avoiding touristic spots by fear of being photographed., and taking the subway only after having checked whether there was a beggar playing accordion to collect some coins. Some behaviors linked to inward-looking attitudes, classically called “communitarian”, are actually coming from this anxiety: Salafists would rather buy food from Salafist shops to avoid any music .

This anxiety of “doing Shirk” becomes constant: the stage of paranoia reaches its maximum for an individual when the Salafist group explains him that, as the temptation of “worshipping” something else than God resides everywhere, he can sin without even noticing. The only solution is to “correct one’s Tawhid”, which becomes the only topic addressed in religious courses. It’s about focusing on it if one does not want to succumb to omnipresent temptations of this polytheist world. The young individual is shutting himself up from any non-Salafist person as he judges that this one can be polytheist without being aware of it as soon as that person walks in the street

³⁸In 631, the Prophet entered into Mecca’s city wall, destroyed the 360 idols around the Kaaba to unite peoples around a single God as Abraham did in his own time. He made erase the representations of Prophets except the ones of the Madonna and Jesus.



without having rectified his Tawhid. An obsessional anxiety emerges, which is materialized by phobic-like behaviors: the youngster demands his mother to turn off the radio before getting in her car, destroys statues and paintings at home, tears apart family pictures, refuses to exchange messages which would include emoticons, judges any activity as a possibility to divert him from God... Then comes the ultimate stage when he estimates that adhering to human laws would amount to consider members of parliament at the same level than God. He then refuses to sign a deposition, a contract of employment, to take a look at an EDF (French electricity company) contract... Then he refuses to make a pact or a contract with someone submitted to human laws.

The anxiogenic emotional approach that radical discourse is setting up with this theological interpretation is so efficient that it leads the young individual to a sort of internal “mini- death”. Indeed, in fine, by cutting the young individual from any culture, the radical discourse is operating a kind of “anesthesia” of individual sensations and prevents any pleasurable experience and personification of any feelings. It diminishes not only the usual emotional positive sources of relaxation for human beings (cinema, music, shows, friendship, etc.) but it also happens to transform them into anxiogenic activities (as henceforth perceived as susceptible of betraying the unicity of God). It sets the young individual in a self-exclusion stance fully isolating him. There too, the latter is not benefiting anymore from positive interactions with his relatives, perceiving them as a source of danger diverting him from the Truth. Quickly, the radical group becomes the exclusive source of positive and reassuring emotions. It is then this anxiogenic approach which induces the fusion of the group members: the group identity becomes its own identity. The relational and ideological approaches are here intertwined to the extent that the adhesion to an ideology is inseparable of the group adhesion and vice versa.

Tawhid and Shirk revised by “jihadists”

“Jihadists” use these interpretations about God’s unicity, even though once on the field they do not put them necessarily into practice, multiplying images for the elaboration of their online propaganda and reintroducing music to galvanize their soldiers.³⁹ But, unlike Salafists, “jihadists” consider they cannot settle for protection against temptations: they have to struggle against polytheism by imposing divine law. In order not to go to hell, they have to spring into action. Not only mustn’t they associate God to other divinities, but before loving God, it is also necessary to reject other divinities. It is not enough praying God to be monotheistic; it is also required to get rid of invisible remnants of polytheism. In fact, an individual can only worship God if he rejects everything but Him. The main difference between Salafists and “jihadists” is about the status of the fault of the one who is not applying the divine law.

For Salafists, it involves a simple sin but not a crime of apostasy. The Muslim can live in a country where human laws apply if he does not have any other choice. He is not bearing the responsibility of Shirk since he is not part of decision-makers. He simply has to distance himself from the governance, for instance in not taking part to elections. The heart of this interpretation lies on the fact that Salafists consider that “the government is the reflection of its people”. To them, it means that when all citizens are Salafists, the government will be as well. For them, politics come from its people.

³⁹See Farid Benyettou’s video on NOORONLINE.FR which shows each interpretation he adhered to when he successively became a salafist and then a “jihadist”.

For “jihadists”, complying to human law falls under Shirk: it is a crime of apostasy which replaces God by members of parliament. A Muslim is not allowed to live in a country where the government is not applying the law of God. Otherwise, one is falling into Shirk, in enabling a human to declare what is licit (what is allowed) and illicit (the forbidden). Governments cause obstructions to the Tawhid by adopting human laws: we can thus kill everyone who works for the government, especially military men and police officers. However, contemporary “jihadists” added an additional meaning to the “Shirk”: staying on an “infidel land” is akin to implicitly recognize that human law is superior to divine law. Doing Shirk cannot be reduced to like a footballer, a singer, a politician, a philosopher or even a country. According to them, respecting the Tawhid implies that being submitted to human laws is forbidden. Therefore respecting the Tawhid is similar to condemning citizens accepting to live in a country which applies human law. “There is no innocent” is their favorite maxim: they can thus do the Takfir (excommunication) of all those who obey human law, pietist Salafists included, also called Mourjis (Muslims who consider faith is in the heart, no matter the faults) by “jihadists”. Any citizen who lives in a country where human laws are applied can from now on be killed in the name of God, whatever may be his conviction and activity. Therefore, the Muslim must do anything in his power to fix this situation. This is exactly this logic which led to “jihad”, which becomes the only possibility of practicing Islam. “Jihadists” esteem politics must be imposed from the top. The people will never progress as long as the government does not impose good choices. Governed individuals will not be able to be good Muslims until complying with divine law. This is the reason why the Tawhid takes is of significant importance to them, at the expense of other dogmas (which sometimes are inapplicable in the lack of a Muslim state). The sole imposition of divine law will enable to respect principles and prohibitions of Islam.

While Salafists hide in what we could call an escape from a corrupt world, “jihadists” consider that only confrontation with the corrupt world will be able to regenerate it.

Conclusion

We have been relying on the two examples of the notions of Tawhid and Shirk to demonstrate the use of a religious term doesn’t allow to spot a “jihadist” individual. Instead, the content given to the terms represents a much relevant factor, as well as its frequency of use and its enlisted associations. Our analysis grid is based on the knowledge the person has of the concept. However, if the person does not know the meaning of the word used whilst adopting it in “jihadist” sense, the alert indicator remains nonetheless weak. Indeed, the nomination of the term “Shirk” to designate the fact of living within a society where human law prevails shows a link with a “jihadist” group. This person using the term in this sense must know the real identity and the exact objective of his interlocutor. However, an inquiry should be organized to inform him, in terms of prevention and detection.⁴⁰

Please, see Annex 4 to identify the terms used par the different groups and their meanings.

⁴⁰In order to know how the radical discourse uses Muslim terms, the Muslim history and other elements of identification to the Prophet, please see the report BOUZAR D. ET VALSAN S., ‘Détecter le passage à l’acte en repérant la manipulation des termes Musulmans’, available online on the website: cpdsi.fr.

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TAWHID	MUSLIMS	PIETIST SALAFISTS	"JIHADISTS"
<p>Meaning of the word</p> <p>In french : "Unicity of God"</p>	<p>Thinks that "the Unicity of God" consists in the fact that there is only one God and that he is the only one to be adored.</p> <p>Does not feel that appreciating human things obstructs the "Unicity of God"</p>	<p>Is persuaded that liking a singer, a footballer, a painter, an intellectual, an artist, etc., will result for him to adore him as much as he adores God and then it is associating someone to the same level as God, which leads to a type of polytheism and betrays the principle of Tawhid: --> sin of Shirk (associationism).</p> <p>Believes that most of his actions block the Tawhid and remains careful at the daily basis. "To rectify his Tawhid" is the only theme mentioned in religion class.</p> <p>Believes that not applying the Divine law is a simple sin. Imposing the Divine law is the only responsibility of the governments</p> <p>Believes that he simply must stay away from the governance by not participating to elections.</p> <p>Forbids violence and believes that, through predication, each citizen will become Salafis and the government too, by saying that "the Government reflects his people". Then, Divine law will be applied without any violence.</p>	<p>Has the same beliefs as Salafis, but on a practical level, on war zones, makes exceptions when it comes to galvanise himself (the re-use of music and pictures)</p> <p>Believes that respecting Human law would place deputies on a same level with God (and therefore blocking Tawhid). Respecting Tawhid would lead to a rejection of Human laws, governments, UNO, democracy, the Republic, etc. We must form a pact or a contract with people who are under human laws (refuses to sign a deposition, a work contract, an electricity contract...)</p> <p>Believes that the one who participates to the creation of Human law (and works directly or indirectly for a government) blocks the Tawhid --> We can kill those who work for the State, and also military and police officers. Respecting Tawhid would condemn each citizen who accepts to live a country which is made of human laws and pays taxes. Not applying Divine law is not only a sin but also leads to miscreance (apostasy act).</p> <p>Accomplish the Takfir (are apostats) of all those who submit to human laws. --> We can kill any citizen (considered as an accomplice) who lives in a country where human laws are applied. Imposing Divine law would be the responsibility of the governee only. The believer has the responsibility to impose the Divine law in order to not become a miscreant and not go to hell.</p>



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<p>Type of expression related to this notion</p>	<p><i>Profession of faith Muhammad is the Messenger of God First Pillar of Islam</i></p>	<p><i>Must correct his Tawhid The Tawhid first</i></p> <p><i>The Tawhid is the basis of religion</i></p> <p><i>Without the Tawhid, everything is vain</i></p> <p><i>We must study Tawhid throughout the whole life</i></p> <p><i>Saying the Chahada is not enough, you can accomplish actions or say words that revoke your Tawhid</i></p> <p><i>You can accomplish revoking acts without knowing it</i></p> <p><i>The Prophet remained 13 years in Mecca to teach Tawhid</i></p> <p><i>Saudi Arabia is the land of the Tawhid</i></p> <p><u><i>When speaking about Jihadists:</i></u></p> <p><i>Those who make miscreants governors that are khawarijs (people that declare miscreant a Muslim for committing a "simple" sin</i></p>	<p><i>Must practice his Tawhid</i></p> <p><i>Theoretical and practical Tawhid</i></p> <p><i>Tawhid must be practicised</i></p> <p><i>We must act for "la ilaha illa allah" (for the Tawhid)</i></p> <p><i>To judge according what Allah revealed is part of the Tawhid</i></p> <p><i>"Tawhid el hakimiyya" (divined unicity linked to the command)</i></p> <p><i>There are no innocents</i></p> <p><u><i>When speaking about Salafis:</i></u></p> <p><i>Salafis are Mourjis (muslims that consider that faith is in the heart, no matter his faults)</i></p> <p><i>The Talafis don't go through their principles</i></p> <p><i>The Mourjis are the jews of this community</i></p> <p><i>The Salafis are Mourjis of the Palace</i></p> <p><i>Those Mourjis are sellouts</i></p> <p><i>Those Mourjis are scholars of the Palace</i></p> <p><i>The Mourjis defend governors</i></p>
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1.2.3.2 Testimonies on the anxiogenic approach based on Muslim notions

There are many testimonies concerning this anxiogenic emotional approach. We have selected the most significant ones:

“ Then, they told me a lot about the Tawhid (the unicity of God). They were telling me it was forbidden to use emoticons in my text messages. If I allowed myself to depict a face, I was putting myself on an equal footing than God because Him only can create. A brother (from the radical group) told me that if I was drawing faces or animals, God would ask me to give life to these drawings the day of Judgment. As I will be incapable of doing it, He will judge me as an infidel and He will throw me to hell. The drawing was one of my great passions. It enabled me to relieve my emotions, to leave to another world. I have stopped overnight. I was not even allowed to draw a sun as it was something God created. To suppress human representations surrounding me every day, I had to burn curtains, hangings and pictures I had. I also deleted every picture of me without veil dating from my birth my mother had on her computer... I was scared God would be mad at me because I was accomplice to infidels who wanted to equal Him. I was the one who allowed my mother to take pictures, and I was the one in the frame, so I was the one who sinned. In the end, I destroyed nearly all my childhood's memories. ”

(Morgane, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

“ We are scared of everything and at the same time, we are telling ourselves we are fearless because God is with us. It's contradictory... They were telling me the devil is using music to drive us away from religion. At the beginning, I was only allowed percussions, then they removed them too. I stopped watching television. They were stressing me out telling me the only difference between Muslims and infidels was the prayer. If I did activities, watched a TV show or listened to some music, it would drive me away from religion. I rather kept doing my activity than praying on time or reading books on Islam. I was very scared of not making it on time because if we were only three minutes late, I was told our prayer wouldn't be accepted by God. I withdrew from the world, I didn't dare going out with my friend. I was constantly afraid of becoming an infidel if I was just a minute late for prayer... People didn't understand and thought I wanted to be under the spotlight when I was praying in front of everyone in stores or in the street... Still my fear was deep. I didn't dare to get in my mother's car because she always turned on the radio. I was scared the Devil could get me and drive me away from the true path. They also talked a lot about the mixity ban. They explained it was necessary to avoid any temptation. I had to refuse to hear a man's voice. I couldn't listen to a female singer because women are forbidden to sing. This could tempt men and they are considered as seductresses. Women should not show



their face, or even their hands and their feet. They kept saying a sentence particularly affected me: “Islam is not the one forbidding everything, but today’s society allowing too much.”

(Morgane, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

“ The fear of signing contracts is (now) gone whereas before I was petrified at the idea of doing “shirk”. I am still scared of misunderstanding Islam. You know that you have the punishment of hell.”

(Brian, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

“ The brother of the Dawla added religious notions which caused me anxiety: they said we could do shirk without even being aware of it, and that it was better to deprive ourselves from everything to avoid being in such situation. I focused to respect all the prohibitions and finally, I became completely withdrawn. Day by day, I felt more and more hatred towards the outside world, and it increased. I went from being someone who wanted to help people to someone who wanted to fight.”

(Hamza, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

“ At one point, I wasn’t doing anything anymore because I was scared all the time to do something wrong. And I think that all the things they prohibited us to do are the reason why I became totally withdrawn. Every time we said something, they gave us a pretext to prevent us from doing whatever it was about. So that means that at one point we were telling ourselves that the only thing that we could do was praying and other things related to religion, such as reading books (theological), attending lectures (theological) and still, from specific sheikh. And then, they told us things like: yeah, we told you to do that but that’s wrong. But I’ve been told that prayers after ablutions are mandatory. Then instead of doing my 5 basic prayers a day I was praying two additional times in regard to previous ablutions. And then, I used to do two supererogatory prayers after the mandatory one. So I was spending one hour for each prayer and I even forbade myself to go out because I thought that if it was overlapping the prayer time, if I was missing it, I would be considered as an infidel... Especially considering they told us that we were not allowed to run when it was prayer time, we were not allowed to run home. I believe it was about not rushing because we had to do it anywhere we were at that moment ; so we could show that we were thinking about God at any time and no matter where we were, and God comes first. So basically, that’s how they make us scared about everything, especially about irrelevant things. At the end, they told us that everything was forbidden. I was even told that drawing a sun was forbidden because it was something God created. Same thing for the curtains, the



hangings, the pictures of me I had... I threw everything away. I burnt a lot of them. I deleted every picture of me my mother had on her computer before leaving, because I was scared that someone could find the computer and see me without the veil as my mother had pictures of me without the veil on the computer. I was also scared that, as I was on the picture, God would resent me because I was accomplice. I was the one who authorized it and was on the picture so theoretically I was the one who sinned. I should have stayed away from the frame. So I deleted everything. As a result I don't have any memories left from those moments. And yeah... they made up prohibitions from everything. So, we were super highly paranoid.

(Young adult, atheist family, middle class, convicted of apology for terrorism).

By fear of doing Shirk, I destroyed my identity card, my student card and my social security card. I avoided as much as I could money too. I was anxious at the thought of associating it to Allah because I knew it was the highest sin, above fornication and alcohol. At the beginning, I thought that if I accepted to be recognized by France, I became automatically an infidel. However, I soon realized it was a mistake of mine. I had a shubuhah (a ambiguity), because I understood it was a narrative from state. My identity, my age, my nationality and other information were written, but it didn't make me an infidel because I didn't ask for the French nationality in any way. Wanting the nationality was a serious deed because it was hoping to be of the same nature as an infidel, a French citizen, whereas to us, our nature is Islam (...). I also hurt my mother a lot when I removed the family pictures from the wall of my bedroom. It was very harsh because she had the feeling that I tried to make her disappear. There is one in particular depicting us with my mother, my deceased father and I in the stroller. Since my birth, my mother has hung it up on the wall. She didn't understand that I had no choice because representations are scaring off angels. I had to exercise an inordinate amount of self-control not to touch to the living room's pictures. However, even though I said I had thrown them away, they were hidden in a drawer. I couldn't get rid of them completely. I also forbade dogs from entering the house. My mother is very strong-willed, she shouts a lot but never hits. Sometimes, I heard her crying alone in her corner, it was very hard but I comforted myself telling me it was not a bad intention on my part. I was taken them down to respect religion and Allah. It was impossible to keep a tiny box to take into account the feelings of my mother. Yet, I saw muslimins (Muslims) as being part of the best communities, from a middle-ground. It was very hard to share religion and the world I was living in. I thought society was making it difficult. When I went out, it was really for something of importance.

(Peter, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)



“ And concerning music, I didn't even dare going into my mother's car because she always turned on the radio or stuff like that. At some point, I even refused to listen to testimonies, in which men were talking, because it could be a temptation. I could be tempted by the voice of the man or something like that. Then, I didn't dare listening to anything anymore, including to girls, because I've been told that women are forbidden to sing. Women are not allowed to sing, not even the right to voice or show their face, hands, and feet... Nothing! Then, I became excessively withdrawn on all this. They manage to frighten us by actually prohibiting everything and saying a sentence that particularly affected me: “Islam is not the one forbidding everything, but today's society allowing too much.” ”

(17 year-old girl, atheist family, lower class,
monitored by the juvenile court judge for radical indoctrination)

“ There are plenty of examples like this [...] when I was taking the subway for instance and that someone was playing music. I was listening like every passenger, but I knew I was not supposed to. So I told myself that something was wrong, something is wrong. Normally, you should feel bad! So I began to feel anxious, to breathe loudly, my throat was obstructed, I felt bad, I had to go in another train car. To the next stop I went to another train car, it was not normal! I couldn't stay there, where someone was playing music in front of me, and going on living as if nothing happened! I had to feel bad, at a minimum I had to feel bad. At the beginning, I didn't move and he started playing. And there I had so many thoughts in my mind. I told myself: “but, no, this is not normal, you shouldn't stay here! You don't belong here! Normally, if you were a real one, you wouldn't stay here, you would go to another train car. Your other brothers, if they were in your position, they would have done it, so why aren't you doing it? How are you going to present yourself in front of your brothers tomorrow and you will say that when someone is playing an instrument, you don't go to another train car?” I was feeling guilty, I thought “it is not normal” to the extent that I thought I shouldn't go to shopping malls and stores where we can hear the radio... It was not normal... ”

(Young adult, Muslim family, lower class,
condemned for participation in a terrorist enterprise)

“ I experienced several forms of paranoia: I experienced an absolute need of isolating myself, I had to leave France, do the hijra, not to live with infidels. The latent discourse was that infidels would test your faith. We were warned against the other Muslims who were not in the haq, and the kamis enabled to distinguish ourselves from them. Kamis was both protecting oneself from persecution and rejecting others. When we turn to “jihadism”, we do not wear the kamis any longer because it is too noticeable, but we keep the idea in mind that we must stick together, and that the outer world wants to harm us. It's always here, even if it is not noticeable with clothes. They kept saying that “Jews and Christians will be satisfied only once you follow their path; they will do everything to lead you away from your religion; ”



if you start to get dressed like them, to talk like them, to think like them, you are done. They will never cease to fight us until we leave our religion...

(Young adult, Muslim family, lower class, convicted of apology for terrorism, back to France)

In my private space, I've never listened to music or watched TV, even though I wasn't the one turning it on, as I had the right to refuse. I stopped playing video games as well because it made me lose too much time over my religious learning. Not to do Shirk, I had to be very careful not to use the word "love". I forced myself to say "love" because only Allah could be Loved. It went far... I had to think about it non-stop. I observed all activities to be sure I wasn't doing Shirk without being aware of it. Staying locked up in my bedroom made me feel secured very much in the end...

(Peter, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

A debate is stimulating experts regarding the porosity between the interpretation advocated by the pietist Salafist discourse and the one advocated by the "jihadist" discourse. The Salafist discourse is not requiring Muslims to enforce divine law within society where it lives but only to protect themselves individually against the rest of the society controlled by human law. It shares the same rigorist interpretation of Tawhid, to the point that many young individuals slip from a group to the other without even noticing as soon as in early stages:

At the level of the religious discourse: it was with a continuation of what we have already explored with the Salafists. That's why at the beginning, I didn't even see any difference between the Salafists, the first Salafists I frequented who were absolutely non-violent, and the jihadists, because somehow the discourse on which jihadist propaganda is based on is the same. It is particularly the issue of the Tawhid – the Tawhid being God's unicity. So, about the Tawhid, it is true that when you hear about it from Salafists, it is at the same time something new in the sense that it is not a word we hear from other Muslims. There wasn't such focalization on this word with other Muslims. At the same time, we have been told from the outset that it is religion's foundation, the basis of religion, the testimony of faith: there is no God than God, this is the first sentence you recite when you want to become Muslim, so it is not something extraordinary. On the contrary, this is what every Muslim should know. So, basically, just the first approach with the matter makes you feel awkward with everyone and everything surrounding you. You think: this topic is obvious, this is exactly it! We should have started with this. Why don't the others talk about it? Why don't the others focus that much on this aspect? And gradually, the deeper you go into the subject, the more they try to explain you certain practices tend toward associationism, which is Tawhid's opposite. The Tawhid is about worshipping one divinity, only one God: Allah. The Shirk consist in loving something as much as



Him. While loving your Lord, you could also vow acts of worship to another divinity at the same level. It is not denying God. You're also told that while loving God, one unique God, you're not protected from doing things that could lead you to set an equal to Him, to put somebody at the same level. And so you never know... You're always scared. I said earlier that the simple fact that others are not talking about it is somehow a sign showing that they fell into it without even noticing. And then, you think: maybe I did fall into it without even noticing. I may do Shirk alongside acts of associationism... I may set somebody higher than God without being aware of it... And I will therefore have to give God an account for my behavior on resurrection day. I will then be a non-believer because I did Shirk. The one associating somebody to God is destined to go to hell. So, am I not myself destined to go to hell?

(B., 28 years old, Muslim family, lower class, condemned for participation in a terrorist enterprise, back to France)

The Taghout is designing everything which would be close to Shirk:

The word which kept being used was the word Taghout. The word Taghout is somehow catch-all. It gathers everything worshipping outside of God. So, we boasted we kinda were the only ones understanding this precise word (the Taghout), as if we were the only ones be aware of it and things being worshipped outside of God. The others are not talking about it, they are not even aware of it. They can fall into it without even noticing. We are the only ones somehow who are preserved because we always talk about it, we recall this 24 hours-a-day. Talking about something else than religion? No, no, no! The more important thing is primarily talking about it. If your "God's unicity" is not correct, the rest of religion is pointless anyway. It was the discourse we had anyway. The discourse we had, compared to misled Muslims, was to say: "Yes it's good, he has some knowledge, he is a scholar, he has very, very great knowledge of religion, but it is pointless if you do not have Tawhid, if you do not have God's unicity. It is useless!" God's unicity is what is going to make you go to Heaven, the rest follows. We restricted ourselves to this one subject. We pushed it to its limits, to such extent that we had to step aside from everything that could have a link, not necessarily an obvious clear tie, but everything which could be somehow be linked to Tawhid. For example: loving a soccer player or a singer. By loving, we were entering into veneration realm. "Just look... even the names we give are not insignificant. We name "celebrities" with the word "stars"... So, people who worship stars, it's the same thing... It is exactly the same thing... You should not love a soccer player, you should not love an athlete, you should not love an artist or whoever. You should not love them because you are worshipping, you are associating them with God. And even if you worship the unique God, beware! You can still do associationism, you are never safe... So you must step aside from this whole system.

With your country, it is the same... You cannot love your country. Why? Because loving your country is inevitably nationalism, and nationalism: what is it? It is about putting your country above God. It is about putting your nation, your homeland above your religion. It is about pretending your motherland's interests are above the interests of God. In nationalism, the tie between people is built on the fact they belong to the same



nation. But we should only have one bond: the one of brotherhood of faith. Even the link with the family was a hindrance for us. So, what about people from the same country... Nationalism clearly was like an idol – The great idol challenging God. And all the other so-called Muslims, who claimed to be Muslims, who were praying, who were filling mosques, who were doing many worshipping deeds for religion... Well, most of them did Shirk because they didn't hate their country, no matter if it was Morocco or France. We couldn't love our country. We couldn't put our country at the same level as God. It was necessary to do the opposite. Basically, you had to hate your country. Just like soccer players: you worship them, or you hate them, there is no middle-ground. You are not told to seek a balance. It is possible to draw some parallel with the conspiracy theories, it's always about taking a small piece of truth and taking you much farther. Here it's the same: indeed, someone can live for his idol only, and excesses may happen. It's also true a religious discourse can bring the person to question himself, leading to think: you have every right to love what this person does but there are some limits... No, they were clearly not looking to make us reach a balance. They above all sought to make us feel guilty, to make us swing from one extreme to the other. If you start loving a soccer player, if you start loving a star, you know where you will end up... So step aside from everything! That's the exact same process with conspiracy discourses, it always starts from here. They start to inspire a little truth within which you will recognize yourself, and you will say: it is true I do love this player! I love this singer! etc. When he had this haircut, I had the same, or I dressed the same... So you're reminded: you must have one model, you must dress only as Muslims, like mujahidin more exactly: having long hair, etc. You must dress like them. So, mujahidin must be your sole models, you must follow them to the finest details, and if you concede this to another, then, you do associationism. They are always using very, very scary words. It is always about something which is very, very anxiogenic, to the point we wonder whether we do associationism as well? Am I doomed to go to hell? there is always this feeling of worry and fear. You are not reassured regarding your own practice. You even get to ask people: "Here, I did this, am I doing associationism?" You get to the point where you are not even able to say: I am Muslim, I love my lord! You don't even know anymore, you don't even know anymore where you are, you don't even know anymore where you stand in all of this. The discourse is so much guilt-inducing.

(34 year-old man, Muslim family, lower class,
condemned for terrorist activity)

The principle of Alliance and Disavowal stops putting the young individual in a position where he feels discriminated and persecuted as soon as he cannot exclude himself and others as wished by his own interpretation:

Now, I realize that the feeling of persecution was very much built on the notion of Al Walla Al Barra (the principle of Alliance and Disavowal). Its purpose was to cut ourselves off from everything: it was necessary to stay with people who think like us and above all not to mix with the others. The Media was trying to hurt us, even the other Muslims, so we had to be careful, as



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they were going to question our values and our faith... Just like conspiracy theories that achieved to echo by relying on half-truths, on things that truly exist by amplifying them, and producing an analysis which is not necessarily true, the feeling of persecution was strengthened and justified by a religious principle: the Alliance and the Disavowal. The Muslims keep proximity and friendship, brotherhood as well as anything linked to Muslims, and rejecting anything linked to infidels. I have never heard about this principle with Salafists, but with jihadists only. It appeared as the basis of religion, a subject which was constantly mentioned. The fact it existed in Muslim history was used as a justification for this feeling of persecution: we do not mix with koffars, why? The Alliance and the Disavowal. I had to study this topic to understand how it was being manipulated: loving other people's religious beliefs was forbidden. Otherwise, when reading books on the matter, it is the contrary: we can marry, love a non-Muslim woman, and we even have to guarantee she can go on practicing her religion, etc.; but we have not been told any of this information all of this, we were not told, this is what matters... We have been told that: Jews and Christians will be satisfied only once you follow their religion. Here again, if we look a bit for it, we find in hadiths a lot of illustrations showing the contrary: the Prophet had contacts with non-Muslim people and he married non-Muslim women... Nobody talked to us about all of this. By reading real theological books and discovering that I could be friend with non-Muslim people, I understood I was dealing with people who were repeating what they had been told but who actually didn't know anything about what they were talking about. Meanwhile, my brothers felt discriminated as soon as they couldn't impose their vision: no music, no image, no talk... So, we didn't feel discriminated, we basically felt constantly persecuted!

(24 year-old adult, Muslim family, lower class,
convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise)



I.3 - THE APPROPRIATION OF THE FEELING OF DISCRIMINATION/PERSECUTION DUE TO THE ANXIOTIC APPROACH

The anxiogenic emotional approach produces a cognitive transformation that leads to new definitions of the subject himself (the one who has discernment and wants to change the corrupt world) and of 'others' (those who choose to maintain this state of corruption).

Following the radical group's comments, the young person develops a worldview where he must protect himself from any hostile element surrounding him.

Two phases lead the young person to the feeling of discrimination / persecution:

- 1- The perception of 'others' as negative elements as a whole;
- 2- The fusion strengthening within the radical group.

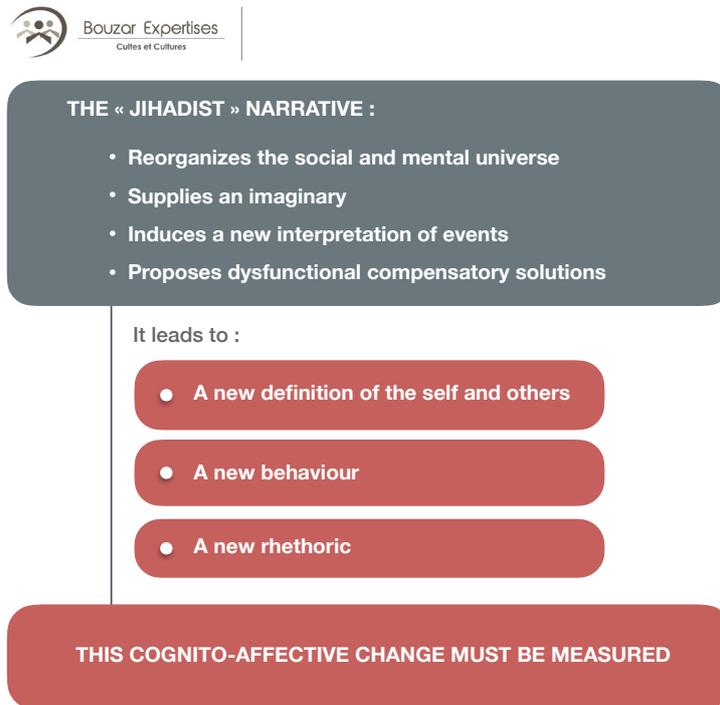
The phases that lead to the feeling of discrimination / persecution are important considering the latter is linked to the use of violence. Interviewees start talking about violence as soon as they express their feeling of being 'hunted down' by 'the others'.

The way they perceive the world has changed as soon as they develop this new definition of themselves and others. Through this perception they feel persecuted and defending themselves becomes legitimate.

The terrorist act that emanates from this cognitive change is justified in all their videos and speeches as 'self-defense'. Violence appears to them as the only way to fight against the 'forces of evil'. During the commitment phase, the feeling of persecution plays a predominant role: all the activists follow the same modus operandi and justify their acting out by their feeling of persecution – acts that are never qualified as terrorist acts but as acts of 'resistance', 'justice operations', 'defensive maneuvers', 'strategy requiring the use of force', etc.

NOTA BENE about Internet : There is a consensus in literature considering Internet as a tool and facilitating the radicalization process: BOUZAR D., The mutation of the jihadist narrative: the new forms of Muslim radicalism, Cahiers de la Sécurité n°30, 88-93; DUCOL B., Becoming jihadist in the numeric era, A processual and situational approach of the jihadist involvement in the light of the Web Université de Laval; PAUWEL L. and all, (2014), To understand and to explain the roles of the new social medias in the formation of violent extremism: a qualitative and quantitative study, Bruxelles; HUSSEIN H., The online recruitment of teenagers by ISIL : the anasheed jihadist songs, in Mediadoc n°18, 2017; ALAVA S. and all, (2017), Social networks and the youths' radicalization in the numeric; UNESCO Report, Direction of Information and communication; Report (dir. P.CONESA and all): The french propaganda of ISIL: the mythology of the happy fighter, FMSH.





Redesigned schema for the report harmony
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I.3.1 The anxiogenic approach leads to develop a new self-definition as well as a definition of others as ‘the Enemy’

In a comprehensive treaty regarding extremist groups in the United States, Hofstadter used the notion of ‘paranoid style’ to characterize their thoughts and behaviors.⁴¹ Aaron Beck emphasizes that the development of a paranoid personality is quite inevitable when part of a group that built a collective identity based on a vulnerability vis-à-vis a controlling and intrusive government (in other words: ‘a government that applies human laws’ according to Islamist radicals).⁴² He notes that “as paranoid delusions, the paranoid perspective focuses on the enemy and their ‘plot’. The conflict escalation with the persecutor exacerbates the paranoid position. As the extremist, the paranoid patient will attack his alleged persecutors. The militiamen who perceive themselves as oppressed by the agencies of a tyrannical government will retaliate against their alleged enemies”.⁴³ The common characteristic between paranoid patients and members of extremist groups is the presence of “an enormous psychological investment in their believes both grandiose and persecutory: ‘we can save the world, we can overthrow the tyrannical government’”.⁴⁴

Through our testimonies, we could observe that radicalized individuals interiorize a representation of ‘others’ entirely negative and a representation of those with whom they

⁴¹HOFSTADTER R. *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York : Vintage Books, 1967) , Robins and Post, Political Paranoia.

⁴²BECK Aaron T. *Prisonniers de la haine, les racines de la violence*, with the collaboration of Héloïse DUPONT and Maud MIL-LIERY, Ed Masson, collection ‘Médecine et psychothérapie’, p. 187

⁴³*Ibid.* p. 188.

⁴⁴*Ibid.* p. 188.

communicate fully positive – one reinforcing the other. The rejection of their ideology and behavior is perceived by radicals as the evidence their group holds the truth. They consider they disturb because of their willingness to destroy corruption and privileges with the use of the divine law. It somehow reminds the Prophet's life as he wished to destroy the privileges of the Arab tribes of Mecca who persecuted him until he immigrated to Medina. Being rejected by society illustrates the existence of a conspiracy against Islam (the true Islam). The individual in the process of radicalization needs external hatred to feed his own hate. "The more opposition from external groups he perceives, the more he strengthens his own group. His brothers become even more respectable, noble and moral while the others become more and more despicable, ignoble and immoral."⁴⁵ The paranoid perspective attributes an automatic malicious attitude to anyone outside the radical group. It leads to the interpretation and expectation of harmful behaviors that go far beyond any objective evidence.

“ *He (my brother on the internet) insisted on the fact that miscreants have been leading us to numerous illicit temptations. They have been leading us to sin and keeping us away from purity. Miscreants wanted to make us bad and couldn't handle the fact that we were superior to them. I understood that the more we held the truth, the more persecuted we were in an attempt to make us fall. But we are stronger than they are, Hamdulillâh (Praise to God). So, for my brother, it wouldn't matter if we killed people, because they are the ones who bring us back to the temptations of Sheitan. I believed him and shared his worldview. I didn't think that killing people was a good thing but I could justify it as it was the only way to reach purity.* ”

(Mathieu, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

“ *We knew we shouldn't talk to the phone... should we have taken the chip off? Or even the battery? Because our enemies were everywhere. It was obvious. As we held the truth, for sure we were watched. And the more we felt like being watched, the more convinced we were to hold the truth. To me, I was part of an authentic group, we were the most alert. We were hunted because they wanted to brainwash us, to indoctrinate us... I was scared at the idea people could get close to me, I perceived them as harmful. I had to stay alert, no matter what.* ”

(16 year-old woman, Muslim family, lower class,
convicted for terrorism and proselytism)

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 169.



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“ “ *My sisters on the internet used to tell me: do not trust anyone or you won't be able to run away, you will stay there forever. You will never be able to live as you wish for. So, I saw 'the other' as an enemy as he was an obstacle to my goals. I tend to share my thoughts too easily so I took the decision to just stop talking. I had to protect myself.* ” ”

(Morgane, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

“ “ *They warned me: once you wear the niqab, you'll see that your friends won't talk to you anymore! They won't accept the Islamic outfit! France doesn't want any Muslim. Their prediction appeared to be true: my best friend reacted as her father asked her to stop talking to me... My way to dress scared her. So I didn't want her in my life anymore. I was not going to give up my religion for her, right? If she truly loved me, she would have accepted me and my religion. She wasn't the only one who rejected me. Nobody talked to me anymore... In the bus, ticket controllers persecuted me. In the stores, people refused to answer me. In the street, people walked on the other sidewalk. It was the evidence my brothers said the truth: France didn't fight against ISIL only, the truth is that the country advocated against Islam and Muslims. For me, at the time, the niqab was the representation of Islam. That's what brought me to hijra at the end. The miscreants wanted to harm us.* ” ”

(19 year-old woman, catholic family, lower class, sentenced to jihadist sites consultation)

“ “ *Watching the videos 19HH, I had the feeling that we were like outsiders in France... that there really were plots against Muslims... that no-one wanted us... that people wanted to persecute us. I started to feel persecuted myself as soon as conflicts rose between me and my parents, not long after my religious conversion. To me, it confirmed that the ones who made those videos said the truth, because they warned me regarding my family – that they were going to reject me once converted.* ” ”

(Fabien, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

“ “ *My family had the feeling I was abandoning them as soon as I converted to Islam. I didn't participate anymore to birthdays, parties or Christmas. I remember that my mother was very upset when I didn't celebrate Mother's day or her birthday. I also didn't participate to the communion of my young cousin even though I am very close to her. She asked for me but I was not allowed to enter a Church. I admit I took some distance with my family. I didn't see my grandmother, my nephews and nieces anymore... Sometimes, to make me part of the events, they came to our house to celebrate them. They brought food and cakes but I refused to leave my room. I didn't leave my room. I was not allowed to participate or I would have had been complicit in their miscreance. They had the feeling I didn't exist*



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anymore. I was hiding from my own family. They told me they missed me and still I didn't feel a thing. I was afraid to get close to them, afraid they would bring me back to evil with all the sins they daily commit.

(Peter, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

I wanted to get married, have kids and raise them in a Muslim country where I could practice and teach them the true religion without being persecuted. I could picture my little girl fully covered as young as six or seven years old ... (...). They told me once there I will be able to stay in my apartment, in my own world, with my children and my husband and that no disturbance would occur. I would be peaceful, far from everything, protected...

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)

The construction of the image of the 'other' as the 'Enemy' is not necessarily based on the same analytical approach. As an example, this young man developed a paranoid personality based on the concept of purity. Nevertheless, the scheme remains the same: the anxiogenic emotional approach leads him to feel persecuted by 'the others' and ultimately to define them as those who deserve to die:

Human nature disgusted me. I felt like I was finally opening my eyes on the world surrounding me. I had access to the truth. Then the brother talked to me about human purity. He told me that secret societies made a pact with the devil to keep the power and therefore control the world. These secret societies would have accepted to sacrifice good men, stopping them from being pure. He took as an example the sexual temptations that we have to combat daily in our own body. This brother wanted to go beyond the limits of his purity. To do so, he explained me that we could push the boundaries of Good. That's when I heard about Jihad for the first time. He considered that miscreants were accomplices of secret societies and so, they were responsible as well. Even worse, he insisted on the fact that miscreants have been leading us to numerous illicit temptations. They have been leading us to sin and keeping us away from purity. Miscreants wanted to make us bad and couldn't handle the fact that we were superior to them. I understood that the more we held the truth, the more persecuted we were in an attempt to make us fall. But we are stronger than they are, Hamdulillâh (Praise to God). So, for my brother, it wouldn't matter if we killed people because they are the ones who bring us back to the temptations of Sheitan. I believed him and shared his worldview. I didn't think that killing people was a good thing but I could justify it as it was the only way to reach purity.

(Mathieu, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc,
Les désengagés)



The ‘other Muslims’ are also part of this idea of ‘Enemy’:

“ As soon as you start thinking this way, you don’t see other Muslims as Muslims, without necessarily saying it, without necessarily saying that the others are not Muslims and they just physically look like ones. But unconsciously, this is what you’re convinced of. You exercise even more caution as there may be enemies within. We kept looking for a “good mosque”. Every time, we warned each other: “do not pray behind this imam because he does Shirk!” I’ve never asked myself: “Really! What is he doing exactly?” I just needed to hear those words to accept it the way I’ve been told. Somehow, I had this obsessional fear deep inside me that expressed itself. I was so afraid to be associated to this that as soon as I’ve been told the imam was dirty, I literally stepped back. I had to stop going to the mosque of koffars’ country and go pray with my brothers only at one of their places. If I went to a mosque again, I put myself in danger because the imam would read the Coran and I could forget about not praying behind him. I had to avoid absolutely any link with him as progressively, I could have ended up following his misguidance and mistakes. ”

(Adult, Muslim family, lower class, convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise)

Individuals who do not adhere to the worldview of radicalized ones (based on conspiracy theories and strict interpretations of the Tawhid) lose their individual features and are perceived as a homogenous group. Then, the dichotomized thinking progressively starts labelling “in a perverse way, victims as criminals and glorifying abusers as savers”.⁴⁶ From that moment, the radicalized individuals categorize any person external to the radical group as the ‘Enemy’.

“ Then, the Dawla brainwashed me by telling me that the whole world was against us... Journalists, politicians, but also teachers, community facilitators, and even our own families... If they murder our children, we should murder theirs. I didn’t feel a thing for much people... To the point where even attacks in France, where I live, in my own country, didn’t affect me. I perceived French people as enemies, persecutors, Islamophobic individuals, responsible of the massacre and torture of Syrian kids... Moreover, the involvement of the French people in the international coalition and my house arrest confirmed even further my conviction that my brothers of the Dawla spoke the truth: the koffars wanted to break us because they knew we were superior, that we could impose justice. I considered French people as a sub-category of human beings. Several months ago, if an old woman greeted me, I wouldn’t have answered to her. I considered her as a “kafira”, a miscreant, so a bad person. I actually completely ignored how this woman was, good or bad... She didn’t say

⁴⁶BECK Aaron T. *Prisonniers de la haine, les racines de la violence*, with the collaboration of H elo ise DUPONT and Maud MIL-LIERY, Ed Masson, collection M edecine et psychoth erapie, p. 30.

nor did a thing... It gives you an idea of my state of mind, how paranoid I was. You feel like everybody wants to hurt you. I felt hatred against the rest of the world as I was convinced to hold the truth.

(17 year-old man, atheist family, middle class, convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise)

I will always remember the first video of decapitation I watched. It was the one where a pro-Daesh' British guy sliced the throat of a journalist. This led to the decision of the international coalition to bomb ISIL. I was deeply shocked and shaken by this video but the Dawla explained me he was a miscreant and so deserved it. It was him or the others, the innocents murdered by Bachar El Assad. I had to choose my side: hold with the strongest or the weakest. I needed evidence, so I bought religious texts. I read texts on the Djihad. I have been explained that it is mandatory to do the Djihad if persecuted, that we had to kill the "koffars" as they were the ones doing evil on Earth.

(Teenager, atheist family, middle class, convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise)

I.3.2 Defining others as the 'Enemy' automatically leads to the fusion within the group

We observed that the anxiogenic emotional approach is interconnected to an ideological approach based on Muslim principals (diverted from their former interpretation) in order to heighten its effectiveness. A third dimension clearly appears in the interviews. This third dimension can be defined as a 'relational approach'. While the ideological approach leads young people to endorse to the ideology of the group, the relational approach enrolls the young individual in his new group. There is a direct link between the relational approach and the ideological approach. They are interconnected as the fusion within the group operates on the conviction they possess 'the true Islam' and this conviction is the glue that connects the individual to his new group. We are in a situation where belief influences behaviors and behaviors influence belief.

One of the features of religious extremism appears as follows: beyond the ideological justification defined in such groups, Islam is used as a narrative that gives not only a meaning to their lives but also to the community life within the group. The French-American anthropologist Scott Atran noted that: "although the religious aspect is the cause which at first federates these companions, what they are looking for is the bond strength".⁴⁷ Indeed, we find this 'relational' aspect - not to say cohesive - omnipresent from both 'jihadists' and young people.

Previous testimonies have shown how the anxiogenic emotional approach of the radical discourse led young people to be wary of and cut off from the outside world. The fear of the outside

⁴⁷ ATRAN S. *Terroristes en quête de compassion*, in Cerveau et Psycho, N°11.

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accentuates the resemblances with the members of the group and increases the differences with the outside world. This is a consequence of the feelings they start sharing. The paranoid view reinforces the group fusion and isolation from society: any group suspicious of the outside world withdraws from it. Gradually, the individual is losing his old affective, memorial, and intellectual references as the identity of the group is absorbing his own identity. The group thinks of the place of the individual. Any ideology of rupture rests on group exaltation. Wearing clothes that hide the identities of individuals and presented as ‘authentically Muslim’ contributes to the group fusion. It not only allows one to recognize oneself within the radical group and to distinguish oneself from ‘the others’, but also to break with one’s ‘old self’.

“ He said ‘if you don’t want to listen, then you’re not a real Muslim. You are blind like the other koffars (miscreants). You don’t want to see the truth. Others can see but not you. You are like the others, the ignorant ones. It made me feel guilty so I forced myself to watch videos; I forced myself to get in contact with them to actually try to be a better person and mainly to be accepted. I don’t know why but I needed them to accept me in the group. They were like a family. Actually each person I talked to had his own role. One was like a big sister, the other one was a bit like my mother because she had kids and gave me advice. She was mature when she expressed herself. And then, there was a guy who talked to me as a father. He told me what I had to do. He checked on me etc. And then of course, there were those who talked to me to get married. Actually, I was very supported... I was progressively losing my family and my friends but the group filled this loss. There was no void. On the contrary... I felt spoiled and loved, more than ever. My ‘new big sister’ used to tell me I was the most mature one in the group and that despite I was 14 years old only, I should get married now because she was sure great things would happen to me. Then, she introduced me to a brother. And then suddenly, she deactivated all her accounts, nobody from the group had any news from her. Then, this brother stayed in touch with me and wanted to marry me; he took over (...) In Syria, I could wear the full veil, just like all the other women. I had the feeling they were my sisters, that we were the same, that I was supposed to be one of them, with them. I didn’t feel different than others, I was supported. But in France, I was alone, different, I lost my friends and family. I had only them in my life. I was very close to them, I needed their presence, I felt like I was addicted even though our relationship was mostly virtual. (...) When I was finally wearing the veil on my face, leaving only two little holes for my eyes, I felt serene, relaxed. I finally had a strong barricade protecting me from the world. My anxiety vanished, I felt so thankful towards these sisters for freeing me from these feelings. They gave me so much. Finally, I was not afraid anymore. I saw them as savers. I had the feeling they were the only ones who could understand me and more particularly who had the solution to my problems. I admired their knowledge... Sometimes, I thought about leaving them but I couldn’t. I didn’t dare say my doubts out loud. I kept them deep inside me and I convinced myself that I completely agreed with them. The rare occasions I could express my doubts, they started to exclude me: they wrote messages and warnings about me on social networks. They talked to the brothers and sisters so they avoid me and stop talking to me. They said I was weird, that I was asking too many questions, that I had too many doubts, and that the truth was that I was not one of them: I was a spy. I was so scared the group abandons me, just like my father... I could not accept the idea of losing them. They



became my family, my brothers, and my sisters. They protected me against the world, against myself. They could not abandon me as well, it was not an option for me. I realize now that I have never been afraid they hurt me. And still, I knew the fate they reserved for those who did not strictly follow them: they declared them as spies and killed them. At that moment, I didn't think about it at all... Only the fear to end up alone was in my mind. The feeling of void came back to me and truly scared me. So I kept my questions and doubts for myself. In addition, I could see everybody agreed and no one else was tormenting oneself but me.

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

I found odd the idea that we had to kill everybody, but I've never told them. I've never dared talking about my doubts. I just mentioned my doubts regarding how they slice the throat of their victims but they told me they were right. I don't really remember how they justified it. I can't remember if the brother I was the closest to really convinced me, or if I didn't feel like contradicting him. It was important to me to know what he was thinking. I had the feeling that thinking the same thing made us closer. We had the feeling we were the same. He's never mentioned me his doubts though, just about the fact that he wanted to go there. For me, it was completely normal to have doubts, especially considering I was in contact with Salafists who are against the Dawla and told me that the use of violence is forbidden. That's why I had doubts. If I was in contact with pro- Daesh' people only, they would have succeeded in making me one of them. I would have been screwed. At that moment, I really wanted to leave my family, I was dreaming of going to a place where I would feel fine... In Syria, the brothers seemed to be so happy!

(Peter, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

I felt like in a cocoon as soon as I was online. We understood and encouraged each other. My sisters were always here for me, day and night. They always found pretexts to my mistakes, to my failures. I could tell them everything, even if haram (illicit to God), like listening to music... I was literally fantasizing the idea of living in a world with goodness and female fraternity... I loved them more than my real sisters (...) Before leaving for Syria, we met in the 93, we decided to wear our niqab and went outside in the street, enjoying life like crazy kids.⁴⁸ Some were already on the field but some others were waiting for the signal from the brothers who were organizing the trips. We came from the whole territory of France to meet up there. We often passed a sport club... Well, those last days, I took the train and went back to this city just to pass this sport club. I wish I could live this moment again...

⁴⁸93 is the official administrative number of Seine-Saint-Denis, a French department located in the Île-de-France region.

I felt invincible with my sisters. Nothing could scare me: nor being unemployed, nor the cancer... In vain... I feel like I will never be able to feel this again...

(Adult, 22 years old, Muslim family, lower class, back to France, convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise)

I had the feeling the brother who opened my eyes could bring me love, fraternity and goodness. He also helped me being someone, someone good. To me, everything was important in this relationship, his project as well as what he was teaching me. But to me, what was the most important thing was to be with him and with my new brothers. The most important thing was to have a real family.

(Teenager, 15 years old, atheist family, middle class, monitored by the juvenile court judge for indoctrination)

At the beginning of my conversion, I started to get interested in Daesh'. When I started to watch their videos, I felt persecuted and I started to feel hatred towards everybody else. At that moment, I became withdrawn and I started to get bad grades. I stopped going to school and I kept fighting with my parents every day. I didn't have any goal; I didn't know what to do. When I was accepted in 10th Grade, I felt lost. The first videos I watched were about anachids (war songs that Daesh uses as 'religious songs'). We could see armed warriors. For me, the army meant combatting but also supporting its country. All this kind of things interested me. When I was watching these videos, I mainly saw people who looked happy and united. I feel like it was what I needed at that time. I've never been betrayed by any friends but I've been abandoned. Maybe it has something to do about that. I've always known my mother abandoned me. It has never bothered me though. But I was looking for never being abandoned ever again and finding a family. I needed to be loved. I had the feeling that I was going to find love and fraternity. I believed that because of them, I could help others, be good, or even have a good behavior. And thus I would never abandon anyone myself. I needed to show I was strong and the only way to prove it was to carry weapons.

(Fabien, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

I left thinking I would find again human values linked to Islam. We had things in common with the sisters. We were like peas in a pod. We were identical. When one of them was talking, it was like listening to me. Another me... We were very close... We had our own expressions: 'the Shâm Heart Heart', 'lioness is looking for lion', click here, click there, and at the end 'let's go to Disney to kill penguins' which meant 'let's go to Syria to kill koffars'... Still, we didn't even meet yet. We were talking via Internet only. I was online 24/7. I couldn't



sleep. I was all curled up in my bed, with my duvet and computer. Without them, I felt like I didn't exist. We were so close that I couldn't stop thinking about joining them. This was my only thought: going as far as possible, leaving this shitty place and going breathing pur air of Shâm. We kept repeating the hadith that says: "Allah is going to make a selection when the end comes and the best ones will go to Shâm". They listened to me and understood me as well. This is the kind of people who always come to ask us some news about everything and nothing. They were always there for me, talking for hours. Even when I was scared to fail my exams at the University, they reassured me: 'Don't worry, you just need Allah...' I really had the feeling that my sisters and I protected each other when we were chatting. I was really not attracted to power but to the possibility of being listened. The more the time passed the more hatred I felt towards my family. I preferred my group.

”

(Adult, 20 years old, atheist family, lower class, sentenced for attempted departure and apology for terrorism)

Teenagers are looking for strong sensations, a group of peers and an ideal. It is not surprising that the feeling of fusion existing in radical groups attracts them. The recording of this group of teenagers gives a better understanding of this phenomenon:

“

M : My mother forced me to watch TV. So, I watched "Les enfants perdus du djihad". It was about Omar Omsen and his group. I so wanted to leave everything behind and just go there now. I couldn't sleep all night...

I : I experienced this as well, even though I do not socialize with the Salafya. Still, I watched a documentary about Syria using a hidden camera. My mother forced me too... to disgust me... But the result was the complete opposite: seeing all these sisters together in a coffee place, I wanted to be there so bad that I was sweating. Luckily, we had a meeting several days later... If not, I would have left the group for another just to be there...

J : Personally, I don't watch the news anymore when I am at the Centre because I'm afraid that the view of a picture only would make me want to join them. Then I cry too much...

A: Just when you see the journalists mentioning what's going on there, despite all the bullshit they say, you just want to join your sisters so badly to tell the truth...

J: Yes, just when I hear "the Dawla", I just can't fight it... It attracts me like a magnet! Even when they show pictures of propaganda from the government to criticize them... Just when I see brothers and sisters, I so want to be with them...

M: It just makes us want to join them as soon as possible... It's like a passion, joining them, as if we were watching a TV show and we wanted to be part of the cast...

C: When I hear the anachids, it gives me strong feelings! As if I was with them...

M: They are more than just brothers and sisters, as C says, they are like "mini-us"...

J: We are like the fingers on a hand... We are linked. If one is affected, we all are.

M: We are like one single individual...



C: You don't give a shit about anything because you know your brothers will come to save you and retaliate...

J: Yes exactly... Even though they don't know us, we know they love us.

I: Yes exactly... To them, we are more important than their real brothers and sisters who don't want to leave...

A: I calmed down. I don't want to leave anymore. But if you tell me "Wake-up! I'll answer you 'Oumma !'"

L: We are one single individual actually, we don't suffer anymore. We think 'if he falls, I fall'. We won't be alone anymore.

J: So, when people told me that I had to do something to revenge my brothers and sisters, I was ready to kill for them and eventually die. But now I am sequestered and off Internet, I don't have such thoughts anymore...

”

I.3.3 Self-defining as a cohesive group claiming legitimate defense and defining others as 'the Enemy' necessarily leads to the feeling of discrimination / persecution

This cognitive change shows how the radical discourse also manages to make young people internalize discrimination whether or not they have personally experienced it. They have all internalized the same perception of the world as they interpret what they live through their new group beliefs: "the corrupt world persecutes them because they want to fight this perversion".

This phase shows the interaction of the emotional, relational and cognitive dimensions. While the anxiogenic emotional approach has led the young individual to redefine himself and others, and to embrace a paranoid worldview, this latter also provokes strong emotional reactions (feeling of discrimination / persecution). Understanding the role of the feelings in the construction of the young person's intentions (potential actions) is fundamental. In part II, we will see how the 'jihadist' discourse uses emotions (fear, pity, anger, hatred, etc.) felt by the young person to encourage him or her to adhere to their project and to the use of violence.

Here is the extract of an interview between our team named E and a young convert named X. X grew up in a middle class Catholic family. His parents are public servants and his family has no recent history of migration. He attempted to join the 'jihadists'.

“

E: Can I ask you a question? You keep mentioning the idea of holding out against discriminations, but personally, vis-à-vis your religion, what kind of injustice did you suffer?

X: Personally, I don't know... We suffer injustice so much...

E: But you, personally, as an individual?

X: When I see what's happening overseas, all the temptations we force us to go through via the ads, all my sisters wearing the niqab (full veil) who are fined, how the Prophet is insulted and how it is justified by the freedom of speech... I feel attacked... Because my



religion is mine... They can't discriminate us and persecute us. E: Does this affect you?

X: Yes, we all feel affected and concerned. For example, I do not agree with Charlie. I am not Charlie. I can't accept they soil the Prophet. There are so many things that affect me... But it doesn't mean I am going to kill a 4 year old kid in a school. Particularly not a kid... An adult or a cop who discriminates, that's different... But not a kid... I feel helpless... We need to fight back.

E: You feel helpless?

X: Yes... Not doing a thing for my community... Not fighting for the truth... Not waking up all the brainwashed people who keep paying taxes to koffars who defend the democracy... Not freeing the prisoners in prisons as well as those who are under judicial supervision... Not being able to do a thing when a sister is asked to take her veil off once she enters the high school... For me, it is heartbreaking. In my heart wallah, I feel hatred towards the koffars... ” ”

The feeling of X is not based on a personal experience of discrimination but rather on the emotions he feels when he thinks of his brothers and sisters. He justifies the use of violence as legitimate defense following his own perception of the world where Muslims are massively and globally persecuted. There is a link between the degree of the sense of victimization and the moment violence is used. This link will be further discussed.

Here is another interview extract with a 15 year-old girl who grew up in a middle class atheist family with no recent history of migration. This young woman attempted to join Daesh' on several occasions (three times). She will be named as M and the team as E:

“ “

M: At the beginning, everything was Peace and Love in my group... I hated terrorists. E: Who were the terrorists?

M: Daesh'...

E: When you were part of the Salafist group?

M: Yes... It was all cool... We were always praying... We had to avoid feeling angry. When feeling pissed, we prayed...

E: Now, can you remember when all changed? What happened so you started to be interested in Daesh'?

M: As soon as I found out about some videos...

E: How did you find them?

M: After speaking with some friends on Facebook... They send me links...

E: And then?

M: I talked about it to my sisters of the Salafia... But they just kept talking to me about religion. They didn't give answers to my questions.

E: How did you feel?

M: It started to make me feel sick. They kept praying over and over again... And then what? People were soiled and murdered everywhere but we didn't move a finger...

E: That's the moment you decided to take some distance from the Salafia?



Part I

M: Yes... I started to think they were cowards... And I started to discuss with those who sent me the videos...

E: What kind of videos was it exactly?

M: I have been told to get more information on Palestine, to watch documentaries and then go on Youtube. At first, you watch videos about Palestine, and then you find other videos on Myanmar. Then there are even more videos on the persecution of Muslims in the whole world. Anyway, you can find a bit of everything. It was not on purpose to watch stuff about Myanmar or somewhere else... But I think they knew I would somehow. But for me, it was not on purpose, it was just a logical continuation ...

E: How did you feel when you were watching these videos?

M: It made me mad. I had the feeling that we've been hidden the truth in France and that we were hiding the truth to ourselves as well. If such massacres could be hidden from us, then it could be the case of other things as well.

E: Did you tell them how you felt when watching these videos?

M: No, but sometimes I was writing in my journal...

E: And do they talk to you about it?

M: Yes.

E: What did they say?

M: Well... They basically told me that somehow I was supposed to do something about it, that I should join them to make the massacres stop. They said the discriminations of Muslims occurring in France allowed the massacres of Muslims worldwide...

E: Did you consider they were right?

M: Yes. For me, I had to do something. I had to be part of the action. My opinion would have been pointless if I didn't act on it to help others.

E: Did you feel hypocritical?

M: Yes, I had the feeling to be a witness of injustice acts as well as an accomplice as I was not acting on it... I witnessed discriminations wherever I went and on the TV too...

E: You have always been sensitive to injustice since you were a young kid. You have always wanted to be an educator. It must have revolted you to be powerless to injustice?

M: Yes, I was crazy mad and I felt so guilty every evening I was about to go to sleep in my comfortable bed and every morning when I was eating my breakfast. I was thinking: I live in my own little comfort while they die and nobody care... just because they are Muslims.

E: So you felt guilty a lot?

M: Yes, at the beginning, I made a lot of flyers that I used to give to people on the market so they would know about what's going on. It felt like a small but important step. But nobody cared. Some even turned their backs to me because I was wearing a veil. They didn't even want to take my flyer.

E: What kind of veil did you have?

M: As they told me to: I was wearing a long black jilbab but I hid half of my face. I pulled it up on my chin and pulled it down on my forehead. Basically we could see my eyes only.

E: So it was a bit like a niqab?

M: ... Yes... a bit...



E: Are there other people wearing a niqab where you live?

M: No, there is no Muslim where I live. It's a small village of X... To buy halal meat, I need to travel at least 100 kilometers...

E: And how did you feel when seeing people refusing to take your flyer?

M: It confirmed what I thought... that everybody discriminated Muslims because we were the only one to see the truth...

E: Didn't you think they were a bit scared of you?

M: Yes I did... But I liked it because it showed I was different... And I didn't want to be like them. They already were cowards to me. They didn't do a thing to save the people slaughtered.

E: Were the flyers about the defense of Palestine?

M: about Myanmar as well.

E: Myanmar?

M: Yeah... and about all the Muslims in the world.

E: So it's mainly the political project that interested you?

M: I am not sure. I think I don't care about politics.

E: Why did you want to join those who talked to you on internet? Is it because they were building a State?

M: No. It was because they said we were going to defend the victims of injustice and discrimination.

E: How?

M: Well... I thought that if I could go to Myanmar, Syria or Palestine, I would be able to help. For example I said I loved kids. I've been promised that I would take care of orphans and that I would teach them... I don't know... English perhaps... That I would take care of them and help rebuild houses destroyed by bombings. That's the kind of things they succeeded to make me believe in...

E: How did they do that?

M: Well... by showing me pictures of them on the field, what they were doing, as well as pictures of orphan kids they were holding in their arms. There were many sorts of pictures. Things like that.

E: At some point they told you they were ISIL, right? They must have told you at some point?

M: hm well yes but later... It was with the one who is 31 year old.

E: Ok...

M: the first ones I talked with...

E: So now you are using telegrams?

M: Yes.

E: Talking with them?

M: Yes.

E: They send you many videos, make you believe they are saving kids there, etc. But they are not telling you their names?

M: No.

E: You don't think this is odd?



Part I

M: No. To me, they only were people trying to do good around them. Only this mattered to me. They were the only ones doing something... I didn't care about their names.

E: Ok, so for you, it was not necessarily an organization?

M: Yes exactly. I felt like I left and was saying to people: come and join us. It was not an organization but we still do things.

E: Ok. And at some point, they told you they were members of Daesh', right? But when you were with the Salafists, you used to see Daesh' members as terrorists who were going to kill innocents, didn't you?

M: Yes, that's true. I have some difficulties to understand how things happened... Actually I came from the idea to fight against discriminations and save discriminated people to the willingness to kill everybody who was against Daesh'. But I don't know how I came to that point...

E: When you knew it was Daesh', did you tell them what you were thinking about them?

M: No. I just kept thinking about taking actions. I gathered information myself via internet. And then I thought "Well at least they do something...it's not like the others who keep talking without acting on it... So that's why they are subject to critics. Only those who don't do a thing are not subject to critics."

E: Where did you get information?

M: Quite through Youtube. Actually via Internet only.

E: And then?

M: Well then... I don't know... I can't understand the... How to say... I can't understand how I ended up there. To me, it feels like it suddenly happened.

E: And as soon as you started to get information about them, how did you perceive them at that moment?

M: As the real protectors of underdogs, as the real protectors of Islam. It was the idea that we had to correct things, start from scratch... so Islam restarts well.

E: And you thought they were the only ones who could protect underdogs?

M: Yes, with the true Islam. Time passed and I thought that with the use of Islam we could fight against discriminations and massacres. But I didn't know how... Even if I take some distance, I still can't explain how they managed to make me believe that. But I was truly convinced that they were doing good, that they were the only ones to do good and be able to do good with the use of Islam... I had to choose my side: the good ones or the bad ones. But we were the good ones.

E: It all happened progressively?

M: Yes and no... In my mind, quite fast, after several days...

E: You used to see them as criminals but now you see them more like people who are going to save the world? M: Yes, yes... They talked about all the things with Gog and Magog... All that kind of stuff. So I thought, well yeah...it's what is happening. And I felt like I could open my eyes on what was really going on... that the end of the world would happen soon... that I absolutely had to take actions and stop complaining about how screwed our world is. I accepted the idea they killed people for this cause. There was no other choice. We had to fight to save the massacred populations. There were the only ones taking actions to save the weak, taking the risk to have collateral victims.

””



In this excerpt, we can observe the cognitive construction of M. starting from the moment she exchanged videos and discussions with ‘jihadists’ on the internet. The consequential worldview she has is confirmed following people’s reactions in the market of her village after starting distributing flyers whilst wearing a niqab. There is then an interaction between individual factors (an altruist personality who used to wish to become an educator), organizational factors (a well-structured speech based on emotions and making her feel guilty), and external social factors (the reaction of rejection from the people of her village - rejection confirming her change of mind regarding our world, but also the existence of international and domestic political dysfunctions).

All these factors interacting with each other represent the context in which M. started to give a whole new definition of Daesh, from ‘terrorists’ to ‘those who take actions to save the weak, taking the risk to have collateral victims’.

In this example, M. did not personally experience discrimination before her radicalization. The feeling of discrimination becomes part of her identity as soon as she assimilates Daesh’ narrative. Exchanging with ‘jihadists’, she develops a new perception of the world in which she identifies ‘the good ones’ (the ‘jihadists’ because they take actions) and ‘the bad ones’ (the others). Although M. had no discriminatory experience, she internalized a new social cognition that now leads her to feel personally impacted. This feeling is so strong that it will first become part of her revolt and then her extremist commitment.

In addition, the existence of discrimination is a factor of radicalization, including for young people who did not personally experience it, as discrimination represents a dysfunction of the Republic that asks for answers:

“ *My father never could handle religion as his parents forced him to practice it when he was a kid. I then was accused of believing in God and having chosen the latter Prophet. It was not possible for me to accept his bans. I absolutely wanted to learn about Islam. I was even more curious to know why Muslims were that hated. I wanted to know what they’ve been reproached and I decided to get in contact with them via Internet. I am a very curious person. And the more my father wanted to prohibit me from learning about Islam, the more I wanted to learn about it.* ”

(Aline, 17 years old, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

Conclusion - Part 1

It is fundamental to understand the different phases that precede the break with society and its foundations. Part 1 emphasizes these phases that can be called “radical commitment preliminaries”.

Experts debated as to whether the phases were part of a sectarian process or of a voluntary commitment on the part of young people. Based on the empirical data contained in these first testimonies, we propose not to oppose the two dynamics.



- On the recruiters' side, the radical discourse is undoubtedly re-appropriating processes used by sectarian movements including but not limited to:
 - Severance of young people ties with their former interlocutors who previously contributed to their socialization ;
 - The complete integration of the individual within a group and the destruction of his previous markers (emotional, memorial, historical) ;
 - A binary reflexion.

But the 'jihadism' success is not random. To ensure the discourse leads authority on an individual, it must answer to a demand. This demand exists through these young individuals.

- On the receivers' side, the objectives announced in the 'jihadist' propaganda attract them so much they adhere to both their ideology and group. This is probably not a coincidence that the mutation of the classic 'jihadist' propaganda (Al Qaeda rhetoric based on a theological project) into propaganda 2.0 (based on young people's fortitude) first hits persons aged under 30. It is indeed a critical time when one seeks at the same time an ideal, a group and thrills.

The gathered qualitative data tend to show the existence of a 'recruitment' elaborated by the radical group as well as a 'commitment' of the young individual who feels the need to question us on the failure of our society. From our point of view, we must determine the articulation of circumstances that facilitates the credibility of the radical discourse and the commitment of the group members.

The place of Islam in this process is also subject of debate among researchers. According to our study, there is no radicalization without, sooner or later, believing in the conspiracy theory based on various arguments and stories, many of which being related to Islam. This is compounded by the rigorous interpretation of the Wahhabi movement based on the idea that Culture is incompatible with Faith. The radical discourse relies on the persecution of Muslims and exploits Koranic verses to make young people believe that atheists, Jews and Christians want to prevent Muslims from remaining faithful to their religion.

Several socio-political elements are therefore interacting so that the radical discourse influences young people:

- **The relations between the young generation, politics, and the social contract: the adherence to conspiracy theories can be explained by the lack of trust felt by the youngest generation towards the political system and its members;**
- **The administration of Islam within the political sphere: the presence of stigmatizations and discriminatory situations facilitates the radicalization process of individuals who did not experience discrimination.** Indeed, the 'jihadist' discourse is based on such context to point out a critical societal dysfunction: 'the Government does not do as it says'. **The existence of discrimination within societies can be considered as a causal factor as it indirectly supports the radical discourse to further exercise control over young individuals. 'They cannot trust human laws and democracy'.** This dysfunction allows the 'jihadist' discourse to define itself as those fighting against the dysfunction,



and the 'enemy' as all the others who are blind by all the lies about equality and fraternity. **In general, the awareness of personal discrimination is not the factor motivating the willingness to take action, but emotions and the cognitive restructuring that supports the concept of deprivation as perceived by the community.**

- The spread of the Wahhabi interpretation, more particularly on internet networks,
- etc.

Several studies have shown that being exposed to a conspiracy discourse generates an increase in the sense of uncertainty that was defined as follows:⁴⁹ uncertainty occurs when people neither understand the cause of the situation in which they ended up, nor how the factors with regard to this situation are interacted and how events may evolve.⁵⁰ These authors also demonstrated that this uncertainty was at the origin of a search for compensatory measures to overcome it: experiencing emotions reflecting uncertainty with regard to the world creates the need to impose order and structure through a broad range of compensatory measures.⁵¹ Therefore, explicit uncertainty increases anxiety significantly and urges to adopt a protective behavior.⁵²

Analyzed in this light, the exposure of young people to conspiracy discourse can itself be considered as a stressful situation giving rise to a double assessment process regarding the threat, then the individual capacities in addressing this latter.⁵³

The radical discourse which uses conspiracy theories at its advantage also generates anxiety. It directs towards and places the young person in a situation where solutions are increasingly dysfunctional starting with social, school-related, professional and familial breakdowns, leading him to join the radical group and/or use violence. In other words, immersed in a paranoid perspective, the young person wants to protect himself by rejecting this corrupt world he now seeks to flee. On this specific point, the pietist Salafists and 'jihadists' disagree. In part 2, we will see how some people pass from escaping from the social contract to the conviction that 'only a final confrontation with the real world will be able to regenerate it'.

Considering the attendance of conspiracy websites causes stress, the assessment process regarding the radicalization threat relies on the young individual's perception of reality. This perception itself depends on contextual and personal factors (the personal characteristics of each individual).

In other words, the paranoid worldview of 'jihadists' affects more easily a young individual already weakened by a traumatic event or a difficult past.

⁴⁹ WHITSON Jennifer A., GALINSKY Adam D. et KAY Aaron *The Emotional Roots of Conspiratorial Perceptions, System Justification, and Belief in the Paranormal Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 56, 2015, p. 89-95.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵² REUMAN L., JACOBY R. J., FABRICANT Laura E., HERRING B. N. et ABRAMOWITZ J. S. Uncertainty as an Anxiety Cue at High and Low Levels of Threats, *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, vol. 47, p. 111-119

⁵³ LAZARUS Richard S. et FOLKMAN S., *Stress, Appraisal and Coping*, New York (N. Y.), Springer, 1984, cité par BRUCHON-SCHWEITZER Marilou et DANTZER R ; *Introduction à la psychologie de la santé*, Paris, puf, 1994.



The psychological factor is interconnected to the social and political factors.

- **The radicalization process is then conscious and unconscious: the young individual perceives the threat depending on his own personal resources, vulnerabilities and means of defense.**
- **Circumstances in which this paranoid perspective is communicated to the individual influence the reception of the message itself. The impact will be stronger if the concerned individual's acquaintances can relate as well: if several friends watch the same videos and feel the same anxiety, the latter will be increased.**
- **The anxiety of the young individual will thereby find an echo through his friends, validating his perspective.**

The concepts of “objective stress” relating to the nature of the stress-provoking situation, and of “perceived stress” relating to the subjective perception of the latter⁵⁴ bring to light the individual features of the cognitive interpretation – origin of emotional and behavioral differences between subjects for an identical stress factor.

- **For this reason, not all those who watch conspiracy videos fall into the ‘jihadist’ trap, as well as not all those who get closer to ‘jihadist’ recruiters become violent.**

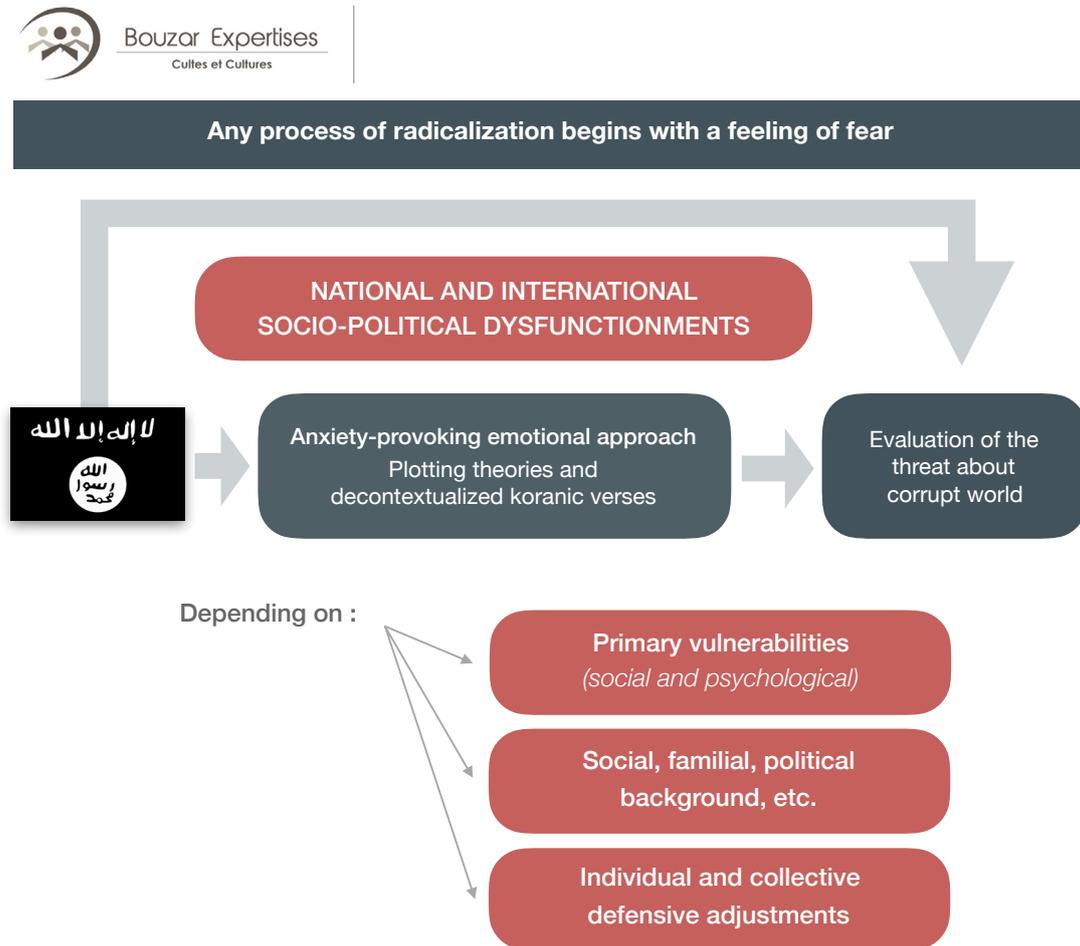
Our data also shows that opposing the psychoanalytic approach to the cognitive approach is pointless. Indeed, an interaction exists between the young individual's state of mind when he learnt about the discourse (consequences of his history and personal features) and the impact of the latter (the way the anxiogenic messages have been received and the choice of compensatory measures). The more psychological vulnerabilities the young individual has, the more the radical discourse will be able to increase his anxiety level and drive him to dysfunctional and inappropriate solutions.

At this stage, we refer to the report “RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS” to recall some features of our cross section of individuals.⁵⁵ That sample proves young persons involved in the ‘jihad’ reflect on existential questions before any introduction to the radical group as 48% of them were monitored for depression or experienced a depressive episode the previous years. Statistics also show that the majority - if not all - of the ‘jihadists’ in our sample grew up in an ‘insecure’ family environment.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵See our report RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS on 450 radicalized young individuals from France.

The following scheme offers a summary of this Part I.



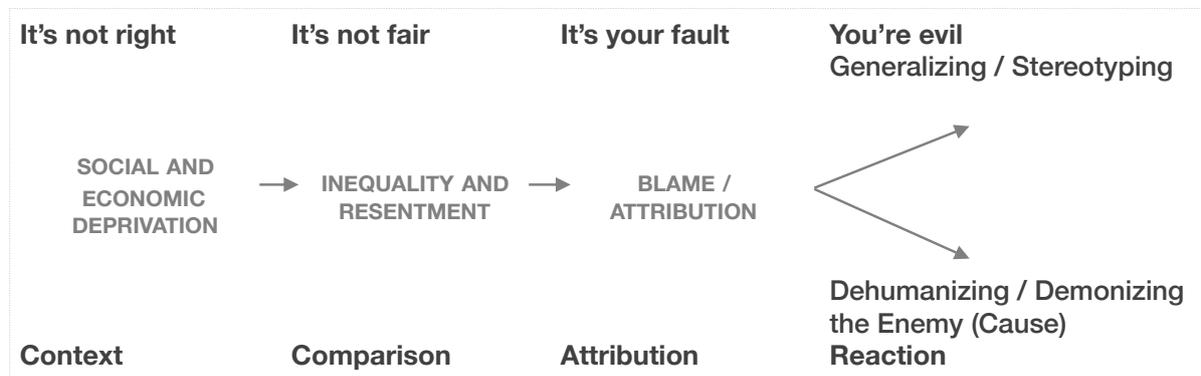
Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Dounia Bouzar — 2017

PART II. THE INDIVIDUALIZATION OF THE “JIHADIST” INVOLVEMENT

Serge Garcet notes that the study of “the place of the individual into the equation according to his ability to lead the course of his actions towards personal goals that he himself valued”⁵⁶ is still missing from the radicalization models, as are the interactionists. Some researchers, such as Borum⁵⁷, started to study the cognitive processes associated to social interactions, by pondering on the motivational singularity of the radicalized individual. However, they place the individual “into an active position constituent of a social fact in which psychological motivations are a ‘passive’ and causal declination of contextual influences”. In other words, Borum, according to the article of Serge Garcet previously quoted, placed the relative privation paradigm in the core of his ideological engagement model.⁵⁸

Figure n°1: The ideological engagement process, by Borum (2003)

The ideological engagement process, by Borum (2003)



Serge Garcet puts forward the idea that Borum “neutralized the differential perspectives emerging from the social cognition within the comprehension of individual motives”⁵⁹. He also notes that the staircase model of Moghaddam (see Chapter 1.1 of this report) is very emblematic with regard to the use of the relative privation concept originating an identity crisis called “good-

⁵⁶GARCET S., Une approche psychocriminologique de la radicalisation : le modèle de « transformation cognitivo-affective de la définition de soi et de la construction du sens dans l'engagement radical violent », in *Revue de la Faculté de droit de l'Université de Liège*, 2016/3.

⁵⁷BORUM R., « Understanding the terrorist mindset », *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 2003 72 (7), pp. 1-10 ; F. MOGHADDAM, « The staircase to terrorism : A psychological exploration », *American Psychologist*, 2005, 60 (2), pp. 161-169 ;

⁵⁸GURR T., *Why men rebel*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1970, 440 p.

⁵⁹GARCET S., *ibid.*

copy problem” and close to the “double identity” concept. However, when searchers are able to work upon empirical data, the results of their studies indicate that the relative privation as a radicalization factor must be reconsidered⁶⁰. In fact, “from the individual angle, it is important to notice that the action is not motivated by the realization of personal discriminations, but the emotional impact and cognitive restructuration that accompany the perception of relative privation including the affiliation community (...) The victimization ideological narrative, built on objective situations of discrimination, must necessarily be dissociated from the individual motivations, in which the environmental pressures were treated by the interpretation cognitive and affective system in order to define as much a connection to oneself as an affiliation and a social identity⁶¹ by taking as a victim”⁶².

In this part, **the main goal consists in studying the cognitive transformation of our sample of radicalized individuals.**⁶³ By integrating into the radicalization process analysis the way the cognitive contents conjugate with other (individual and societal) data to modify the radicalized behavior, we aim at pondering on the prevention and the exit of radicalization. This part consists in studying the model of “cognitive-affective transformation of the definition of the self and the construction of a meaning in the violent radical involvement”⁶⁴. **Indeed, for each involvement, there is an interaction between the unconscious needs of the young person (being useful, escaping the real world, avenging, etc.), his research of an ideal (changing the world, building a genuine justice, saving Muslims, etc.) and the narrative which proposes him a reason to accomplish “jihad” whilst having a purpose for himself (leaving to save the children gazed by Bachar Al-Assad, constructing a society with Muslim values, fighting against the dictator’s army, etc.). This step in which the “jihadist” narrative persuades the young person that his ideal, his underlying needs, possibly his uneasiness, will be solved by his adhesion to the proposed project, the only one able to satisfy him, make him be reborn and regenerate the world, is fundamental in the transformation and involvement of the young person. From there, the radicalized one appropriates the “jihadist” ideology of his group, because a cognitive connection between his history and the proposed transcendental dimension proposed is established. The young person then evolves towards an ideology related to a collective identity, that Serge Garcet calls “the stage of identity activism”, preceding “the stage of terrorist participation”.**

Actually, this re-appropriation of the ideology and the “jihadist” project appears to be an engagement motive, which goes beyond the explicit motive expressed by the individual after his cognitive system changed (often reduced to few common sentences of theological kind such as “jihad is a duty”). **In order to access the complexity of his engagement motive, it is**

⁶⁰See Part I and KING M. ET TAYLORD M., « The radicalization of homegrown jihadists: a review of theoretical models and social psychological evidence », *Terrorism and political violence*, 2011, 23 (4), pp. 602-622, quoted by S. GARCET, *ibid*.

⁶¹AYDUK O. et GYURAK A., « Applying the Cognitive- Affective Processing Systems Approach to Conceptualizing Rejection Sensitivity », *Social Personal Psychology Compass*, 2008, September 1, 2(5), pp. 2016-2033, cité par S. GARCET.

⁶²GARCET S., Une approche psycho-criminologique de la radicalisation : le modèle de « transformation cognitivo-affective de la définition de soi et de la construction du sens dans l’engagement radical violent », in *Revue de la Faculté de droit de l’Université de Liège*, 2016/3.

⁶³In order to accomplish this goal, we selected the radicalized persons we knew their previous way of seeing the world before their radicalization, thanks to the participation of their families. We also selected those that we followed for 2 years, so that we could detail the evolution of their transformation, step by step. This allows us to take a path that is not the methodological one of the study of persons that have already been through a cognitive transformation.

⁶⁴GARCET S., *Ibid*.

necessary to know the previous features of the “jihadist” and the elements of his history, and the aspects of the propaganda that affected him to evaluate how and why he invested the “jihadist” narrative and which aspect is the more interesting for him. That is what we call the ‘implicit engagement motives’.

According to the principle that “the trajectory of radicalization begins with a quest for a meaning, motivating the search or responsiveness in order to make sense”⁶⁵, the assessment states the involvement in the “jihadist” ideology was built to appeal the motives and ideals of each individual. This seems to be fundamental to exit radicalization considering the quest for a meaning in the radical involvement will allow to construct an alliance strategy with the “jihadist” by leaning on his first ideal. This will also allow to choose which sort of alternative narrative to adopt that will help him to acknowledge the difference between his ideal and the reality of the “jihadist” project.

Those engagement motives are a part of the dysfunctional compensatory solutions provoked by the anxiogenic approach described previously (Part 1). In fact, we ended this part emphasizing that the anxiety are generated by conspiracy theories which orientate young people towards the choice of solutions that are more and more dysfunctional to protect themselves from this world seen as profoundly corrupt. We also noted that through his radicalization, the young individual’s assessment process of danger depended on his individual grid of interpretation of reality⁶⁶, itself depending on his personal features and variables specific to the situation. Then, we announced that this stage marks the difference between pietist Salafists and “jihadists”. The formers only protect themselves from the corrupt world (from human law) and break with the social contract while the latter considers they must regenerate the corrupt world (with divine law) and validate the use of violence.

We will first present the different engagement motives we collected from our sample. We will then present a case study in order to demonstrate the conjunction of micro and macro factors and the cognitive transformation steps. It aims at pointing out how this appropriation of the “jihad” ideology leads to a double dehumanisation that precedes the acting out. Finally, we will try to understand why certain young people only stop at pietist Salafism without joining any engagement motive.

⁶⁵ ARIE W. KRUGLANSKI et al., « The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization : How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism », *Advances in Political Psychology*, vol. 35, n° 1, 2014, p. 69-93.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

II.1 ADEQUACY OF DYSFUNCTIONAL SOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY THE "JIHADIST" DISCOURSE TO VARIOUS COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE (OR ENGAGEMENT MOTIVES)

We conducted a thematic analysis of data collected from our sample, by crossing the individual and family characteristics of every youngster before his radicalization, the study of his radicalization's steps, the analysis of his individual and collective interviews (free speech between radicalized-ones), his communications on social networks and the kind of propaganda who deeply affected him (videos and arguments of discourses).

The data analysis has resulted in the identification of eight main reasons to make a commitment, which all come within, one way or another, a search for an ideal, whether it is an ideal self, of the world, of the spouse, or of a community⁶⁷:

- The promise of a fairer and more fraternal world (DAESHLAND)
- The promise to do humanitarian aid (MOTHER TERESA)
- The promise to save his family from hell (THE SAVIOR)
- The promise to protect, with his brothers, the weakest against the strongest (LANCELOT)
- The promise of purity and restraints to protect themselves from sexual urges, particularly not assumed homosexual urges (THE FORTRESS)
- The promise of death (THE LICIT SUICIDE)
- The promise of omnipotence (ZEUS)
- The promise of protection (The SLEEPING BEAUTY) > a female motive.

For us, the point is to take into account the search for meanings in the "Jihadist" commitment and also to deconstruct the interaction between the (micro or macro) characteristics of the young person, the external factors and the rhetoric of the recruitment. We suggest paying more attention to each motive for engagement.

II.1.1 The promise of a fairer and more protective world (DAESHLAND)

We called the first motive for "Jihadist" engagement: "Daeshland", as it is based on the promise of a brotherly and united world. The search of the young people who joined radical groups behind this motive is characterized by a theme of a fairer and more protective world. The express motive explained is the search of a utopian world which they verbalize as a substitution community in a brotherly and united world where equal treatment really exists. It is here a political utopia.

⁶⁷BOUZAR D, Martin M. What motives bring youth to engage in the Jihad? *Neuropsychiatr Enf Adolesc* 2016;64(6):353-59 [French] ; BOUZAR D. A Novel Motivation-based Conceptual Framework for Disengagement and De-radicalization Programs. *Sociology and Anthropology* 2017; 5(8): 600-614.

The concept of Hijra is presented to these young individuals as a protection against a corrupt world full of sins where the devil influences permanently the world leading it to a destructive direction. To protect themselves from the evil that reigns on Earth (rape, violence, murder, injustice, war of powers, selfishness, poverty, theft, famine, etc.), these young individuals think they have to escape this world of “Non-believers” corrupted by human law and join an organization defending values as solidarity and brotherhood, and where only “The True Islam” (including the divine law enforcement) can guarantee its implementation. This escape from the real world combined with the search of a utopian world could consequently constitute an implicit motive for a specific engagement.⁶⁸

Most young people engaged behind this motive were very committed to the notion of citizenship. Some had overthought the motto of equality of the French Republic. The gap between the promise of the republican motto and the reality disappointed them. Now, they are over-investing Islam, using the old credo (introduced by the Muslim Brothers) according to which religion can manage all the domains of life because it has an answer for everything⁶⁹ and can be used to approach all aspects of life. Islam is the exclusive source from which everything is designed: education, care, social organization, laws, etc. There is a denial to recognize a produced reality which would not join the order of the absolute divine Truth. Reality has to correspond to the sacred text, as an exact copy. This type of statement leads to a symbolic confusion, which is to connect Islam to a political system. No value is considered as the result of human experience.

Young individuals engaged behind the myth of “Daeshland” all have a mix of videos in their smartphones or computers. The first ones insist on the fact that all Muslims are persecuted in the West generally and in France particularly. They highlight discriminatory managements of Islam and extracts from debates on the headscarf ban at university, or for mothers going with children on school trips. Some add scenes of Muslims persecution in other countries. In these montages, we always find a compilation of themes: science and magic thoughts, historic facts and political speeches, information and disinformation... The discourse is built on a set of theories and traditions so vast that each individual would necessarily find an element of his own thinking. The other videos show the brotherhood and solidarity between jihadists of any origins and nationalities (men kissing each other and sharing), praising aspects of Daesh public politics which would consider the needs of the poorest individuals (hospitals, schools, heating, free food for all), would facilitate the material aspects of the quality of life in Syria (stores with chocolate bars and other Western brands of food companies), and would develop the existence of infrastructures for children with difficulties and disabled persons (carousels, balls, etc.) strengthening the utopia of a better world.

Many couples, wishing to see their children growing up in this utopian world, joined Daesh on this motive. In all the testimonies, we noticed a constant link between the idea of a better, fairer, more equal and purified world, and the idea of brotherhood and solidarity.

⁶⁸BOUZAR D, MARTIN M. What motives bring youth to engage in the Jihad? *Neuropsychiatr Enf Adolesc* 2016; 64(6):353-59 [French] ; Bouzar D. A Novel Motivation-based Conceptual Framework for Disengagement and De-radicalization Programs. *Sociology and Anthropology* 2017; 5(8): 600-614.

⁶⁹BOUZAR D., *Monsieur Islam n'existe pas*, Pour une désislamisation des débats, Hachette Littératures, 2004.

“ Despite the anger I felt for my mother, I thought about her a lot. I was afraid of destroying her, that she worries too much. To move on out of this feeling, I used to read over and over again a *Sūrah* sent by a sister: "And if you obey most of those on Earth, they will mislead you far away from Allah's Path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie". Syria was my country, the sisters and brothers who were over there were my new family. I did not know them but I liked them more than my real family. My new family was so perfect then we could only do good and fight evil. They were necessarily people full of kindness. I imagined myself within my community taking care of orphans, dispensing free food as Islam orders us to do, building hospitals and free schools, learning the religion which is the base of everything, laughing and helping my brothers and sisters. I had images of heaven on Earth. We showed mutual solidarity, we were happy; we shared the same values and really did something to fight against the massacres of poor innocents. I knew that it was a country at war, but that would be one thousand times better than France. I denied my country and my French origins. I was not anymore a member of the French community; I had nothing to do with it anymore. I did not accept injustice I witnessed in my own country. I could not stand anymore how badly welcomed illegal immigrants were, how persecuted they were. Besides, France lectures the rest of the world about Human Rights and does not apply them. We hear about equality at school. In reality, we are seen as dogs when we do not have bourgeois parents. I knew I will have to face the poverty, the famine, the fear, but at least, we were going to build a world where we were going to make hope and justice exist. I was stunned by the courage of people of "Dawla". They left material good, comfort, family, friends, house, absolutely everything, for the justice of Allah. I wanted to be there. I dreamed to carry the flag of the Islam. ”

(17 year-old girl, atheist family, lower class, condemned for proselytism).

“ I left thinking I would find human values related to Islam. All started with discussion with my sisters on the Internet. I felt fulfilled: we spoke to each other all the time, we understood each other, and we were similar. They quickly convinced me to join them. They told me: 'if you think like that, it is because Allah guided you, Allah loves you. 'It was so beautiful when they told me that. It used to make me cry. I didn't need my parents anymore, I didn't need anybody. It was during a period of time when I had a hard time with everybody: my parents, my friends, my teachers and my exams. I was not feeling well anywhere: neither at the university nor at my home. I found the world inequitable and discriminating. And we just sold our house because of financial problems... I studied economics at the university and I had the feeling that everybody lied to me every time. Suddenly, I felt like I could find peace with people who loved me for who I was, without doing anything special... People who did not want to exploit others but help them, and please God. No exam to pass, no goodwill to be proved, etc. I dreamed about this world of peace and love, a world where everybody is kind, without expecting anything in return. I would never be alone anymore because of the divine protection and my "sisters". I left and I thought I would find in the "Sham" brotherhood and solidarity values. I really thought that our submission to God would allow us to apply those values "for real", not like in France. I wanted a detachment from material possession and to build a world of sharing. I wanted to buy a 30 cent soap and use it all year long. I didn't want to need anything, I just wanted to reject the consumer society. When we heard the term "The blessed land", we imagined many things: the good-smelling air, beautiful landscapes, friendship,



brotherhood ... I imagined my sisters telling me: " Here, take that pullover, my son has two, do you want it for your son?" It was our Holy Land. I clearly looked for a world of peace and love. Besides, they told me that I was intelligent and that I was going to serve the Islamic State because we were developing our currency, because I was an economics student. 'They will need you'. It was so beautiful and rewarding: ' you will serve The Islamic State; you will contribute to create a new currency shared by all'. Even if I was not sure to work for them, I could become a girl living at the top of a holy mountain, reading the Koran and getting closer to God. I wanted to increase my faith and especially to become a fair person.

”

(25-year-old woman, her parents are from the middle class and Muslims coming from North Africa, she has been convicted for participation to terrorism).

II.1.2 The promise to do humanitarian aid (Mother Teresa)

This myth shares with the precedent the pursuit of a utopian world, but this one represents a humanitarian ideal. The commitment motive presented by the young individual (boy or girl) is about saving the people gazed by Bachar El Assad. It may be an implicit search of an ideal in order to become a humanitarian 'super-hero'. During their follow-up, we noticed that, before their radicalization, they had all the intention to do an altruistic job (nurses, social workers, doctors, volunteers, etc.) and felt the urge "to be useful". Often, they have "shown" this humanistic commitment through their tweeter or Facebook page by posting an image of their last internship in a humanitarian camp or by clearly showing their area of studies. We can wonder if recruiters do not spot them through the use of keywords. In their conversations, we noticed the highlighting of an imperative of immediacy and a strong will to feel guilty for staying in their "Western comfort".

Young people indoctrinated behind the "Mother Teresa's myth" are characterized by:

- The presence in their smartphone or computers of unbearable videos showing war victims, particularly children. The goal of recruiters, through these videos sent to young people, previously spotted as having a "humanitarian" profile, consists in making them feel guilty for staying in their country and not rushing to rescue victims;
- Their professional project, often shown on their social networks profile, is related to the domain of the social assistance (nurse, doctor, social worker) and/or in humanitarian missions in poor countries ("My last camp in Burkina Fasso [...]"). It should be mentioned that almost all young individuals of the sample engaged behind this motive had this kind of professional projects before their radicalization.
- A very strong sensitivity and empathy for suffering people since their childhood ; and
- A search for a meaning in their life and for a place in this world.

In many cases, young people concerned by this myth, because of their sensitivity, are going to raise existential questions earlier than the average. It will often create a gap between them and the other young people of their age. They become out of step on their center of interest



and their questioning and have the feeling to be surrounded by insensitive and selfish people. The young people involved will not find the same suffering and concerns from their classmates or childhood friends, who will be interested by things appropriate to their age and not by the sufferings of the world. These young individuals generally show a deep feeling of helplessness, frustration and injustice when they do not find any humanitarian work to try to make the world a better place. They really need to feel useful so they can help this suffering planet, and avoid falling into melancholy or even depression.

Many these youngsters deeply believed they could have a humanitarian role on the field.

“ *A sister told me to come to Syria, that she was going to find me a husband. Since my 9th Grade, I have wanted to become a nurse just like my mom. Before, I wanted to be a lawyer to fight against injustice because it always revolted me. I am very sensitive and I deeply love children. I love taking care of my family's children, especially babies. I am unable to be a spectator of injustice, hunger or war without doing anything. I saw that children were killed in Syria and nobody moved, nobody did anything. Since I was a little girl, I am sensitive to these things. For example, when we went to Africa and when I saw people begging, I always wanted my parents to give coins, clothes, food, etc. I wanted to help bomb victims and feel useful. I have always been generous. The sister told me that over there, I could become a nurse in seven/eight months.* ”

(Hawa, 18 years old, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

“ *At first Daesh promised me humanitarian work, and finally diverted me from it completely... Since I was a little girl, I had the feeling that the whole world was with a victim of injustice. I was revolted by children's death. When I watched news, I realized that many countries were at war and I had the feeling that France was making them war, at their home, rather than helping them. I read about humanitarian projects and I watched many videos realized by associations. I sent clothes and money to contribute. Then, the "Dawla" arrived and convinced me that my contribution was not enough: they needed more. To really help them, I had to go on the field; it was too easy to stay in my own comfort zone and send money to those who suffer. I had to live what they live. The group made me feel guilty a lot about my own comfort, by using among other things, 19HH videos. I became very quickly addicted to these videos, I knew everything about them. I watched them over and over again and felt a need when I could not watch them. Then, they showed me videos where the group members fought the army of Bachar Al Assad to defend Syrian people. At first, they represented for me the justice and the defenders of the oppressed victims. They were restoring peace (...) they showed me videos in which the brothers of the Dawla went to houses of Christian families in Syria to give them food to eat, toys for children, took them to carousels, etc. It confirmed they were there to defend Syrians and they were people with pure heart doing good around them.* ”

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)



II.1.3 The promise to save his family from hell (THE SAVIOR)

The explicit motive of engagement explained by young people is the will to go to paradise by dying on the blessed land of Sham because the world will end soon. Saving his family and taking care of the loved ones without having to worry about responsibilities appears finally to be the implicit desire. The young people indoctrinated behind this motive seem to be so terrified by the punishment of hell that they want to do things that would guarantee a place for them and their relatives into paradise. Through their follow-up, we noted that young people indoctrinated behind the myth of the "Savior" had to face, for the majority of them, a lot of responsibilities throughout their life. They had to take care of a sick member of their family, their younger brothers or sisters, the household, the financial and food aspect, etc.

In death, they hope to break free from this suffocating life. They are in spite of them the pillar of their family and have the feeling that their life does not belong to them. They had to give up what they wanted to be (funny, adventurer, partygoer, lazy, selfish, traveler, etc.), to do (move in 500km away from home, begin long studies, not having to bring money, not assuring medical care of a family member, etc.) or become (getting married, building their own family, not taking care of parents and brotherhood, etc.), for their family. They suffer and are overwhelmed by this burden and do not find any solution to escape it. The suicidal feeling is never far from these young individuals who look for a way to break free whilst protecting their family. They show a huge feeling of guilt as they want to give up responsibilities. The promise to die for the loved ones soften this guilt and strengthens their "savior's" role: finally if they sacrifice themselves, it is not for them but for their family. The death for God appears as an excuse.

This commitment motive is often linked to the idea of the world ending soon, as 'proved' by the concordance of several warning apocalyptic signs. For example, the fact that the international community did not intervene when Bachar Al-Assad gazed his people is one of these signs. The idea of saving their "not real" family concerns young people having grown up in a culture assimilated to the nuclear family in which ties are cohesive between children and parents. The promise to meet his lost or not Muslim relatives in the paradise feels like compensating the induced abandonment by joining Daesh. Therefore, the suffering caused by the separation in this world is offset by the promise of ending up in paradise forever. It is a blessing in disguise reserved to the toughen ones, the real believers... Recruiters understood that point very well and prepare this kind of arguments with delicacy in their videos. This motive for engagement is typically French, adapted to the unconscious of a nuclear family composed of "muddled up" members.⁷⁰ In North Africa where a social context of sexual frustration persists, recruiters insist on an aspect much more traditional: dying in the jihad would allow to have 72 virgins⁷¹.

Joining and sacrificing on the land of Shâm will be seen as compulsory for the young individuals who want to satisfy Allah at any cost in order to intercede for their loved ones. Hijra will be considered as a proof of loyalty and faith. God would expect this sacrifice to accept their request.

⁷⁰HEFEZ S., *Quand la famille s'emmêle*, (When the family gets tangled), Hachette, 2004.

⁷¹Some verses of the Koran and some hadiths (tradition) mention the presence of "pure beings" in the paradise and a traditional faith translates these evocations by "virgins from paradise who would wait for the men." A belief that has been used by the jihadists to encourage the fighters to die. There is a talk about the amount of «houris», 70 or 72.
<http://oumma.com/14876/houris-hommes-12>.

Until the end, they will keep dedicating worship and loyalty to God and not to "jihadist" groups. The collective scope of the "brotherly group" and the "new surrogate family" does not attract these young individuals. The "jihadist" group does not supersede the divine words, as it is usually the case for other young people attracted by other motives for engagement. If they considered that the radical group directive goes against what God expects from them, the "savior" would be able to rebel and disobey.

Young people indoctrinated behind the myth of the "savior" present the following characteristics:

- Presence in their smartphone or computer of photos or videos obviously supplied by recruiters to nurture terror of the end of the world and the punishments of hell such as: videos of sheiks sobbing by imagining the tortures of hell, videos of the end of the world, videos of hell, etc. ;
- For the majority of them, they took on important responsibilities throughout their life which should not have been theirs (children turning into parents); and
- They suffer from being unable to focus on themselves.

You can find below the testimony of young individuals who tried to release themselves from their responsibilities:



I come from a family who came to France not long before my birth. I am their first daughter. They always counted on me to help them integrating into this new country. They do not speak French well and I was in charge of translating all their discussions during appointments with institutions.

We were poor and the help of social workers was necessary and essential for our survival. So as far as I can remember, I have always been there in these appointments. From the age of 5-6 years old I translated for my mother what the professional told her. I filled CAF papers (FRENCH SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE) for the housing assistance, the RSA (the ACTIVE SOLIDARITY REVENUE), electricity bills, etc. I had to take care of the house because my mother worked as a cleaning lady overnight and got home early in the morning. She was exhausted and it was my responsibility to help her to take care of our house. We were 6 in a 4-room apartment so sometimes the cohabitation with my brothers and sisters was complicated but I was the biggest and I had to be a good example for my siblings. It was forbidden to complain and I did much more than the others. I cooked, took care of the household, the homework of my younger brothers and sisters, their dressing, their bedtime and their awakening in the morning. I took them to school or to the nurse because I could not wake my mother who came back from work at dawn. Sometimes the water and the electricity were turned off because we were late on payments, I spent hours on the neighbor's phone to find a solution and I cooked somewhere else so my brothers and sisters would never get hungry. We have always been lucky because we had extraordinary neighbors who always helped us: they brought us food to eat, I could heat the water at their home, they guarded little ones in case of unforeseen, etc. Several times the bailiffs came home but my parents worked hard so that we would avoid the worst. We have never ended up in the street. The situation got worse when my dad got seriously sick. I had to take care of him in addition to the young ones, and we lost a salary. My



mother doubled the cleanings and was almost never at home. Fortunately we had a visiting nurse who came to take care of my father and taught me how to do the same in her absence. I had to watch him so he takes his medicine well, the right dose at the right hours. I was also responsible of his dressing and for certain stings, especially if he had a seizure ... It was very hard for me as I was a teenager. I had difficulty in concentrating in class, and getting good grades because I was so tired and often fell asleep on my desk. On one side, I wished to make higher studies to satisfy my parents and make them proud. I also wanted to bring a lot of money by earning a living. But on the other hand, I wanted to work as quickly as possible to help my mother and relieve her suffering. She was young though but she seemed 20 years older because she worked so hard to provide us a roof and clothes. My parents came in France to have a better life and to provide us what they did not have in the country. They wanted our happiness, and given the life they had over there and here, I did not have the right to complain. I always have been a great athlete and I had the right to a grant to keep studying at the university. Everything changed then. The university that proposed me the grant corresponding to my sport was far from home, and this decision was too hard. I could not give up my family, they counted on me, I was their bearing wall. I was enormously anxious by the idea of leaving them but even more by the idea of staying in this vicious circle eternally. Sometimes, I became jealous of my younger brothers and sisters who could live their life normally without caring about others. They had the right to have a normal life thanks to my sacrifices. If I left, who was going to take my place? I knew that my brothers and sisters were not going to be able to do it. They were too selfish and protected. They never had to do the sacrifices I have done since my childhood, it was too late to teach them. I did not sleep any more at night and I was completely overwhelmed by all these contradictory feelings. Then I found in the Internet some discussion forum for "sisters". I come from a Muslim family and I thought that Islam was going to help me to get back on the right track. I needed external advice. I did not unfortunately find Muslims but Daesh. Finally, I did not accept the grant and I missed the opportunity to study but I did not stay with my parents either. I found as quickly as possible a husband with whom I was able to run away to the land of Shâm to intercede for my family once arrived on the Holy Land.

(25 year-old woman, Muslim family, lower class, she had a daughter during her radicalization and ran away after her birth, condemned for involvement in terrorism).

“ Since I was young, I have been an autodidact. I can understand and learn things fast. My mother has been abandoned and beaten up by her family when she was very young. She ended up in the street when she was still a little girl and had to survive. She found a first young husband who used to hit her with whom she had two kids (my big sister and my big brother). She managed to leave him after several years. Then, she met my father who cheated on her and secretly raised a second family. It was the love of her life and this disappointment affected her a lot. Because of this complicated life she became fragile, depressive, sick. She spent her time lying on her bed in the dark. Each time she felt sick, she called out my name and I had to come running immediately, otherwise she would make me feel guilty. To her, I left her suffer and I did not love her if I took more than one minute to arrive. She is also an alcoholic and I spent my childhood cleaning her vomit, carrying her with great



difficulty to her bed or putting a pillow and a blanket on her when she collapsed on the floor. Sometimes, she would wake up in the middle of the night and called me to help her reaching her bed and very often, she vomited everywhere; all over her and the floor. I do not know why it was always my task to help her, whereas I was the youngest. My older brother is a drug addict. He even went to jail because of that. My sister now is married to a violent man. I am the only one still living at home. I always heard my mother crying because she was sad at night, and asking God why He punished her, why she had such a difficult life? She tried over and over to commit suicide with medicine. I had to call firemen every time to come and rescue her in-extremis and take her to the hospital. I remember boarding in the fire truck with her, holding her hand. It became a habit ... The social worker came several times when I was a minor but I trivialized, I lied by telling that everything was fine at home. I always had to take care of myself and I could only rely on myself. When I met the Dawla, I felt like a load off my shoulders because they allowed me to break away physically from my mother. I could get away from her while taking care of her because my engagement was in order actually to save her. I felt less guilty when I imagined her alone crying in the dark of her bedroom, drinking alcohol, vomiting, or committing suicide. Even if she committed suicide, my act and my faith would save her from hell. It was a win-win transaction for everybody. ”

(23 year-old man, atheist family, lower class,
convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise)

“ Before I converted to Islam, I felt like I did not have a real life. I had never taken time to think about my future. It was like I was on Earth but without goals and future. I was simply there to help my family, but I had the feeling that it was not really true... It is hard to explain! It's like religion gave me a goal to reach. I needed to find a meaning in my existence. This world did not fit me. It was almost impossible for me to find where I belong. I was very introvert, I did not speak a lot. I tried to be the most discreet possible not to disturb. I was always afraid that somebody would notice my difference. I did not want to be noticed. I needed to stay in my comfort zone. The outside world frightened me. It was unpredictable and I could not control it or anticipate any event. When I was young, if my parents were fighting, my mother would disappear for hours, days and sometimes whole weeks. I was always afraid that she decided not to come back. I was under an enormous pressure because I was the one holding my mother. If I was a naughty boy, if I was not kind enough, if I was not worth it, she would not come back ... Fortunately, my older brother and I were very close. But when I was 12 years old, he left the house to study. It was painful for me. I had the feeling to have lost my other half. He met people who dragged him doing hard drugs. He eventually stopped his studies. We saw him less and less at home and when he went back, it went wrong. He became more and more aggressive. The drug calmed him for a few hours and then irritated him. One day, my parents were fed up with him and they kicked him out. From that point, we have almost never seen each other again. All I knew, it is that he slept in the street, as a homeless person, and I worried about him a lot. Besides, he had problems with other young people of the neighborhood. I was really afraid that they could hurt him, that they would even kill him. I blamed a lot my parents for that, especially my father. [...] At that time, and until now, my mother was not well and couldn't make a decision. My parents broke up a few months later.



My father left to live somewhere else and I stayed with my mother. She told me that my father abandoned us, that he preferred to leave far from us, that he left us for another family ... Thus I cut ties with him. I refused his visits and calls. I blamed him a lot for leaving me alone with my depressive mother. My brother was gone and now my father too ... It was a hard time. I did not go out, I had no friend. I was very solitary. I ended up staying locked into my room in the dark all day long. I suffered a lot from this loneliness. I needed to count on someone. I spent all my time taking care of my family. [...] I felt responsible for my sick mother and for my drug addict brother. I felt guilty not to be able to make my mother happy again and be unable to get my brother out of the drugs. I had a lot of failures and I did not have the feeling to succeed in my mission. I thought that if I was stronger, I would have managed to save them. This feeling haunted me. It was like I had the responsibility of my family on my shoulders. My mother has always been psychologically weak. She went several times to psychiatric hospital because she experienced major depression episodes. [...] Then I used to meet friends doing sport. They told me about the Muslim religion. For me, they were good people with good behavior, honest, generous, who did not lie ... Everything from them was coming from their heart. There was no manipulation, or perversity I could see through their eyes. Honesty was for me something precious. They did not try to hurt me or to belittle me. They just wanted to take care of me, protect, guide and advice me. One of them became my best friend. He helped me a lot, in particular concerning all my family problems. My new brothers were always there for me, protecting me from worries of the outside world. I could share my worries. They understood me, did not judge me. I could complain, speak about my heavy responsibilities, my burdens. They always found words full of wisdom, the right words that affected me deep in my heart. They explained me that God tests only those He loves. They gave me some courage by telling me that. God decided to put such hardship on my path only because I was able to overcome them. It helped me to sustain. ”

(Mathieu, see full interview in the annex
of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

II.1.4. The promise to protect, with his brothers, the weakest against the strongest (LANCELOT)

In this myth we find the theme of the chivalrous heroism serving the community. It is not about a humanitarian aspiration as in the “mother Teresa's” myth, but rather a search for an ideal of justice with regard to the oppressed ones (for example the children gazed by Bachar El Assad) and/or for a desire to regain the Muslims lost honor within a group of peers.

This ideal of justice seems to go hand in hand with a certain fascination for weapons and for fight, including the search for adrenalin in the adventure. The search for a community united in the fight against the injustice constitutes probably the implicit side of this commitment motive.

“Killing the soldiers of Bachar Al-Assad's army“ is the explicit reason evoked by young people once their cognitive process is transformed, but when we listen to them before (during the process of radicalization) and after (during the process of deradicalization), we can see that most of these young individuals were attracted by a community of adventurers or "hotheads".



They want to confront their courage, to know if they are able, if they are men. It is often about the weak one taking revenge on the strong one to regain their dignity. They testify a feeling of loneliness throughout their childhood. Many times they felt unloved, left out, rejected by their classmates. The videos and speeches reaching young people with this motive create a feeling of will to sacrifice for History and posterity, so compensating for the lack of intervention by the International Community to save the children gazed by the Syrian dictator.

But "dying for the cause" appears to be only an excuse. By listening to the testimonies of individuals identified as "Lancelot", we understand that the "self-abnegation" is for them dedicated to their tribe. "Lancelot" does not want to die to save his family but his new community. As explained by Scott Atran, "in a tribe, links are so strong that the value of life and death is not the same any more".⁷² He talks about the military men who can throw themselves under a tank with a grenade in hand, neither thinking that they are going to make their homeland win the war, nor for the glory or for the medal, but for their group of friends, which means to them in some ways a family (...).⁷³

Young people indoctrinated behind the myth of "Lancelot" present the following characteristics:

- Presence in their smartphone or computer of photos reminding the symbols of the Christian missionaries (Lancelot's sword, cloak, etc.) ;
- Viewing of videos built for this motive of engagement, glorifying the heroic fight, in particular the one using the music of the movie "Pirates of the Caribbean", and the sword of the Lord of the Rings (with the Stamp of Daesh on it) and the Little Prince (legendary character of Saint-Exupéry) ;

The majority of them were, before their radicalization, planning or fantasizing to join the army and a minority of them didn't pass the army entrance exam or the gendarmerie exam.

«Lancelot» is a unisex motive for engagement, even though more boys than girls choose this path. However we have several extracts of girls' testimonies as follows:

“ *Before my religious conversion, I wanted to join the arm. I even went to get some information. Perhaps that's what attracted me when I became a Muslim. As soon as I was in the 9th grade, I had in mind to become a military man. I mainly wanted to have brothers, fight with them and feel supported all the time. In one hand, I was searching for action, and on the other hand, for a family. I wanted to be part of elite forces. Before, I used to be someone laughing a lot and being noticed. I wanted to be accepted by others. I liked to wear nice clothes from famous brands and hang out with girls. I have never been interested in doing drugs. I have never been out for partying. I was interested in martial arts like boxing or in thrilling activities like parachute jumping, but I never paid for it. [...] I felt like if I was there, I will be with them and I won't be any different. I liked to be feared, be someone*

⁷²ATRAN S., *Terroristes en quête de compassion* (Terrorists looking for some compassion), in *Cerveau et Psycho*, N°11

⁷³The same than 6.

dangerous. A bit like drug dealers, the more you upgrade, the more renowned you are. I wanted to be respected. That's also what attracted me. I don't know why, but I thought that as soon as we get power, we have everything, we are happy. I also tried to go above and beyond to know what I was capable of. I wanted to join the army to be part of the action. I think I was ready to kill, it wouldn't have been a problem. I also wanted to be a kind of hero. I wanted them to say about me that I'm a good person, helping and defending others. I wanted to be recognized for who I am.

(Fabien, see full interview in the annex of
Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

In fact, I failed. For me, I wasted my life here, I did not become what I wanted to be. Finally, I thought: 'I am going to go fight and maybe there I shall be someone. So people would talk about me and maybe then ... I am not saying that my name will be in the History but maybe I would not have been born for nothing... So, I do not know ... I did not want to have a meaningless life. I wanted to be useful for something. Doing good. I wanted to be a soldier to serve my country and a cause, defend those who cannot defend themselves. Anyway, we will all die someday. So, it's better to die doing something good. Leaving our mark on History. Somebody would say: a man saved my life that day. And this man would be me. I would not have been born for nothing. When I failed the army tests because of my so-called poor vision, I was devastated.

(28 year-old man, North-African origin, lower class,
condemned for terrorism participation).

Personally I was really there to fight for Allah. I was really there for religion. I was really there to do something for religion, for Muslims, so Muslims would have a land for our women, our sisters, our children. They come, and they will find Coke and a house where to live. There, nobody will assign them a house: 'here, you must not move, you must not live, but you pay taxes and you will live all your life just like that' .I really fought for something so Muslims would be free. He (a Muslim) can go to a mall, and his wife can wear hijab if she wants to, or the niqab. If she wants to wear headscarf, she wears headscarf... A real Islam land which would be a true paradise. A small paradise for Muslims, this is really why I wanted to fight.

(Minor, Muslim family, North African origin,
lower class, monitored by judge for juveniles.
He used to wish to become a gendarme
prior to his radicalization.)



I saw the Dawla's brothers as good Muslims. For me, to be a good Muslim, you must do the jihad, and leave to a Holy Land. It is an obligation to fight on the path of Allah. I wanted to establish the law of Allah, to propagate Islam all over the world. I did not want to stop in Iraq or Syria, I wanted the whole world to reach the truth. Firstly, I wanted to use words to convince, and then to use weapons if words were not enough. I thought there were people who are non-believers only because we had never tried to give them the truth. Thus it was my duty to give them this possibility. On the other hand, if once in front of the true message, they did not choose to reconvert, they deserved to die. I had the same feeling for strangers or members of my own family. I say "to reconvert" and not "to convert" because every human being is born Muslim at first. When he (or she) chooses another religion, he or she leaves the right way and is converted without being aware of it. When I heard that jihadist groups were killing each other, it did not affect me that much. I thought they must have a good reason to do it. It did not question the noble "cause" of their fight. A close friend told me that it was necessary to wait for the return of Mehdi⁷⁴ to go on the land of Shâm. He asked me: 'what will you do there if once there you realize they are not the good ones?' I answered him that I would verify it myself and that I must go to check. I could not stay here, on this non-believers' land, while I was needed over there, on the Holy Land (...) For me, everything was justified as it was realized by the jihadist group. Considering they served God, all their acts were justified. It shocked kouffars because they were ignorant and cowards. That's why sometimes, we do not understand some of their acts, but really, there is always an explanation. I wished to fight, take weapons and serve the cause as men do... I did not want to get married, stay at home and take care of children. My group confirmed me that "sisters" could also go into battle over there. Nevertheless, all the testimonies claimed the opposite: Dawla protects women, they do not go into battles... In the worst case, I thought I would agree to get married to please them, to have a son so he can continue to serve our cause and to give them an additional soldier, a little lion baby of Shâm. I didn't give up on the idea that I was going to wait five years, the time needed to put him in a training camp. Then, I would be free to take weapons. I was not sad neither when I imagined him with weapons in the hand, nor when I thought that he would certainly die young. Our time is limited on Earth. If he fights for a noble cause, he would die as a martyr and would reach the paradise. It was the best I could wish for him. It could even be a good thing for him not to live too long on this "dunya". I was not attracted to humanitarian work, the marriage or the learning of religion. I did not even know the five pillars of Islam ... All I wanted was to prove that I was as strong as a man. Weapons attracted me a lot. Since I was a little girl, I have been fascinated by weapons, I have always wanted to find a job which would allow me to use weapons. I feel strong and powerful in their presence. That's also why I like video games. I picture me as one of the characters, I dive into the fights and I imagine that it is reality. It is my dream, to be powerful, to be feared. I wanted to show my power to the whole world. I would never have returned in France if I have not been arrested in Turkey. I would not bear jail in France. I hate so much that country. They imprisoned my blood brothers since my childhood, I see them be thrown in jail, year after year. On the other

⁷⁴Last descendant of the Prophet expected with the messiah for the final battle against the forces of evil at the end of the world (imminent for jihadists).



Part II

hand, when we are starving, when we have nothing, no one cares about us; but when my brothers steal from supermarkets to bring us some food or when they sell some drugs to have an income, then now we pay attention to them, only to throw them in a hole. One day I shall avenge them, I always promised it to myself.

(Najet, 17 years old, Muslim family, North African origin, lower class, arrested at the boarder by the police, convicted for attempt to participate in a terrorist enterprise, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

“ Since I was a little boy, I have always had the feeling to be put aside from everything, to be unloved, whether it was by my family or by my classmates. I was the only one in my class who was not invited to birthday parties, and played alone during playtimes. I had the feeling that the others did not love me. Yet, I have always tried to do good around me, to help the weakest. I was always the first one defending victims of racketeering, abused or humiliated ones, even taking blows for him or her. Sometimes to try to join a group, I participated in stupid things behind the back of teachers. Every time we were caught I denounced myself and took full responsibility. I never denounced them, even to parents. Nevertheless, I was always put aside like a crashing patch and had to insist on being invited to trips or at their home. I had the feeling that I had to be someone else to be like them and be accepted. I suffered a lot because of that and I eventually accepted the loneliness I felt. My family did not help me. They saw me as someone weak. My mother did not stop making fun of me and humiliating me because I was too sensitive. I admit that when I was a child, sometimes I cried because my friends did not invite me. I was also afraid of spiders and had many nightmares. I slept for a long time with a light in my room ... I did not match the father's vision of what a man is. He was a military man and a competitor. He put a lot of pressure on me to win all sports. I had to be the best. During the holidays, it was impossible to play soccer or Ping-Pong just for fun. It was necessary to fight, overcome, strictly respect rules and of course win. Daesh gave me the feeling to really be loved just the way I was for the first time in my life. They accepted me, valued me and did not make me feel weak but on the contrary as a chivalrous man who wanted to help and protect his neighbor. I was seen as a soldier, a hero who put other first before himself. It was the first time I did not suffer from loneliness or humiliation. I was finally in a group of brothers who valued me.

(20 years-old man, middle class, atheist, currently imprisoned for a terrorist attack preparation).

II.1.5 The promise of omnipotence (ZEUS)

Whoever caught by the myth of Zeus has not the same profile, even if he/she also leaves to go into battle. «Imposing sharia to the whole world», as the only way to leave the corruption, is the explicit reason given by the ZEUS profile type individuals once their cognitive process is transformed. However, through their radicalization process and their process of deradicalization, we note that this reason mainly concerns limitless individuals having high risk behaviour for years (motor vehicle, unprotected sex, drug addiction, alcoholism, etc.) and looking for omnipotence.



Their main question is: will it work or end back badly? If it works, then they are immortals and almighty. They do not submit themselves to God but they appropriate God's authority to command others. Numerous educators compare this specific kind of «radicalized youth», to the «young drug addicts»: no law integration in the symbolic way, research for the immediate pleasure of ecstasy, and in for most of them an absence of a structuring father figure.⁷⁵

The "jihadist" line gives a justification to their omnipotence quest, as well as some videos staging Daesh killing «rebellious» then resuscitating them, then killing them again. The aspiration to be omnipotent and dominate others appears implicitly. The war zone is seen as an ideal world, in which omnipotence and domination can be applied and also find legitimacy. Fethi Benslama talks about delinquents who are ready to transform their antisocial urges in heroic deeds in the service of a supreme cause: "The image of the super-Muslim attracts delinquents or those aiming at becoming one: they convert because they want to be an outlaw in the name of the law – a law supposed to be above all the other laws, through which they ennoble their antisocial leanings, sacralizing their murderous urges. The Super-Muslim is looking for an enjoyment that could be called the 'incest between men and God', when a human being claims to be in confusion with his supposed creator to the point they act on His behalf, becoming His lips and His hands".⁷⁶

One of the young people we have followed has left the group of the Muslim Brothers to join the salafis because he thought that they did not detain the truth. He then left the salafis to join the "jihadists" for the same reason. Eventually, he mourned the utopia presented by the "jihadists" noticing they did not possess the truth either! He created a new group with four other "brothers", who valued themselves «above» Daesh or Al Qaeda. He has mourned the groups but not his engagement motive. His will for omnipotence clearly appeared.

These young people are often characterized by:

- A delinquent background, a drug addiction, or more generally risk and/or aggressive behaviors ;
- An absent father ;
- The feeling to be «from nowhere» ;
- The feeling to have to take power by use of violence in order not to be anymore humbled and persecuted by society ; and
- The presence in their smartphone or computer of videos showing the omnipotence of Daesh with atrocities of any kind, dehumanizing victims, and showing the superiority of those who make allegiance to their ideology.

The testimony of Brian (see below) illustrates this commitment motive well. Imprisoned then put in Juvenile detention center, then followed for two years by our team, Brian was condemned for participation in a terrorist enterprise.

⁷⁵BOUZAR D., *Quelle éducation face au radicalisme religieux ?* 2006. Déjà cité. (*What education against religious radicalism?*)

⁷⁶Quoted by BENSLAMA F., *Ibid*, p.177.

When we took care of him, he was interested in explosives. He was only attracted by the promise of omnipotence, so much that, as we analysed it before, he eventually created his own group to «be above» Daesh. Here is the way he analyzes his commitment:

“ Before being Muslim, I didn't have any bearings. My life didn't have any meanings and I had nothing to lose. I didn't have any friends and I didn't care much about life compared to somebody normal. When I was a little boy, I was seen as a disruptive and restless child. I was in a private school and they were not used to see children like me. During a birthday party of a classmate, for example, we broke a toy by messing around with another friend. The parents excluded me from the party, but not the other heckler. From that day, nobody ever invited me to a birthday party. I found that very unfair. Why punishing me and not the other child while he was as responsible as I was? When I was in the first year of primary school, it was the same: I was the "little brat". Adults and even classmates were unfair to me. I was living in a hostile world and so I used to see people as enemies. Then, I had two or three friends but I did not know many people. At the beginning, converting to Islam gave me a reason to live. But when you've told that only life after death matters, it's difficult to have a life plan. In Spain, I met the first person who talked to me about Daesh. He was wearing the kamis but he was different from others. His kamis was Afghan, so, black. He had a beard and did not have a shaved head. It attracted me right away. I saw him as a pious man, but different, special... He prayed like me and at that time, I thought that I was the only one praying correctly, because I was doing exactly what a religious wise had explained me on the Internet. I noticed that in mosques, the other Muslims didn't know how to pray well, not as well as me at least. Their gestures were not completely the good ones. It was the first time I met a brother who was praying exactly like me. I felt two very strong feelings: he must have had great knowledge, I was sure of that point; God put us in touch, we were close without knowing each other, because we were praying the same way, we were both on the right path. Here is the proof, when we began to discuss, we had the same opinion. It was not a coincidence. Progressively, we started to speak about death. It was natural. We had to give up our small lives for "the cause", it was obvious. Necessarily, when you go to battle, you know that you are going to die no matter what. He was physically attractive, he was beautiful, there was something special about him. I like villains. I have always liked the dark side. This is why he attracted me. When I was a child, I was always for the villains, in cartoons for example. I always wanted them to win. And when I was playing, I always took the role of the villain. I have been restless, nervous, aggressive and violent since I was a child. That's what my mother told me. She says that she always felt that I was full of hatred. I have only bad memories. I can remember my parents slapping me. I also hit my younger brother in the car once. The more he cried, the more I punched him. Every time I was violent, I found that adults were unfair to me. I liked to frighten. I liked to be seen as a bad guy. When the others were afraid of me, it gave me the feeling that I was the boss. I liked to see people turning red because they were really afraid. I thought that weakened the enemy. I always liked to be above others. When I walked in the street, I always had a knife in my pocket, just in case. When I became a jihadist with him, it was so cool. One day, we were in a market, because of our look, everybody was looking at us and we saw that they were scared. I liked it very much. I followed this brother of Daesh without knowing anything about Daesh. In primary school, I was fighting every day. I liked to fight. When other children were fighting, even if I was not concerned, I



went into the fight just for fun. Following this brother and joining his group, it was like finding a group of people just like me. I stayed with them because I was not any more the only one like that. Our goal was to frighten others. That is what convinced me [...] Dawla attracted me a lot by promising me to be able to take action, and in addition, I could die as a martyr. I was looking for only one thing at this time: being able to fight, using all my hatred, and if I could reach the paradise, it was even better. So I could fight as much as I wanted, I would always go to paradise. It was so great. But by observing Daesh's actions, I realized that their behavior did not always correspond to what they were defending. They were lax and cowards like the salafis. For example, they don't kill all those who make «shirk»⁷⁷, they only kill those doing it deliberately. Still, they declare that if a citizen pays taxes, it is then considering government at the same level as God, because he agrees to live in a country governed by the human laws. But they do not kill them all, so they are not logical. So, I eventually left Daesh too for a third group even more radical. They were doing the «takfir»⁷⁸ of everybody, including those of the Dawla. I agreed with them. And they were more logical: a sin is committed no matter if it was voluntarily or not. So the sinner didn't respect Islam. So he/she had to die. The guy who is photographed without being aware of it in the street, he's on the photo, so it's necessary to kill him. Not like the brothers of the Dawla who are non-stop making selfies, while the image is forbidden by Islam. For them, if you pay taxes, if you have an ID card then you are doing "shirk". So you are not a Muslim. So you must die. I left Daesh because they were not consistent. My group was upright and fair. When I went out of detention, I contacted them to check if I was right because I had not signed the report. Even signing a contract with a non-believer is punishable by death for them. So I have drawn a cross instead of my signature. The president Hollande, the leaders and all the led ones, it was «taghut»⁷⁹ for us. It was necessary to deny them by "the tongue, nose, mouth and hands", like the Prophet when he broke the idols. They said that when somebody is adored by the people, it is necessary to kill him first. I agreed. I agreed on everything anyway.

(Brian, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

Another testimony of an older man (Arab-Muslim family, lower class) convicted for apology of terrorism:

I have always liked violence. When I was a child, I was fascinated by weapons and fight. I used to watch Rocky with my father and I was ecstatic when I saw this boxer representing the strength. He was a man, a real man. Since my childhood, my father has been beating me each time he saw me crying. I did not have the right to be weak, a fag. If a classmate stole me a pen, offended me or hit me during playground, I did not have the right to come home with

⁷⁷“To do associationnism”. some radical groups consider that accepting anything instead of God (music, pictures, human laws etc.) is like breaking the principle of the divine uniqueness, so doing associationnism, and so apostasy.

⁷⁸To declare a person “apostate”.

⁷⁹What is adored besides Allah.



holey clothes crying to be comforted by my parents. My father refused that I got home if I had not defended myself, if I didn't punch back. Today, the new generation makes me laugh! All weak ones! I always wanted to show that I was the strongest. Even through sport or team games, I needed to prove to others that I was the best. Playing just for fun did not interest me! I wanted to win. In the district, people did not want to play soccer or Ping-Pong with me anymore because I was always competitive and I got angry when somebody was fooling around and did not take the match seriously. The more I grew up, the more I liked to be feared and respected. I did regularly body-building for example to have an impressive body and to not look like a weak one. I used to provoke professors and policemen when they came to control us in the neighborhood or in the train. I never shut my mouth, otherwise it was admitting to be scared and I was never scared. So, I spent many time in detention or police custody but I was proud of it. I had a reputation to uphold. What clearly attracted me in the Islamic State (ISIL) was the fight, weapons, kalachnikovs, tanks, etc. ... I was ecstatic when I saw people having the right to decide who can live or die just by pressing the trigger. They had the power. They were feared and respected by people. I wanted to be a member of this group. I felt good among them. I felt stronger and more powerful. When I was holding a weapon in my hands, I felt galvanized. I liked this feeling, that thrill going through me. I felt alive. I wanted to fight. I wanted to go above and beyond, and show my power to the world. In this world, we have no choice, we are smashed or we smash, there is no middle ground. If people see a weak point in you, you're screwed. They are going to use it to humiliate and hurt you. I never share my thoughts to anyone. I have never given any details about my life to my friends. Even those with whom I have grown up don't know my life. They don't know me, so they will never be able to use things against me. Life is a jungle. It is necessary to fight to survive and especially to win. I don't want to be treated like a dog. I don't want to have a miserable life struggling every month to survive. I deserve more. I want money, a big house with a swimming pool and women. To have women, you need money and to have money you must be respected. It's all about power and I have understood that since I was very young. I want to live like Tony Montana or Jacques Mesrine. I am quite a caricature of a young delinquent, I know, but I was fascinated by the movie Scarface. I know it by heart. I had posters, photos, T-shirts representing Al Pacino weapon in the hand, with a stern look. These men are impressive. My objective was to reach their power. I did not want to become a young dealer of the district but the drug lord: a leader. This is what I was looking for at the Dawla, the power but also to become their leader. I didn't bear when they tried to control me, to impose me rules. I had to make as they wished and it was impossible for me. I am the one controlling, the one deciding. I started to have some relational problems with some leaders who did not accept my independence and my will to take their place. I was smarter than them. I could see things they did not even understand. I was superior to them but they did not get it.

”



II.1.6. The promise of purity and restraints to protect themselves from sexual urges, particularly not assumed homosexuals urges (THE FORTRESS)

Lately identified, this motive is characterized by the dominance of the sexual theme and can also be applied to the addiction of psychoactive substances. The choice of this terminology (fortress) is motivated by two characteristics observed in the young individuals identified as such:

- Sexual obsessions (heterosexual and more often homosexual, and/or consumption of alcohol or cannabis, both generating a strong guilt). These obsessions and consumption, often not assumed, seem to overwhelm the young person who is terrified by the idea to give in to it.
- The desired ideal is a "better self": the young person invests in the radical Islam as he sees it as the best option that can contain him: a strict and reassuring framework protecting him from any sexual obsessions or consumption of illicit products. The religious ritual is «over- invested» to calm the guilt, and so, getting closer to the over-investment of the ritual characterizing the obsessive-compulsive disorder.

We could venture the guess that the much ritualized religious practice organizing the everyday life of Muslims (according to the radical discourse) could look like a compulsion as much as it has the function of reassuring the individual with regard to his sexual obsessions overwhelming him. Several authors were interested about the links between the overinvestment of the religious ritual and the obsessive-compulsive disorder linked to the practicing of different religions⁸⁰, and more precisely from young French Muslims⁸¹. The explicit commitment motive of the latter is the quest of purity and holiness. This means implicitly the search for a protection. The ideal would be to give the possibility to transform their body into a "fortress" against intrusive sexual thoughts and the temptation of psychoactive products. The radical discourse provides them a "haven of peace" by surrounding them with prohibitions.

As the sexual questionings is an important theme during the adolescence, we wondered if the "fortress" motive was characterizing a specific radical commitment, or if it was common to all the recruited young individuals. Even though sexual urges are clearly common to all (expressed or not), the distinctive element of the "jihadists" committed behind this motive is the quest of holiness. When the religious rituals do not regulate their urges as they had imagined they would, the death as a martyr seems to be considered as the only exit in front of the impossibility to reach this ideal. The explicit motive for commitment is the quest of a certain level of purity, while the implicit motive seems to be the search for a help to contain sexual obsessions difficult to handle. It explains why many terrorists frequently hired prostitutes, went to swingers club or slept with several women in nightclubs a few days or weeks before their attack. It is not about dissimulation but about released behaviours before death which is seen by the subject as a relief with a future

⁸⁰INOZU M., KARANCI AN, CLARK DA, Why are religious individuals more obsessionnal ? The role of mental control beliefs and guilt in Muslims and Christians. *J Beh Exp Psychiatry* 2012 ;43 :959-66 ; YORULMAZ O., GENCOZ T., WOODY S. OCD cognitions and symtoms in different religious contets. *J Anxiety Disord* 2009 ;23:401-6.

⁸¹HEFEZ S. Le clivage (the cleavage). In: BOUZAR D, CAUPENNE C, VALSAN S, editors. *La métamorphose opérée chez le jeune par les nouveaux discours terroristes (The metamorphosis of the young person created by the new terrorist line)*... 2014 [<http://www.bouzar-expertises.fr/publications/526-la-metamorphose-operee-chez-le-jeune-par-les-nouveaux-discours-terroristes>].

existence project including what is forbidden today.

“Jihadists” committed behind this motive are among the most dangerous. Indeed, the follow-up of these young people shows that the strict respect of the religious rituals is not enough to drive out their sexual urges. The gap between what they wanted to be and what they are increases, leading to a huge guilt. Feeling incapable of having what they call a "good behaviour" on Earth (to move away from the «others»), these young individuals thus decide to shorten their life by sacrificing their body. Meanwhile, the recruiters taught them that killing those who submit to the human laws (the non-believers) is a guarantee to go to heaven. Dying as a martyr provides a kind of shortcut for the afterlife. It offers a relief with a project of future existence that will include what is forbidden today (the wine flows like water in the paradise populated with eternal virgins). As they do not manage to build a fortress against their vulnerabilities (letting the otherness and chaos invading their body and so their new cohesive group as well), only death will allow them to stay within their new radical group.

Young people committed behind this motive are characterized by:

- The presence in their smartphone or computer of pornographic videos, kamikazes videos, the toughest sermons about the prohibition of gender diversity and about the strictest prohibitions on sexuality, as well as videos or speeches praising the benefits of heaven ;
- Their guilt to be "weak" in terms of sexual urges related to the “Dunya” (life of this world) and their dream to transform their body into a "fortress" against sexual intrusive thoughts;
- Their former sexual appearance, which can still exist at the time of the attempt of departure (girl dressed in leather obsessed by the desire to leave for the field);
- Their feeling of being inhabited by the evil; and
- A psychological pathology even psychiatric (mainly schizophrenia).

The young person testifying below engaged himself in the "jihad" because he was obsessed with pictures of pedophilia after watching a video on the Internet when he was 10 years old (fortress motive). He also wanted to intercede with God "to save his mother" from hell.

“ *The human nature disgusted me. It's like I finally opened my eyes to the world surrounding me. I had access to the truth. The brother then talked to me about the human purity. He told me that secret societies made a pact with the devil to keep the power and control the world. They would have agreed to sacrifice good men by preventing them from being pure. He uses as example the sexual temptations we undergo everyday inside our body. This brother wanted to push the boundaries of his purity.(...) The notion of purity was essential because I always had the feeling I had a monster inside me. I am really afraid of being someone bad. In fact, all started when I was young. I accidentally watched a pedo-pornographic video. I was really shocked. For the first time, I was facing the truth of this world. When I saw*



these horrible images, something happened inside me. I remember when I saw these images, I felt dirty and became corrupt by something coming from the inside and the outside. I didn't understand it back then because I neither believed in God nor in the devil. So, when I heard the brother talking about Sheitan, it impacted me. I spoke with him about these videos I had seen and what it had provoked in me. I had never told this to anyone before but sometimes I could see and hear things that frightened me a lot. I never dared talk about it. I was afraid that people would see me as madman. Moreover, I was unable to admit the feelings I felt at that time. I didn't dare tell that they were not only negative. He understood it. He explained me that djinns⁸² exist and they can possess people. Thanks to him I understood what went wrong with me. It reassured me a lot because he gave me the real explanation. At the end, I was not crazy. Since I was a little boy, I have been feeling different from others, as if there was something deeply bad in me. I had the feeling that the evil has always been here, that I was born with it, that I was half-man / half-devil. This brother convinced me that I was not bad but I was possessed for a long time by the devil. It is Sheitan which persuaded me that I was a devil. Since my conversion, Allah has purified me. Today I know who I am. Becoming a Muslim saved my soul. I cannot explain how much these discussions conditioned my attachment to this brother. It was the first one who listened to me, who understood me. He was the first one with whom I could share my thoughts. He neither seemed to judge me nor to see me as a madman. For the first time, I felt understood and helped. I felt less guilty. I would have done anything for him. (...) I avoid all the temptations not to get closer to sin. I also pray a lot, sometimes all day long because I know that the devil is not far and is trying to tempt me using many ways (...) Some brothers told me that if I wanted to stay pure, the only solution was to die as a martyr. At first, it tempted me. It was a way to eventually stop the anxiety and the endless fight against the temptations of Dunya⁸³. It's exhausting to resist to the many temptations surrounding me. I'm tired. Moreover, when I don't manage to block all my bad thoughts, I feel guilty a lot, even if I know that it is not my fault. I feel weak to lose against the devil. I must be stronger than him because God chose me to be one of His soldiers. I have to keep up. By dying as a martyr, I shall have the guaranteed heaven. I can be forgiven for all my past sins. Moreover, it would give me the possibility to intercede for my family. I worry a lot about my dead grandmother and about my atheist parents. I have seen many videos about hell punishments. I have difficulties to sleep well and I experience insomnia. I have always had nightmares keeping me awake. I often see apocalyptic images. Powerless, I watch my parents and brother disintegrating under the flames of hell. Their faces are deformed and burned so much that I don't recognize them anymore. They are nothing but howling skeletons. Their screams are the most atrocious sounds I have ever heard in my life. Several minutes after waking up, I can still hear them. In my nightmares, they ask me why I did not do anything to save them? As they are atheists, I have no hope for them. They will never reach heaven. The idea to save my brother was very important to me as I had failed when I was a teenager. This time I could manage to do it. My brother who did not get off drugs and my mother who has always been experiencing continuous episodes of depression would finally find the straight path thanks to my sacrifice.

⁸²Supernatural evil beings, mentioned in the Quran

⁸³The life of this world



They could be healed and protected by God. I blamed them a lot for having abandoned me for their addictions. (...)

Today, I understand that it is not their fault. It is Sheitan's fault.. He gets inside us and takes possession of our soul. I took distance from my family to avoid the temptation of Sheitan which could reach me through them. I don't want to be lost ever again. It doesn't mean I don't think of them. I miss them a lot and I really would like to be able to save them. The only way possible for me is to bring them to heaven with me. I tried to talk about religion to my brother, to reconvert him to Islam⁸⁴, so he would find the right path too. It did not touch him because he was not a «chosen one». The status of the martyr always attracted me. It is the most beautiful death, the one which allows us to reach a higher level of heaven. Moreover, I would be able to rest because I would finally be able to give in all the temptations. The brothers frightened me when they told me that for each misstep, I have to start all over again the process of purification. All the efforts and sacrifices done until this day do not count anymore. One bad thought is enough to go back to the impure side. It is a huge responsibility on my shoulders because I often think: "whatever I do, I will never be able to keep being pure until the day I die."

(Mathieu, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

II.1.7 The promise of protection (THE SLEEPING BEAUTY): a motive specific to women/girls

It is the only commitment motive specific to women. The central theme of girls committed behind this motive is sentimental. Finding a husband who “would never abandon them” is the explicit reason given by those young ladies when their cognitive process is transformed. We could note after studying their stories that they were all looking for a protection because they felt very vulnerable, psychically and physically. The utopia desired here is the ideal husband who will love her forever, protect her and make her live a fairy tale. The physical and emotional security is wanted in the context of wedding, purity of conjugal love and lifestyle without mixing gender strengthened by wearing the sitar (veil covering the eyes). The quest for this lifestyle can be considered as the implicit search for a shell. This term is sometimes explicitly used by the young ladies we talked to.

Recruiters manage to give them the illusion that Daesh respects women. The sitar (which even covers eyes) is presented as a luxury case protecting a diamond, a physical shield so effective that it is like a real armour. The world without mixing gender is presented as the most adapted model of protection against the perversity of men. Getting married to a hero sacrificed while saving children gazed by Bachar Al-Assad confirm the feeling of invulnerability. The marriage is presented as "the solution" to the majority of their problems. These girls commit themselves in the ideology only for this union and they do not know much about the propaganda of Daesh. They frequently seem immature and their will for departure might not be taken seriously because they misunderstand the group and the "jihadist" project. All they are looking for is eternal love.

⁸⁴He says «to convert back» and not «to convert» because for him all human beings are born Muslims and they just left the right path.

Girls engaged behind this motive are characterized by:

- (For most of them) the systematic experience of a sexual assault before their radicalization;
- Their abandonment by a father;
- The presence of videos or romantic photos in their conversations on the internet, with bearded men of any origins kneeling with bouquets of flowers in hand and looking at the horizon sitting on the beach, with pink hearts coming out of their bodies.

This testimony of this 19 year-old woman (atheist family, middle class) monitored by the juvenile court judge for involvement in radical Islam is a perfect illustration of this type of promise made by the "jihadist" group:

“ When I was 3, my father abandoned my mother and me for another family. At first he cheated on my mother, then he had a new home with his mistress. He burdened us with a mountain of debts, and my mother still has difficulty in paying them. Before him, her ex-husband with whom she had my older brother used to hit her. We cannot say that she was lucky with men. Since I was 3, I have always seen her alone She didn't want to be dependent on a man anymore. She said that her own mother had abandoned her for men and that she would never do the same to me. I think she hates men, she sees them as bad people who can only do evil and betray. According to my mother, if a woman needs a man, she is weak. All my childhood I was raised by a mother telling me only bad things about men: never trust them, never count on them, never love them, never need them, never depend on them, etc. Nevertheless, I have always seen my mother sad, alone, given up, and depressive. Besides the debts, she had a genetic disease physically weakening her. Secretly, I have always thought that if my father would have stayed with her, she wouldn't be so sad that she had to take antidepressants. She was seeing herself as a strong woman but I saw her weakened and unhappy. I think it was because of her loneliness. Like her, with her own mother, I thought that I would never be like my mother: alone and sad. I needed a man who would love and satisfy me. I adored Disney, princess and prince stories. I used to dream about it at nights in my bed. Big love with a big L. When my mother talked to me about future and told me about the importance of studies to get a job, I was only thinking about love and building a home. I imagined myself loving my husband, taking care of my house and my children. I didn't have a big self-esteem I was ugly and a little bit fat. I did not know if someday a man could love me because if my father had been capable of abandoning me, it was because I was not special. Maybe I did not deserve to be loved? Especially since he didn't leave his new family ... He was close to his other daughters, so the problem did not come from him but from me. The first man who had to love me, take care of me, rejected me without any regret. I have always been in this ambivalence I was dreaming about a prince charming and at the same time thinking that I did not deserve to be loved. I had my first sexual relation when I was very young. I thought that it was how I was going to win their love For a while, I have been important to them I had the feeling that they cared about me. Through their eyes I felt love and desire. I was satisfied until they moved on because they eventually all left me again and again. But I kept hope:



'that one will be different from others', 'that one will stay with me if I do better, if I give more, if I am better'. The problem was always coming from me. I was sure about that. At the age of 14-15, I have already tried to get pregnant. I absolutely needed to have a child, for myself and also to keep my boyfriend. If we had a child, if we started a family together, he could not leave anymore or at least he would always be bound to me. My last experience before I met the Dawla went wrong. My boyfriend hit me, raped me, and humiliated me. At that time obviously I did not see it this way. He took pictures of me in intimate situations and sent them to his buddies. They circulated in all the high school. The girls rejected me because they considered me as an easy girl and the boys did not respect me. I was daily the victim of unhealthy remarks. I oscillated between the feeling to be noticed and in some way liked, and the feeling of being humiliated and harassed. It was a hard time for me. I was so addicted to him that in spite of that, I kept seeing him and trying to satisfy all his needs. I cannot explain why. Until the day my mother noticed it and forced me to stop any contact with him. She made me change my school, deprived me from my telephone and my social accounts. She said it was to protect me but I did not think it was true. I was convinced that she was angry because I did not look like her. I did not have the same values as her, I didn't want to manage my life alone without a man and that's what annoyed her. She neither tried to protect me, nor to make me happy but to turn me into her, which is something that I refused. This temporary break with the outside world and this anger against my mother plunged me into my room doing nothing but surfing on the internet. This is how I found Daesh's videos showing eternal love, marriage and religious prince charming. That attracted me immediately because I thought that thanks to the religion and the faithfulness to God, my man would be obliged to stay with me, build a family, love me and respect me. I have never been interested in Daesh's project, religion or anything else, but only by this promise to have a man who would love me forever, because it was imposed by Islam. He would protect me and build a family with me. The fact that he could have several women didn't disturb me as long as I was the first one. In a way, that guaranteed his loyalty and his eternal love. Furthermore, if the second woman did not suit me, I had a say in this and I would keep being the leader of the house. It is the first wife who commands. Everything suited me in their proposal. The fact that he would be a fighter for a noble cause, protecting an oppressed people and would intercede with God for me and my family to go to heaven only made things even more beautiful.

”

The girl testifying below, firstly committed behind this motive, but we can see in her testimony how the group also uses another motive (The Savior) consisting in interceding with God to bring her parents to heaven. She hesitates between both argumentations then she falls back on the role her husband plays⁸⁵:

“

My mother and I were very close when I was a child ... We were always together. We supported each other throughout our lives. She has always been there for me and has always loved me. The separation between my mother and my father was very difficult for both of us. I had the feeling

⁸⁵We will see later that the radical group tried also to touch her with humanitarian commitment (MOTHER TERESA)

that he had abandoned me to raise another family. As if I wasn't enough as a daughter, as if he wasn't proud of me enough, as if I disappointed him, as if I wasn't up to his expectations... I supported my mom who got ill, but sometimes I had the feeling that nobody was here to support me. My mother did what she could but I could not show my weaknesses in front of her, I had to be strong so she could stand. I was too young to face adults' responsibilities ... I carried everything on my shoulders. Sometimes, I could hear my mother crying in her room in the evening. I came to console her and reassure her: everything was going to be fine. This is why I had anger against men. I blamed my father for all my mother's problems. My mother rebuilt herself without a man. She did not want to be dependent again, whether materially or sentimentally. But I thought the opposite: I had the conviction that only a man could protect me and support me. My only objective was to fill the hole I could feel inside me. I needed a man who would never abandon me and who would truly love me without ever leaving me. Indeed, I thought that my father didn't only leave my mother; he abandoned me too. He left me alone to build another home with his other children whom he probably spoiled. He was sharing all the important moments of their life, by leaving me aside, in the oversight ... What is better than a man submitted to Allah to be sure that he would never abandon me? (...)My group from the Dawla⁸⁶ felt that I was very concerned by my mother, so they frightened me by describing me the punishments that she will endure in hell. I was sure that her atheism would directly take her to hell despite all the good things she may have done in her life. I had to go on the land of Shâm to have a chance to save her. They talked to me about martyred operations to intercede for my family but I didn't feel up to it. Thus I put it all on a husband who could take my mother to heaven with him by dying as a martyr in the fight. I shall ask him to intercede for her with God, because he would have the right to intercede for 70 people. My mother felt this anxiety and tried to reassure me by telling me that she didn't care about God and that she did not need to go to heaven. But the more she told me that, the more I worried, and the more that encouraged me to leave to die for her. I was afraid of hell and sins which could take me there. Dawla had convinced me that God would never forgive me.

”

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

The last testimony can illustrate this commitment motive. This girl has been raised in an atheist family (lower-class), and has been victim of a sexual abuse in her early childhood that didn't lead to any follow-up. We will call her X. She has been arrested twice by the police at the French boarder as she was trying to leave for Syria. She is now monitored by the juvenile court judge.

“

Team: Did you have any difficulties in sharing your thoughts with your new sisters on the internet?

X: Yes, it took me about six months before being able to talk about my life...

Team: How did you imagine him, the man to whom you could to speak?

⁸⁶Young people call the terrorist group bounded to Al Bagdadi «The Dawla». They need time to accept to use the acronym «DAESH» used by the public at large and media in order to refuse to validate this group as a real state.

X: As a nice person, a honest man... Above all, a pious man. A man who would have done anything for God, I thought that was really beautiful. The fact that he was ready to leave his family for the cause... He had three daughters and he was still ready to leave them for God. I thought that was beautiful ...

Team: And what was special about him compared to others so you could feel comfortable enough to share your thoughts?

X: The fact that he committed his body and soul gave me confidence. I thought that he might be a kind of hero. The defence of the Syrians took over his own children. To do that, it is necessary to have a huge heart. He was everything for me. 'an example' ...

Team: Did you talk to him right away about your feelings?

X: Yes.

Team: Was there an attraction right away ? Very quickly?

X: Yes, because I met him on Facebook; he just wrote: 'lion looking for lioness'. He wanted a woman sharing the same convictions than he had, who sacrifices herself for justice, who would make her hijra with him ...

Team: Did he talk about hijra?

X: I was in the beginning of my radicalization process. So I thought: 'yes, that's what I need'. He is a pious Muslim. A man who gives everything. He must be a reliable man. Thus I did not spend much time considering it. I sent him a message. Then, we have never stopped talking to each other. Until I was arrested.

Team: Were you attracted by the marriage before that?

X: No.

Team: How old were you exactly at that time?

X: When I met him on the Internet, I think I was about 15 years old.

Team: And how old was he?

X: 31.

Team: It did not seem weird to you?

X: No, because my mother always told me that the difference of maturity between men and women is about 10 years. So he was just 5 years older ...

Team: Have you ever met him physically?

X: No, because the police arrested me.

Team: And how long have you been speaking to each other?

X: More or less a year

Team: you talked to each other for a year without ever seeing him?

X: Yes.

Team: With the webcam?

X: No not with the webcam, only photos.

Team: Did you send your photos?

X: Yes.

Team: And how did you married him? Because you told us that you were married?

X: Hm yeah. There was only the two of us and a brother.

Team: Were you together physically?



X: No, that was done via Skype. And later, we were going to officialise it there, once joining him ...

Team: So in fact, you married on Skype?

X: Yes. And he promised me that we would never divorce either by Skype or by Telegram. Because we knew sisters who were rejected by Telegram ...

Team: Did you have the feeling to be loved by him or by Daesh?

X: I don't know. By Daesh, no. By my husband, yes ...

Team: If your husband wasn't there, do you think you would have stayed in this group?

X: No I don't think so. When I had doubts, I felt reassured by thinking that a man who has chosen to protect the children killed by a dictator over his own children must be a superman. It reassured me every time I was anxious. I was thinking: God provided me this man to protect me. It is sure, it is my fate ... I must not think too much.

Team: And finally, this is why you tried to leave?

X: Yes, I tried twice. I was proud that the man who wanted to marry me was a mudjahidin. He would protect me from hell. If he dies, I would be happy because he would die as a martyr and we would be both safe in heaven. I only thought about joining him. It became an obsession. I thought about it all the time. I was terrified at the idea of my husband dying in the fight before I could physically meet him at least once. Finally, it was more important for me to join my husband than to make Hijra (immigrating). He became the symbol of my survival: only him could protect me and allow me to face life. He was the only one reliable. I distrusted the whole world but him. He was the first person I trusted. I wanted to give my life to him.

”

II.1.8 The promise of death (THE LICIT SUICIDE)

Young people classified in this category had suicidal tendencies before their radical commitment. They have the characteristic to accumulate more commitment motives than the other young individuals or to change their motives. This hesitation is characteristic of this category because the will of suicide finds a favourable framework in any commitment motive. Indeed, the "jihadist" discourse gives them a scenario of suicide: where, when, how, why, characterizing the strong suicidal crisis, in addition to the possibility of giving a meaning to their death and a promise to have a better life in heaven.

While the explicit request of the young person is often linked to one of the seven other myths, his implicit request is to die. He eventually admits it progressively during the support group discussions. In fact, he wanted to die because life is too hard, but as committing suicide is forbidden when we believe in God, he felt more or less obliged to use another motive for commitment. He is not obsessed with the idea of saving his family as the saviour or saving his group of heroes as Lancelot, he simply no longer wishes to live. A girl corresponding to this subcategory has considered the offer to wear an explosive belt "as an opportunity". The young individuals corresponding to this profile type followed by the CPDSI eventually become aware of that through their deradicalization process. They finally can word their will to die. We identify, as we mentioned it above, these depressive individuals by their instability or the multiplicity of their commitment motives.



Lamia is a girl whose suicidal aspect was lately discovered. At first, during our follow-up, we were confused by the fact that she evoked ideals, needs, and thus very different motives for commitment. It is only after several months we understood that the "jihadist" discourse affected her just because it permitted her to die. This explains the interchangeability of her various arguments. Here is her testimony:

“ I began to be interested by the Islamic State after I heard on television someone talking about Abou Bakr Al Baghdadi. I asked a girl pro-Dawla with who I was in touch on Facebook to give me some details about the caliphate. She told me: "you know, Shâm is the Holy Land! We must go there! It's important". It was thus necessary to disavow the non-believers and join the mujahidin brothers (Jihadists) on the field. I thought the truth was over there. I was convinced that the end of the world was near and that it was absolutely necessary to leave to join them. At first, I talked about it only with my friend on Facebook. I also watched many videos on Youtube. They were talking about the holy war and fighters. I also watched humanitarian videos where I could see Syrian children dying because of Bachar Al Assad. Then, I started to watch other videos not only from Daesh but also from 19HH, for example. They talked more about religion and the Holy land. When I watched them and I wanted to leave now. Then, I watched videos of executions done by Daesh. The first time I have seen that it disgusted me. I almost vomited. Then the more I watched it, the more I got used to. I did not feel anything anymore. In the contrary, I was proud of them. Then I watched war videos showing brothers fighting there. I listened to speeches of Awlaqi for example⁸⁷. The videos that I liked the most were those talking about the worst sins or the afterlife. As they frightened me, it motivated me to be better. Then I joined a private group of "sisters" on Facebook. I logged in every day as soon as I went back home from high school. I have always been active on social networks but before I was communicating only with friends of the neighbourhood. The group eventually became important and I was very attached to them. What they told me affected me. It became more important than everything else. I asked them questions very regularly. The more I moved forward, the more I wanted to know about it. It became an obsession. At first I wanted to go to Syria all by myself but then, I wanted to go there with my best friend. We were in touch with the same brother in Syria who organized our departure for both of us. When I realised that I had to leave my family I was very sad. During the first 24h, I was not feeling very well. But I didn't change my mind because I was going there for them too. I thought that they would follow me because I had the truth and they didn't. I was sure that I could convince them to join me. If not, I would have interceded for them once in front of God, so they would join me in heaven later. I had the feeling that I could save them by going there. I heard that if you die as a martyr, you could intercede for several persons. The day of resurrection (Yawm Al Qiyyama), I could save the souls of my family members so they would avoid hell. When I felt anxious, I reassured myself by thinking I could return in France if something went wrong there. It took me time to understand that if I am there, it would be for life. This made me hesitate.

⁸⁷Anwar Al Awlaqi was the chief of Arabian Peninsula branch of Al Qaïda (AQPA), he died in 2011.

Anyway, I decided to leave because I considered that I had gone too far and I could not go back anymore. It was like a whirlwind around me that I could not take control of. In hindsight, something was obvious: I really wanted to die as a martyr. I was going there to save myself but not only. I also wanted to go there to do some humanitarian work, I really wanted to help. For me, it was obvious that once in Syria I would help Syrian children. So I had in mind to learn how to use weapons. I was then in a different state of mind. It was no longer a question of helping victims but rather fighting oppressors. They convinced me that I would fight and die as a martyr but it was only lies. I knew deep inside me that women could not fight. I thought that someday they might need me. And then, I realized that once there, I should get married and raise child soldiers (mujahidin). I was so indoctrinated that I was completely ok with these projects. I was convinced that my children would fight in the path of Allah (fi sabilli-llah), which would have led them directly to heaven (Janah). Finally I thought that over there I would be able to practice my religion freely and wear the niqab. That's what I wanted more than anything else. I have always felt useless in my family. As far as I can remember, I have always had family problems. I wanted to find a place where I belong. There were times when no one cared about me. I felt a little apart. To make them notice me, I used to do stupid things. At school, I didn't work well so they would call my mother. It made her react. Even if she was arguing with me, I felt like I finally existed to her. I also wanted my father to react, especially him, because I really felt I was non-existent to him. During the last years of high school, when I started to get interested by the Dawla, I did not want to do anything. Before that, I had a lot of plans for the future: I wanted to study medicine, become a caregiver or work with children. I don't know why but I didn't want to do anything anymore. In the last year of high school, shortly before I joined Daesh, I dropped out everything. All because of them! The only thing that mattered to me at that moment was to join them because there were only miscreants here. Before that, I have always had a little project here or there. I could picture myself with a driver's license and a job, but nothing mattered anymore. I always thought that this world was just a test. I think this life on Earth (the Dunya) is useless, it is ephemeral. I have always been following a spiritual quest. Children dying made me feel sick. When I saw poor people, it affected me, especially if they were children, much less if they were adults. Then gradually, I have to admit, it did not matter to me if they were not Muslims children... For example, when I have heard about a shooting in the US, it did not affect me. I started to be really hard on certain subjects. I changed. Although, I did some humanitarian work before, like giving food to homeless and poor people. I stopped working for this humanitarian association because I did not really like the group, even though I really liked to do this. I really wanted to help the Muslim community. I wanted to go to Palestine to support them but it was impossible. I used to imagine that once I grow up, I will adopt a Somali or Palestinian orphan. I thought that Daesh's project was to help us, Muslims. With a purpose: converting the whole world to Islam. The purpose to live as at the time of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings on him) was the best solution to me. I would be able to practice my religion freely. Clearly, in France, I believed that I could not apply my religion like I wanted. I was convinced about that long before I was indoctrinated by Daesh. I knew that if someday I decide to wear the hijab, a lot of doors would close. Each time I wore it, I felt assaulted by a "FFrench" person, and I considered that person as a miscreant and an enemy. In fact, I eventually saw all of them as enemies because most of them were scowling at me because of my hijab. My group members used this argument a lot. They told me "Look here, it goes wrong but with us it goes well. Women can dress



as they want. Etc.” What was the most important to me was the re-establishment of Islam. [...]I thought the world would be better with Daesh. Before that, I don’t know if my life made sense. The life of this world is a test but the day of the last judgment will come and we will all be judged. So I had to be the best Muslim as much as I could. I did not bear humiliations of Muslims anymore. I always thought about that. It led me to feel hatred. I had the feeling that everybody was always against Muslims. I watched over and over again videos talking about women wearing headscarf and being mistreated by the police (...)Firstly I wanted to join my sisters. I really thought that it would be like a fairy tale. I imagined we would practice our religion together. I never dared do things alone. I’m afraid of having responsibilities and so doing things in a group always reassured me. And it’s still the case today. I really thought that thanks to the war, we would be able to create a good solidary community. It was important to me. I really thought that over there, I would learn Quran and Hadits. It was the only place where I could learn the real Islam. In fact I could have learned it anywhere. But in my mind, over there, it was better... Over there it would have been the truth, not like here in France. I really felt impure by staying here. Sometimes I felt like I was going crazy. As soon as I went out, I cried, I was fed up, I wanted to leave. The marriage attracted me a bit but I really wanted to go there for religion. I really had the feeling we were protecting ourselves with my sisters when we were speaking to each other.

”

(Lamia, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

This 22 year-old young man from an atheist family (middle class) accumulated three reasons for commitment before our team became aware of its suicidal will: ‘Mother Teresa’, ‘Lancelot’ and the ‘Savior’, with a small aspect of ‘Zeus’ by the end. The follow-up was effective only once one took into account his fundamentally existential questions:

“ *Daesh immediately seduced me as soon as they started to talk to me about their project. Everything touched me deeply into my heart. I wanted to save oppressed populations, starving children, widows who lost all hope in life, and men who had lost body parts in bombing or after fighting. I wanted to distribute and send money and food to support and help them. I was dying not to be able to do anything concretely to save and help them. I felt so responsible and guilty of staying in my own comfort while all of them, not so far from me, were suffering. I was in my own comfort and warm, and it was unbearable for me. So I wanted to take weapons to take concrete action because I quickly understood that it was not enough to participate in humanitarian work, and send money, food and clothes. I emptied my dressing and sold everything on ebay. I got rid of all my material goods to send to associations in Syria everything that I had, but it was useless. My help was minimal. I wanted to give more. I wanted to really change things. The fight quickly attracted me: the brotherhood aspect, fighting with my brothers and for my brothers. I was ready to sacrifice myself for them. They were my family, my twins. I would have given everything for them. I needed them, I felt loved and understood among them. For the first time I was accepted the way I was. I did not need to correspond to their values, humour, and personality. I*



could just be myself and it was enough for being loved. For the first time I laughed, I felt happy and alive at their side. Weapons didn't attract me that much at first, I was afraid of them but I quickly get used to them. Moreover, now, it has become commonplace to carry a weapon. Everybody has one in the suburbs. It is not very difficult to get one. When I saw pride in their eyes, when I published a photo with a gun on Snapchat or when we were all in the forest to train, I quickly forgot my initial apprehension. Their approval and love were the most important thing to me. I really have had the feeling to live for the first time since I met them. At first, I was very afraid of my mother's health who was seriously sick. She has a cancer and suffered a lot because of her chemo therapy. I felt responsible for her. I was the man of the house. My father has abandoned us for a while now and I had only one younger sister. It was my role to take care of them. What my mother would become if I abandoned them? How my sister would survive alone without me bringing them some money or supporting them? A few years ago, I started to sell drugs and steal in order to bring some money to my family. It was the only way. I felt guilty about that with respect to God. I was afraid of hell, but I didn't have the choice. I had to save my mother and my younger sister. Everything was the fault of my father and the government who abandoned us and did not help us to survive. My mother could not work anymore because of her cancer. And my sister was too young. She deserved to be protected, go to the college and have fun with her friends. I was the one who had to save my family. My responsibility. My honor. The brothers reassured me a lot concerning Allah's punishment regarding my drugs sale activities. I have always stole and sold drugs to «White people», nonbelievers so in a way I was already serving the cause without knowing it. God prevented me from going after my own community even in despair, and my commitment to Daesh would erase all my sins. My sacrifice would cleanse me from all my sins to be a virgin again, and especially to save my mother and my little sister from hell. I would bring them with me to heaven. That was my ultimate goal. It was the better way to save them. I was not going to try to protect them from this life anymore but I was going to make sure that in death they would be safe. The most important thing is the life afterlife and not the life on Earth. It was no more a problem to abandon them. We would meet up there, in heaven. They would thank me once they will understand that I sacrificed myself to take them to heaven with me. They would not be mad at me. I admit that the group was giving me the illusion to be powerful, to feel power. I always had the feeling to be lower than the others and then suddenly everybody looked at me. They didn't talk to me the same way anymore. People could see through my eyes that I could be dangerous. I was more respected, I was even feared and I loved it. That did not prevent me from wanting to help oppressed people. On the contrary, I was thinking that the more respected you are, the more you can contribute to happiness and help your neighbour in distress. It is necessary to have power to help others. It is not with kindness that we can change things. Finally I had only one goal, it was to die as a martyr. This solution without understanding why reassured me and gave me a feeling of achievement. It was what I wanted deeply in my heart and it gave me the feeling I could save everybody: myself from my sins, my mother who was going to die soon because of her cancer, my little sister, oppressed people, and my brothers. Until my last day, I would fight for a noble and fair cause. I shall fight against injustice and shall make something to change the world. I shall bring an important message and my brothers will remember me as a hero. I shall stay in the memory of people. My gesture will not be vain. It could be used to win the war.



Other young individuals expressed very clearly their melancholy tendency and from the very beginning of their retro-analysis, quickly understood the link between their desire to die and the promise of the group. For example, this 20-year-old woman (atheist family, middle class) was convicted for proselytism of terrorism on the Internet:

“ I don't really know what attracted me in Daesh. I just had the feeling to feel less pain. Since I was a child, I have been very sad. I have always had the feeling to be a stranger, a spectator of the world surrounding me. Neither this life, nor this world fits me. I do not belong here. I don't understand what I am supposed to do, or be... My life was an endless routine. I had the feeling to be in an endless time loop that was constantly repeating. As if I was in a movie where the main character is living the same day over and over again until he manages to get free from this spiral thanks to the understanding of a message coming from the universe. I was desperately looking for this message, but in vain. Every evening, when I fell asleep, I wished not to wake up. Every awakening was a suffering. I felt nothing more: neither enjoyment, nor sadness, I felt emptiness. I was an abyss, a well of tiredness. Everything seemed to me so tough. I had to make huge efforts to survive. Everything was an effort: getting up from bed in the morning, breathing, smiling, speaking, listening, walking, taking the bus, etc. I often fantasized over death. I spent my time on blogs where people like me didn't feel like belonging here. I wrote poems about death which I considered as an ultimate delivery. It represented for me happiness and freedom. I saw it as light and a synonym of hope. Each birthday, my despair increased. I was a year older and I was still there, prisoner of a life I didn't want, that I could not bear. I don't know why I was so unhappy. I tried repeatedly to commit suicide but I have never managed to end up with life. Sometimes, while waiting for the subway, I hoped that somebody pushed me on the rails or to have the courage to make this little step separating me from my paradise: death. I didn't care to go to hell or to heaven. I didn't really believe in it anyway. My dream, my paradise, was simply death. Even hell would be a delivery from that life. When I was high up, I looked at the window with a lot of melancholy. I wished I had the strength to jump. I found those who committed suicide brave. I did not understand people saying that it was cowardly to commit suicide. They did not realize the necessary courage to cross this step – courage that I did not have. The day I went the furthest, I swallowed medicine mixed in some alcohol. My mother found me in my room, unconscious. I was taken to the hospital by firefighters and was quickly transferred to the psychiatric center. I started a therapy that, in my opinion, was useless. I don't think that therapy was very helpful. It just transformed me into a zombie. That emptied me of my last strengths. The only positive thing was that I didn't think about anything anymore. My brain was empty. I was not any more invaded by desires of death. I did not think anymore, every second, about ways to go, to escape this life. I was so empty that even thinking was too much tiring. I had the feeling to be in a tunnel which would never end. The only light I could reach was by waiting death coming to find me. I felt bad. My family would be happier without me. I would do them a favor. I was making them miserable. I could hear my mother crying at night in her room. I saw worried looks from my brothers and sisters who did not understand what I was living. They took turns to watch me. Sometimes, I had the feeling to see some relief in my mother's eyes when she came home from work in the evening. As if she was ready to receive some call announcing her that

Part I

I was at the hospital ... I wanted to set her free from this concern. She did not deserve to suffer so much because of me. At the same time, I was blaming her a lot not to let me go, forcing me to stay here. I had to do and be like the others., I had to make an effort to open myself, and look at the beauty and not only the darkness, they said ... They wanted me to become another person, so I tried to pretend to be joyful and be fun. I did everything so they would leave me alone and stop giving me this medicine that made me sleep all day long. I smiled, answered the good answers to my doctor and quite slowly, everybody was reassured around me. I went back the school. I regained my independence and freedom without forgetting to wear my mask every day. I understood that it was impossible to show my real feelings. I was misunderstood by all. I was not like them and I was taken for a madwoman. I was convinced that they were the mad ones, blinded by a veil that made them ridiculous and ignorant. This is when I met Daesh. They saw the person I really was behind the mask. I had at last found people understanding me, with whom I could speak without having to filter my words by fear of shocking or worrying. They really wished to set me free and help me. They gave me an explanation for all my misery: I was close to God. I was in the truth. I finally understood why I was capable of seeing, or feeling things that others couldn't. I was right, I was not crazy. I was on Earth to serve a cause in the name of God which leads me to die as a martyr. When I understood that for the first time in my life, I felt alive and happy. I could finally breathe and smile without suffering or being hypocrit. I had found the meaning of my life and where I belonged. I did not have to live for a long time. My destiny was written by God. I just had to wait for the good time. That also explained my lack of courage to commit suicide the previous years. I had to meet my new sisters before to sacrifice myself the right way.

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In fine, ‘Lancelot’ is the most successful motive for engagement with boys. It is necessary to have a look at the report RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS (II.4 DYNAMIC OF VARIABLES RELATED TO THE MOTIVES FOR COMMITMENT) to discover the connection between gender and motives for commitment (Table 17a) but also the connection between social class and reasons for commitment (Table 19 and Table 20). We can see how the social factor interacts in the choice of the commitment motive, transcending the psychological factors of the young individuals. This shows that the ideal of building a better world always supersedes the ideal of building a "better self".

When we combine qualitative and quantitative methods, 6 main dimensions of individual characteristics can be found within these motives: violence, depression, experience of violence, sexuality issues, loneliness, and affinity with death. When a young person has two commitment motives, which is the case for about 30% of young people (see TABLE 16), one or more dimensions involved are similar in the two reasons he or she pursues: depression, violence, loneliness, etc.

The cross between the qualitative and quantitative methods also shows that those who are committed behind the motive called ‘ZEUS’ are the most difficult to support in the exit of radicalization. Among the “jihadists” disengaged and “deradicalized”, only 7% were engaged behind this motive. This result is not surprising: to help the radicalized one to mourn the “jihadist” project, we need to set up various techniques allowing him to realize the difference between his needs, his ideal, the promises made by the “jihadist” discourse and the real “jihadist” actions. But concerning the motive of ‘ZEUS’, the promise of omnipotence of the “jihadist” discourse and the real actions are similar: their project of extermination and purification uses omnipotence. It is necessary to have a look at the report RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS to study the interactions between the different motives of engagement and the probabilities to exit from radicalization.

To conclude Chapter II.1

The different commitment motives demonstrates the diversity of people involved, proving there is no “jihadist profile”. As Judge Trévidic emphasized: “the jihadist population is diluted within the French population. They come from diverse social classes, without exception. The proportion of women and minors involved is worrying. [...] Our schemes are outdated. Gender, age, social class, origin, level of education, stability within the family, and paternity and maternity are no longer criteria allowing us to detect and assess the level of dangerousness of an individual.”⁸⁸

Table summarizing the interactions between what concerns the individual, what comes from external factors and what emerges from the recruitment system.

1st column: name of the engagement’s motive (name found by the CPDSI) and the promise of the “jihadist” group to which this motive corresponds
2nd column: explicit needs expressed by the radicalized-one
3rd column: personal characteristics of the young person detected by the quantitative method elaborate by the team of Professor Cohen from the questions of the CPDSI chart ‘MOTIVE FOR COMMITMENT’ and from elements collected by the CPDSI before radicalization.

⁸⁸Marc TRÉVIDIC, *Terroristes, les 7 piliers de la déraison*, JC Lattès, 2013.

Table of interactions

	REASON FOR COMMITMENT AND PROMISE OF THE « JIHADIST » GROUP WHICH THIS MOTIF CORRESPONDS	REASON FOR COMMITMENT AND PROMISE OF THE « JIHADIST » GROUP WHICH THIS MOTIF CORRESPONDS	PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE YOUNG PERSON, DETECTED BY THE QUANTITATIVE METHOD DEVELOPED BY PROFESSOR COHEN'S TEAM
1	Zeus Promise of omnipotence	Need to order and be respected	Violence, interest in weapons, megalomania, adventure, combat, « masculine / virile value », no lack of self-esteem
2	The licit suicide The promise of death	Depressive feelings often unconscious	Depressive feelings, risk-taking behavior, suicidal behavior, loneliness, often victim of abuse
3	The Savior The promise to save his family from hell	Needs to save his family, search for a better world	Feelings of responsibility and guilt towards others and relatives, having relatives who have suffered, particularly because of health issues
4	Daeshland Promise of a fairer and fraternal world	Social Suffering, Social Despair	Expression of loneliness and guilt, feeling of injustice, resignation, loss of interest and loss of hope for the real world, poor insight (i.e. sudden discovery of the solution to a problem without going through a series of progressive trials and errors)



Part II

5	<p>Lancelot Promise to protect the weakest against the strongest</p>	<p>Expression of a need for justice and heroism</p>	<p>Violence, interest in adventure, weapons, fight, army, homosexual concerns, a peer group, uncertainty of identity, altruistic but difficulties in interacting with others</p>
6	<p>The Fortress The promise of purity and restraints</p>	<p>Fear of temptations and a control will</p>	<p>Fantasies and intense sexual activities, not assumed homosexual thoughts, drug addiction, feeling of guilt when happy, no search for protection or belonging to a group, often victim of abuse</p>
7	<p>Mother Teresa The promise to do humanitarian work</p>	<p>Need to save the world, to be useful and altruistic</p>	<p>Feelings of responsibility and guilt, expression of being bad, expression of sacrifice, fear of sexuality, interest in death</p>
8	<p>The Sleeping Beauty The promise of protection</p>	<p>Looking for a husband, ideal love</p>	<p>Expression of loneliness, feelings of male persecution, identification with an « oppressed » individual, victim of sexual abuse, interest in death</p>

This table has been developed thanks to statistics compiled by the team of Professor David Cohen, already mentioned, from the elements collected by the CPDSI before the radicalization of the young people in the sample. The details of the statistical method appear in the report RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS.

II.2 ADHERENCE TO VIOLENCE AND DOUBLE DEHUMANIZATION

We have seen how the anxiogenic emotional approach leads the individual to redefine himself and others (I.3 of the part I). We have also highlighted how feeling surrounded by a kind of consistency between his ideal and needs, and the “jihadist” project (II.2 of the part II) strengthens this double redefinition and introduces the trivialization of the use of violence. **The commitment motive doesn’t define the degree of dangerousness of the radicalized-one but allows the personal appropriation of the “jihadist” ideology, making the link between the ideal of the individual and the collective project. However, the level of accession to the “jihadist” project determines the level of dangerousness of the person.**

The testimonies of the radicalized-ones show that the “fear of Shirk” allows the “jihadist” discourse to drive away radicalized ones from everything making them human beings (their body, filiation, link with their former memorial environment, emotions, family, personal feelings, culture, etc.), but also confining "the Others" into the category of the "Enemies". Gradually, this conviction overwhelms the wholeness of their psyche and their affects to the extent they deny themselves as human beings for the benefit of the supremacy of their divine ideology. They identify themselves with the omnipotence of their belief and can decide to sacrifice themselves for this purpose. At this level of radicalization, they see human relationships as a cause of weakness and fragility. They are not anymore able to have a real relationship with a human being because they think that would make them too dependent and would divert them from God (from the cause). We speak about “one’s dehumanization” because the radicalized one rejects at this stage all the feelings that constitute a human being.

The denial of the human being of the “jihadist” ideology also allows to dehumanize future victims. It is a psychological process in which "an individual sees and treats his peers as extrinsic or inferior to the human race». It is the consequence of a "Manichean division between the community to which the individual adheres, to which he pledges unconditional allegiance, and another human group, disqualified and despised, seen as a real or symbolic threat». This dehumanization allows to no longer see "the Other" as his peer and makes easier the transgression of the murder’s prohibition. This explains why “jihadist” groups do not just kill those who do not want to make allegiance to them: they cut them into pieces in such a way that bodies have no longer any similarities with humans, according to the same process used by the Nazis against Jews in extermination camps.

The collective dimension of the group goes through the dehumanisation process. It is important to emphasize that the dehumanisation of victims is no more than a mean to identify the group categorized as “the Enemy”, in other words individuals who did not pledge allegiance to the “jihadist” group. For this reason, terrorist actions can happen everywhere to anyone: the target is the group to which the individual belongs and not the individual himself. “We attack the ‘collective part’ of the individual that links himself to a designated group by assimilating the articulation between the singular and the collective.” For this reason, terrorist attacks cause a national trauma: each citizen knows he can now be potentially killed not for what he does but for who he is: a French citizen, an English citizen, a Shia, a Jewish, etc.



THE DUAL SIDE OF THE INDOCTRINATION OR THE DUAL FACES OF THE INDOCTRINATION



Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Dounia Bouzar — 2017

If the radicalization process of young people is not stopped by an external intervention, all these individuals, whatever their commitment motive, dehumanize themselves and others.

The testimony of this young woman (atheistic family, middle clas) who seemed to be predestined to study medicine before her radicalization (a commitment motive such as ‘Mother Teresa’) shows how she analyses all the stages she passed through during her radicalization process. Those stages can be schematized through five levels:

- 1) She feels guilty for the “innocent people who are being massacred”;
- 2) She feels a relief after meeting a group denouncing the “innocent people who are being massacred”;
- 3) She hates even more those who are not members of her new group and do not care about the “innocent people being massacred”;
- 4) She agrees with the fact that her group attacks those who don’t care about the “innocent people being massacred”;
- 5) She goes from the desire to help the “innocent people being massacred” to the will to kill all those who do not commit by her side to help the “innocent people being massacred”.

The most interesting part in this testimony is the way this young woman fights the disgust and reluctance she feels after watching the videos sent by her group – those videos being chosen accordingly to her dehumanization's stages: first, pictures of the «innocent people being massacred» suffering, then pictures of the death of those responsible of this suffering. Her guilt, the lifeblood of her membership to the group and to the “jihadist” project, will be used throughout her radicalization process: bearing the unspeakable becomes her punishment, her penance.

“ After between 6 months to 1 year of being in touch with Daesh, I started to feel nothing. At first, I didn't realize it. It's rather strange because at first, I had many feelings: anger, sadness, revolt, etc. These feelings were valued within the group because they were the proof that I was interested and affected by injustice in the world. They used my sensitivity to justify the necessity of acting to fight against the disparities. On the other hand, they didn't speak to me about attacks right away; on the contrary, they told me that they didn't commit those attacks. It pissed me off that they were being portrayed as bad guys to keep people away from the truth. When they started to recommend me tough videos, I was feeling many things. They showed the massacre of innocent people in many countries. The worst thing was that nobody did a thing to defend them or speak about it. The media or television news preferred to talk about unimportant subjects. They were difficult to watch but it was necessary to do it to reach the truth. I couldn't hide myself any more behind my ignorance. I felt guilty, responsible of these massacres. In a way, I let them do it without reacting. I no longer felt innocent of a system overwhelming me. I felt like I deserved to be punished for my complicity. I had to face the horrors of these images because it was a kind of redemption towards God; as if it was the only way to be forgiven by Allah for my sins and my lack of investment. It was the only way to prove Him that I regretted what I had done or not done during those long years. I needed to be forgiven for being French, happy, alive... I blamed my parents who had always given me everything. I had never felt like missing out on anything. If I didn't know the lack of material, emotional or food, it was their fault. If I did not know that some massacred people were living just a few thousand or hundreds miles away from me, it was their fault. I needed to blame someone else but me; otherwise it became too hard to bear. I could not even look at myself in the mirror. I hated myself. I was disgusted by me. So by keeping looking at this kind of images as a punishment, I gradually stopped to feel anything. I felt like my mind and my heart were coming off my body. I was there without being really there. I don't know how to explain it, it was a strange feeling. My body was sitting on the chair in front of my computer, I was clicking link after link and watched videos more and more awful but my spirit was somewhere else. I don't know if it was a way to protect myself or on the contrary, if I was no longer able to feel emotions so it became commonplace for me. When you are a member of the group defending a cause superior to your personal interests, you don't have the right to show your weaknesses. I was convinced that I deserved the harm caused by watching these videos, just like the nightmares that woke me up in the middle of the night or images I had in my mind every day. To me, it was a sign of God. It was his way of sending me messages to encourage me to follow the right path. When Daesh started to change their discourse about the attacks to value them, to me, it was normal, even noble. At least they were not just talking but actually taking actions to fight injustice and massacres. They were not hypocrites like me, who always thought I was a



good person. I needed to expel all that anger and hatred I felt about myself. Being able to transfer it against other people gave me a lot of relief and reassurance. Today I think that allowed me to find some self-esteem. I was convinced to be less than a second class citizen, a bad person. I was grateful because they gave me solutions to become a good person. Any questioning was impossible for me because otherwise I was taking the risk of losing the little hope I had found. As I was sometimes overthinking and asking too many questions, I had to learn to stop. I had to concentrate to turn my brain off. I think it also contributed to the fact that I didn't have any more feelings. The necessity of turning my brain off in order not to think anymore also turned my feelings off. Finally I neither had to listen to my head, nor to my heart. Naturally, I no longer needed to concentrate to ignore them, it was like they had eventually understood and turned off by themselves without any additional effort. I really toggled at this time. I considered everybody as enemies; even ignorance could not forgive them. All the massacres, horrors, injustice in the world were their fault. I was overreacting. The population let it go for years, kept voting for monsters to whom they gave power to get rich and hurt even more. If they were ignorant, they were responsible. They preferred to drink, do drugs and fornicate rather than be interested in real subjects about this world. I was proud and I encouraged attacks on the French territory. I didn't care if they were children, women or people that I know who would be killed. I no longer saw them as friends but as hypocritical and perverted monsters. They deserved what was happening to them without any hesitation. After the attacks, I watched the videos online and I remember that I smiled. For example, watching people getting crushed by the truck the 14th of July didn't disgust me... Seeing strollers or veiled women didn't make me doubt the validity of this act. It was almost the best day of my life. I was really happy that we had killed so many miscreants. We were sending a strong message. We will be remembered. I was convinced that we were at war and attacks were battles that we were winning. Every dead people in the opposing camps represented a victory to celebrate. ”

Aline⁸⁹ summarizes in a more condensed way how she went from her first humanitarian ideal to her acceptance of cruelty, despite the inconsistency of her group's arguments.

“ Concerning the attacks, it was the same principle, I was sure they were committed by Zionists hired by the French government in order to cause harm to Muslims. Although... I understood the truth through my radicalization. However, I can't explain why that wasn't enough for me to untie myself from them. But no... I remained tied to them. I even ended up so dependent on the group that no matter what contradictions appeared... I could not go away any more, I have always found them excuses. I was saying to myself that errors could exist. Members of the group could have a bad behavior but it didn't question their project. I still believed in the emirs and their ideology of a utopian, egalitarian and brotherly world. At first, they focused on the diffusion of anachids clips showing happy families

⁸⁹See full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés

with their children. I was like hypnotized. It was very rare that I had access to videos of fighters or decapitations. When I found this kind of videos, I didn't watch them, they disgusted me, but I didn't show them. But one day, I got used to them. I no longer felt a thing. They justified their acts with the Talion's law: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. If, Barack Obama could send planes to bomb them and kill people of "our" kind, "we" had to fight back. It was normal. Finally, the group was more important than "the cause". They attracted me by talking to me about the humanitarian aspect of their project. But in fact, when I wanted to join them, I no longer wanted to become a nurse or help Syrian people.

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(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

Now we will analyse the testimony of Hamza who, once out of his ideology, tries to analyse his double dehumanization. His testimony is particularly interesting as he makes the connection between his own "symbolic death" and the disappearance of any feeling for others. Conversely, he starts to worry about his lack of empathy for the suffering of others when he finds his own body back. Hamza re-humanizes progressively those he didn't consider anymore as human beings, according to the degree of inferiority to which he reduced them previously. He first felt empathy for children, then for Muslims (non-"jihadists"), then for Shia people (he considers them as non-Muslims) etc. After several months only, he starts to feel compassion for the Magnanville police couple's child, only because he focuses on the "parent-child" relationship by putting aside the father's professional identity. When he talks about the Orlando night club attack, Hamza has difficulties distinguishing the group identity (the US government that he still criticizes now) from individuals (American citizens who don't all agree with their current government). Throughout this extract, we can discern the group dimension of the dehumanization process: Hamza dehumanized Americans to attack the symbolic entity of "America" that he has now difficulties distinguishing the political action of the government from American citizens' way of thinking and identity. Discerning individuals comprising in the category he generalised requires him some efforts.

Through this excerpt, we see how fundamental it will be to work with radicalized ones about what can be called their position of «perpetrator / victim». Helping them sort out their share of responsibility and "victimhood" in their radicalization process will be essential for them to position themselves as responsible, rectify the redefinition of themselves and others, and thus find another type of commitment:

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My goal was to do as the Prophet Mohammed. I wanted to be faithful to him. The Dawla explained me that during the war, the Prophet also killed miscreants, so I thought it was legitimate. They were right. It's necessary to kill the villains to save the good ones. But I kept wondering about the whole logic: why could we kill without any judgment? Why did we have to kill every miscreant without checking if they did something wrong? It meant that there was a direct parallel between the unbelief and the evil justified by an immediate killing without any judgment. A brother advised me some videos



on YouTube talking about Medias plots in order to tarnish Islam. It pissed me off. Medias were accomplices of the devil to divert us from Islam and destroy us. So, I decided to be part of the resistance. My brothers were right: journalists and Medias deserved to die. No need of judgment. I toughened. I was able to see dead people, getting beheaded... It didn't affect me. I didn't feel a thing anymore. I remember once, before I met the Dawla, I watched a report on LCP channel about tensions in Bahrain. I saw Shia people being massacred and it made me cry. At that time, I was feeling concerned by everyone. Then the Dawla talked to me about Shia people. They told me they have persecuted Sunni families.

They were no better than journalists or misbelievers. Everybody was against us... They talked to me about the Talion's law. If they massacred our children, we had to massacre theirs. I was not feeling anything for anybody (...) Dawla's brothers added religious notions that worried me a lot: they told me that it was possible to do Shirk without even knowing it, and so it was better to deprive yourself of everything to avoid it. I stayed focus on respecting prohibitions and finally, I completely withdrew myself. Day after day, I felt more and more hatred against the outside world. It was rising inside me. I changed. I was someone who wanted to help people and became someone who wanted to go into battle. Initially, I was not fascinated by weapons. I was attracted by geopolitics and the political project: God's law, the Sharia. If I had been able to choose between using arms or helping people by giving them some food, I would have chosen the humanitarian work right away. The problem was that I had no choice. It was women's duty to give food to Syrians or treat them; men had to use arms to protect them. It was the only way for men. I saw death differently. I was not afraid anymore. I drove my scooter fast without any helmet, and I didn't care about it. I thought that if I had an accident or if I was crushed by a car, it wouldn't be a big deal ... While before, even when I crossed the street, I was very careful. I was always afraid of dying. I was terrorized by death. Yet on the internet, my Dawla's brothers were the only ones who gave me answers to all my questions about death. In addition, they fascinated me because I saw they feared nothing when they went into battle. It really fascinated me ... I wondered: "Where do they get their courage from?" If they were not afraid it was the proof they really had faith. They became role models, examples to follow. I loved their philosophy of life which was: "life on earth is only a stage leading to the eternal life". They kept telling me: "In any case you're going to die one day, young or old ... So what do you have to lose?" I was thinking that dying among them was a good idea, because that will send me certainly to heaven. They took away from me not only the fear of death but also the fear of pain by promising me that a bullet in the heart did not hurt, hardly the sensation of a mosquito bite. Finally, you think that there are only positive things in death; it doesn't hurt, you will be a martyr and you will be able to intercede for your family...

Furthermore, you are convinced that you are doing something good because you are going to save women and children. They will be grateful to you. If they had offered me to be a human bomb in a plane or a bus, honestly I would not have done it. I wanted to attack Bachar El Assad's army or those of the coalition that I considered responsible and accomplices of the military strikes in Syria. I wanted to avenge the people who died there and forget my fear. Finally, I was completely paranoid, everyone wanted to hurt me. I had to defend myself. I worked hard to recover my sensitivity that I had before. I had the feeling I left my heart to Dawla. When you get out of it, it's tough to get back your sensitivity. You have the feeling to have lost it forever... It was a big step for



me when I managed to be sad for some dead people... I started to feel emotions when I identified the dead as “Muslims”. It did something to me, I wasn’t feeling well, but when I knew it was a Shia or French person, I didn’t feel a thing... I continued to evolve gradually. A bit later, I could feel things even for non- Muslims. For example, when the police couple was killed, I was sad; even more for their child who became an orphan and who witnessed this atrocious scene. I can imagine myself in his shoes, despite the fact that he’s not a Muslim. I can feel compassion for the parents too because I identify them as parents and not as policemen. But, still, I was not the one I was before meeting the Dawla... I was not upset as I would have been before... I don’t know how to explain my lack of empathy. On the other hand, concerning the attacks in Orlando, I was less touched, maybe because it happened in the US. For a long time, when it concerned American citizens, my hatred towards the US was still stronger than everything else. I could not make the difference between the American government and American citizens who have done nothing wrong. Today, I accidentally killed a chicken crossing the road with my scooter, and I didn’t sleep at night because I was feeling bad for having taken a life! So it’s better now... I had reached, I think, my dehumanization limit, when I watched a video showing an execution. That really chocked me. At that moment something happened inside me. It showed a four-year-old little boy in a fairground abandoned because of bombardments. Then a pick-up arrived with an attached man on board. A guy from Daesh gave a gun to the little boy and asked him to shoot. The little boy put two bullets in the “prisoner’s” head. I had to throw the phone. I wanted to throw up. It wasn’t really the same when I saw adults doing the same thing. He was just a child. He was innocent. He didn’t know what bad or good is. He was used for that, he did not ask to be there. I don’t even think he understands what he did. He doesn’t even know what death is. In another video, I saw a six year-old boy easily beheading a “prisoner”. That really shocked me. I still have nightmares about it. I can’t talk about it because I am ashamed to have been so inhuman sometimes. I don’t understand how I could watch videos of people being beheaded. The victim has a family. He was someone’s son, brother, uncle... I should have felt something when I watched them. It wasn’t anymore the beautiful videos of the beginning where they showed me the Emir Khalif Abou Bakr giving toys to children... Videos where everybody was smiling and happy...

(Hamza, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

Through his relation with death, a transformation of Hamaz’s psychic state occurs. This young individual goes through a huge fear of death to a will of death: **“With the videos and hadiths on the notion of martyr, I no longer saw death the same way I used to... I had a completely different point of view. I was not afraid anymore”**. Hamza watched many videos of martyrs, identifying himself to members of the "jihadist" group in an attempt to rationalize his anguish. As Benslama writes, "when they are enlisted in a group, the trap of the grip is closing in around them, it is not only a process of submission, but of dilating the individual’s boundaries. A collective body is created fostering the megalomania of each individual, and allowing the

suicidal ones to sacrifice themselves”.⁹⁰ In the end, Hamza finds a new way to achieve his dreams through death, offering him a form of eternal continuity as sacrificing for eternity is to never undergo again the test of loss. It leads to immortality, leaving a mark on Earth and depicting death as the only way to live forever. Therefore, "the preachers' discourse penetrates the unconscious fantasies of adolescents as they experience a reworking of infantile theories on the limits of life and death. Imaginary death is so pervasive that real death becomes insignificant, which explains why some young men who have been enrolled declare: "Death is nothing, it's like a pinch".⁹¹

This is a clear example that “even though representation contents tend to confound themselves with the ideological (and theological) narrative at the beginning of the process, they often refer to individual considerations, such as emotional attachment to a relative, a group of peers, a need to be recognized, a need of excitation and adventures... depending on the individual's psychic state and expectations”.⁹²

In her turn, this young girl describes the inversion of the position “perpetrator / victim” that happened in her change of worldview, showing the link between the anxiogenic emotional approach of the “jihadist” discourse, the categorization of the "Enemy" figure, and the dehumanization of this "Enemy" figure under the pretext of "self-defence". We will analyse her comparison with the “Jews joining the Israeli army” in part III regarding the radicalization exit.

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I had a new passion for weapons, murders and war. I loved “terrorists” and I had no mercy for the non- Muslims. The fact that France was preventing me from going to Syria to reach my goal revolted me. The hatred for my country was rising every day. In fact, its behaviour validated the discourse I heard from Daesh: “French” didn’t want us to go protect people being massacred by France and other countries. They let Jews join the Israeli army easily, but we were seen as terrorists when we wanted to help our brothers. They pretended they wanted to save us by preventing us from going there, when the truth was they wanted to continue to torture Muslim populations without any witness. I was sure they wanted no one to protect the thousands of civilians being killed by their drones. Why were they attacking so many civilians? This was the evidence that there weren’t any terrorists there. Moreover, I watched videos and news reports on Netflix showing White Helmets working alongside with jihadist groups... After the International Coalition bombing raids, they saved the wounded and picked up dead bodies. So, who were the good guys in this story? I was thinking that in France, they put Muslims in jail and made them look like terrorists, while they (French government’s members) were the real terrorists, the white-collar murderers... At that time, the group started to talk to me about conducting attacks in France. I wanted so much to avenge that I really considered it if I could not leave. At the centre, educators said they could see my determination. Finally, it motivated me even more. I wanted to show them they were right. I was more than determined. Even if they try to interfere, I will go forward. My head was full of very violent images. I could

⁹⁰Interview of Fethi BENSLAMA. Inrocks, 15 May 2016. le 15/05/16. See online: www.lesinrocks.com/2016/05/15/actualite/fethi-benslama-11827292/.

⁹¹BENSLAMA F. *Un furieux désir de sacrifice*. Le surMusulman. Paris: Ed Seuil ; 2016.

⁹²GARCET S., *Ibid*.

see myself killing someone. I always pictured myself with a knife in my right hand and a kofar head held like a trophy in my left hand. I even imagined taking my sister as a hostage so my mother would let me pass the boarder without denouncing me...

(Morgane, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

We have also selected the testimony of Faïza because it demonstrates the intermingling of the emotional and ideological dimension. After being convinced that France “betrayed Muslims” and so Muslims can (should) betray “their pact with France” (theological moral commitment of Muslims, as well as Jews, to respect the law of the host country), she is in a phase of radicalization where she tries not to put her parents immediately in the “Enemy” category - which would at least lead her to get rid of her feelings for them. She considers trying to make them adhere to her worldview. She hesitates between the logic of her ideology (making anyone paying taxes in a democratic country guilty because it represents a betrayal to God’s uniqueness by validating the existence of human laws) and her belonging to her family which is curiously still preserved:

After the Charlie-Hebdo attacks, I was surprised to see that Saudi Arabia condemning the jihadist group because they killed people insulting the Prophet. The Imam brought by my parents explained me that I had a pact with France. If France was not attacking me, I could not attack it. As soon as you attack a target in France, you are breaking the pact. At that time, it seemed logical. Then (Jihadist) brothers told me that France has defended Charlie-Hebdo when they had been sued. Mr. Hollande even took civil action for them. France was accomplice and supported the caricatures and this hatred against Islam as it did everything to save them from bankruptcy. They have been supporting the newspaper by using the law on freedom of expression. This is the way they convinced me we did not break the pact but France did. I ended up considering civils at the same level as soldiers. There was no degree of responsibility. I did not dissociate the two of them. Civils pay taxes and voted. They finance the government. Even paying the TVA (taxes) made me feel very guilty. Each time I paid a baguette or even my hijab, I knew that 20% of the money I spent directly went to the government. I was myself, by obligation, financing it. I ended up thinking that if I happen to be an attack’s victim, it would be completely my fault because I had nothing to do here. It was not my country anymore. I had the same reasoning about the rest of my family and my little brothers. If something happened to them, it would be their fault. Initially, I wanted to wait until I was in Syria to convince them to join me. Once there, I would be safe, France would not be able to send me to jail. I thought if my parents saw me under bomb raids, they would be touched. They didn’t understand that by paying taxes, they were making me responsible of it. I was a misbeliever because of their actions. I wanted to show them concretely where their taxes went. By going there, they might have understood they were accomplices of the killings and were helping France launching bombs over Syrian.

(Faïza, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)



Once at this level of radicalization (the double dehumanization), the young individual has usually already put his/her family in the “Enemy” category. Faïza preserved her family by putting it in what may be called the «Brainwashed» category, which leaves her some leeway to bring them back to the “right path”. Najet’s testimony shows a superior level of dehumanization:

“ *What they didn’t understand was that I wasn’t seeing them as Muslims. The religion got lost nowadays, people call themselves Muslims but they don’t practice, smoke, drink, don’t pray, don’t learn the religion and they call themselves Muslims. They are just hypocrites. They are lost. There are no more Muslim in this depraved world and that’s exactly why we need to restore Islam. We have been massacred and persecuted for so many years... It is the proof that it’s a God’s punishment. We are so weak today because we moved away from Him, and we got closer to the devil. We must show loyalty to our Creator. Allah will always be first. I thought I could even be able to kill my own mother and my own father if they didn’t accept to convert back. I was not trying to protect them, or to bring them with me to heaven. I was only thinking about myself, my own place in heaven and if for that I had to kill my parents, my family, I would have done it. Part of me was hoping not to have to go that far and that they would join me in the holy land. I pictured myself fighting with my “brothers”, marrying my mother to a jihadist. Deep down, it was my dream to convince and bring my family with me (...) My “brothers” started to encourage me to act here but I wanted to go to the Land of Shâm. I didn’t want to die as a martyr in France. For every attack, I was proud of my “brothers” dead as martyrs. I congratulated them and envied them in a certain way. They had reached heaven... But that scared me. I didn’t want to leave now. I was proud of the Orlando’s attack. I thought those homosexual dogs deserved to die that way. The fact that the “brother” frequented that night club, that he was homosexual, didn’t make me question anything. He found the right path and his faith was so big that he managed to fight against the Sheitan and be forgiven by doing this courageous act. When attacks were against civilians, like the Paris Bataclan attack the 14th of July, I was also happy. They all deserved to die, because those misbelievers stayed here... Some relatives showed me pictures of the Bataclan victims in order to make me think about it, facing those filthy images. But I was laughing out loud in my head. I looked at them without flinching, on the contrary I enjoyed it. I saw in their eyes shock and fear because of my lack of reaction and it made me even happier. I felt strong, powerful, and superior to them. Seeing fear in the eyes of others pleased me and brought me great satisfaction.* ”

(Najet, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

This testimony of a twenty-year-old man, recorded at the time when he just started to verbalize his commitment, reflects the feeling of many “jihadists” followed-up by our team who are looking for a restraint, a utility and power by joining Daesh (a mix of ‘Zeus’ and ‘Fortress’). He comes from a Catholic Portuguese family (lower class). The rhetoric is not the same as the one used by those who have committed for humanitarian reasons. Yet, he expresses the same double dehumanization, integrating his parents in his narrative:

“ I have never been very sensitive. I have always liked for example to watch horror movies. It made me laugh. I liked being able to watch gloomy scenes when others were hiding their eyes. The first videos didn't impress me that much. There was still a difference with movies because it was no longer comedy, special effects or actors but real life. In a way, I liked watching these videos because I used it as a challenge to test my own courage. Was I strong or not? Being able to watch these videos without flinching allowed me to feel more like a man, a fighter. Before, I used to feel a lot of anger and frustration. I could change my mood from minute to minute. It was so impressive that my family kept saying that I was moody or bipolar. Happy for a minute, on the edge of a tantrum the next one. My girlfriend often pointed out that she had to walk on eggshells to avoid hurting me. She also left me because of that: I was too complicated according to her. I always had tantrums that I could not control. I used to break everything, and hit the walls until I'm exhausted. The Dawla calmed me down. I finally understood, thanks to them, that Sheitan was influencing me to the point of driving me crazy. I had to be stronger than him. I learned to fight and the importance of body control. Practicing boxing and following training courses in the forest helped me a lot. I don't know if it was because I owed them something or the fear of being abandoned by my brothers, but I belonged to them entirely. I was able to sacrifice and give everything for the cause. My parents started to worry about me, because according to them, I became cold. I didn't get angry anymore, I was no longer moody. They told me that I was different, that I had changed my personality. I just felt like I was taking a step back. I had to separate myself from this world to be stronger. I had to move away from misbelievers. It was either them or us. I couldn't stay in these two completely opposite worlds. Those misbelievers didn't understand anything and despite of my will to save them, they were too weak to see the truth. They even didn't see that my faith changed me into a better person. Thanks to the religion, I found the strength to control myself. I found them ridiculous, petty, weak, ignorant, liars, manipulators, fools and even more. I was seeing myself ten times, even a hundred times, better than them. I despised them. I had no respect for those people who were my family. I needed to prove myself that I was up to the mission entrusted to me. Sometimes, I enjoyed watching videos of decapitations. I was proud of my power, proud of me. Only weak people look away. I identified myself to the brother killing traitors because I wanted to be him someday. What's more virile and more effective than to make a pig bleed? I used to rush to watch each notification of videos. I was addicted. I still miss them today. I watch them sometimes. I needed to see them every day. I knew them by heart. I loved how they were made. I sang the anashids. I only had to hear a melody to recognize the video right away. When they put the hostage heartbeat in background, I loved it. I found it mesmerizing. I dreamed of being able someday to kill a misbeliever, to prove my value to the group, to the whole world. I really think today that I would have been able to kill a member of my family. I have already been asked the question: if we were at war, if you were in front of your parents who were

in the opposite camp, would you fight against them? Clearly, yes, I would have done it. At least, I would have tried to let one of my brothers kill them so it won't be directly me who would have done it, but if I was in a situation where I didn't have the choice, I would have done it without any hesitation. My loyalty to Allah was more important than my feelings for my parents. They are nothing compared to God. God chose them to give birth to me and raise me, and instead of being grateful, they turned away from Him. At that time, I was sure that if I had to kill them someday or a brother, it would be their fault. I thought I would have felt a little sadness perhaps but no regret. They should have been in the camp of the righteous and not in the enemies' side. ”

The level of dehumanization of this twenty-four-year-old man (North African family, lower class) is high, even though he has only been convicted for proselytism. During his follow-up, his first doubts were only about the attacks in France. The reason is not about his feelings for victims but his questions regarding the access to heaven for those who committed the terrorist attacks. Professionals must propose spaces where radicalized-ones can express this type of words even though hard to hear, because the first doubt always leads to a beginning of cognitive remobilization. Here is the excerpt from one of his sessions where he demonstrated his first reflection:

“ Today, I start to question myself about what is right. Some situations make me doubt. For example, the use of children in fights. First I thought that our baby lions should be protected, they were our future, they would fight after us. However, during their childhood, they had to enjoy life, go to school, have fun with toys, eat sweets, watch cartoons, play hopscotch, etc. The role of mothers was to give them birth and raise them until they are old enough to train for the fight (around 15-16 years of age). We had to wait them to be adults to bring them on the field so they could fight alongside their father if he was still alive or to take over. By the way, normally, in Islam, you cannot fight if you are not an adult. Gradually, this vision changed and I was convinced that the younger they would be trained, the better soldiers they would be. It was necessary to reach their mind before they are polluted with other bad ideas. Allah's message had to be transmitted to them at an early age. I realize that I ended up having the same expectations from children than adults. The childhood innocence didn't exist anymore; the world was too much polluted with sins. We had to protect them by teaching them religion from their birth day. That's why the videos showing children around 5-7 years old being trained to use weapons and fight didn't shock me anymore. I was proud of those baby lions using weapons with so much ease who were able to take hits and were developing impressive combat techniques. I felt guilty for staying in France and not being able to join them to fight on their side. I tried to comfort myself by thinking that it was not my fault, that Allah knew my intention in my heart and knew that misbelievers were blocking me in this land of Koffars. I was ashamed that some children were doing more than I could. I started to watch many videos of children killing prisoners, and traitors; others were dying as martyrs wearing explosive belts in the villages or relying on detonators. At that time, that made me smile, I had no problem watching these videos. They would become great men. They had faith and strength of character that would allow them to honour Allah's cause without



cowardice. God guided them to the right path and the group was going to honour them. I thought they were happy and proud to have served Allah's cause, because in the videos, they had big smiles when their act was celebrated by brothers. I have never thought about the negative impact it could have over a 7 year-old child to put a bullet in a man's head. They were only guarantying their place in heaven, as well as for their relatives, so I saw only positive points even though they had to die wearing an explosive belt. Today I no longer think like that. Children don't deserve that kind of life. I can't watch this kind of videos anymore in which we can see children killing. It's the role of adults, men. Seeing a little boy wearing his Spiderman pyjamas holding a weapon bigger than him doesn't make me proud anymore. Seeing a boy trained to fight, being kicked, and punched by an adult trainer revolts me. Neither seeing a child pushing a red button that makes a car explode... Especially when I see the child covered by blood, crying because he doesn't understand what is happening. We are traumatizing our lion cubs. They are members of our group and not enemies. They don't deserve to get their childhood spoiled. However, I still don't feel anything for the prisoners being killed. Only the Dawla's children are innocent and must be spared as much as possible. I also start to doubt about the place of women and children in war zone. They should not be there with fighters. Women's role is to have babies and take care of children. Men's role is to fight and protect their family. I think it's a mistake to have brought women. They should have stayed near the borders. We should have waited until the Sham was a peace zone to gather there. It was up to men to go back and forth. Today, I still like to watch war videos, but I choose to watch only those showing adults fighting. I admire the brother who he is not afraid of anything and runs despite bullets. I like to receive photos of my brothers dead as martyrs with the smile on their face. They have reached their ultimate goal and I envy them. I know that these photos can hurt their families in France but that's only because they don't understand, otherwise they would be proud of their sacrifice. Videos of torture and decapitation don't bother me either. We are obliged to defend ourselves the same way as our attackers. People pretend to be shocked but their governments are the ones who created all the tortures! We did not invent anything. We only reproduce the tools they use to make us suffer. Actually, they often made us go through much worse things than we did. They should thank us for our mercy. In times of war, we cannot hesitate: we kill or we are killed. Doubting only one second can cause our death because they (enemies) won't hesitate. We should put ourselves at the same cruelty level because we don't want to be victims anymore. Muslim people are massacred and humiliated everywhere. It proves that that we need to change the way we are doing things. We need to attack! It's the best way to defend ourselves. The day we will gain our freedom, we will stop fighting. I only question myself about the attacks in France. Are they legal? Is it justified to kill people living on the French territory while France has allowed us to immigrate here in the past. And if Allah does not validate these operations...? What if we went astray by attacking civilians and not military? Is heaven still guaranteed in these conditions? Let's imagine that martyr operations killing French civilians are not legitimate, but the brother's intention was good, will he still be rewarded? Will God see that this man committed this attack in order to honour Him and serve the cause? So, in case he made a mistake, if God didn't want that, will He reward him and still send him to heaven?

””



The testimony of Hamza shows a certain level of maturity regarding his dehumanization. He switches into an armed commitment: ***"I went from someone who wanted to help people to someone who wanted to take up arms."*** At this stage, it is no longer a question for Hamza to simply help the populations bombarded by the dictator but to take up arms to directly fight against Bashar Al Assad's army. His definition of the enemy is no longer limited to the dictator's army but to the coalition armies: ***"I wanted to attack Bashar al-Assad's soldiers or those of the coalition because I considered them responsible and complicit of strikes in Syria"***. Then, Hamza quickly changed his commitment motive (taking up arms) for the will to die as a martyr: ***"When I agreed to prepare for a martyr operation, it was neither for the pleasure of killing nor for the pleasure of dying. I wanted to avenge the civilians they killed."*** This acceleration in his level of violence can be explained by the reversal of a position perceived as passive towards an active position where taking up arms appears as a mean to be a full-fledged actor in the cause he defends within his "jihadist" group. To really feel useful, Hamza no longer has to help the widow and the orphan but to kill all those who do not save them on his side.

We also perceive the effect of the binary worldview in the study of the videos he watches. From the beginning, Hamza has seen images of fighters allowing him to appease his anxiety of death. It seems like he was trying to immunize himself against his anxiety. Then, the group sent him videos of the Syrians' massacre leading him to feel injustice and revolt that convinced him of the reliability of his interlocutors and the necessity to leave for the field. Later, the videos content was about the coalition's soldiers and Bashar Al Assad's army. Gradually, videos of decapitation were proposed by the group and the scrolling YouTube links: ***"I was able to watch dead and beheaded people without feeling affected. I didn't feel anything anymore"***. The intensive viewing of these videos, coupled with the violent radical discourse of the group members, deprive Hamza from all emotion. The "jihadist" discourse operated in such a way that it gradually broke his social prohibitions and moral brakes: ***"Everyone was against us ... If they massacred our children, we had to massacre theirs. I didn't feel a thing for most people. I ended up at a stage where even attacks in France, at home, in my own country, didn't affect me anymore. I perceived the French as enemies, persecutors, Islamophobic, responsible for massacres and tortures on Syrian children ... Moreover, the French government's engagement in the international coalition confirmed that my brothers of the Dawla were right: the koffars wanted to break us because they knew we were superior and could impose justice. I considered French people as a subcategory of human beings"***. At this point, Hamza is totally deprived from all feelings and emotions. His capacity for empathy is hampered and he is no longer able to feel anything for the victims executed by his violent group: ***"I kept thinking: 'you are safe, you are hypocritical! We are here despite our brothers are being bombed!' To show that the Dunya (life on Earth) was not important to me, I broke my iPhone, my television... Everything that was of value ... I went in the street shouting and insulting everyone. One day, I even got on a car wearing flip-flops, screaming like a mad person. All the neighbours saw me and may have thought: he should be in the psychiatric hospital!"***

The exploitation of decontextualized Koranic verses reinforces the legitimation of the use of violence: ***"The brothers of the Dawla added religious notions that worried me a lot: they said that one could do Shirk without knowing it, and that it was better to deprive oneself of everything in order to avoid that. I focused to respect all prohibitions and I ended up completely withdrawing myself. From day to day, I felt more and more hatred against the outside world."*** At that time, Hamza obviously didn't express it this way but adhered completely to the religious discourse which considered that all the Muslims remaining in a country applying the human



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laws are necessarily apostates or hypocrites. Therefore, he considered the members of the Salafist movement as "hypocrites" and called them "Talafis" as, according to him, *"they didn't apply their principles..."*. Indeed, for Hamza: *"They forbid certain things in their speech but found justifications for not applying them. I thought they aimed at an impossible goal because they were not struggling to reach it! In all their speeches, they only spoke about patience or the current context, as if things would change without any intervention! Contrary to the brothers of the Dawla, they didn't apply their principles. Brothers of the Dawla executed what they said to achieve their goal. They fought, rose, and did not wait like cowards."* Until then, Hamza used to listen indistinctly to the radical pietist Salafist and "jihadist" discourses. From that moment, he strictly adhered to the use of violence pronated by the "jihadist" discourse. In this case, the perpetrator / victim status is reversed: the members of the "jihadist" group are considered by Hamza as the victims of the global conspiracy against Islam and the persecution against Muslims. Conversely, he considers the victims of Daesh abuses responsible for the persecutions against his group. The fact that Hamza is no longer able to be moved by the violent videos he is viewing or to feel empathy for the victims of the attacks shows that this young man is doubly dehumanized. The dual process of dehumanization aims at first at dehumanizing the subject himself in order to normalize cruelty so that gradually the field of the conviction includes the psyche and the affects. In a second time, it aims at dehumanizing the 'others' to perceive them as objects so that, once it has been objectified, the 'others' can no longer be represented as a human beings. Hamza explains that his "fascination" for the attacks came last in his engagement. He saw death as a "reward" and thought that dying as a martyr would take him "automatically to heaven." As our group sessions progress, he says: *"I have worked hard to regain the sensitivity I used to have. I felt like I left my heart at the Dawla. When you leave, in the end, it's hard to regain your sensitivity. You feel like you lost it forever ... It was actually a big step for me when I finally could feel sadness for some dead people..."*

Hamza's vision of death has changed through his evolution to a violent radicalism. First experienced as an overwhelming anxiety, death becomes the only goal to achieve: *"In the end, you tell yourself that death is only positive: you won't be hurt, you will be a martyr and you will be able to intercede for your family ... Moreover, you convince yourself that you do something good as it will save women and children. They will be grateful to you. To be honest, if they had offered to blow me up on a plane or a bus, I wouldn't have done it."* Hamza expresses that only death as a martyr for a noble cause will grant him access to heaven. Olivier Roy believes that "suicide attacks are also perceived by jihadists as the ultimate goal of their commitment". Yet again, we distinguish the explicit level in which the appropriation of the "jihadist" discourse by Hamza is represented as the only way to regenerate the corrupt world, and the implicit level where Hamza seeks a justification for his malaise and his desire to take actions to regenerate himself. Dying as a martyr is also a way for Hamza to save his family members: *"In addition, I could intercede for my family. I thought about my dad, my mom, my grandparents who could have a place in heaven thanks to me. I told myself: 'I have nothing to lose. I have everything to offer if I go there and die, I will go to heaven and intercede for my family'"*. From a self-sacrificed martyr to a martyr for others, Hamza dialectically responds to his unconscious problematic since sacrificing himself for the cause allows him to bring his loved ones to heaven and becoming a martyr for his family allows him to die. By this mean, Hamza achieves his goal and transcends his ideal of the self into an altruistic ideal. The egoic and superegoic expressions reach their paroxysm in a form of self-generation consecrated by the figure of martyr. As Serge Garcet sais, it clearly shows how "the



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questioning of a set of cognitions developed during the radicalization process would generate an unbearable cognitive dissonance and an extreme existential crisis as we observe at this stage a lack of differentiation between personal and collective goals”.

Therefore, it is not a primary commitment to die as a martyr by killing as many people as possible, but to have the feeling of being understood and supported by people perceived as resources. This commitment is linked to the feeling of incomprehension and isolation previously experienced. When Hamza was in a situation of extreme vulnerability, the "jihadist" discourse offered him arguments in line with his questioning. By placing their speech in an emotional register, the "jihadist" group convinced Hamza that the solution to his anguish lies in the refuge of the radical group. It is only once established in his "jihadist" group that he plans to take violent action to protect those who protect him. The radical discourse will then persuade him that the protection of his group includes the protection of the Syrians, requiring the murder of those who do not protect them. This transition from the protection of the group to the stage of violence is done through the "jihadist" ideology that promotes the divine law as the only system of regulation and justice (Gilles Kepel's thesis).

If one only focus on Hamza's explicit discourse at this key moment in his life, one could deduce that religion legitimized his will to take violent action. If one interview the young person at another time of his engagement, for example when death appears as the only aim, summarizing it as a pure and simple desire to kill himself, one could deduce that he found a justification for his action or adhered to a nihilist approach due to his will to commit suicide (Olivier Roy's thesis). But in a related way, violent radical discourse also offered Hamza a politico-religious response, making him glimpse the fact of finding "real" values that he could apply and put into action in the service of a new world order (François Burgat's thesis), thus becoming a kind of hero, thus closing his relationship to death (Fethi Benslama's thesis).

In reality, the deconstruction of Hamza's path shows that a trajectory composed of relational, emotional and ideological dimensions transformed his world view and behavior.

The vision of the binary world induced by the "jihadist" group reassures Hamza because it allows him to categorize his environment in two simplified categories: the "good" and "bad" guys, or in other words, those who pledged allegiance to the "jihadist" group and the "others". Indeed, the duality makes it possible to hierarchize one's relationship to the other by attributing oneself and attributing to the other a place without compromise or ambiguity. Violent radical ideology therefore needs to stagger its values in order to construct a human hierarchy, which will then allow a passage towards violence experienced as the only way out. His relation with the divided world reassures him because it identifies his source of anxiety (the "others") and those who can protect him (his "jihadist" group). He can finally overcome his anxiety of the outside world, in fact exacerbated by the "jihadist" discourse.

There is the common idea for radical ones that a fear having a source can be controlled while a diffuse fear leaves the person insecure. The cleavage of Hamza between "we" and "them", coupled with the use of notions from Muslim history by the group, legitimizes the use of



violence: "I needed proof, so I looked for religious texts. My goal was to do as Prophet Muhammad. I wanted to be faithful to him. The Dawla told me that during the war, the Prophet also killed unbelievers, so I thought it was legitimate. They were right. It was necessary to kill the villains to save the good guys." At this point, Hamza withdrew from his environment and only the defence of his group by joining the cause becomes paramount.

This step allows us to have a better understanding of the difference between the implicit (search for compensatory solutions to calm his anxiety) and the explicit (binary speech related to the ideology of Daesh). We are witnessing "the articulation between the radical imaginary and the theological rationalization offered by Daesh". It is not based "on real knowledge but on an argument of authority". As Olivier Roy explains in "Le djihad et la mort" (Jihad and death), "when young jihadists speak about 'truth', they never refer to a discursive knowledge, but to their own certainty, sometimes based on an incantatory reference to scholar's notions they have never read. They find in those notions what they want to see."

In Hamza's commitment to "jihad", social, psychological, psychoanalytic, geopolitical and religious elements are intertwined in such a way they correspond to the features of his life at that precise moment, just like the other young individuals we have monitored. This detailed analysis allows us to assert the existence of three dimensions in his radicalization process: emotional, relational, and ideological. The radical commitment and its acting out arise for Hamza at the intersection of a dimensional triptych whose comprehension can't be limited to the unilateral cause-effect analysis which would be located only in one of the dimensions (psychological, social, political or religious). The "jihadist" engagement is not just a result of emotional, relational or ideological resultant. By considering these three dimensions as entangled, we could optimize our thoughts and more particularly our multi-disciplinary care.

II.3 YOUNG PEOPLE WHO CHOOSE PACIFIST DYSFUNCTIONAL COMPENSATORY SOLUTIONS OR THE QUESTION OF THE “LOW-COST PIETIST SALAFISM”⁹³

Despite facing the anxiogenic emotional approach convincing young people that the world managed by human laws is corrupt, some individuals have never adhered to the engagement motives specific to the “jihadist” discourse. Pacifist compensatory solutions were satisfactory enough. We refer to the reading grid of pietist Salafists as “low-cost” Salafists to define those who unlike the erudition required by the traditional religious movement called the Salafya, know nothing about Islam.⁹⁴ The following analyses do not concern what could be called the pietist Salafists but the low cost Salafists. It is a movement using mostly the internet as a source of information without much Muslim knowledge. Despite that, this movement uses the name Salafism. This movement’s members share the same belief than “jihadists” (only God’s law can regenerate this corrupt world) but refuse to use violence to make it happen. It should be noted that the term “Salafist” became a portmanteau word including a lot of groups. The purpose of this study is not to analyse these groups, we resume here the interviewees’ way of naming things, distinguishing “Salafists” and “jihadists”.

Our feedback shows that it is easier to get a young person out of the “jihadist” movement than of the low-cost “Salafism”. Indeed, among the young individuals of our sample who have been stabilized through “the exit process of radicalization”, we have only 38% of “pietist Salafists” (low-cost), but 62% of “jihadists”.⁹⁵ If it is conceivable to show to a «pro- jihadist» individual the gap between the promises and reality of “jihadist” actions, this exercise is much more difficult with a low-cost Salafist whose group did not promise anything (because they do not aim at taking action). In other words, it is difficult to lead individuals to mourn the vision of the «Salafist» world because they are not victims of a false propaganda that we can denounce with repentance (as we can do with “jihadists”)⁹⁶.

Yet social workers are interested in the prevention of what may be called the “low-cost pietist radicalism” as this ideology obstructs the socialization of young people and their access to fundamental rights (access to culture, hobbies, education, citizenship, etc.), rights of the child when there is a child involved, and rights of gender equality. From this point of view, it is possible to compare this group to Christian Mormons or Jewish Lubavitches. However, there is a difference between the low-cost Salafists and these other fundamentalist pacifist movements:

⁹³The traditional religious movement called the Salafya requires a great knowledge of Islam texts, established by Ibn Taymiyya (13th century), Abdelwahhab (18th century) and then by their contemporary students (Ibn Baz, Nasr Ed Din Al Albany, Cheikh Al Outheymine or more recently Cheikh Fawzan). It is on the exclusive basis of their interpretations, their choices of hadiths, that the Salafya leans and asks a certain rigor in their learning. Thus, the evidences (“dalils” in Arabic) of a religious discourse must lean on one of those specific figures to be assured of the truthfulness of the claims. Salafists thus have a form of erudition towards the learnings of their precursors by presenting them as more faithful to the first companions of the Prophet. This movement is fundamentalist because it wants to respect the Islam’s foundations, but it does not preach the same anxiogenic beliefs as the “youtube imams”, we named low-cost Salafists. Their interpretations do not also necessarily lead to the extermination of Muslims, even if they feel superiors in the comprehension of the sacred text. Thus, Shiites or Sufis still can – but are restrained and controlled- practice their Islam in Saudi Arabia, as long as it is not proselyte. Sometimes it is called neo-hanbalism for this absolute rigorism, in order to only validate the fourth school of sunnism, Hanbalism professed what Ibn Taymiyya and Abdelwahhab will introduce. The latter introduced a new notion, absolute fidelity to the king of Saudi Arabia, descendant of Saoud’s family, for every Salafist. The traditional Salafya will then never question it and it is about respecting it to the letter. What is called “low-cost Salafism” uses the same doctrinal basis that this movement to deploy on the internet (but also on physical networks). Their doctrine is extremely summary, and their legal corpus is far from steady, referring systematically to videos and not books. This interpretation of Islam becomes the most widespread and the easiest to use (the text is be understood on a literal way) but can lead to violence, unlike traditional Salafya, for two main reasons: the principles are less mastered and the submission to the Saudi Arabia king is softened. The professionals and the elected representatives do not distinguish easily the wise traditional Salafists from the low-cost Salafists because they have similar appearances (the same beard and clothes). The only way to distinguish them is by talking with them or by observing how they educate their children, their vision of work and their relationship with the non-Muslims and non-Salafists.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵See COMPARISON OF “JIHADISTS” AND LOW-COST SALAFIST VARIABLES in the report RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS.

⁹⁶See next chapter



the relation to the law. Low-cost Salafists are the only ones to consider in the 21st century that they cannot participate in elections of officials governing with human laws. Their ideology places young people out of the social contract. Although freedom of belief is a fundamental right in France, the rights that low-cost pietist radicalism hinders are also fundamental. Moreover, this prevention is necessary because there is a certain porosity between each ideology (Low-cost pietist Salafist and "jihadist"), separated only by the question of the legitimacy of the use of violence.

Police authorities are also interested in another side of this debate: at what point in time can an individual who believes that the regeneration of the world depends on divine law, be dangerous? Currently, the debate focus on low-cost Salafists are "registered S".⁹⁷ In one hand, won't the repression help to stiffen them even more and lead them to join the "jihadist" project? On the other hand, does the question of low-cost Salafism really concern police forces, knowing that this group does not use violence against public order? Currently, police authorities do not have clear guides to distinguish low-cost Salafists from jihadists, which may explain this generalised surveillance. But not thinking about preventing the expansion and trivialization of this ideology raises questions, since the Republic must guarantee to everyone the same access to their rights and duties, and the possibility of becoming a citizen. There is a basic incompatibility between low-cost Salafists' ideology (which refutes human laws) and citizen democracy (based on the electoral system). What kind of prevention or deconstruction of this ideology can be established?

Researchers and specialists are really interested in the connection between the low-cost Salafism and the "jihadism". Some of them think that Salafism protects from "jihadism"⁹⁸, while others think that Salafism constitutes the ideological support allowing the use of violence. Our purpose is not to enter the controversy but only to study how the changeover from low-cost Salafism to "jihadism" happened for the young people of our sample who adhered to the use of violence. It is important to remind that the "Salafism" phase is neither necessary nor automatic to become "jihadist". Many young individuals have immediately followed the ideology based on the use of violence. However, the improvement of primary and secondary prevention requires a good understanding of the porosity between the two groups (from an internal point of view) to anticipate and counter it when it occurs.

II.3.1 Few differences between low-cost Salafist and "jihadist" discourses

Before analyzing how radicalized ones have chosen their group, it seems important to recall the main reasons for the rejection of violence for low-cost Salafists.

- Firstly, they recognize Saudi Arabia as their theological reference. They cannot therefore engage in jihad without having received the order from their "governor". Indeed, the Muslim tradition requires three main conditions to consider themselves in self-defense and to make the jihad: a population endangered by an external aggression in a given territory, observed by the one who governs this territory. On the other hand, "Jihadists"

⁹⁷In France, the folder "S" includes information of potential dangerous individuals who must be monitored.

⁹⁸Some governments are financing associations which employ salafists in order to unradicalize «jihadists».

redefined the jihad's conditions, by dispensing themselves from the order of a governor (and the observation of a population at risk in a given territory) because they consider there is no Muslim country (applying God's law). Those who recognize Saudi Arabia as their theological reference cannot contradict the opinion of Saudi Arabia's King as religious authorities of their movement recognize him as legitimate governor. The belligerent and conquering history of the Saudi family with regard to their accession to power (massacres of populations, attempt to destroy the dome, and pillage of Prophet's tomb) has meticulously been refined not to make it appear as a violent seizure of power in Arabia. The king precisely recognized the Salafist doctrine as the only legitimate source in order to obtain submission and control over his subjects and Salafists in the whole world.⁹⁹ **The main difference between Salafists and "jihadists" does not remain in their interpretation of Islam but the recognition of Saudi Arabia's king.** According to "jihadists", the fact that the king can develop political relations with countries identified as miscreants appears as a proof of disbelief.

- Secondly, the low-cost Salafists believe that imposing divine law is not their responsibility. Their responsibility is only to "show the example and how to behave" in order to convince as many people as possible of the benefit of the divine law. According to "jihadists", submitting to human law is doing "shirk" (associationism) and apostasy. A Muslim does not have the right to live in a country whose government does not apply God's law and put parliament's members in God's place. A Muslim cannot participate (directly or indirectly by paying taxes) to a system that places humans in a position that allows them to decide what is licit and illicit. According to Salafists, submitting to human law is only a sin and not an apostasy. A Muslim can live in a country where human laws are applied if he/she has no other choice. They do not have the responsibility of Shirk because they are not members of the government. They must simply distance themselves from this governance, for example by not participating in elections. The essence of this interpretation is based on the fact that low-cost Salafists assume that "the government is just like its people". In other words, they think that once all the citizens are Salafists, the government will be Salafist too. According to them, politics come from below (from people). "Jihadists" disagree on that matter: they consider it is the responsibility of any Muslim to impose God's law. Doing nothing is doing shirk. Whoever agrees to live in a country governed by human laws is guilty of apostasy and, consequently, is not Muslim.

The two groups disagree on two aspects: the responsibility of imposing the divine law and the use of violence. Although, the belief that only divine law can govern a society is common to both of them. The similarity between the two discourses is so strong that some young people have gone from one to the other without really being aware of it.

⁹⁹The pact made in 1745 in Nadjd between Mohammed Ibn Saoud and Abdel Wahhab, creator of the Wahhabi- Salafist doctrine, still remains in place between the two families currently reigning (one on the temporal power and the other one, on the spiritual authority).

Table comparing crimes and related punishments under Daesh's and Saudi Arabian authority (source: Middle East Eye):

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT	 Islamic State	VS  Saudi Arabia
CRIME	ISLAMIC STATE PUNISHMENT	SAUDI ARABIA PUNISHMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blasphemy (Insulting God, the Prophet, the religion) • Acts of homosexuality • Treason • Murder 	 Death	 Death
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slander • Drinking alcohol 	 80 lashes	 At discretion of judge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adultery (if married) 	 Death by stoning	 Death by stoning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adultery (if not married) 	 100 lashes and exile for a year	 100 lashes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stealing 	 Amputation of hand	 Amputation of right hand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banditry (theft) 	 Amputation of hand and foot	 Amputation of hand and foot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banditry (murder and theft) 	 Crucifixion	 Death

Redesigned schema for the report harmony
 Source : Middle East Eye

Here are the most significant testimonies regarding the reflection of young individuals on that matter:

“The problem is they all identify themselves as “Salafist”. What is the “Salafya”? They claim to be pious predecessors... Then, every Muslim claim to be faithful to the pious predecessors! From Tareq Ramadan to Ibn Baz and not to mention the beard brother from the kebab place at the corner of the street... Everyone think they are “Salafists”. I am “Salafist” too. I want to be faithful to Islam. Everything depends on the meaning of ‘being faithful to Islam’. It is confusing. In the Salafya, there are at least 3 or 4 groups, according to your ramifications with Saudi Arabia. It is very complicated! And “jihadists” do not identify themselves as “jihadists” but “Salafists” too. They claim to be pious predecessors. Actually everybody thinks knowing what the true Islam is. Even when you go to the mosque, when you hear an imam claiming to be Salafist, you are not shocked. On the contrary, you are happy... And on the contrary, when you hear Manuel Valls telling that the problem comes from “Salafism”, you are shocked... It’s like saying the problem is Islam! Even in Morocco, Muslim scholars identify themselves as Salafists. Everyone thinks it’s normal. The government talks with them. They are fundamentalists. In fact, this whole confusion came from the moment Wahhabis decided to identify themselves as “Salafists”. Now, this word can mean real “Salafists” and Wahhabis! They wanted to change their name because its origin comes from the last name “Wahhab”. So, by using it, they would do Shirk. Now they confused everybody”

(22 year-old man, Catholic family, lower class, convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise).

“In the Dawla’s discourse, I heard a lot of things that the bookstore (Salafist) and others had taught me. It shocked me a lot because they (Daesh) are perceived as terrorists and not Salafists. I thought I would hear a completely different line. For example, the prayer: they have exactly the same opinion. Few years ago, I heard an imam telling that not praying is an act of disbelief. He even said that if you don’t pray you are not a Muslim. This imam quoted the Hanbali school, which is the first and most widespread of the four Sunni schools¹⁰⁰, to give this opinion. He has always been using fear, like the Dawla’s brothers do. He said that Ramadan is not about rai nights or shisha parties, but only prayers. He considered that nowadays, Muslims are not taking religion seriously enough. He said that France was a country of nudity. Even though he didn’t say that it was a country of “koufr”(miscreants), the Dawla had the same discourse. He did not use the word miscreant but “non- Muslims”. Dawla’s brothers just went a little further in their thinking and acknowledge it. I had the feeling that the Imam did not use these terms not to shock people. In other sermons, he talked about the “koufr douna koufr” (inferior level of miscreance), which is another subject extremely used by jihadist groups. Every time the brothers talked to me, I recognized the Salafist imam’s discourse. So I thought they agreed. Sometimes I just had the feeling they talked more clearly than the imam. It shocked me to hear the same words from them. So

¹⁰⁰The young person is wrong: it is the last and the least spread of the 4 Sunni schools

I thought Dawla's brothers were not at all extreme, contrary to what I could hear in the press or elsewhere (...)

(Hamza, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

I think that both (Salafism and Jihadism) are the same. Sharia's lecture is the same. The doctrine is the same. Muslim Scholars are the same. The lecture of the Tawhid and Shirk is the same. The application of the Al walaa wal baraa (principle of alliance and disavowal) is the same: you must mistrust Jews and Christians because they will be happy only once you practice their religion. No other Muslim know about this principle: you hear about Al walaa wal baraa only if you talk with Salafists or jihadists. Others say that it doesn't exist, that it is not mentioned in the Quran. For some, it is a basic principle, for others, it does not exist! You have the right to hang out with Jews, Christians, and even atheists! You must even have a good behavior with them. So yes, Salafists and jihadists say pretty much the same thing. Of course, there are several opinions in the Salafist branch: some are faithful to their scholars and others not. In fact, there are degrees of radicalism in Salafism: we can say there are 3 levels, the last one being the jihadism. There is a level of extremism. In fact, some Salafists support jihadist groups, and others don't. Those supporting jihadists blame their Salafist brothers who are thinking differently to be "palace scholars", in other words, servants of (Saudia Arabia's) king. They make up "fatwas" in the interest of the king who doesn't want to create tension with the United States.

(22 year-old man, North- African origin, middle-class family who does not practice religion, convicted for proselytism and apology for terrorism).

The difference between Salafism and Jihadism, well, it's like changing your Renault for a Peugeot. They are the same except they changed the place of the car controls...

(24 year-old man, lower class, North African family who do not practice religion, convicted for terrorism proselytism).

My sisters from the Salafya dreamed about doing Hijra in Syria because of their niqab. They said there they would be able to wear it freely. The niqab and even the jilbab were the evidence we were perfect Muslims. We refused to mix with the others of the mosque, those wearing hijab only. We used to meet in a garage to pray with other Salafists. When they talked about jihadists, they said "our brothers". It drove me insane... 'You can't say they are our brothers! They kill everybody! They will kill your mother and you're going to say they are your brothers! They kill Syrians and you say they are your brothers!' I was fed up. I couldn't breathe.

(20 year-old Salafist woman, Catholic family, lower class)



My transition from Salafism to jihadism happened naturally, without being really aware of it... Jihadists introduced themselves as the real Salafists. Jihadists had the same dress code, kamis (long tunic), beard, and codes, because it was before the attacks in France. After the attacks, they became more discreet than Salafists. They also had the same theological references, scholars, Tawhid theme (Uniqueness of God), Shirk (associationism), and Taghut (things unloved by God) as Salafists... According to all, it was necessary to get rid of the invisible things that came from the time of polytheism to worship God. We could worship God only if we rejected human laws. There were minor differences but I didn't even see them at that time. Now I understand them. For example, Salafists asked us "to rectify" our Tawhid, while jihadists told us "to practice" our Tawhid. In fact, this difference of verb was major. "Rectifying" our Tawhid meant you had to withdraw yourself from everything, you mustn't like anything thing but God. "Practicing" your Tawhid meant you had to destroy everything around you representing shirk, and as everything was Shirk... But now I can see clearly what it was all about... The difference is subtle. According to Salafists, living under human laws is only a sin. According to jihadists, it's an apostasy. If you want to be a Muslim, you must impose God's law to everyone. Living in a Kofr country (non-believers) is like implicitly recognizing that human laws are superior to God's law. Somehow you become an accomplice. God puts you here to correct this situation. It is exactly this logic that leads to the Jihad, which became the only way to practice your Islam.

(Adult, Catholic family, lower class,
convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise)

The difference between Salafists and jihadists? Not that easy... Let's pick one topic, for example: the Sufis. Salafists are convinced they are the only ones to really understand Islam and believe that all the other Muslims have been perverted. From their point of view, they (non-Salafists) do not respect the principle of Tawhid. Salafists criticize the Sufis who worship saints. For the Salafists, Sufis worship other Gods by visiting tombs. If someone evoked a Moroccan scholar, Salafists rejected him as they considered that everything from Morocco was more or less Sufi. Then if you ask Jihadists, the only difference is that you have to destroy Sufis' tombs and also Sufis if you see some. So you practice what you have learned before. It's quite the same with all themes. You learn the principles with the Salafists and then you practice with the brothers of the Dawla. We can talk about the Hijra too. Who taught me that I had to do my Hijra because I was persecuted in France? Salafists! Who taught me that I can't live among non-believers? Salafists! We only talked about leaving. They told me: "God ordered us to pray but in France, you have the right not to pray. It means that the legislator authorized one thing God forbade (the abandonment of prayer). This is the proof that the two laws are incompatible." Basically, in my head, leaving was about being able to live among Muslims our Islam. But when I met the Dawla's brothers and they explained me that there was no real Muslim country, that all of them were applying human laws and were depraved by the West, it seemed to me natural to go to Syria with them to build a real Muslim country. Everything was logical. There was no gap between the two thoughts. It was rather a continuation.

(Adult, atheist family, middle class,
convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise).



“ *By reading Salafist books, I started to hate Jews and Christians, atheists and Shia Muslims. They denigrate everything and prove theologically that others are lost. I learned to hate anyone who did not think like me. Even other Muslims.... Even other Sunni Muslims like Sufis. Those dogma books teaching us to hate others should be forbidden. They are freely available, in all Muslim bookstores of Paris, in all conferences... Everything comes from there. For example, there was a word which we heard often: the “Tashabuh”. It means ‘looking like’ and was used constantly. Everything was coming from a hadith saying ‘Anyone who imitates non-believers is one of them’. So we should not look like the others. The notion of resemblance was pushed to the extreme: do not eat like them, do not get dressed like them, do not celebrate common celebrations, etc. No similarity was possible. We could not share anything. This is at that time, with the Salafists, that I started to be afraid of the others, tag them, and protect myself from them. But I don’t know who will want to ban those books. Saudi Arabia makes business with the West, even with France. But it is useless to cut the branches, it is necessary to attack roots. We must denounce Wahhabism, but nobody wants to do it because Saudis have money. Then we give them medals, we welcome them, we act as if Daesh members were the bad guys. Yet they look alike... This is why a majority of jihadists comes from Saudi Arabia. They don’t need to be indoctrinated: this is their national doctrine. They cut thieves’ hands, punish with whip, and prohibit others religions. I don’t see the difference between them. Except that some are more hypocritical than other and they have enough money to cover their hypocrisy.* ”

(26 year-old man, atheist family, middle class,
convicted for proselytism and apology of terrorism on Internet).

Salafists deeply rooted in the “Wahhabi-Salafist” ideology keep being pacifist because they remain submitted to Saudi Arabia’s king.

Those defined as low-cost Salafists can more easily adhere to the violent ideology as they have only listened to some imams online and only summarized Salafism as some ideological snippets (such as Al Walla Wal Barra). Low-cost Salafists often found in “YouTube imams” speeches a justification to reject society. Besides, low-cost Salafism also attract youngsters who are looking for strict rules, reassuring “ready-to-think” discourses as well as a certain form of affirmation.

Farid Benyettou is an ex-“jihadist” leader linked to Al Qaeda and was jailed for four years. His testimony providing us an input to deradicalize our youngsters, confirms our analysis:

“ *Past often came up in our conversations. Most of my brothers experienced quite a lot of extreme situations, from violence to drug consumption. Several of them could benefit from educative or psychological care. But neither pedagogy nor prison succeeded in making them change. They needed a strong framework with strict rule not to awake their demons. They only wanted one thing: a framework breaking up with the outside world, a kind of ideological bubble that would maintain them ‘aside’, a kind of relational and geographical bubble. For them, only religion could help to change to become a better person. The more we strictly respected rules, the more we felt like going on the right path. For my friends*



*who used to be offenders or drug addicts, starting with Salafism was firstly beneficial. The closer they got to the Prophet's practice, the more they felt like being good people. Only the identification of the Prophet would save them from their previous bad life. It strengthened the idea I had that radical practicing was the best way to become a good man. Only Salafism, through its great rigor, could help us. The more we could break off, the more we wanted to break off. There are some correlations between Salafism, the will for rigor, and the search for breaking up with our past.*¹⁰¹

”

II.3.2 What underlies the choice of group: Lowcost salafist or «jihadist»

In terms of primary or secondary prevention, identifying the elements fostering the choice of violence is fundamental. Young people have all experienced the same anxiety, no longer trust democracy, and all over-invest the Divine Law as the only way to fight human corruption. Why do some choose to legitimize violence, believing that the imposition of divine law is part of their responsibility? Why do others believe that they should only protect themselves from this corrupt world by refusing to mix with others?

We have crossed the quantitative and qualitative analyzes to find some hypotheses.

II.3.2.a Similarity of individual characteristics between low-cost Salafists and “jihadists”

In terms of quantitative analyses, we have compared the individual characteristics (personal life before their radicalization) of young low-cost Salafists and “jihadists”. The results of this comparison show that there is no significant difference between the two categories of young people, except the fact that “jihadists” have a higher rate for some variables¹⁰² :

- A fusional relationship with one of his/her parents,
- A close radicalized one in his/her entourage,
- Experience of a suicide attempt or scarification,
- Depressed parents,
- Experienced episodes of depression,
- Experienced abandonment,
- Addiction to some psychotropic products in the past.

¹⁰¹BENYETTOU F., *Mon Djihad, Itinéraire d'un repentir*, Edition Autrement, 2017, p.63.

¹⁰²Taken from the report RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS: COMPARISON OF «JIHADISTES» AND LOWCOST SALAFISTS VARIABLES

Comparison between low-cost pietist Salafists and “jihadists”, both from middle-class (Average results, standard deviation)¹⁰³ -Table X+2

	“ JIHADISTS ” (N = 100)	SALAFISTS (N = 100)	P-VALUE
AGE_PEC	19.44(4.67)	21.38(4.78)	0.001

Variables binaires

	“ JIHADISTS ” (N = 100)	SALAFISTS (N = 100)	P-VALUE
GENDER (Female/Male)	67(67%) / 33(33%)	67(67%) / 33(33%)	1
QUITTE_DOMICILE_PARENTS (0/1) (Have left parents' house)	75(75%) / 25(25%)	62(62%) / 38(38%)	0.048
QUITTE_FRANCE (0/1) (Have left france)	86(86%) / 14(14%)	86(86%) / 14(14%)	1
ARRÊTÉ_PAR_POLICE (0/1) (Arrested by police)	20(20%) / 80(80%)	97(97%) / 3(3%)	< 0.001
DÉPARTEMENT (HORS IDF/IDF) (Region, living far from paris or not)	59(59%) / 41(41%)	62(62%) / 38(38%)	0.664
ENVT. SOCIAL_ENFANCE (Camp./ville) (Social environment during childhood, countryside or city)	17(17%) / 83(83%)	21(21%) / 79(79%)	0.471
STAT.FAM.JEUNE (Célib. / divorcé/marié) (Family situation of the young , single / divorced / married)	76(76%) / 24(24%)	65(65%) / 35(35%)	0.088
ENFANTS (0/1) (Having children no/yes)	79(79%) / 21(21%)	70(70%) / 30(30%)	0.144
STAT.FAM.PARENTS (Célib, divorcé, veuf /Marié) (Family situation of parents, single / widowed / married)	55(55%) / 45(45%)	63(63%) / 37(37%)	0.25
ORIGINE_PARENTS_AFRIQUE (0/1) (Origins of parents, Africa)	96(96%) / 4(4%)	98(98%) / 2(2%)	0.683
MAGHREB (0/1) (North Africa)	72(72%) / 28(28%)	81(81%) / 19(19%)	0.133
EUROPE (0/1)	80(80%) / 20(20%)	78(78%) / 22(22%)	0.728
ANTILLES (0/1) (West Indies)	94(94%) / 6(6%)	97(97%) / 3(3%)	0.498
AMERIQUE.DU.SUD (0/1) (South America)	99(99%) / 1(1%)	97(97%) / 3(3%)	0.621

¹⁰³We advise the reader to have a look at the FACTORS OF RISK AND PROTECTION report, for a better understanding of the variables titles, abbreviated here.

Part II

JUIVE (0/1) (Jew)	99(99%) / 1(1%)	99(99%) / 1(1%)	1
ASIE (0/1) (Asia)	98(98%) / 2(2%)	97(97%) / 3(3%)	1
USA (0/1)	100(100%) / 0(0%)	99(99%) / 1(1%)	1
PARENTS_SÉPARÉS_VEUF (0/1) (Divorced parents / widowed)	45(45%) / 55(55%)	36(36%) / 64(64%)	0.195
CATHOLIQ.EXTREMISTE (0/1) (Extremist Catholics)	86(93.5%) / 6(6.5%)	70(97.2%) / 2(2.8%)	0.468
CATHOLIQ.PRATIQUANT (0/1) (Practicing Catholics)	78(83.9%) / 15(16.1%)	64(80%) / 16(20%)	0.508
CATHOLIQ.NON.PRATIQUANT (0/1) (Non-practicing Catholics)	63(67.7%) / 30(32.3%)	50(62.5%) / 30(37.5%)	0.47
MUSULM.PRATIQUANT (0/1) (Practicing Muslims)	83(89.2%) / 10(10.8%)	71(87.7%) / 10(12.3%)	0.742
MUSULM.NON.PRATIQUANT (0/1) (Non-practicing Muslims)	78(83%) / 16(17%)	71(88.8%) / 9(11.2%)	0.279
ATHEE (0/1) (Atheist)	51(51%) / 49(49%)	57(57.6%) / 42(42.4%)	0.352
CULTURE.MUSULMANE (0/1) (Muslim culture)	65(69.1%) / 29(30.9%)	59(72.8%) / 22(27.2%)	0.592
CULTURE.CATHOLIQUE (0/1) (Catholic culture)	19(19%) / 81(81%)	17(17.2%) / 82(82.8%)	0.738
AUTRE_1 (0/1) (Other)	87(93.5%) / 6(6.5%)	67(88.2%) / 9(11.8%)	0.22
RELATION_FUSION_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Fusional relationship with relative before radicalization)	34(34%) / 66(66%)	61(61%) / 39(39%)	< 0.001
RELATION_EMPRISE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Relationship of influence before radicalization)	63(63%) / 37(37%)	71(71%) / 29(29%)	0.229
RADICALISATION_CONNUE_PROCHE (0/1) (Having a radicalized relative)	62(62%) / 38(38%)	74(74%) / 26(26%)	0.069
TENTATIVE_EMBRIGADT_ALENTOUR (0/1) (Attempt of indoctrination from surrounding)	66(66%) / 34(34%)	66(66%) / 34(34%)	1
TS_SCAR_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Suicidal attempt, scarification before radicalization)	66(66%) / 34(34%)	77(77%) / 23(23%)	0.085
HOSPIT_PSYCH_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Psychiatric hospital before radicalization)	89(89%) / 11(11%)	91(91%) / 9(9%)	0.637
SUIVI_PSY_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Psychiatric follow-up before radicalization)	59(59%) / 41(41%)	69(69%) / 31(31%)	0.141
ENFERMEMENT_AP_RAD (0/1) (Confinement after radicalization)	74(74%) / 26(26%)	86(86%) / 14(14%)	0.034

MALAD_DECLAREE_PROCHES_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Having sick relatives before radicalization)	74(74%) / 26(26%)	76(76%) / 24(24%)	0.744
MALAD DÉCLARÉE JEUNE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Have been sick before radicalization)	85(85%) / 15(15%)	79(79%) / 21(21%)	0.269
DEP_DECLAREE_PROCHES_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Having relative(s) gone to Syria before radicalization)	55(55%) / 45(45%)	73(73%) / 27(27%)	0.008
DEP_DECLAREE JEUNE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Have gone to Syria before radicalization)	51(51%) / 49(49%)	66(66%) / 34(34%)	0.031
ABUS_VIOL_PROCHE (0/1) (Abuse or rape of a relative)	92(92%) / 8(8%)	90(90%) / 10(10%)	0.621
ABUS_VIOL_JEUNE (0/1) (Abuse or rape of the youngster)	75(75%) / 25(25%)	78(78%) / 22(22%)	0.617
SI_ABUS (0/1) (If abuse)	16(64%) / 9(36%)	29(78.4%) / 8(21.6%)	0.213
VIOLENCE_PHY_PROCHE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Physical violence endured by a relative before radicalization)	80(80%) / 20(20%)	84(84%) / 16(16%)	0.462
VIOLENCE_PHY_JEUNE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Physical violence endured by the youngster before radicalization)	82(82%) / 18(18%)	86(86%) / 14(14%)	0.44
VIOLENCE_PSYTRAUMA_JEUNE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Psych. violence endured by the youngster before radicalization)	24(24%) / 76(76%)	26(26%) / 74(74%)	0.744
ABANDON_JEUNE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Have been abandoned before radicalization)	25(25%) / 75(75%)	38(38%) / 62(62%)	0.048
DC_ENTOURAGE_JEUNE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Death of sb close to the youngster before radicalization)	66(66%) / 34(34%)	70(70%) / 30(30%)	0.544
ADDICTION_PROCHE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Addiction of a relative before radicalization)	74(74%) / 26(26%)	85(85%) / 15(15%)	0.054
ADDICTION_JEUNE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Addiction of the youngster before radicalization)	81(81%) / 19(19%)	87(87%) / 13(13%)	0.247
INCARC_CONNUE_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Imprisonment before radicalization)	95(95%) / 5(5%)	98(98%) / 2(2%)	0.445
SUIVI_EDU_AVT_RAD (0/1) (Followed-up by an educator before radicalization)	84(84%) / 16(16%)	94(94%) / 6(6%)	0.024
SUIVI_EDU_AP_RAD (0/1) (Followed-up by an educator after radicalization)	48(48%) / 52(52%)	74(74%) / 26(26%)	< 0.001
LIEN_RADIC_PHYSIQUE (0/1) (Physical connection with a radicalized one)	52(52%) / 48(48%)	57(57%) / 43(43%)	0.478

État_actuel p-value = < 0.001

	“ JIHADISTS ”	SALAFISTS
DIED IN BATTLE	6	0
RADICALIZED	11	62
DISENGAGED	21	0
DERADICALIZED	62	38

The choice of violence does not appear to be the consequence of specific characteristics which would define “jihadists”. There is no significant difference between the two groups of young people in their stories before their radicalization. There is no psychological predisposition to violence characterizing those who wanted to become “Jihadists”. There is no “Jihadist personality”. No social path characterizes them either, since both groups are coming from middle-class families. The social frustration does not explain why some opted for violence. These results confirm that violent engagement does not differ from the logic of commitment more conventional.¹⁰⁴

II.3.2.b The choice of violence fostered by the desire to belong to the most effective group

Based on the qualitative analysis, the study of “pro-jihadist” individuals’ interviews shows that the violent group appeared to be the only coherent choice with their new world view. As the world is corrupt by human laws, it is not enough to dream of a divine law to regenerate it. Contributing to changes is necessary here and now, even though it depends on the commitment motives: humanitarian for some, social justice for others, etc. “Jihadists” denounce the “cowardice of pietist Salafists” as they defend a world view without taking concrete actions to establish it. The “cowardice of Salafists” is perceived through different ways: some young people realize they are pacifists only because they are waiting for the king’s order to participate in the Jihad. **Consequently, the disagreement with “jihadists” is not about the question of the legitimacy of violence but of the leader who orders it (according to the interviewees).** Others came to the same conclusion by noting that Wahhabism established the same way Daesh did. **It is finally the need to apply the proposed solution (managing the world with the use of the divine law) which made these young people switch from low-cost Salafism to “jihadism”.**

¹⁰⁴SOMMIER I. Engagement radical, désengagement et déradicalisation.(Radical commitment, uncommitment and unradicalization). Continuum et ligne de fracture (Continuum and fracture line), Lien social et Politiques, no 68, autumn, Radicalité et Radicalisations (Radicalism and Radicalizations), 2012, pp. 15-35.

“ El Bagdadi inspired me confidence. He said there were three very important concepts in Islam: the humanitarian one, religion learning and the jihad. And it's true that Dawla's people managed to mix the three. I wanted to be useful and fight against the villains. Those brothers talked a lot about the unity of the group and equality. There would be no difference of treatment between nationalities. It was like the Dawla was created for me... Unlike Salafists that I found hypocrites... We called them “Talafis” because they didn't apply their principles ... They forbade some things in their speeches but found justifications not to apply them. I thought they aimed at an impossible goal because they didn't do anything to reach it! In all their speeches, they talked about patience or the current context, as if things would change by themselves! Contrary to them, Dawla's brothers applied their principles. They do what they have to do to achieve their goal. They fought, rose, and did not wait like cowards. Moreover, the Dawla warned me about the Salafists, telling me that they were no better than the “Muslim brothers”. So I stopped all communication with my bookseller (a Salafist) with whom I was learning the religion. (...) The more I learned about geopolitics of jihadist groups, the more convinced I was. I saw groups like Ahrar ech-cham. They said they were Salafists and were against kamikaze attacks etc. They gathered 10 000 persons, made factions. Like Jound al Aqsa, I supported them because they were neutral concerning the dispute between Daesh and Al Nosra. As soon as the group got dissolved because of a money story, one party pledged allegiance to Daesh, the other to Al Nosra. Same thing with the Libyan group Ansar el sharia: those brothers joined Daesh, all of them. So you can see that the ideology is exactly the same, whether they are small or big groups. ”

(Hamza, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

“ I felt guilty about doing nothing. This is why I left Salafism for jihadism : not to be selfish. It seems stupid to say that now, but it's true. I thought that I had to see my way through: it's too easy to denounce something and do nothing. If you think that God's law will help the world to be better, so you must build a country where you will be able to apply it. Do not just talk, or wait for the governor's decision this is useless. Even if he is the king of the land of Holy places. The governor doesn't care, he stays warm. He is no better than the president Hollande. It did not suit me. I wanted to change things. I didn't want to become a Mourji¹⁰⁵ like them. ”

(Adult, atheist family, middle class, convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise).

“ It took me time to find the Jihadists of my dreams... Before meeting this brother in black, I was with the Salafists. I was the youngest and they called me to order sometimes. Quickly I got tired. I thought they were talking a lot without taking action. Only words ... If we don't apply our ideas, what's the point of having some? They don't want Human laws but they don't

¹⁰⁵“Those who are waiting” in reference to a group of old time who did not fight the “big sins”.

apply God's law! I found them weak because I was convinced that we had to fight and behaving was not enough. So I left them and I looked for something else. The Dawla attracted me a lot by promising me to go to battle (...)

(Brian, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

At that time, a girl on Facebook came and talked to me. She immediately asked me if I was a member of the Salafya. I didn't know what it meant and when she explained they were people following Quran and the Sunna, I answered: 'yes, I am a Salafist then'. I had many Salafist sisters among my friends and I saw they talked a lot about Daesh. Salafists spent their time insulting and criticizing them. I didn't understand why, because they were creating an Islamic state and it was supposed to be positive for Muslims. So I started to look for them to have an explanation. Salafists' answers were not enough, there was no evidence, they only mentioned scholars' words. Then, I met pro-Dawla sisters so I left Salafists for them. I had the feeling to find better answers and a real project to help the Muslim community. I spent a lot of time on my phone in my room. I surfed on the internet, especially in the evening, until very, very late.

(Hawa, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

What are the foundations of Saudi Arabia? A simple and common story: Ottomans were controlling Saudi Arabia and the Wahhab arrived and took their territory. Al Bagdadi is doing the same thing : he arrived and took the territory to make the real Islam reborn again. Wahhab did the same thing except that he made an alliance with English people to kick Ottomans out. He killed whole populations, everyone who opposed him. And now, Wahhabis are saying: you must not rebel against the governor! But they did it before too! They rebelled against the Ottoman governor. Wahhab denounced his brother too, who was a great scholar, and his father. In fact, Saudi Arabia is a legal version of Daesh. France closes its eyes and makes business with them only because of their oil. We sell them weapons and more. We don't want to see everything. One day, it will backfire at them, the politicians.

(21 year-old man, atheist family, middle class, convicted for attempt of leaving for Syria)

In the testimonies and in the videos, “jihadists” believe that Salafists’ inaction is like playing the enemy’s game. They accuse them to be accomplices of disbelievers by naming them “murjis” or “talafis”, which can be translated by “those who are waiting”, in reference to a group of believers of the old days who accepted the great sins without doing anything. This nickname is supplemented by expressions that show the betrayal of Salafists: “the murjis are the Jews of this community” ; “those Salafists are the murjis of the palace” ; “those murjis are corrupt” ; “those murjis are the scholars of the palace” ; “the murjis defend the governor” ; “Salafists are talafis”, etc. The existence of another group sharing the same world view without taking actions strengthens “jihadists”

will. It's seems like the lack of fervor from the Salafists does not give any choice to “jihadists”, so they feel even more responsible for filling this lack of action.

Our results confirm that the use of violence is fostered “by the competition between opposing or similarly oriented groups”¹⁰⁶, “as well as between “organizations of the same obedience measuring their fervour for the cause (including the attraction of customers) to the boldness of their strokes”¹⁰⁷. This disagreement on the compensatory solutions to be chosen to deal with human corruption multiplies the symbolic reward for those who choose to be actors of the regeneration of the world by imposing divine law.

¹⁰⁶SOMMIER I. Engagement radical, désengagement et déradicalisation. (*Radical commitment, uncommitment and unradicalization*). Continuum et ligne de fracture (Continuum and fracture line), *Lien social et Politiques*, no 68, autumn, *Radicalité et Radicalisations* (*Radicalism and Radicalizations*), 2012, pp. 15-35.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*



CONCLUSION - PARTS I AND II

We saw in Part I how the “jihadist” discourse uses an anxiogenic emotional approach based on conspiracy theories and decontextualized Qur’anic verses. In Part II we noticed that the “jihadist” discourse adapts its ideology to the cognitive and emotional aspirations of young people in order to propose an individualized commitment.

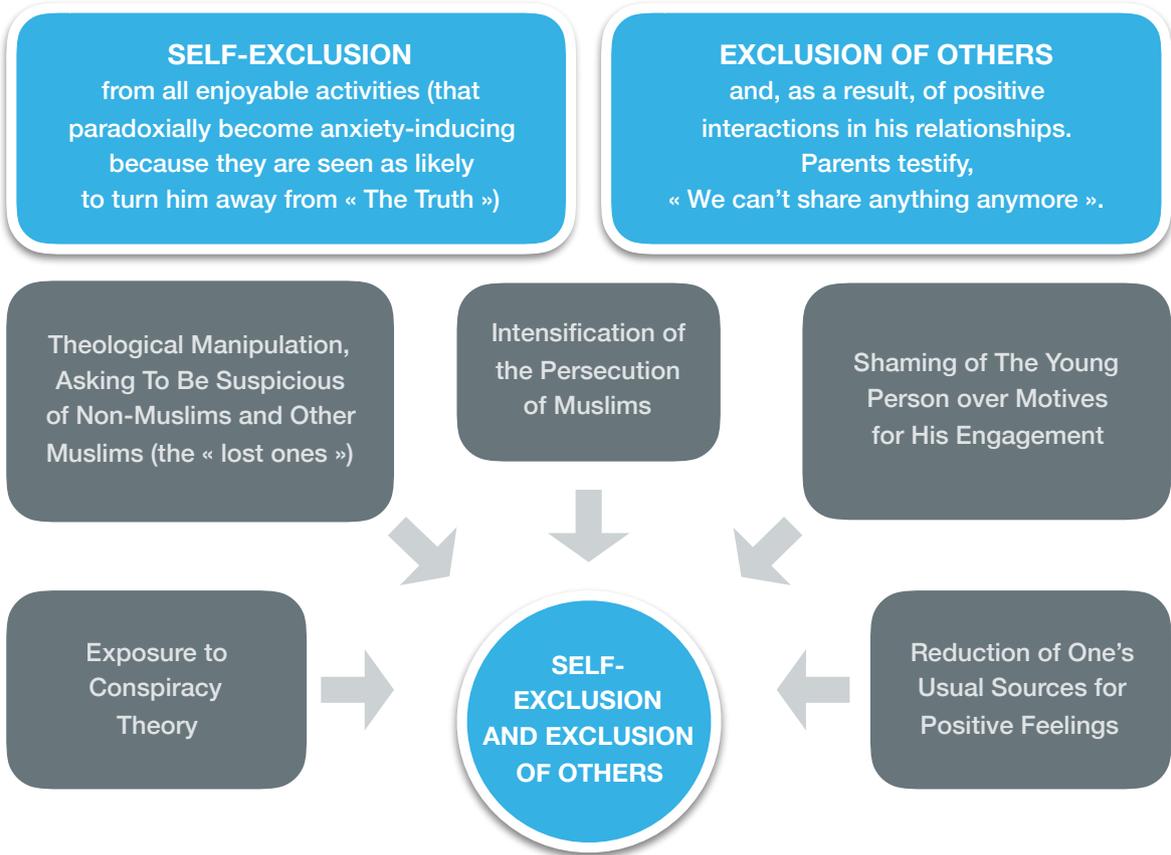
We concluded that the exposure to the anxiogenic emotional approach of the “jihadist” discourse can be considered as a stressful situation (perceiving the world managed by human laws as permanently corrupt), which resulted in a double assessment process: regarding the threat, then the individual capacities to deal with it. We then emphasized on the fact that the radicalizing youngster’s assessment process of the hazard depended on his/her individual interpretation of reality, which depends itself on the individual’s personal characteristics as well as macro variables of the situation. We saw how competition between groups could affect the choice of violent or peaceful compensatory solutions.

At the risk of presenting a reductive vision of the phenomenon, the question of violent radicalization and extreme choices can be conceptualized as a dysfunctional adaptation to “stress”, as it leads to extreme behaviours of breakdown with society and potentially to violent acts. This conceptualization, however, has the advantage of providing a reflection framework to understand the psychic processes underlying extreme choices.

In this conceptual context, the effectiveness of propaganda processes could be explained by several reasons:

- They are all aiming at behavioral changes whose extreme corresponds to the imposition of divine law in its different forms (going as far as the certainty that it is up to individuals to impose it here and now even though it means killing);
- They saturate the emotional sphere by increasing the negative emotions related to the present life (the anxiogenic emotional approach, part I), and by deluding positive emotions linked to the radical commitment of which a brief taste is experienced through the exaltation of the young person in his/her new group (cohesive relational approach, part I);
- They also invest the cognitive sphere by suggesting dysfunctional responses to the “problem” conceptualized by the young person (self-exclusion, exclusion from others, fleeing countries managed by human law, confrontation to impose divine law...);
- The conscious conceptualization of the problem is reinforced by unconscious defense mechanisms which are generally implemented by the type of commitment motive and support individual solutions proposed by the propaganda.

Radical rhetoric fuels various negative feelings by :



Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Dounia Bouzar — 2016

**DETAIL OF SPLITS PROVOKED BY THE ANXIETY-PROVOKING
EMOTIONAL APPROACH OF « JIHADISTS »**
Cognitive split with regard to his former way of thinking



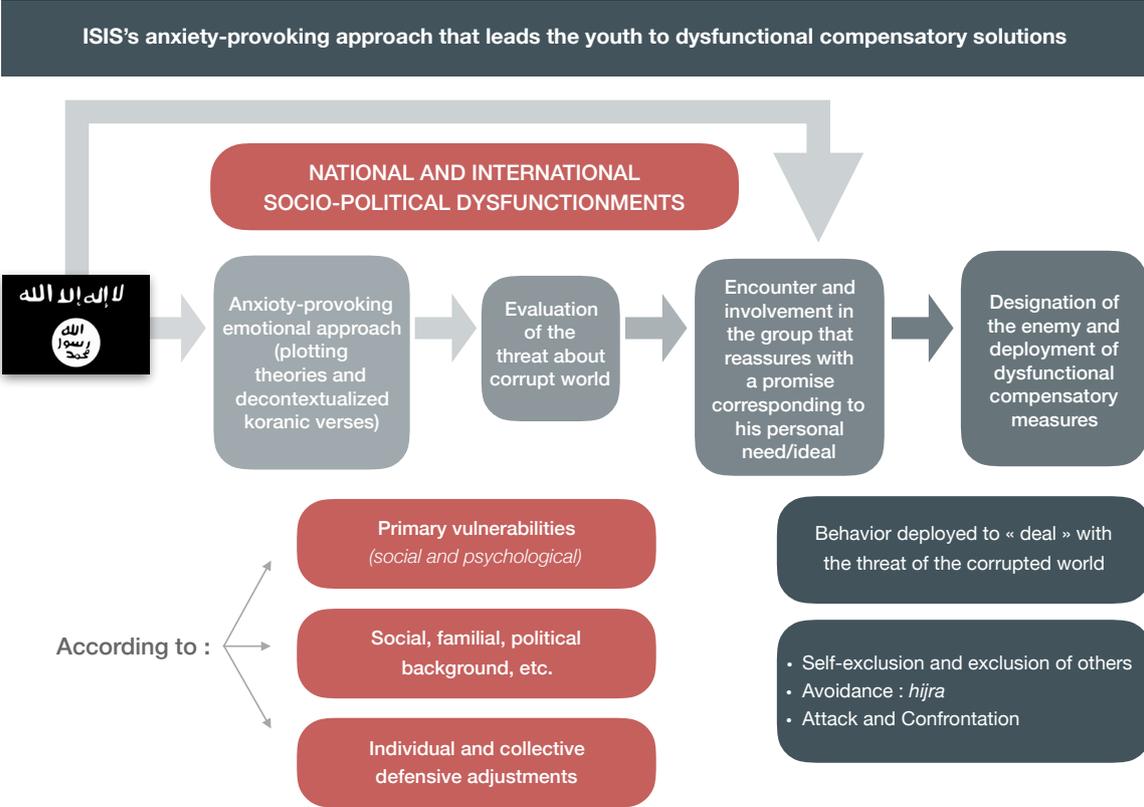
Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Dounia Bouzar — 2016

**DETAIL OF SPLITS PROVOKED BY THE ANXIETY-PROVOKING
EMOTIONAL APPROACH OF « JIHADISTS »**
Behavioral split with regard to his former way of thinking



Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Dounia Bouzar — 2016

To conclude on the stages of the radicalization process that sometimes lead to violent extremism, we can propose this global scheme taking into account the different micro and macro interactions that we have previously identified in our testimonials:



Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Dounia Bouzar — 2017

At this stage, we can propose a definition of “jihadist” radicalization: “result of a psychic process which transforms the individual’s cognitive framework (his way of seeing the world, thinking, and acting), by leading him from a personal quest to an ideology linked to a collective Muslim identity and a totalitarian political project that he would want to apply with the use of violence.”

PART III - THE RADICALIZATION EXIT¹⁰⁸

The radicalization exit is a matter of debate both in the way of naming things and in the approach set up to be able to do it.

Concerning the vocabulary, the word "deradicalization" is questioned in France, especially because it would be impossible to lead young people to mourn their "jihadist" ideology. Leading them to mourn the violence used to carry out their "jihadist" project would be the only goal possible.

In the information report of the Senate Committee about «de-indoctrination, disengagement and reintegration of jihadists in France and Europe» on July 12, 2017, some senators outlawed the word "deradicalization" by explaining that their report "fosters the use of the words 'disengagement' and 'de-indoctrination', referring to the process of emancipation from radicalism and renunciation of violent action, without pretending to give up an ideology (...)"¹⁰⁹

Our feedback shows there is a connection between the use of violence and the endorsement of the ideology leading to the use of violence (and the feeling of "self-defence" position). **The study of young radicalized ones' conversations with their recruiters leads us to emphasize the fact that the rejection of the "Other" and democracy is realized both through the ideology and the "jihadist" anxiogenic emotional approach concomitantly.** All the young people followed by us had a kind of obsessive anxiety about human things. This feeling is shared by and within their group, and endorses the ideology according to which a human thing would be a betrayal to God's uniqueness. It is the intermingling of ideology and strong emotional reactions that leads to violent action. **It seems impossible to lead an individual to mourn his/her "jihadist" project without deconstructing the ideological world view behind this commitment.**

A misunderstanding or a major amalgam must be immediately removed: **pretending that the young person must give up his/her ideology does not mean that he/she must give up his/her Muslim beliefs (if they exist initially), but that he/she must give up the utopian promise made by the "jihadist" discourse, including the worldview it involves.** Violent extremism cannot be treated without treating the ideology behind it. For example, the ideology of the superiority of "white race" was behind the extermination of Jews and in other times led to slavery. All totalitarian projects leading to the extermination of a category of humans have an ideology behind it. This is, in our case, the ideology according to which "only the divine law interpreted by Daesh can regenerate the corrupt world" leading to the killing of all those who do not adhere to this project and to use terrorism as a complementary weapon.

¹⁰⁸We refer to the RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS report for statistics on the characteristics of disengaged and de-radicalized individuals, fate variables, etc...

¹⁰⁹At the time of the presidential elections, the editors of this report didn't wish to audition us, despite our repeated requests and the fact that we had the largest European empirical database. The results that we could have shared with the French services of that time are therefore in this report and in the quantitative report RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS.

According to our feedback, talking about a radicalization recovery, and more particularly the terms "de-radicalization" or "desistance", means: taking into account the individual's characteristics, his experience and commitment motive (whose logic has been recognized and deconstructed through an emotional, relational and ideological approach) and letting him realize through his own questioning the gaps of his first commitment in order to build a new commitment compatible with the social contract.

As shown in our sample¹¹⁰, some young individuals (half of our "success stories") only gave up their group and the use of violence: we called them "disengaged", rather than dis-indoctrinated, to highlight the fact they voluntarily engaged themselves in this project and this ideology, believing they would find "the solution" to reach their ideal. Despite the fact we were the first to point out that recruiters used certain methods usually used by sects (hypnotic techniques, apocalyptic visions, mimicry, etc.)¹¹¹, one does not preclude the other: recruiters can use processes of mental influence and "jihadists" committed voluntarily themselves believing they had found the means to reach their ideals.

The other young individuals, (the other half of our "success stories")¹¹² have not only renounced to the use of violence, but managed to mourn their ideology behind their violence. **In other words, they no longer believe that "only the divine law can regenerate this corrupt world" because they regained their trust in humanity, and realized that what they called "divine law" has always been a human (and political) production.**

Our results do not allow us to join the discourses of the French public and political debate that run after "essentializing jihadism" after pursuing for years the "essentialization of Muslims"¹¹³, considering that "no one can leave the "jihadist" ideology" and that deradicalization / desistance cannot succeed.

The deconstruction of the divine law utopia presented as "the global solution to the regeneration of the world and / or oneself" by the "jihadists" seems fundamental to end the "jihadist terrorism", especially as embracing violence is proportional embracing the ideology (see Part II).

The young people we followed who simply "disengaged"¹¹⁴ themselves are seen by the police as successes as far as they are no longer dangerous to society.¹¹⁵ However, if a new group of "jihadists" was built and proved that they will actually set up the divine law to regenerate the world without falling into all the abuses of Daesh, some might be tempted again.

We propose to follow the different stages lived by the young people who came out of "jihadism". We will try to conceptualize the effects of the approaches we have been experimenting for two years, based on their testimonies. Three types of approaches affected them: the relational

¹¹⁰Cf statistics in the RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS report.

¹¹¹BOUZAR D., *Defusing radical Islam, These sectarian excesses disfiguring Islam*, published by l'Atelier, 2014.

¹¹²Cf statistics in the RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS report.

¹¹³BOUZAR D., *Mr. Islam does not exist, For a de-Islamization of debates*, under the direction of the Institute «National des Hautes Études de Sécurité», published by Hachette, 2004; ROMAN J., *Them and us*, published by Fayard, 2013.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹¹⁵This is why they are among our "success stories" in our statistics. See the report on RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS.

approach, the emotional approach and the cognitive approach, taking into account that the order of cognitive or emotional approaches depends on individuals. These approaches are close to social psychology considering group phenomena and psychology. One last approach concerns only young people who "deradicalized" or "withdrawn": the ideological approach. As already explained, they have begun a reflection about what human and divine, and temporal and spiritual are, which enabled them to deconstruct their certainty that "only the divine law can regenerate the corrupt world".

Next, we will propose an analysis that helps professionals replace "jihadists" dysfunctional solutions by new commitments compatible with the society.

III.1 PROPOSING A SUBSTITUTION GROUP OR THE RELATIONAL ASPECT

The anxiogenic emotional approach of Daesh (conspiracy theory and decontextualized Qur'anic verses) includes the relational approach (proposal of a new group who is aware of the hazards of the world and becomes the only area where one is safe). We have seen how these approaches have gradually led young people into a kind of collective paranoid leading them to avoid everything that does not belong to the radical group, sometimes going as far as disaffiliation.

When we were commissioned to experiment the first deradicalization process, our first concern was to remove the young individual from his radical group, so that he could recover some critical thinking. We wanted to interrupt this feeling of cohesion within the group which leads to a kind of mimicry between its members.

We wanted to move from the condition where "the group thinks instead of the individual" to the stage where "the individual begins to think freely". The following two testimonies are significant with regard to the youngsters' experiences: taking some distance from the radical group is not an easy step, especially for teenagers who need a peer group. Leaving the group is even more difficult when the radicalized one has been identified by his old entourage as a "terrorist". His former friends, whom he tried to radicalize, and who have often been rejected and insulted (sometimes threatened), are suspicious or hostile. So loneliness will replace the group exaltation.

The radicalized-one knows that he will be left alone after leaving the radical group:

“ I had to turn off Internet to keep my head above the water. It was very hard, I was addicted to my “sisters”, my “brothers” ... My parents confiscated my mobile phone and my computer. I was angry at the CPDSI because I knew they were behind this decision. Today, I know that it saved me; it allowed me to find myself back. Otherwise I would have never managed to do it. I went through a phase in which I felt alone; I had troubles making new friends. I only met other young people like me at the CPDSI meetings. Otherwise, I was suspicious of everyone; I felt like everyone was talking about me, everyone scowled at me, I became paranoid. The break with my group put me on the edge of the abyss: I had to move forward, try to rebuild myself, talk to other people. I disgusted myself when I realized what I had done. I was ashamed of myself, how could they manipulate me so easily? I am intelligent, sensitive, with a big heart and they managed to make me endorse an ideology justifying horror, hatred, massacres and torture. Then I blamed the group, I hated them so much. It removed my trust in every human being. I gave them my life. I blamed myself for having trusted them while they were fooling me. I realized that they had erased my personality. I felt very guilty when I came out of it, because unintentionally, while I was trying to bring back the people I loved in the true religion, I indoctrinated some friends too. Because of that, I still suffer a lot. Since then, I have tried to talk to them, to reason them, but it's now impossible to be heard. I'm just a stranger to them, a stranger who is no longer part of the group and who is in the arms of Sheitan. I gradually freed myself from this paranoia that was growing inside me every day. I no longer think that

everything is a plot and that everyone sold their soul to the devil. I don't worry anymore about the presence of djinns (supernatural beings) who would be inside me and I no longer interpret my dreams as the sign proving that I am a chosen-one or possessed. ” ”

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

“ When I was looking for the definition of the word “Califat”, I was amazed. I saw people who had left for Syria being happy and I wanted to be like them. I could see them laughing and jumping into a lake. They were living in beautiful houses with pool and women. It was during a period when I wasn't feeling good, I thought that maybe there, I would find happiness. (...) At first, since I didn't have much knowledge about Islam and was very ignorant, I considered what they said as an absolute truth. The worst thing was that even strangers had power over me. As the “brother” has got the same ideology than you, a link is immediately created. When I went to Paris, I joined “brothers” I had never seen and in ten minutes they became members of my family, as if I had always known them (...) When I talked to them, I felt like they understood me better than anyone else. We shared the same vision of the world, we committed to the same cause. They were always with me, no matter what time it was, as soon as I was not feeling well or wondering stuff. I knew I could count on them. (...) I realized that with Dawla's brothers, we talked very rarely about Islam. We used to talk much more about weapons, women, and ideal living conditions over there. We forgot the cause justifying our devotion: leaving to help Syrians, save Muslims from persecution and free them from Bachar El Assad who massacred them... Everything was far behind me. (...) I could not turn off Internet. I was completely addicted. It was like a drug. Consciously, I didn't want to reconnect, but I have always ended up giving in despite my good will. I missed the relationship with the “brothers” so much. It was very difficult for me to reject a person who said he was in the “dîn” (religion). (...) My arrest and house arrest cut me off from the group. I did not miss Daesh projects - I knew they were lying - but I missed the “brothers” all day long. I didn't have anyone but them. No friend, no relative. I missed my group. When a “brother” was feeling bad, other “brothers” were there for him. They were revolted when my house was raided and when I was under surveillance and that touched me a lot. I thought they loved me so much that they were ready to give their lives for me. It took me time to realize that even their anger was not sincere. In fact, they used it only to justify a terrorist attack and manipulated my revolt to make me join their ideology. For a long time, I protected myself by staying alone. Loneliness protected me, I trusted dirty people who used and betrayed me. I realize this as soon as I left the group, all the others turned their back. Nobody stayed in touch with me, or didn't worry about me. Now, at least, I can no longer be betrayed or judged by others. Sometimes in my room at the CEF, I used to wear my white qamis to feel the same emotions as before. I felt pious wearing it, and protected from the outside world and sins. I needed to wear it again because it reminded me what I shared with my old group. We were really close and, even though I no longer agree with their cause, I missed that solidarity between us. I also wore sometimes the hat I used to wear with my long hair. My first hair cut was something difficult to do ... The hardest thing was to no longer hear anashids (religious captivating songs used by Daesh). They were hypnotizing. As soon as I did some sport again, when I got back to running, for example, the songs invaded my brain. It's because of all the times I used



to run with the anashids, the volume at maximum level, imagining myself over there. When I looked at the photos with my group, I did not recognize myself anymore. It was not me. I wondered for a long time: how am I going to do not to miss my group during when I have a bad mood? I worked hard on this issue with the CPDSI and especially with Farid Benyettou¹¹⁶, whenever they came to see me. He told me that, during the 4 years he spent in jail, he swore to himself to never see his jihadist "brothers" ever again, and that was the first thing he did the day he came out. I felt understood. (...) I sought freedom and at the same time I feared it. At the CEF, I was protected from the world. I was in my bubble. Mobile phone and the use of Internet were forbidden for everyone so it was simple. However, 9 months later, freedom was getting closer and I was scared. I did not trust myself. Failure scared me. I was afraid of the unknown and getting back in touch with my old group. I preferred to go back to prison. At least I knew this place. Finding loneliness worried me deeply. I preferred not to fight and fail, rather than do everything to overcome the situation and fail anyway. Fortunately, at the CEF, they got to know me and to trust me. They fought for me in court. They managed to soften my control and I did some internships or run in the fields with an educator. So, I continued to fight because despite what the government was thinking, I knew that now I overcome this. Believing in it changed everything. ”

(Hamza, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

As soon as the "jihadist" discourse placed the young person in a situation where he no longer trusts the corrupt world surrounding him, it will offer him a group reassuring and valuing him.¹¹⁷ When he talks about his group, Hamza evokes the similarity of the feelings he shared with his "brothers". The group dimension is very important because according to Hamza, only the group members could understand his suffering, listen to him and support him without judging him. In addition, Hamza explains that he felt closer to the group members when they were wearing the same clothes (the qamis¹¹⁸ and the hat). As if wearing the same clothes allowed him to get closer to them and participated in the construction of his new identity. According to Hamza, the covering cloth has a meaning both identity and group that gives him a feeling of appeasement through the perceived protective dimension of the "jihadist" group. With Hamza, we find what Scott Atran describes as the search for a "compassionate core".¹¹⁹ In this movement, Hamza is no different from other teenagers. A characteristic of this age is to separate from parents and invest a peer group.

As Serge Hefez explains¹²⁰, "the whole childhood is a process of gradual separation that somehow reaches its peak in adolescence. The adolescent must put into action and implement this process

¹¹⁶We asked Farid Benyettou to come and testify as a former radicalized individual in front of the young people. His testimony (of his radicalization and de-radicalization in prison) was the subject of a book: BOUZAR D. and BENYETTOU F., *My jihad, journey of a repentant individual*, published by Autrement, 2017. This testimony was very badly perceived by French journalists because this former "jihadist" had indoctrinated the Koachi Brothers 8 years ago. The Koachi brothers are the one who committed the attacks against Charlie-Hebdo in 2014.

¹¹⁷KHOSROKHAVAR F. *Radicalization*. Paris: published by the *House of the Sciences of the Mankind*, 2014.

¹¹⁸Long tunic worn by the Prophet, sometimes worn by men during prayer. The pietist radicalized individuals have turned it into a daily habit

¹¹⁹ATRAN S. *Terrorists looking for some compassion*, in *Cerveau et Psycho*, N°11: September-October 2005.

¹²⁰BOUZAR D., HEFEZ S., *I dreamed about another world. Adolescence under the influence of Daesh*. Paris : Ed Stock ; 2017.

of disaffiliation pushing him to move away from his family to open up to other groups, other influences to which he will affiliate the time to form, forge an identity and come back later to his family, with the possibility of taking what suits him from it, without feeling engulfed by it". The use of appearance to make a connection is also a common thing with teenagers.

Philippe Gutton¹²¹ explains that "this or that wearing style or hairstyle that makes them look like one another gives them the opportunity to feel good about themselves, that is to say to integrate the morphological changes of the genital body in a sufficiently shareable way". However, the radical nature of the "jihadist" group wants to multiply this common trait of membership by imposing dress codes allowing to recognize each other and to be radically different from "others". Hamza experienced this, just like all the other young individuals we have followed through their radicalization process¹²², beyond the sample studied in this report: the "jihadist" discourse accentuates the physical similarity between the group members by valuing clothes that destroy the individual identity features. Therefore, young people have the feeling to be "the same" because they are undifferentiated from each other.

Consequently, Hamza felt protected, loved and valued by the group. Let's notice that Hamza, like all the other young individuals we have followed, was constantly in touch with "his brothers" via internet, telephone, and texts. The group was omnipresent. The availability of the "jihadist" group, the illusion made Hamza believe he was understood, and his existential questions answered. Additionally, the accentuation of similarities between the group members allowed this young person to feel safe. This evolution of Hamza's psychic state participates in and strengthens his sense of belonging to the violent radical group. He moved away from his kinship system to regenerate himself through a new imaginary and fantasized filiation. Hamza finds answers to his identity and filiation questions, and remakes his origins by endorsing the narrative construction of the "jihadist" group. By sharing the same way of thinking, the same emotions and behaviours as the group members, we can make the hypothesis that the subjectification process of this young man was hindered (*"I considered what they said as an absolute truth. The worst thing was that even strangers had power over me"*). By no longer being able to see himself as a proper subject, Hamza has gradually lost his old family, and emotional and memorial references.

The strength of the bond of the group reassures the young person and restrains his emotional impulses. In this perspective, the "jihadist" group adapted its way of working by polarizing it on a relational dimension, because the more merged Hamza felt within the group, the more he endorsed the ideology of its members. And the more he endorsed this ideology, the closer he felt to his group members. We are witnessing an intermingling between the relational indoctrination and Hamza's ideological indoctrination which will gradually transform his cognitive system. We must remember that at the beginning of his engagement (just after the loss of his grandfather who was a fundamental family reference), Hamza was afraid of death and tried to handle it through mourning. But once his cognitive system was completely transformed after conversing with the group and watching videos, death became like a friend that he was actively looking for. From martyr for him to martyr for others, Hamza changed from a personal ideal to an altruistic

¹²¹GUTTON P. *Culture of friends. Critical Books on Family Therapy and Networking Practices*. De Boeck University; 2008. P. 109-129.

¹²²BOUZAR D. et HEFEZ S., *ibid.*



ideal.¹²³ Due to the fact that the “jihadist” discourse provides an answer adapted to the problem and the situation of a particular subject in a given temporality, the person will gradually endorse the ideology proposed to him.

Taking into account the relational dimension is fundamental in the radicalism exit of the young individuals we followed, especially teenagers. Indeed, as long as the “jihadist” group is perceived as the only one to be able to protect them from the outside world, the young people will remain cleaved in their vision of the binary world between "us" and "them". The challenge was to become a third part by gradually replacing the initial object and allowing radicalized ones to temper their relationship with their environment by gradually integrating a new zone. The approach of the anthropologist Scott Atran proposes that "to prevent them from acting, it is necessary to eradicate their logic at the most fundamental level, that is, to remove this irrepressible need to create a compassionate core. And for that, the most logical and easiest way would be to foster the creation of other affective cores not presenting the same lethal threat; whether in cities and in cyberspace, these new communities are necessary for people to find a "tribe" or a pseudo-family (...)". It requires establishing a trust relationship with the young person so that he would gradually succeeds in investing this new working group as a transitional area allowing him, after some time, to break away from his first “jihadist” group. In short, the whole challenge of these new substitution groups will be to try to be "as close and engaged with potential kamikazes as their terror groups were."¹²⁴

Sometimes, when we found that there was no cognitive opening possible and because the young people remained dissolved in the collective paranoid of his group¹²⁵ we asked for the confinement of the young person, if possible in the CEF (“Centre Éducatif Fermé”, a closed educational centre), or in prison if it was the only solution, to force him to cut the connection between him and the radical group.

“*What saved me was the confinement. I could no longer communicate with them. I was in a total breakdown. It allowed me to continue my way, without having them polluting my mind. I had a hard time. The confinement was very hard to bear. I lived it as an extreme injustice. Especially for me, I am very concerned by this subject because my real brothers went to jail and it affected my entire childhood. I thought I was going crazy sometimes. I really blamed the government and the CPDSI who were arguing that it was the best way for me to overcome this situation. They kept telling me: "We ask for your confinement because we care about you. It does not matter if you hate us. The most important thing is to save you". It took me a long time to really see it as a help. At first, I took it as an additional proof validating and confirming all the hatred I have had against the government since my childhood. The truth is that I have to admit that my confinement allowed me to break up with the group and step back. At the beginning, I thought that I just had to*

¹²³ ATRAN S. *Terrorists looking for some compassion*, in *Cerveau et Psycho*, N°11: september-october 2005.

¹²⁴ ATRAN S. *Terrorists looking for some compassion*, in *Cerveau et Psycho*, N°11: september-october 2005.

¹²⁵ This was the case of the famous Léa, treated as a failure of our team by the French press, despite not having all the elements of the file. Our team asked the anti-terrorist judge to lock this young girl because she could not untie herself from her "internet contacts" within her "jihadist" group, which still had power over her and she was aware of it. This has been the case for many young people, especially teenagers.

wait, that it was God testing me. This is what the Dawla told me when I got arrested in Turkey. Today, I think that, on the contrary, God sent me two signs to stop me because I was taking the wrong path. This contradiction between what they promised me "to go fight" and their lack of evidence, made me doubt. And when I have a doubt, everything collapses. I have difficulties to trust ever again.

(Najet, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

This fourth testimony shows how the loss of the group can also question the definition of oneself, or at least question the redefinition of oneself built through one's radicalization. All the "jihadists" we followed went through some kind of periods of emptiness after breaking up with the radical group.

Since my arrest, I have felt like I had to give up who I was. I was no longer the same funny girl, complete, full of conviction and strength, fighting against injustice. I had to sacrifice some facets of my personality. The assignment exhausted me and I had the feeling of losing myself on the way. Towards my 7th grade, I found myself back, I knew who I was. My character was built, I had my own ideas and I started to think like an adult. The government was punishing me for being me, shutting me up because I was too radical for them. I could not be faithful to myself anymore. Before, when I started a project, I worked on it seriously, I invested myself; and when something did not please me, I said it. And there, I found myself in a situation where I did not even have the right to say what I thought or do what I wanted. I felt like I was not allowed to think anymore ... My life was entirely led by men who thought they were right and decided that I was wrong. They took power over my life without being able to do anything about it. It is very disturbing to endure that. I had to become another person so they would let me alone, but progressively, I really became that other person. One morning, they ended my assignment after more than a year, without further explanation. I did not have a single appointment, except with CPDSI, during my entire assignment. I was relieved when I received the decree. Finally there was freedom for me and my family... We could get back to our normal lives. And yet, nothing really changed inside me. I was still missing my former "me". I was no longer a determined but passive person. I had the feeling that even my training (she passed the nurse diploma during her legal process), they spoiled it. I would have appreciated it better if I didn't have to do it to please them, so that they would not monitor me anymore. In addition, I felt like because of them, I was putting my religion aside. I was barely praying and that's all. I avoided human relations. I didn't want to be close to anyone anymore. I broke up with the group and I found excuses to take distance from my friends despite the fact I have always been close to them. I was always funny. I never took myself seriously. With the Dawla's "brothers" it was the same, I made fun of everything. I always wanted to make people laugh, and be funny. But there, I no longer liked anybody. Everybody annoyed me. I did not laugh anymore. I wanted to stay alone, no longer talk to anyone, even those I liked. It is quite amazing that these feelings and behaviours were caused by my house arrest and not by the Dawla. When I withdrew myself from the rest of the world, I built another bubble... In the end, I feel like I have changed despite myself. I don't know



if it's positive or not. Sometimes I wonder if I would have been able to make all these concessions if I had not felt obliged to do it. I don't think so. I would probably be in Syria but I would not have all that hatred and anger in me. Perhaps it is more reassuring to do it by fear of going to prison rather than doing it by myself. It diminishes the anxiety to do things wrong and not be up to Allah's expectations because we justify it by thinking that we don't have the choice. I know I'm not quite recovered because the mourning I did was through coercion. Today I don't want to think about it, I am completely done with all these subjects. I'm allergic to it. I continue to come to the CPDSI from time to time even though I am no longer obliged to do so. Gradually, I may be able to actually turn a new page and will not be afraid to watch it.

(Hawa, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

We quickly understood that the group's discussion we were establishing should be a kind of airlock, or transitional areas between the "jihadist" group and "the rest of the world", in which radicalized ones feel once again understood, supported and even loved. We had to offer a place where radicalized ones could find both a group dynamic and the feeling of being surrounded, so that the radical group is no longer the only one to satisfy their relationship needs. Basically, we wanted to propose a new substitution group.

“ One day, my mother told me that she made an appointment with an association because the family needed help... I was not stupid, I quickly guessed she was talking about the CPDSI. I saw them as a team of koffars, paid by the government with the money of Mossad to “desislamize” young people. Everyone knew that they were preventing young people from doing their Hijra. My “brothers” had already warned me. So that my mother would not take me there, I pretended that everything was fine. I wanted to save time to quickly organize a third departure. I told her that I wanted to see specialists, anyone but Dounia Bouzar and her team. My parents did not tell me anything. I thought it worked, until I stole my mother's phone. I went to the bathroom with her phone to search in her messages, to check if she had really contacted the CPDSI and I saw the name of Laura Bouzar. This is how I knew that the next day my parents would drag me to the CPDSI. I was still in emergency youth home at that time. To make them think that it was all over, I decided to agree to go and meet the association. I hated Dounia Bouzar. I had heard a lot about her on social network. They told me that Dounia Bouzar was Satan on Earth, that we should not talk to her because she was a bad woman, that she didn't know anything about religion, that she was a fake Muslim, a infiltrated from the Mossad... The first time I came, I just wanted to leave. I wanted to kill her because she scared me. In fact, I was very afraid to meet her and her team. They were an obstacle on my path for Syria. It was like I was in hell. I prepared myself but as soon as I saw Dounia in the room, I could not stay, I was going to break everything ... I had to go out and never see her again in my life... When I started to participate in the CPDSI discussion groups, I felt like I was suffocating... I was whispering the Quran endlessly to drive away the Sheitan. I refused to look into Dounia's eyes. The first time, in addition to the girls who were present, there were two boys in the room. There were about twenty young people. I felt very bad because I had

withdrawn myself from the world for two years. I had fled it and I was brutally projected into it. I was no longer used to talk to people, or even have relationships with people or see them. I was hiding behind my veil. I turned it into a niqab. I neither wanted men to see me nor to turn my chair to the wall to protect myself. I didn't want to take the risk of hearing the voices of men, they could have tempted me, seduced me, so I plugged my ears. I wanted to run away but the cops were stationed in front of the elevator. Laura (the team leader) managed to hold me back. We both got isolated in a room. She had a soft voice, she was so nice. Moreover, she was so touching to squat down so she would be at my level and she sat down on the floor with me, while she was huge with her belly. She was at the end of her pregnancy. She won my trust at that time and told me that anyway, it was ok if I didn't feel able to stay. My fear was normal, she understood. I was surprised and relaxed a bit. I started to confide in Laura, I don't know why. It was easier to talk to Laura because my "brothers" only spoke to me about Dounia Bouzar. She really was the bad guy in the story. In the end, we spent hours sitting on the floor talking to each other. Afterwards, the others came to pray because it was time. To my surprise, the CPDSI let us pray. I was destabilized. When I left, I knew I would come back. And I came back. Week after week, the CPDSI became the only place where I could talk to people, other than the internet. I was able to learn again how to interact with young people who were going through the same challenges. This first session had a weird effect on me. It was like I had set my feet back on the ground. I was like landing. (...) We were helping each other at the CPDSI. We were all Muslims, mostly pro-Dawla, some pro-Al Nosra and others who spoke about it in the past. It helped me a lot to see girls who were still in the ideology and others who left it. At first, I had only one desire: leaving for the Shâm with other young people who still wanted to go there. I didn't want to approach those who were "deradicalized". I did not even want to know their name. I just wanted to tell them to go away because they were not on the right path. With Daesh's girls, we could support each other in the right way. We thought the same thing and I had the feeling to be useful. I could advise them about what they were allowed to do or not. I focused particularly on a little girl that I considered like my little sister. I felt obliged to protect her. Then one day, an older sister who had escaped from Syria testified. Her testimony touched me deeply. She destroyed one by one all my illusions without knowing it. She was looking for the same things I was but she explained that she did not find them there. The confidences of the young people touched me a lot. We could ask each other questions that we could not really ask to our (jihadist) group. When we had a doubt, we could tell it. The CPDSI did not jump on us saying "ah, you see!" Adults understood us. They respected our dreams. There were sincere discussions. Some young people talked about traumas they lived in their early childhood. One day, a young woman told us a rape she had underwent. It deeply upset me. It took me days to forget it. She collapsed in Dounia's arms. One person of the team, Samira, took the TGV with the young woman in order not to let her go home alone in this condition. She left her children alone with her husband to get on the train at short notice, and didn't come back home until the next morning. I saw how much they felt concerned about us. Samira is the aunt of a young girl who wanted to leave for the Shâm and had prepared an attack in France. And then, there was Foad. He joined the CPDSI because his little sister left for Syria when she was 14 years old. So he said he wanted to save the other children kidnapped by Daesh... These adults were nothing like the professionals I used to meet. So slowly, I started to trust them too. I was very close to Foad. When I felt lonely, I could call him at night, at any time. He could spend half the night talking with me on the phone. Foad was always there for me. I was not just a job



for him. . I could the deep pain on his face when he thought about his sister. I was obliged to think about the suffering I was putting my own family through. It was like a mirror. ” ”

(Morgane, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

“ I was convinced that I was right and I didn't think I could ever change my mind. My entourage tried to argue with me, and reason me, but nothing affected me. When I started meetings at the CPDSI, I made fun of them regularly. At each meeting, in my heart I thought that these disbelievers would never change my mind, they could talk as long as they wanted, they were just wasting their time. I told everything to my group on social networks to give them the maximum information I collected from the CPDSI, so they could use some against them. I remember that we laughed a lot about it, we regularly laughed about the things they told me. They (CPDSI) thought they could distract me from the truth, from the right path, but I was strong and I was not going to be fooled by the Sheitan who whispered in my ears. I thought that the CPDSI represented the devil. I heard that girls, coming out of the CPDSI, became prostitutes, because they gave up their headscarves and religion. I thought they were there for that, they were the State's accomplices driving me away from Islam and putting me in jail. Moreover, I thought that a policeman was always there recording me, so I was careful about everything I said. I was stronger than them. I immediately recognized Dounia Bouzar, whom I had already seen on TV. The Dawla had already warned me about her, long before. The first time, I wanted to flee when I saw the Sheitan in front of me. I was even ready to kill them. At that time, I thought they all deserved to die because they were fighting to prevent us from going to the Holy Land. I have already told them right in the eyes: "You deserve to die, you are misbelievers" and I meant it truly. When ISIL was asking me for information such as meeting dates, meeting places and schedules, I gave them everything I knew. The problem was that the places were changing all the time and my mother knew the address the morning of the meeting. I often searched on her phone while she was not looking. But she had no information, as if they did not trust her too. (...) I could say monstrosity, threaten them to kill them, no one moved, no one looked at me with horror. I did not understand their reaction and I did everything to provoke them more and more. I wanted to see fear in their eyes. I wanted them to kick me out, call the police, never want to see me again, but no... But I thought they must be afraid because they were surrounded by policemen all the time who were staying in front of the room, but they have never searched in our stuff. And they didn't come into the room with us. I didn't understand. I even remember wondering if the CPDSI team was suicidal or not. The police officers also affected me a lot. I recognized them right away with their postures, their eyes... I couldn't miss it. They must have been cops. Moreover, Laura Bouzar confirmed it to me when I asked her. I provoked them, looked at them in a bad way, I wanted to see their reaction. I had so much hatred against this unfair government. In spite of everything I tried, they have always kept being kind, polite, and respectful to me. They even smiled at me sometimes! Unbelievable! I wasn't afraid of anything so I was ready for their interrogations. I tried to anticipate every question, every answer, but each time I was out of touch. They have never said what I had planned. They destabilized me with their kindness. They talked to me about me, and insignificant things... I was lost because I realized that they didn't



want to fight against me... (...) The CPDSI made me talk a lot about what I was looking for, what was important to me, what made me breathe every second, what allowed me to live... I didn't understand and didn't see the link with "my jihad" but I answered as hypocritically as possible. The problem is they noticed it. I will always remember the day when I was at my best actress performance, persuaded to convince them all, looking at them straight in the eyes. I informed myself and I knew that it was recommended not to look to the right; otherwise it meant that I was lying. So I made efforts to look to the left because I read that it was appealing to memory and so to sincerity. I carefully chose my words; I had trained for several days. With all these precautions, I was proud of myself. I was sure to fool them. But finally, I was amazed. Laura, the team leader, looked at me with a smile and said softly, "ok, are you done?" She did not believe me. I felt humiliated and could not control myself. All my anger, my hatred, my contempt came out at once, I could not stop. I wished to be able to kill her myself with my own hands. But at that moment, I felt that in fact, she and her team were rather happy that I finally cracked. Facing my threats and insults, they replied that we would finally be able to start working. Then they analysed point after point, all that I had spat in their faces, as if these words were not intended to them. From that moment, something has changed. I don't really know why. It was as if a lock in my body finally opened. I still didn't like them, but it was as if they loved me a little. As if I couldn't do anything against it. It was despite me. I felt like they were really trying to figure out who I was. Since I was a child I have used to be always lectured by everybody about everything. No one ever heard my thoughts, my feelings, never answered my questions. I felt so lonely and misunderstood by the world around me... Only the Dawla understood me. Gradually, I started to talk because I could really tell them what I was thinking. I saw others confiding without fearing to be sent directly to jail who came back, week after week. Some came back even when they were free. So finally, I let it go without even realizing it. I did not feel good during the nights, so I sent them messages. Sometimes we talked by phone. Even in the evening or on Sundays, they have always answered. Here I was... I wanted to talk with some koffars... Sometimes there was a crying baby in background, but still, they answered. I felt considered. They answered me while they were taking care of their own child. It has never happened to me. Since the moment I was born, I have felt like I didn't exist. From that moment, I found myself in a crazy world with two facets. In one side there was ISIL, in the other side the CPDSI. I was divided between two worlds. I didn't know which group was the right one. Who told the truth? Everyone told me that the other was lying. Whenever I was in touch with Daesh, I was sincere. And every time I was in touch with the CPDSI, I was sincere too. I felt like I was going schizophrenic.

(Najet, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

This young woman (Catholic family, lower class) explains how at the beginning of her deradicalization, her teacher supported her and forced her to break up with a radical physical group of her neighbourhood:

“ *This teacher helped me a lot. I don't know why. She was a feminist, had been abused by a man in her past, so I thought we could go through this and still overcome such situation. Then she talked a lot about me. At that time, I was between both worlds. We went together to the Mc Donald's. And then, we came across the group of Salafist husbands seated on the terrace. I started crying because I was so afraid to walk past them as they could recognize me without the jilbab: I was wearing trousers with a bright colour shirt, and a turquoise blue scarf! Then she was hard with me but she did me a favour. She said: 'Listen, you have two choices: you rely on the resources you've got in you, in me and in God, or you still submit to this group of machos and I abandon you there, in this parking, and I never want to see you ever again! I wiped my tears and raised my head. I crossed the parking lot with her, head straight up, to the door of the Mc Donald's, with my turquoise scarf and my trousers. I was all over shaking but I did it. When I walked through the door, it was as if I had faced a dragon. But I knew I was strong. It was over... I needed someone to force me to confront them. Yet they were not violent. They would have never assaulted me, maybe they would have not even talked to me, thinking that I was lost again and that I was screwed. But showing them that I no longer thought like them seemed to me like the end of the world. I didn't have the strength, because I was tied to their wives so much. We were as real sisters; we confided everything in each other... I needed someone to accompany me during the separation and forced me to assume that I could live outside this group. And I needed someone to believe in me, who would know that I could do it. Then, with this teacher, I was able to go back and drink orange juice in the city centre, sit outside, etc. I even got back to dance school. I found back my body and my role as a woman suddenly. They had taken away the woman inside me.* ”

(20 year-old Salafist, Catholic family, lower class).

These testimonies selected because they are the most representative highlight that the relational aspect is one of the most important things in the membership in the “jihadist’s” project. Everything happens as if, within the new virtual or real tribe, young people spoke better, could confide, be understood, be loved, and protected. Many teenagers stagnated or regressed in their process of exit because they “missed” their group. The testifying repentant individuals insisted on the suffering and the difficulty of leaving the radical group. Years later, some are still affected:

“ (...) *I met other repentant individuals who also testified during these sessions. By interacting with the CPDSI team and with those young individuals who tried to join Daesh, I became aware of my old addiction to the “jihadist” group. Previously, when I heard Dounia talking about relational indoctrination, I really thought mine was only ideological. However, I, too, recognized myself in the young people's stories when they told how they felt valued* ”



within their group. I experienced that feeling of loneliness too... At each session, the young people were nodding when I spoke, and I, too, nodded when they confided in return. I thought about it for a long time and I waited impatiently for the next session. And then, I was again part of a group of girls, like the time of my studies (to be a nurse). I loved this reassuring feminine atmosphere. With Dounia, we debriefed the meeting together. We spent hours on the train to prepare future sessions. We worried about some young person and we felt reassured about other. After attacks, we were afraid that the author would be one of our young people. But no, none of them tried to leave for Syria or to act, until now... One of the employees formerly radicalized warned me: you'll see, you'll understand a lot about yourself as you will help others. She was right: I received as much as I gave.

(Testimony of Farid Benyettou)¹²⁶

In an interview, the anthropologist Scott Atran said: "What has always amazed me about future kamikazes was that they are not full of hatred (and most observers who study them in the field will tell you), it will be horrible to say, but they are people full of love. This type of analysis is almost impossible for us to hear, but we must make this effort, at the risk of never understanding the phenomenon, and letting it spread. In a tribal logic, we must consider the inside of the group, and we must talk about the need for compassion and intimacy, more than hatred and destruction." At this stage, we must make the connection between this observation and the results of statistics with regard to the characteristics of the "jihadists" we treated: 73% of them, from any social classes, declare having lived a real or symbolic abandonment (feeling of abandonment expressed before their radicalization according to their parents' testimonies).

Relationally, in all of our cares, we have worked with radicalized individuals on their inclination to look for some support from others, and we have refocused them on themselves so they could find their own resources to answer their questioning and make their own decisions. But to do that, they needed to make roots and renew with a new reassuring and supportive group that we became. The rupture with their radical group and the refocusing on their own resources led them to re-affiliate with their families (parents or spouses), with whom they gradually reconnected.

In order to break up with the radical group, the discussion group we organized at least once a week represented a substitution group offering a kind of transitional path from Daesh to society, allowing to recreate a collective and complicity. These discussion groups can be replaced or supplemented by humanitarian projects, break camps, some days in closed educational centres, etc. The point is to fill the loss of the cohesive feeling that reigned within the radical group.

In addition to weekly discussion groups, we set up a 24/7 permanent tutorial program filling the loss of intensity and permanence of communications within the radical group. Young people talk about the availability of professionals in all their testimonies. Otherwise, they could not have been able to take distance from the 200 daily exchanges with their radical group. It is necessary to support them in this progressive recovery of individuation and autonomy.

¹²⁶BENYETTOU F., *My jihad, journey of a repentant individual*, published by Autrement, 2017.

Rehabilitation centres on the model of EPIDE¹²⁷ held with the participation of former retired soldiers. There, young people find both solidarity and fraternity of a united group, a common membership sometimes enhanced by the wearing of a uniform (which underlines their similarities, as Daesh do), strict rules (which makes the group "containing"), and an almost individualized tutor (which helps with learning, compliance with instructions, etc.). This could be invested as "transitional areas with tutoring" during the "jihadism" recovery, especially as the young people who follow these trainings have various issues. We would thus avoid the renewal of the group exaltation behind all the ideologies of rupture, which leads to put several "jihadists" together. Moreover, trained young people are then almost systematically hired by companies in cooperation with the EPIDE networks, which would contribute to strengthen the coherence of society and trust in adults. However, it is essential for these centres to accept, in contrary to their usual operating mode, these young individuals not to be "claimants" to be placed in one of those centres.¹²⁸ Along the same lines, the Centre Éducatifs Fermés (Closed Educational Centres) have been very effective as transitional places for many of our young people.

Concerning the primary prevention on this relational aspect of radicalization, the importance of the search for cohesion within the radical group proves that young people suffer from individualism in our society. It is crucial to use tools to work on their vulnerability with regard to their quest for a peer group. We urge educational institutions to reinvest the collective dimension of their approaches and educational projects: collective sports rather than individual sports, projects based on self-help rather than personal effort, citizen programs based on exchanges rather than unilateral giving, etc. The work on the relational dimension obviously includes the development of education to new virtual modes of communication (internet, social networks ...) to which we must integrate the parents, often showing a "generational gap".¹²⁹

¹²⁷The EPIDE were built with the collaboration of the IHEDN (Institute of Higher Studies of National Defense).

¹²⁸We have already explained that a "jihadist" or even a radicalized person in general can not claim anything because he/she feels he/she has more discernment than "the others".

¹²⁹Recommendations taken from the RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS report.

III. 2 TRUSTING AGAIN LOVED ONES TO TRUST SOCIETY AGAIN OR THE REASSURING EMOTIONAL APPROACH

In our caring experiences, we relied on relatives to consider an emotional approach reassuring the young individual. It is possible to conceptualize this method of change support as a set of techniques dealing with behavioural, emotional and cognitive breakdowns. We are at the cross of the emotional and relational approaches, one acting on the other and vice versa. This method neither minimizes the importance of risk factors and personal vulnerability, nor the group phenomena involved. On the contrary, it leads young people to start psychotherapy in order to reflect on their individual determinants that contributed to their radicalism (our basic postulate is that "if a discourse is authoritative, it means it makes sense")¹³⁰. The paranoid reading grid of "jihadists" reaches even more easily a young person who has already been weakened by a difficult past or a traumatic event.

The process is therefore conscious and unconscious: the young person evaluates the threat according to his personal resources, vulnerabilities and defensive system. The "jihadist" discourse uses emotions to make the young individual feel insecure and radicalize him. First, we tried to act on the emotions to reassure him, in order to skirt the cognitive locking obstacle (consequence of radicalization). Just like the "jihadist" discourse, our method used emotions to act on cognitions.

As a preparatory step, the method requires a search for resources that can be used to reassure the radicalized one. It requires help from their parents or a tutor of resilience (educator, teacher, etc.), who can be a attachment figure (uncle, grandmother, close friend, etc.). Any radicalization recovery must be thought with the help of at least one tutor of resilience.

The anxiogenic "jihadist" discourse lead the young individual to withdraw from his community, by placing him in a substitution community and giving him the illusion to belong from now on to a sacred mythical group (also called "relational indoctrination"). Firstly using the original link as the main reconstruction factor allows to replace the young person in his real community to find at first a part of his emotional, memory, and cognitive references. It aims at bringing him back to an episode of his life where he felt safe before the reception of he "jihadists" anxiogenic emotions. In order to achieve this, relatives put back on stage "little things of his daily life", apparently unimportant, which could inspire a totally unconscious and reflexive emotional come back of their child by reminding him something of his past that has not been affected by his indoctrination. These scenarios (reminding the early childhood or happy moments before his radicalization) create the perfect conditions for the emergence of emotions by referring to elements coming from the long-term memory (autobiographical memory). This explains the lack of control over emotional feelings most often associated with childhood memories, or with a founding event. Parents tell that their children "collapsed" and cried when they affected them by a smell, a song, a gesture, which belonged to their early childhood. Spouses get good results when they managed to remind a memory related to a symbolic event: marriage, birth, death.

¹³⁰Dounia Bouzar, *What education against religious radicalism ?*, already quoted

Considering that the “jihadist” discourse diluted the individual in a paranoid collective, operated a kind of “anaesthesia” of the individual sensations, and disconnected the young person from any culture in order to forbid him pleasure experiments and the incarnation of any feelings, the recall of little events which belonged to his early childhood makes re-appear feelings temporarily repressed. As the “jihadist” discourse reduced the usual sources of positive emotions usually relaxing humans (cinema, music, entertainment, friendly relations, etc.) and turned them into stressful activities (perceived as doing “Shirk”), the recall of little events also allows to feel back sensations, so the young person feels like getting his body back and who he used to be.

This recall acts on emotions and allows the radicalized individual to find indelible feelings most often coming from childhood, and not related to the radical group. We manage to make him feel things so that he distinguishes himself from the feeling of the radical group. When the young person feels sensations, he becomes a singular individual, a reincarnated subject in a body. The dehumanization aimed by “jihadists” involves through disincarnating and disaffiliation. Deradicalization involves reincarnation and re-affiliation.

We have very few testimonies illustrating this emotions recovery because our experience with loved ones uses unconscious mechanisms. Only Aline expresses it clearly.

“ “ *There was a real turning point for me the first time I listened to music again: I cried because I was upset to feel strong emotions again in my body. It was like a rebirth. So I realized that my body had been dead for a long time.* ” ”

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

For her part, Morgane talks about the importance of her parents’ support, and especially from her mother who persevered in applying this approach named by the parents “Madeleine de Proust”, in reference to the episode described by Proust with regard to memories that came back to him when he was soaking his madeleine in his cup of tea. It should be mentioned that both parents, former addicts, had been declared “deficient” by the judicial and educational services. Yet when their daughter tried to go to Syria several times, they managed to focus their efforts and largely contributed to save her. This proves that even parents previously showing some lack in primary educational care can nevertheless develop a reassuring emotional approach to a radicalized child.

“ “ *When I went to the court, I was afraid the judge would lock me up and take away all my possibilities for a fresh start. I was hoping the judge would take me out of high school. I preferred prison. Every day, I was afraid to break down, and hurt someone because I hated teachers and students so much. It was in court that I saw my mother for the first time after my attempt to leave. I had not seen her for two and a half weeks. I denigrated her, insulted her, and scowled her. I refused to say hello, I didn’t let her touch me, or take me in her arms while she was crying. I even pushed her physically. Not to mention my father. I perceived him as a*



traitor, as a miscreant who had never been here for me. He abandoned me and there, he was standing in the court cowering, all sad as if he really cared about me... I remember they called security because I was very threatening. I threatened to kill the judge. I told him that I wanted to cut his throat and play soccer with his head. Despite my behaviour, my mother was always there to tell me that she cared about me, that she loved me very much. She made the same gestures of tenderness during my childhood, and it annoyed me but at the same time it destabilized me. It was weird. It was like I was between two worlds. She didn't try to reason with me or contradict me, unlike my father who was constantly in confrontation with me. I was completely lost. I didn't expect at all this reaction from my mother. I expected her to reject me. Finally, she insisted so much that I remember huddling against her for a few seconds at the end of the audience. This contact shook me. When I left, I still smelled her perfume... The judge placed me in a youth home with an educator who would monitor me for a year. It wasn't a big deal. I promised myself to hate the educator and never speak to him. He must not be able to indoctrinate me and get me away from the truth. I knew I would not have trouble to escape again. I felt like a lion in search of freedom locked in the body of a 15 year-old girl. ”

(Morgane, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

Finally, we chose a spouse's testimony to illustrate how the reassuring approach can also be used within a couple. It is about a thirty year-old converted woman who left to Syria with her child. Her husband contacted us and we gave him the usual advice of the “Madeleine de Proust” approach, which he applied by telephone. The system worked and Sophie agreed to run away with smugglers paid by her husband. Back to France, once released from prison, she published her book¹³¹ and described how her husband's messages had affected her. She titled this passage “Le réveil” (the Awakening) in her book and explained how it had contributed to her cognitive remobilization and thus to her rescue:

“ Julien's messages are loving and worried. He doesn't blame me, he seeks on the contrary to get closer to me. It's strange to have conversations about the future of our love, about our chances of overcoming this crisis separating us, while I'm in Rakka without him knowing about it. During these discussions or email exchanges, Julien is very sweet. Gradually, he manages to restore my confidence in our history. He tells me about us, and the beginning of our relationship. He sends me photos. Some really shocks me. It's a bit like I forgot about their existence. I realize I miss him. I want to go back home. (...) Julien tells me that my sister is ill, which upsets me. Without having to spell things out, he tells me that's because she worried about Hugo and me. Yet we have not left for more than ten days. But the blur of my project drives them all crazy. I imagine they know now that I have quitted my job, even if Julien doesn't talk to me about it. (...) When I speak with Julien, I have some lightning moments. My previous life seems suddenly, not perfect, but rich, and full. I have the feeling that everything falls back into place. ”

¹³¹Sophie KASIKI, *In the Daesh's night, Confession of a repentant individual*, Robert Laffont, 2016.

For his part, her husband testifies in the same book: "My first good contact comes from Benjamin, a friend with whom I was a high school proctor and who now works in the media. He got me in touch with Dounia Bouzar, a specialist in Islamic radicalization. Anthropologist and sociologist, Muslim... She fights against indoctrination. I contacted her immediately: it has been nine days since I had no news from my wife and son.

“ *You are right, it is useless to lie: she is probably on her way to Syria.” Her honesty makes me feel good. Then she said:*

“She will contact you again. And then, everything will be possible. Above all, do not blame her, you must neither overwhelm her nor reason with her. It will not work and it will only drive her back. Try to see things like that: an unknown woman has taken the place of the woman you know and love. You will have to revive her. Tell her about your memories, remind her of your intimacy, your happiness. Do not forget one thing: she has forgotten everything but it is there, not so far under the surface (...)”

“We cannot say that it was encouraging, but at least there was a plan. Immediately, I sat in front of my computer and wrote an e-mail to Sophie. From that moment, I used to write several times a day. I sent her pictures of our wedding, pictures of Hugo in her arms, the picture of her pregnancy test. I talked to her about love, lack, emptiness. At first, I found it difficult to find my words: I wanted to scream, yell, and order her to come back. This is what I wanted to write: ‘you’re crazy, bring Hugo back immediately, for God’s sake!’ But I wrote something else. And curiously, as I wrote first to revive her passion, her heart, to bring her home, it caused me a profound shift. I rediscovered myself too, these testimonies of our great love. I lived again our happy moments, and our complicity.”

Even though deradicalized individuals are not aware of it, this emotional approach has proved to be very effective, since our statistics show that there are more girls and minors than the other young people in our sample who have left the “jihadist” group and ideology. However, the only difference between girls and minors, and other radicalized ones is the reaction speed of their parents to ask for some help¹³². **This proves that the speed of the establishment of the reassuring emotional approach has an impact over the radicalization recovery.** This is logical as this step is necessary for the next one with regard to the cognitive remobilization of the young person. **It is not possible to bring a radicalized one to a team if the dialogue between the young person and his family has not returned back to normal, as the family will be the one settling the “meeting” scenario with the team. Indeed, as the radicalized one is persuaded to have more discernment than the rest of the world, he will never be asking for a “deradicalization” process.**

This tried-and-tested emotional approach was operated on a very personal level, but its purpose was to bring back the trust towards not only loved ones and adults in general, but also towards society and the democratic system. Indeed, the anxiogenic emotional approach of the “jihadist” discourse delegitimized everything that was not within the radical group.

¹³²See “fates variables”, part II of the report “RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS”.

Reassuring the radicalized individuals allows to reintroduce progressively all those he protected himself against.

Along with this personified approach, our team also developed a reassuring emotional approach that was more macro-based, as it meant to recognize national and international socio-political dysfunctions. So any extremist groups are not the only ones to denounce these dysfunctions, it seemed fundamental to offer a discussion area accepting to recognize some failures of the Republic denounced by the radical groups (often related to discrimination, stigmatization, unfair application of secularism, international politics, etc.), and to allow radicalized ones to reintroduce complexity and scientificity to analyse them. Basically, it meant for us to propose new types of defence mechanisms and compensatory solutions based on the young individuals' observation of societal dysfunctions.

At the preventive level, anticipating the anxiogenic approach of the "jihadist" discourse requires to set up free speech spaces where young people can analyse the gap between the promises of the French republican motto and the realities, the political dysfunctions (national and international), geopolitics, etc., in a complex and rational way. It also includes prevention against discrimination, stigma, sexual abuse, etc. (basically anything that can affect the promised equality of all individuals). We can integrate in these actions an "education to secularism", especially for French people, allowing young individuals to understand the rights and duties of this legal concept, but also to be able to find their bearings if they were taken apart in political issues overtaking them from different extremist movements ("jihadist" discourses but also extreme right-wing lines, and other various political discourses that do not belong to extremist parties). Basically, the emotional approach that aims at reassuring young people about the reliability of democracy must include a political dimension. It is supported by another approach based on affects through relatives.

III.3 REALIZING THE UNTRUTHFUL NATURE OF THE “JIHADIST” PROPAGANDA TO INITIATE A COGNITIVE OPENING

During all our follow-ups, the young individuals expressed their first doubts¹³³ about the trust they gave to their group from the moment they became aware of the ambiguous, contradictory, paradoxical and even false statements made to them. We will first deconstruct this awareness, and then show how the collective aspect facilitates it, before clearly specifying the methodology necessary for its emergence.

III.3.1 Becoming aware of the gap between the commitment motive and the reality of the “jihadist” group's identity and action

Aline was destabilized by the story told by a young woman who had escaped from Daesh in 2015. This young woman contacted us to tell us what she lived in Syria.

This testimony denounced the disastrous material conditions of houses, especially the lack of hygiene and the sudden wickedness of the “sisters”, previously so fraternal on social networks. These “sisters” did not defend her when the group wanted to marry her by force instead of letting her work in a hospital, as she had been promised to. She was incarcerated and managed to escape. This testimony affected Aline because her group promised her a beautiful house with swimming pool, the physical and psychological security in a world of mutual aid.

“ I started to have doubts when I heard a “sister” who came back from Syria testifying at the CPDSI...She was one among the few that managed to come back alive at that time. I met her at the CPDSI. She explained how her arrival there disappointed her. The reality was far from the promises made by Daesh. She lived in houses that belonged to Syrians who had been killed by the group because they had not pledged allegiance. She opened my eyes about the conditions of life by describing the absence of hot water, dirt and not the big house with a pool they promised ... And more importantly, the lack of solidarity between sisters, who were only fighting and betraying each other... While on the internet, they had promised to be “sisters for life”... At that moment, I felt betrayed because my “brothers and sisters” had lied to me. This is the first time I started to question their sincerity. I trusted them so much, it's like the world was falling apart. I started to list all the contradictory things I had heard. For example, about the France attacks claim, initially, they told me that they had been made by Zionists engaged by secret societies to raise Islamophobia in France, and then, they told me to be proud of my “brothers” who sacrificed themselves for the cause! This inconsistency suddenly broke out in my consciousness. Before hearing this

¹³³See the work of LAMINE A-S about the doubt (2014), “I doubt ; Therefore, I Believe.” Three Modalities of “Belief in the Making” In Religion in Times of Crisis, published by Gladys Ganiel, Christophe Monnot and Heidemarie Winkel. Leiden : Brill, 72-90 and more generally *Religious identities and the common world*, L'Harmattan, forthcoming in 2018.



repentance at the CPDSI, I would have never been able to ask myself questions without being afraid of an excommunication by my group. I felt like I was going crazy. They never showed any evidence, except evidence that could not be verified. I had to believe in them, in their words. I got to a point where I was sending them messages asking for their permission on everything I wanted to do. I could hardly even breathe if they did not validate the fact it was something allowed in Islam! And there, when I heard the surviving sister, all I had repressed went back to the surface. Who were they really? Why did they dictate my life? From this first testimony of this rescued sister from Syria, I became very ambivalent and started asking myself a lot of questions. ” ”

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

This other young person started to doubt the reliability of her group's discourse by comparing the promise they made to her with the opinions of other “jihadists”. Her testimony is interesting since she only engaged because the group had promised her to participate in the fighting, and she disengaged when she found out that women could not fight. Najet is typically a semi-disengaged woman (from her group who lied to her, but not from her mission to fight against Bashar Al-Assad's soldiers). She is of course still radicalized: she still deeply believes that only “the divine law can regenerate the corrupt world”. However, realizing that her extremist group had lied to her makes appear a series of doubts, which will gradually allow her to forget the binary worldview she used to have.

“ *I started to wonder if women could really fight among ISIL “fighters”... All the other young pro-Dawla, like me, were unanimous in saying that women did not fight in Syria. I did not want to become a Dawla police officer but a soldier, and they assured me that it was not possible. Yet today, I realize how obvious my blindness was. I had never seen women fighting in the videos and testimonies... Everyone told me on social networks that women did not fight, only the “brothers”. They promised to make an exception for me. They persuaded me that there were some women who were fighting without ever giving me any evidence. I believed them again. I only talked with men, unlike “sisters” who spoke very rarely to “brothers” except for a wedding. I spent hours every day talking to “brothers” here and there about the fight. I did not have any discussions about religion, I did not receive “reminders”, I have never received any hadits except the ones talking about fights and jihad. I realized that the discourse I used to hear wasn’t at all the same than the others. When some young people from the CPDSI talked about humanitarianism or principles about religion, I did not understand a word because I was ignorant. Infidels knew more about Islam than me. I realized that with my “brothers” on the internet, we only talked about fighting, weapons, solidarity between “fighter-brothers”, violence, the filthy government that had destroyed my life, and my “brothers” life too. But gradually, I actually looked for some evidence of a woman fighting. I needed proof that I had never received. Until then, I had only seen women training, but they were not on the battlefield. I urged my “brothers” to give me some evidence before trying to leave again. They suddenly dismissed me like I was nothing because I insisted. They could not stand that I dared to contradict them, and not to believe their beautiful words. Now, I understand that they realized they were* ”



no longer controlling me completely. It is true that initially, I have never asked questions, I agreed to everything they said. I thought they had the truth, and that I was ignorant. It was as simple as that. It never occurred to me to doubt them. At the CEF, I read a lot and finally learned religion. I have a better understanding on many things. I have mostly realized how much they taught me nothing and only spoke to me about weapons, while they knew that I could never fight. I spoke to a "sister" who was incarcerated by "jihadists" because she had refused to get married. My "brothers" knew that I would have to marry someone and stay home to have children, and they lied to me. So, who were they really to lie to me? How could I consider them as my brothers?

(Najet, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

In the same logic, doubts about the help given to Syrians allow this young person to ask his first questions.

I was still very attentive to TV reports about jihadists groups. That helped me a lot during my process of deradicalization. I needed to gather evidence to be sure that no group over the 300 ones existing in Syria was realizing the promises that attracted me so much. Since my arrest, I have been feeling very melancholic. I was often thinking about negative thoughts and I was thinking a lot at night. It was impossible for me to close my eyes. After all these years, I wanted to have a normal life like everyone else. For a long time, just hearing the word "Syria" could make me depress. I was always thinking about what was going on there and I still felt a bit hypocritical. I no longer wanted to leave to fight, but at least to send money or do something for them. I felt very guilty for the people who were suffering there, especially when I realized that Syrians were attacked by everybody. I even no longer believed that jihadist groups were there to defend and protect them. I was inquiring about very small groups, like the one of a Belgian-Syrian who left to join the land of Shâm to defend his country. He did not encourage to go there; on the contrary, he was discouraging, saying that we had to learn our religion before joining a fight that did not concern us. He left because he was Syrian, it was his country, he had to defend it against Bachar El Assad. I heard he lost his arm during a Daesh attack in a mosque in Syria. He also lost his son who came to fight on his side. They were only a dozen in this group. Did they really fight to defend the people? I saw pictures of former soldiers of Bachar El Assad currently protected in Europe, with their families. They seemed to be happy and enjoy their new life with their families while Syrian refugees are suffering and they are not welcome anywhere in Europe, or so badly welcome. They are rejected, they live in misery. I could not consider this world as fair. I saw a video that made me question white helmets a lot. It was an amateur execution video made by Al Nosra, and we could see, two seconds after the execution, White Helmets covering the victim with a survival blanket and removing the body. I found that everything was much timed, as if they were waiting next door. I saw a video where they were parading together, White Helmets and Al Nosra jihadists. They worked together after the bombings to save civilians. They had humanitarian trucks. I hoped they were fulfilling their promises. I heard a lot of people saying that white helmets were healing first jihadist fighters and then, Syrian

civilians.... During bombings, they would not rush to save children, but first armed fighters. There was a kind of connivance with Al Nosra. They were seen as part of the resistance. Some people say they would even be indirectly financed because they received part of the money given to the resistance. I heard in 2012 on BFM, politicians saying that Al Nosra was doing a good job on the field. There are even some people saying that the French government armed them. I saw a video at the time in which they didn't say they belonged to Al Qaeda yet, in which they showed shipments of French and American anti-tank missiles. A year later, Aymen Zawahiri announced that Al Nosra was the Syrian Al Qaeda branch (...) The more I learned about geopolitics of jihadists group, the more convinced I was. I saw groups like Ahrar ech-cham who said they were Salafists and against kamikaze attacks etc. Gathering 10,000 persons, making factions. Like Jound al Aqsa, I was supporting them because they were neutral concerning the dispute between Daesh and Al Nosra. As soon as the group has been dissolved for a money story, one party pledged allegiance to Daesh, the other to Al Nosra. The same for the Libyan group Ansar el charia: those brothers have joined Daesh, all of them. So you can see that the ideology is exactly the same, whether they are small or big groups. I also saw a TV report showing a bus that brought people back from Alep to Idlib. Some Syrians were blocked for 48 hours. A humanitarian truck came, men were throwing crisps, sweets, etc.... They attracted children and somebody in the truck made the truck explode. We could see dead children. A Syrian journalist was crying, kneeling on the ground. I really think it was caused by Al Nosra and not Daesh because they have many humanitarian trucks. The kamikaze nature of the attack also confirms that it was a group related to Al Nosra. I am afraid of the Last Judgment, because I wanted to join people who are killing everybody. When I wanted to leave for Syria, my intention was to do like them, so it's as if I participated in this thing. I feel accomplice of the killings they have done. In front of Allah, I will have to give answers.

”

(Hamza, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

This young man left and started to fight against Daesh as soon as he realized this group was a terrorist group. This testimony is particular because pietist Salafists are the ones who mainly deradicalized Fabien, in parallel with the follow-up of the CPDSI. The conversations analysis shows that "low-cost pietist Salafists"¹³⁴ are not the ones with no religious knowledge but well-educated fundamentalist Muslims. The religious education given to Fabien allowed him to condemn his "jihadist" group because it used to kill others. In addition to the ideological approach (Islam forbids killing), the new Salafist group facilitated Fabien's disengagement from the "jihadist" group by developing as well a reassuring emotional approach ("you will not go to hell because you live in a country managed by the human law") and a compensatory relational approach ("you were not with the "right brothers" but we are here, and offer solidarity and brotherhood forever"). This shows that we cannot compare the fundamentalist pietistic Salafists to "jihadists", even though both movements share the idea that the divine law is superior to human laws.

¹³⁴Cf II.4.

“ Now I cannot stand them anymore. At that time, I was lost. I really had bad beliefs. I am completely out of their ideology. I am even at the opposite. I am against "them" now. I had no trouble, on my own initiative, to break up with the "brothers" from Daesh with who I was in touch. A Salafist "brother" told me to change my social accounts and block them all. I applied this advice and I have never spoken to them ever again. Now, I follow the Salafya precepts and I warn against Daesh. For me, the world does not work well. "They" go to war, "they" do not help poor people enough. Western people hate Islam. Many do not like us and want to stop us at every turn. They make amalgam because of Daesh. I don't blame them, because if I were them, I might have done the same... I think we have to show them the good behaviour and eradicate Daesh. Today, I would rather get married, and have my own family. It's important for me to make someone happy. I think I could bring something to others. It's not that simple... I still have trouble living my religion. It's too important for me, I feel like betraying it. But it must come first, even before school or my family. If later, my mother-in-law asks me to choose between my religion and her, I will choose my religion. I think that religion worships Allah. It allows to do what He asked, submit to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), fulfill the five pillars, the uniqueness of God (tawhid), learn religion and behave. It also shows it to others and try to invite them to Islam but I do not have enough knowledge for that. I hope to have some, one day inshallah (If Allah wants). I realized that with "them", religion was just about hating the others and killing them. We have never talked about religion. But when you really know Islam and want to be in the *din* (to practice the religion), it's not easier. In France, I still don't feel like I can really practice my religion. For example, concerning prayers, it's complicated, or for the sisters, the prohibition to wear the niqab or the sitar. Currently, I have the obligation to shave my beard at high school. I know you can be a Muslim without a beard but it's my choice. The fact that I'm forced to shave it, threatened to be kicked out if I don't obey, makes me live it as a persecution. I went back to school, got involved in my studies, my grades got much better. I only received distinctions from my teachers concerning my behaviour and my work, and I am still threatened to be fired only because of a beard. I find it unfair, especially since I agreed to trim it, which was already difficult. I feel like I have to make a choice between my studies and my religion. ”

(Fabien, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

The testimonies of repentant individuals or other "jihadists" made the young individuals confront some new information about the identity and action of terrorists, bringing out inconsistencies between their discourse and realities.

But these testimonies show us that a cognitive remobilization works even better if the incoherence observed concerns a personal motivation of the radicalized one. As each young person feels surrounded by a kind of consistency between his/her needs (psychological and social-political) and the "jihadist's" commitment, it is necessary to make him realize the gap between his/her needs (for example: participating in a world where he no longer feels alone and humiliated), the promise of his group linked to his/her commitment motive (for example: the promise to avenge the weakest against the strongest with his/her "brothers") and the actual

result of the ideology (killing everyone who do not adhere to this project), so it destabilizes him and provokes initial doubts about the credibility of his group. These first doubts make appear a new vision of the binary world of the “jihadist”, full of certainties.

In terms of method, it therefore seems fundamental to identify the initial personal motivations of the radicalized one and place him in a situation where he has to face the “jihadist” group’s actions. That will gradually allow him to face the contradictions his continuous engagement in the group will lead to if he stays faithful to his first commitment motive. Of course, the fewer gaps there is between the motivations and the reality of the group, the more difficult this cognitive approach will be to set up. This explains why young people who are receptive to the promise of "Zeus" are more difficult to get out of radicalization.¹³⁵ It does not mean they are more dangerous than the others, but the promise made to them corresponds to the reality of the terrorists’ action. So we cannot base their remobilization and cognitive reconstruction over the awareness of the gap between their needs, the promise and the reality.

III.3.2 The collective dimension is fundamental through the cognitive approach phase

During the engagement phase, we saw how the group effect influenced the ideology appropriation. The same effect occurs during the phase of disengagement. "Learning to doubt" is a more reassuring exercise when it is done collectively.

“ *The more I moved ahead in the discussion groups, the more doubts I had, the more I inquired... I realized that I’ve already had many doubts deep inside me that I had never dared to express. But as the others spoke openly, I could not keep shutting up. I participated in the discussions... During this period, I came across a video that turned me upside down. I even remember the exact time I watched it, it was 23:33. That had nothing to do with Daesh. It was a video showing car accidents with a sad music in the background. I felt a huge fear of death. Not for me, not for my husband but for my future children. At that time, even though I was only 15, I only thought about the children I was going to have with my husband. I wanted some right away, as soon as I would arrive on the land of Shâm. One thought was obsessing me: I did not want my children to die in horrible pain. I could not imagine myself giving birth knowing that there was death right behind. Basically, I wanted to leave for Syria to save children, then have my own children, and found my family. There was something weird all of a sudden. From that moment, I started to question my future with Daesh. The inconsistency of their promise was suddenly obvious. I wanted to have boys so badly, and according to them, they would have to join training camps from the age of 5-7 years old. “Sisters” guaranteed it to me. The children were sent to the battlefield to die. What kind of life was I going to offer them? I did not want to let my*

¹³⁵See statistics in the part II of report ‘RISK MECHANISMS AND PROTECTION FACTORS’.

children, the flesh of my flesh, go fight. The children had to be protected, go to school, and learn the Quran. I had strong feelings when thinking that my children would die there. It had been a long time since I felt anything. And then something inside me clicked and made me reborn again. I felt that the CPDSI brought me back to life... It was as if I got lost and I found myself a little bit. As if I recognized myself and had not seen myself for a long time... I was in a bottomless, well... for too long and there, I saw a little light. It did not work right away, it was a long tunnel to cross but with my parents, we were seeing the exit. It was like I was drowning all this time and the CPDSI reached out enough to get my head out of the water. And I hoisted myself by clinging to my parents.

(Morgane, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

When I heard a “brother” confessing that he had doubts, I broke down. For months, I had forbidden myself to admit it. Admitting that I had doubts was like admitting that I doubted God, that my faith was falling. Whenever I asked myself a question, I put it aside, thinking that I needed to strengthen my faith, that I had let Sheitan invading me with his murmurs... And I was taking more and more distance from my family and old friends, I distrusted them even more, thinking that doubts have necessarily passed through negative dark forces. So through people from the dark side... In fact, you end up submitting yourself to your group as if your group was God. And asking questions was like betraying your “brothers”... But it's a real fight. You always have doubts... Especially concerning the killing of civilians. You don't dare tell to your “brothers” but you have some. And now, I know that we were all having doubts on our side. It would have been enough if one of us had talked and said his doubts so others could speak too... You don't speak about your doubts not to betray your “brothers”. But when your “brothers” say out loud they have a doubt, you can talk about yours without being afraid to betray them. On the contrary, we stay together with our doubts. That's what happened at the CPDSI actually.

(22 year-old man, atheist family, lower class, convicted for proselytism).

The prefecture and my parents forced me to meet the CPDSI. I knew Dounia Bouzar's reputation. I sometimes saw her on television shows. On social networks, we talked about her too. Moreover, a “sister” I was supposed to marry one day told me “I'm going to meet the CPDSI” and I have never seen her ever again on the internet! She was gone! A very close “brother” met them too, for a few sessions. I had warned my mother: ‘not the lady of the TV!’ And there, I was in front of her and her team, locked in a room. They immediately introduced me to former jihadists who stepped back from their group because they discovered the group lied to them. Some girls and boys joined them in Syria and then came back because what they saw had nothing to do with what they imagined. Initially, I didn't believe them. I thought they were paid by Dounia and / or the government to manipulate us. When I went back home, I searched on social networks to see if they were real. To my surprise, I found many evidence validating what they said. Their stories were true... At each session, I wanted to

hear from Aline, the one with whom I was supposed to get married and who fell into the hands of the CPDSI as well. I understood that she left Daesh and curiously, it gave me hope and strength. If she did it, I would be able to do it. So basically, I accepted their help without realizing it. I was lost because I wanted to believe in the Dawla and open my eyes too. When I was with the Dawla's "brothers" I asked them to give me some proof of their affirmations and each time, they told me they would give them to me after, always after... If they were sure to have the truth, why didn't they give me proofs right away? I wondered about the existence of different Muslim groups. Just in the Qur'an, there were 73 groups. Everyone interpret God's texts the way they wanted... Then, I remembered they claimed we had to get away from material goods, and in reality, they spent their time filming themselves in beautiful cars and beautiful houses. They sent me videos in which they were eating a lot of pizzas and kitkat chocolates ... I don't know why I didn't see the contradiction at that time! Today I can clearly say to the Dawla group that I no longer think like them, that their caliph is a false caliph, etc. Before, it was impossible to talk about my doubts. Thanks to the meetings with the CPDSI, I could admit to myself the lies I spotted. I thought about a lot of things, like the beheading for example...I thought it was a Sunna (God's law) and now, I understand the opposite. One of the reasons I had given so much importance to Daesh, it was because of a scholar I was following. When he joined Daesh, it had a profound impact on me: I thought he couldn't be wrong because he knew religion well. If he joined this group, it was because this group was in the truth... Moreover, I heard that intelligent people like doctors or lawyers joined them. Today, no one has heard from this scholar, not even his family... They probably killed him or imprisoned him when he wanted to correct their misinterpretations and actions... But that, I realize it now only... I can see all the inconsistencies now. The way they were treating prisoners or executing them. The Prophet had never swung a sword and never beheaded someone. The way they established the Califa, by proclaiming themselves. The worst thing was to see jihadists "brothers" fighting against each other to gain power while before, they fought together. The slander they were showing everyday has broken my myth of community and fraternity. It is impossible to be honest and fraternal if you keep lying... I also saw how they all abandoned me when the police caught me. I only had my parents by my side.

”

(Hamza, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

When radicalized people face new information about their extremist group, in order to bring out inconsistencies, they go through a stage where they no longer have confidence in themselves and also find difficulties to trust others. Their marks are blurred and uncertainty makes them panic. **The collective dimension of the discussion group allows them to express this new anxiety, which is no longer linked to their perception of the corrupt world but to a questioning on the reliability of the solution they had found to face the corrupt world:** their "jihadist" commitment. The support of the radicalized one at this precise moment is fundamental because in front of this new uncertainty, he must not use any defence mechanisms or new dysfunctional compensatory measures. It happens that some young people, realizing the utopian and false aspect of their "jihadist" project, become addicted or adopt other risk behaviours to escape the real world. It is also at this step that the most fragile at the psychiatric level (schizophrenics or bipolar for example) decompensate and act at this precise moment when they begin to mourn their utopia.



Weekly participation in collective discussion groups can help them: with their peers, who feel the same psychic discomfort, they will build and exchange “alternative thoughts” against the inconsistencies discovered in the “jihadist” discourse, which will eventually soften the rigidity of their cognition. **Being confronted to inconsistencies in the discourse of their extremist group forces them to seek explanations, and exchange information, which in spite of them creates a “cognitive opening”,** defined as “a process through which the person becomes more receptive to new ideas and worldviews”.¹³⁶

Without cognitive opening, radicalized ones would remain in a binary world where renouncing to the "jihadist" perception would place them in a “zone of emptiness”. This cognitive opening allows other reading grids and thoughts to be set up. They complicate the system of thought that loses its binary aspect. They also allow “jihadists” not to end up in void by abandoning their ‘magical thoughts’.

In the discussion group, the feeling of uncertainty is valued as an expression of freedom: it is good to doubt, and ask questions... **Uncertainty becomes the proof that the thought is restarting, but it is easier to bear it when the radicalized-ones are together to share it. Moving from a reassuring binary worldview because every gesture is dictated, to a worldview where everything is questioned would be too scary without the support of the peer group.** Accepting doubts knowing that other former members of the radical group are developing the same questions is reassuring.

In terms of method, offering collective discussion groups appears to be fundamental so radicalized ones can go through the experience and support of their peers to get out of their certainties. The collective aspect is then important because the distance with the radical group means at the same time the loss of the rigid normative framework, the mourning of the utopia and the feeling of protection given by the feeling of fusion 'between brothers' or 'between sisters'. In this logic, for radicalized ones who still have the right to go abroad, we recommend camps in Muslim countries offering an "alternative horizon"¹³⁷ to "jihadist" promises.

III.3.3 The cognitive approach can work only if the conditions of "the insertion of doubt" are required

During our experimentation, we developed a method where loved ones, once they had reassured the radicalized person (See part III.2) had to find a “scenario” to bring them to the team without telling them the true purpose of this meeting (the radicalization recovery). **The meeting with the "jihadist" was never asked by this one, but it was based on a scenario co-invented with loved ones** ("We found an association that will explain that we are wrong about you", "We found an association that will help us to defend you", etc.). Otherwise, when a young person spotted

¹³⁶WIKTOROWICZ Quantin. (2004). *Joining the cause : Al-Muhajiroun and radical Islam*. Syracuse : Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism (INSCT) ; (2005). A genealogy of radical Islam. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 28(2), 75–97 ; (2006). Anatomy of the Salafi movement. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29(3), 207.

¹³⁷www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/63116/attaques-terroriste-l-aude-deracinement-francais.html, written by the sociologist Julien TARDIF, secularity referent to the Judicial Protection of Youth.

on the phone of his/her parents or spouse that they were in touch with us, he/she blocked himself/herself and positioned himself/herself against his/her parents as it turned out difficult to intervene. **The context of the meeting must allow to surprise the radicalized one, and have access to something reflexive, that he/she did not have the time to elaborate. Consequently, the pressure of the government to make us intervene in the media (to educate parents and professionals) was counter-productive for the young individuals we were following: on the contrary, the less "jihadists" identified the CPDSI team, the more effective the team was.**

Another condition for effectiveness to allow a "jihadist" to elaborate his/her doubts concerns the duration of the discussion groups. The time of elaboration of doubts is long. It takes about 10 months to begin this process, with the setting up of weekly discussion groups that last at least 3 or 4 hours each.

This young girl, very committed to "jihadism", listens to the doubts of others because she thinks that their testimonies are not intended for her. The same applies to this young man in the following testimony.

“ *To my amazement, I started to have doubts about the cause. I met many young people in these groups. At first, I thought they were actors paid by the CPDSI and once again I was laughing and made fun of them on the social networks. I had promised myself to never listen to them, I forced my brain to think about something else, I invented stories in my head, especially not to hear a single word. Still, I do not know how or why, but I started to listen to what others were saying. They did not talk to me but to the team. To reassure myself, I was thinking “I’m just listening so I can repeat everything to the brothers”. Gradually, I recognized people with whom I used to speak on social networks and who disappeared. Their stories allowed me to recognize them because at CPDSI, they did not use the “Kunya” (pseudonym related to the lineage of the Prophet, according to “jihadists”) that I used to know. I was wondering 'but what are they doing here? Why do they talk so freely? Why don't they pretend, like me?' They were real “brothers” and “sisters” who wanted to leave, like me. In spite of myself, I started to listen to them. I was captivated by their stories and listened to them attentively. I recognized myself a lot in their stories, beliefs, and feelings. I asked myself the same questions they expressed. We looked alike a lot.* ”

(Najet, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

“ *When I met the team of the CPDSI, I didn't know who they were. My father claimed that we would see young activist lawyers defending Muslims against Islamophobia. I don't know why but I believed him. Perhaps because my father is a rebel and I risked a severe sentence in court for my next trial. Even if I considered my father as a disbeliever, I remained attached to him and wanted him to pay to defend me anyway... I pointed 4 times a day and I was furious. I could not even watch a video entirely with all those trips back to the police station... When we arrived at the meeting, I was surprised that the interview was in a hotel room, but my father told me that it was a free permanence organized in the city*



center so that everyone can come more easily. I believed it too. We came in and I saw a lot of Muslims: men and women. It was logical. The man who spoke to us barely greeted us, asked us to sit and wait for our turn. That's what we did, although I was embarrassed by women who were not completely well veiled. But I did not quibble because I really wanted to know how to escape this Koffar's justice. And I heard a story that looked like mine: the "brother" was a Salafist at first, then he joined Al Nosra "brothers", then he finally joined those of the Dawla. He had understood that the Dawla's "brothers" were the only ones authentic and he was thinking like me. I didn't want to listen to him but as I was bored, I heard his words and progressively, I was attentive to what he was saying. At first, I wondered why he was telling everything in front of strangers, and then I told myself that lawyers need everything to defend us. As I listened to him, I felt sometimes like he was talking about me, especially when he told us the moment when he admitted he always had doubts about the legitimacy of the killing of civilians. He was good at theology, and that's when I dared ask him my question. After that, we talked for 2 hours without stopping ... And I asked to see him again. I recognized Dounia Bouzar. I saw her on TV, and I realized that it was the CPDSI and that my father lied to me. But curiously, what mattered was to talk to him. Once we had prayed together, I only thought about joining this group. That too was curious: the CPDSI let us pray on time. Some members of the team even prayed with us. The fear that they betray us and talk to the cops to send us in jail faded away. They were koffars who understood us better than others. It was said that the CPDSI was what we preferred in the Taghut¹³⁸. Finally I came back for 15 months, until today. It was only last week that the "brother" explained to me that he delivered his testimony at the time expressly for me, because the CPDSI decided that we were alike and that it would affect me. He told me the truth because they asked me to do the same thing: I have to testify for some young people who want to leave. And I said ok. ”

(23 year-old man, non-practicing Muslim family,
North African origin, sentenced for participation
in a terrorist enterprise)

This means that the provision of testimonies to "jihadists" to bring out inconsistencies must overcome a major difficulty: the radicalized one must not feel that the testimonies are intended for him. If he understands that his interlocutors want to shake his certainties, he will become even more stubborn, convinced that he doubts because he has a "decline of faith" and that "Sheitan has managed to reach him". Any frontal strategy based on the register of knowledge is at best ineffective, at worst counterproductive, strengthening the convictions of the "jihadist". This probably explains the inefficiency of counter-speech¹³⁹ when they are given too early. In terms of method, it is therefore a matter of inventing strategies where the radicalized one hears new information without being aware that it is intended for him.

¹³⁸This young person uses this word here to accuse the members of our team of worshiping human laws and working with a democratic government.

¹³⁹CIPC 2017, *Ibid.*

Once the first doubts appear, the "jihadist" goes through an ambivalence step. All the young people we have followed have gone through this "inter-step" period, where paradoxes and contradictions sometimes multiply without coherence. The young person doesn't know exactly where "the truth is" and where "the wrong is". The team following the radicalized one then offers an area where this ambivalence can be expressed. This period can last several months, with moments of regression:

“ There is an argument that stayed for long in my head ... They tell us - I think it's a hadith – that Allah will be sorting out people when the end of the world is near and only the best ones will go to the land of Shâm. Otherwise, it means He will drive back the others. So every time I doubted, I told myself: 'Be careful, Allah is rejecting me because my faith is not strong enough'. And I fought against myself not to have doubts anymore. Now, I think I should have thought about who "the best ones" were. Were we "the best" because we were ready to do the takfir of all the other Muslims? I was completely lost. In the evening, in my bed, I was thinking 'So, what do I have to do to please Allah?' It was driving me crazy, it obsessed me... I didn't know at all what to do... We have always had doubts. 'Is it really good or really bad...' Since we don't have the necessary knowledge of Islam, we think that maybe what they tell us is really good, because basically, Muslims who went over there really wanted to do some good, so, basically... Do they tell us that because it's really the right thing to do and it's really the end of the world? And on the other hand, we also think "but no! Don't do that, God has never said we had to kill... There is a Quran verse saying, I think: "Killing someone is like killing every human being"... So we become completely schizophrenic: Monday we admire them, Tuesday we denigrate them... Monday, we want to believe the CPDSI, Tuesday we threaten the whole team... I reached a point where I did not want to watch TV at the CEF because only one image could make me want to join them. We need to mention that journalists lied so much that necessarily, it made you want to join them to defend them. When I heard the name, doubts came back. I didn't do it on purpose, it was stronger than me. Even when the government or journalists showed images of propaganda to denounce them, the simple fact of seeing "brothers" and "sisters", it made me want to be with them actually... It was "the myth of Umma". After that I thought they did not even respect the basics of Islam. So, I was walking completely in the fog... ”

(17 year-old boy, Muslim family, lower class, convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise).

“ The more doubts I had, the more I opened my eyes. I realized they banned music while they were using it in all their videos. I realized that they banned images while they put them everywhere in their videos. I could talk about my doubts at the CPDSI without anyone judging me, a way or another. I could tell everything and the opposite. Sometimes, and for a long time, I felt lost. Someday I trusted Daesh, the next day I trusted the CPDSI. Sometimes I changed my mind from one hour to the next one. The whole team has always believed in me. ”



They told me that ambivalence was a normal state. Other young people had oscillated thoughts like me, and it reassured me.

(Aline, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

There are more than 300 groups in Syria. I thought it must exist one that was true ... I had a long period of ambivalence. I hated Daesh but I wanted to believe in a utopian world. I thought that Al Nosra was different. I disengaged from Daesh to join Al Nosra. Then, I disengaged from Al Nosra to join unknown small groups to finally to disengage myself definitively. I saw in Al Nosra's videos that they really helped people and had a humanitarian project. They applied more Islam. With my home assignment, I could not go out and was very bored. My guilt continued to drive me crazy. I was dead inside. I had hatred. When I saw pictures of bombings on BFM TV or other channel, I went crazy. It has happened to me several times to have nervous breakdowns that were impossible to control. I broke everything at home. I hit my father. I was always thinking, "you're safe here, you're hypocrites! We are here while our "brothers" are being bombed!" To show that Dunya (the life here on earth) was not important to me, I broke my iPhone, the television, everything that was valuable... I went into the street shouting, insulting everyone. I even climbed on the roof of a car one day, wearing flip flops, screaming like a sick person. All the neighbors were watching me and were probably thinking: "his place is in a psychiatric hospital"! I already had such reactions at school, after my grandfather died, when I was 12 years old. My crises were often triggered by an injustice feeling. I could not express myself. Violence was my only means of expression but it was never against my parents before Daesh... I needed to find a sincere group. I was still looking for it. I wondered who was really Al Baghdadi? I watched his preaching at Mossul mosque. I was more looking for an ideology than the group's image. I was trying not to be fooled again, watch less videos and focus on the discourse. It was very hard when I saw the new video "Like lions" made by Omar Omsen, the recruiter on YouTube. He is much more manipulative. He had a much more open line about parents unlike ISIL which clearly say if your parents don't pray, they are unbelievers so you have to fight against them. He was following some incarcerated Saudi scholars' opinion. I think it was to better sell the product to the family of the person who is there or the person who wants to leave, rather than a sincere intention. Concerning the "Jihad" questions, it was the same words than Daesh, except that he was saying them differently. He was putting the Al Qaeda strategy in place by pretending to bring evidence with the use of hadiths. He referred a lot to the Islamic court in this video. Daesh members urge people to commit acts without bringing any evidence. These are two different strategies but the goal is the same. Besides, I was still working on my ideologies, and my doubts. I became more open, less rigid. For example, I was thinking that homosexuality was a serious sin but it did not excommunicate you from Islam so far.

(Hamza, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)



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Now, I don't even know what to think. It's burdensome. I should never get myself in trouble like this. There are many things I would have liked to do and I can't do them now. I feel locked up. It took too much space in my life. I am convinced today that what Daesh is doing is inhuman. I think I'm out of their ideology, I no longer support them but I still have doubts. There are things that have not changed in my way of thinking. I always think that life is ephemeral and that it is only a passage to prove oneself. That makes me sick when I think I was able to adhere to their ideology. Before detaching myself completely, I learned about other jihadist groups. I even supported during a moment Al Qaeda. I think that deeply I always have supported Al Qaeda even though I was only in touch with Daesh. I didn't even know at that time that Al Nosra was a group of Al Qaeda. I joined Daesh, a group which was fighting against the group I really wanted to join finally... Some of my "sisters" are still my friends, even some who could leave it. Regarding social networks, I closed my accounts permanently. Today, I feel closer to my family and I reconnected with former friends that I rejected at the time. Some of them know my story. Nevertheless, I prefer to stay at home because I feel judged and pointed. Despite my doubts and my disgust for the Dawla, I tried again to leave for Syria... It was not at all for the same reasons as the first time. I saw my parents getting divorced. My mother left our home every day to take refuge at her sisters in other cities, leaving us alone with our father. I was turning into a housewife, I had to clean up, cook, and take care of my little brother... It was pretty hard. My dad has never done a thing. He has never taken care of us. He is here without being here. I had to confront my brother so he did not come home too late, check that he went to school, check his friends, etc. I worried a lot for him, I saw him hanging out with bad people from the neighbourhood but I could not stop him. My mother has already suffered a lot when my big brother went to jail, the little one could not join him. In addition, her only daughter has brought the anti-terrorist police at home. I thought I had a responsibility in their conflicts. I was persuaded to be a bad girl and to make her suffer. I was responsible for my mother's unhappiness. It tore my heart when I heard her crying, curled up in a corner almost every night. I felt very guilty about the fact I considered leaving my mother alone. It is contradictory because I thought to leave again, this time, to release my mother. I thought she would have fewer problems if I left, she would suffer less. I would stop hurting her. My family was always making me comments and catalogued me as a terrorist. I had everyone against me. My family is Muslim and is seeing me as naive and stupid for having been manipulated. For them, it is proof that I am ignorant and weak-minded. In addition, they think I am responsible for the indoctrination of my cousin with whom I almost left the first time. That created wars between families. I'm not allowed to approach her again now while we were very close. I miss her. By going over there, I wanted to punish myself for not being up to what my mother deserved. I had everything ready. I took the papers of a friend, stole jewels to pay me the trip and so I was leaving for death. Because this time, I was not going to learn religion, marry and found a family. I wanted to go there to die as fast as possible, get it over with this life, and release the sufferings of my mother. I had to punish myself. She told me one day a sentence that made me feel very guilty: "You see everything you have done (?) And yet, I am always here for you". I wanted to wear an explosive belt. A "sister" encouraged me to become her co-wife because her husband was on the martyr list and he promised me that I could accompany him on his mission once his turn. When



I changed my mind because I was afraid not just to kill myself but also my mother, this “sister” immediately insulted me. She said I was as a nonbeliever. ” ”

(Najet, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

During this period of ambivalence, the young person is cleaved. He positions himself both inside and outside the radical group. **This combination of two levels (including sometimes contradictory convictions) is complex for professionals because they have to evaluate, at each meeting, in which level the individual is. The effectiveness of the work depends on this fact, because the discussion groups must be balanced: the professionals cannot gather radicalized-ones which are at the same degree of certainties (or uncertainties). In order to make the discussion group function, young people must present differences in terms of radicalization’s process, steps of radicalization, reasons for engagement, levels of doubts and their reasons, etc.** At each session, the group is formed differently to maintain certain heterogeneity in the cognitions of the members who talk. It aims at not reproducing the existing feelings of exaltation of the radical group while allowing a group support protecting from void in this delicate step of the utopia mourning, which can include the same type of mourning steps defined by psychologists: shock, pain, guilt, anger, negotiation, depression, pain, reconstruction and acceptance.

III.4 THE IDEOLOGICAL APPROACH: A LONG AND HARD WORK

“ When I called Dounia, I had already mourned Al Qaeda and all other jihadist groups. It was clear to me that these people were betraying the values of Islam and committing murders against humanity by claiming building a better world. But there was still a little hope in the corner of my mind: the hope that one day the divine law could be applied authentically, to do good on Earth. This concept of "divine law" was clear to me. I separated what came from God from the human world. I imagined that we could access the divine world without going through human experience. This is no longer the case today: I realize that the divine law is only a utopia, because it is always human beings who interpret and apply them. By listening to the young people at the CPDSI, I realized how much the interpretation of a religious text depends on the feelings, subjectivities, stories and experiences of human beings. The connection between their ideals, their needs, and the way they endorse one or another interpretation was too obvious for me not to perceive it. For each young person, deradicalization consisted in showing them that their commitment was not a divine mission but rather their personal need. Then they could work on their issues instead of "escaping" to the divine. And at the same time, each time, I realized how my interpretations were also the result of my personal needs. What I perceived as holy was actually very human. When I went out of the sessions, I admitted that for years I had made God speak as I wanted Him to speak, instead of listening to Him. Beyond the understanding of my radicalization and deradicalization, the sessions at the CPDSI led me to a great discovery: finally, I have always been Muslim but I had never thought of God. I thought that being a Muslim was to respect the rituals, pray on time, wear the Qamis, solve the political problems of Algeria, help the persecuted ones, protect my group, not listen to music, not take pictures of me, think the same way as others ... Through the sessions and discussions with the CPDSI team, I started thinking of God. It was between me and God. I discovered that God was in my heart. And that my heart was filling with God. For this reason, I know deeply that jihadism will never be able to attract me again: because I have met God. No human will ever be between me and Him ever again.¹⁴⁰ ”

This testimony shows the last stage of radicalization, the one making the difference between the "disengaged" individual and the "deradicalized" individual. It means that the radicalized one, after disengaging from his former radical group and the promises they made, as well as the use of violence, he will manage to mourn the belief that "only the divine law can regenerate the world". Otherwise, he will remain vulnerable to a new promise from a group that would present itself as more authentic than Daesh.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰BENYETTOU Farid, *My jihad, journey of repentant individuals*, *Ibid*.

¹⁴¹See our statistics in the report 'RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS'. After 2 years of follow-up, about a third of our disengaged has still not mourned the utopia according to which "only the divine law can regenerate the world".

An ideological approach goes beyond radicalism recovery. It is a question of familiarizing the former radicalized one with a critical reading of religious texts, just like an education to religion. Indeed, maintaining a constant reference to "authentic Islam" leads to a situation in which believers believe that some "ready-made" solutions are "waiting" in the divine text. This type of relationship to holy texts leads to the negation of all extra-religious factors involved in the construction of an individual and in his understanding of texts. Instead of taking into account the contextual parameters allowing a better understanding of the holy texts, this type of believer uses the texts as a kind of "ready-to-think" and behavioural patterns.

This vision of a pure and abstract Islam, detached from time and place, independent of extra-religious factors, leaves no room for the dialectical dimension of the dialogue between humans and their divine message. If the solution is in the text and not in the understanding of the text, then those who want to have access to "the Truth" must go through the holy text. In doing so, this type of Muslim surreptitiously imposes his own interpretation of the text and establishes a status of Islam as a superior reference to all others. Driven to the extreme, this relation to the religious text leads to the issues of relations with freedom of conscience of other citizens, with the concept of "living-together" and the respect for secularism, even if it does not lead systematically, far from it, to Islamism and / or violence.

Through an ideological approach, we can make sure that the young person admits, on the contrary, the historicity of the religious fact and considers that the holy text reveals its meaning through dialogue with human beings who read it. It is about recognizing that human beings understand his religion according to what he is and what he goes through. Admitting this interaction between the transmitter (God) and the receiver (the believer who reads) leads us to recognize the existence of extra-religious factors in the construction of individuals and society: since we do not Islamize everything, and Islam has not "invented everything", we recognize that we are the product of something else. The individual is defined both by determination based on economic, social, cultural, family, and historical. factors, and as an actor who builds his religiosity from these experiences.

In this view, the holy texts are not sources of separation from other humans to determine values or truths. Islam is no longer seen as competing with other worldviews. On the contrary, those worldviews help Muslims to build themselves in a richer way and allow them to access new dimensions of the divine message, from their present reality. According to this conception, modern science is a valuable asset to refine the understanding and reception of the divine message. Rather than looking for what Islam says, these believers seek what Islam can tell them through their lives, at the present moment, according to a historical situation and to new cultural categories. The solution is then not in the text but in the understanding of the text, which deepens thanks to the contribution of others, in a real dialogue where nobody thinks to hold "the truth".¹⁴²

Believers, who admit an interaction between the human being and the text, value a religiosity that everyone must build through his own story. They are interested in other worldviews and so, they enrich their own worldview, and thereby their understanding of the holy texts. They know that it is their personal and current experience that leads them to read "retroactively" the

¹⁴²See our analyzes on this subject in *Mr. Islam does not exist, For a de-Islamization of debates*, , Hachette, 2004.

presence of modern rights in the Quran. Therefore, they distinguish the divine message from its particular expression in a given culture and distinguish the "creed" from the history. Many authors¹⁴³ have highlighted the mixture between the "creed" and the history in the term "Islam", whereas the difference is made between Christianity and Christendom. In order to avoid the ideological use of religion¹⁴⁴, they insist on distinguishing the set of values set out in the Quran from the historical practice that constituted the religious thinking (theology and law), and finally the individual faith.

According to them, the norms appear as the result of social and historical processes, due to the interaction of humans with their texts. Pluralism, dialogue with others - non-Muslims or non-believers - is seen as the opportunity for a new cognitive approach that differentiates the Qur'anic message from the understanding of first Muslims.¹⁴⁵ In France, this work is undertaken for example by the Imam Tareq Oubrou,¹⁴⁶ the Islamologist Rachid Benzine,¹⁴⁷ Ghaleb Bencheikh¹⁴⁸ and Omero Marongiu-Perria,¹⁴⁹ but also by some former Islamists, who deconstructed their old relationship with the text.¹⁵⁰ There is also the symbolism work initiated by the Sufi movements that can contribute to this reflection.¹⁵¹ This desacralization of Muslim history appears to them as liberation, against religious discourses presenting the models of the past as having to prevail over the present ones, and for whom the only way to be faithful to the Muslim heritage would be to reason like pious ancestors. This is a modern position, giving full legitimacy to human experience, shared experiences, and praxis, as foundations of a new theological production.

¹⁴³Some of these authors are named "New Thinkers of Islam" by Rachid Benzine. Cf Rachid Benzine, *New Thinkers of Islam*, Albin Michel, 2004. Cf too DJAIT H., *The Great Discord, Religion and Politics in the Islam of Origins*, Paris, Gallimard, 1989; FILALI-ANSARY A., *Is Islam hostile to secularism?* Casablanca, Le Fennec, 2000 ; ABDERRAZIQ A., *Islam and the foundations of power*, La Découverte/CEDEJ, 1994; JABRI M.A., *Introduction to criticism of Arab reason*, Paris, La Découverte, 1995; NASR ABOU ZEID, *Criticism of religious line*, Sindbad/Actes Sud, 1999; ABDERRAZIQ A.; CHARBI Mohamed, *Islam and freedom*, Albin Michel, 1999; ESACK FARID, *Quran, instructions for use*, Albin Michel, 2004; FERJANI Mohamed Chérif, *Islamism, secularism and human rights*, L'Harmattan; SOROUSH Abdul Karim, *Reason, Freedom and Démocratie in Islam*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000; TALBI Mohammed, *A plea for a modern Islam*, Cérès et Desclée de Brouwer, 1998; *Coran universality*, Actes Sud, 2002; and all the works of ARKOUN Mohammed.

¹⁴⁴Mohammed ARKOUN and Joseph MAÏLA, *From Manhattan to Bagdad, Beyond Good and Evil*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 2003, p.101: if the mytho-history retains the "discursive quality of the works, the evocative power of enchanted universes, the symbolic richness of ideal figures proposed for contemplation (...)", the mytho-ideology pretends to "the scientificity of its postures and its lessons in order to erase the vestiges of the myth».

¹⁴⁵This is all the work undertaken in France by the Imam of Bordeaux Tareq Oubrou, and that's the meaning of his work with 30 imams "Against terrorism and anti-Semitic crimes that blindly affected our country", which is an answer to the manifest "Against the new anti-Semitism" signed by 300 intellectuals asking that some verses of the Qur'an be removed.

¹⁴⁶Tareq OUBROU and Marie-Françoise COLOMBANI, *The feminist and the 'imam*, Stock, 2017; Tareq OUBROU, *What you don't know about Islam*, Editions Fayard, 2016; Tareq OUBROU, Leïla BABES, *Allah's law, man's law*; Albin Michel, 2002. Cf too the 12 instructional videos in the free virtual library of NOORONLINE in the website CPDSI.fr

¹⁴⁷Rachid BENZINE and Delphine HORVILLEUR, *Thousand and one ways to be Jewish or Muslim*; Seuil, 2017; Rachid BENZINE and Ismaël SAIDI, *Finally, What is there in the Qu'ran?* La boîte à Pandore, 2017; Rachid BENZINE and Christian DELORME, *Republic, Church and Islam*, Bayard, 2016; Rachid BENZINE, *The new thinkers of Islam*, Albin Michel, 2004.

¹⁴⁸Ghaleb BENCHEIKH, *Little instruction book for an easy Islam*, K. Latès, 2018; Ghaleb BENCHEIKH and Antoine SFEIR, *Open letter for Islamists*, Bayard, 2008...

¹⁴⁹Omero MARONGIU-PERRIA, *Reopen the Islam's gates*, Atlante, 2017.

¹⁵⁰Farid ABDELKRIM, *Why I am no longer an Islamist?* Les points sur les i, 2015 ; Mohamed LOUIZI, *PWhy did I leave the Muslim Brothers?* Michalon, 2016...

¹⁵¹See the educational videos on the Muslim symbolism of Muhammad VALSAN in the free virtual library of NOORONLINE, available online on the website: CPDSI.fr



This ideological change takes time, especially since it questions certainties shared by non-violent Muslims.¹⁵² We therefore prefer to speak of “religious education”, a broader concept than “alternative lines”. Basically, our feedback leads us to think that for alternative lines to be authoritative (listening to music, watching pictures or photos, voting and participating in democracy as something that does not hinder the Unity of God, the Tawhid), it is necessary to offer a religious education aiming at changing the relation to Quran text. The alternative line is effective with time, once the young person is no longer radicalized and is able to hear new arguments and new knowledge without being afraid to go to hell. It is also necessary before a possible radicalization. But it is ineffective in the middle of the radicalization’s process, because “jihadists” are convinced that all those who do not think like them are working for conspiracy societies against the “real Islam”. It is also for this reason that they no longer pray in French mosques, believing that praying behind an imam who lives in France¹⁵³ (and who thus pays his direct and indirect taxes to a government which runs a society based on human laws) is like doing Shirk (associationism).¹⁵⁴ Sometimes an alternative line can be counterproductive, as the radical group warned the young person that “some hypocritical Muslims who are misguided and jealous will try to keep him away from the truth”. In this case, according to the radicalized individual, the alternative line confirms the predictions of the radical group and strengthens its authority, instead of deconstructing it. The ideological approach is therefore more effective once the radicalized one is at least disengaged.

¹⁵²Cf. our statistics in the report ‘RISK MECHANISMS AND DESISTANCE FACTORS’. After 2 years of follow-up, about a third of our disengaged has still not mourned the utopia according to which “only the divine law can regenerate the world”.

¹⁵³Some «jihadists» would never agree to pray behind a Salafist Imam for the reasons explained in the part II.

¹⁵⁴Some «jihadists» explained us they pray the “traveler’s prayer” (a shortened prayer adapted to travel) when they were in France (or in Europe) to show that they were just passing by here and they knew that they had no right to consider themselves at home or to stay on a land where human law is applied.

III.5 PROPOSING ALTERNATIVE COMMITMENTS RATHER THAN ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSES

The cognitive, emotional and relational approaches have only one goal: placing the radicalized individual in a situation where he can be aware by himself that his commitment is not suitable to his final (conscious or unconscious) goal and find another one compatible with the social contract. When radicalized individuals testify, they talk about their alternative commitment as a crucial step in their radicalization exit.

Aline learnt to refocus on herself. She then committed to her nursing studies matching her need for altruism:

“ Today I am finally myself again. I think by myself. I am not the same girl I used to be. I evolved. I grew up. I am a young woman fighting to rebuild myself and become someone I will be proud of. I want to be in line with my true self... I am learning to love myself, rather than looking for love from others at any cost. I understand how they manipulated me. I understand the weaknesses I had. My goal is to make them become my strengths. When I was called to testify in court for my trial, it was very difficult to justify myself for actions and things I said I am ashamed of and just want to forget. But the CPDSI warned me: I had to take responsibility and learn to live with this phase of my life, and mainly not to look for run away again. So I mustered up the courage, answered to any questions, and accepted the possibility not to be trusted by the judges. I avoided ending up in jail thanks to everybody (the CPDSI and educators) who agreed to say that I was rebuilding a new life and that I had excellent grades in high school. But now, I want to help other youngsters who, just like me, really believed in Daesh and their project of a better world. To me, this is the best way to forgive myself (...) I finally feel free. The CPDSI and my educators helped me to be accepted at high school again. I focus on my studies and my new relationships, my family and friends. I rebuild myself and I have the feeling again to belong here, in France. I want to become a nurse, work in the maternity unit, or with disabled people. There, I would truly do good around me and I could fight against injustice. ”

(Aline, see full interview in the annex
of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

It is not necessary for the youngster to ask for an alternative commitment. The reasons of his acceptance to commit to this new project can be hidden as he could try to deceive those in charge of his reinsertion. However, placing the youngster in a situation where he commits to a new project matching his conscious and unconscious needs will still lead to positive effects with regard to his new definition of self, others, and the change of his worldview.



“ *Nursing studies saved my life. Unwillingly, I became passionate. We were 200 students at school and I ended up in a great class. Courses were very interesting. We helped each other and we shared courses even with those we didn't know. Most of them were mothers. I was like a baby next to them. I liked my internships, even though I had to get ready at 4am to go there. I developed feelings for my patients and cried when one was gone. I laughed with the hospital teams. I took care of old people, and washed them without any problem. Nudity and mixity were not a problem for me. I was neither wearing the scarf anymore nor a bandana to go to school. I was wearing jeans and no longer the long skirts I used to. I reassured myself when telling me that one day I would work in private practice in about three years and that I could practice with my scarf and long skirt later. At first, if being honest, I kept studying so the government would let me alone and to look good in my records. I felt like living under a dictatorship and to please the dictator I had to obey to his standards and practices. But now, I'm passionate about my studies. I was passionate about the idea of becoming a nurse one.* ”

Hawa, see full interview in the annex
of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

Fabien, who became a pietist Salafist, is currently working on his self and the dependency he felt towards his former “jihadist” group, through the practice of sport, which represents a crucial factor to let him be aware of his unconscious research for restraint. This sport commitment also represents an experience in which he can redefine without realizing his definition of self and others who used to be perceived as dangerous enemies. At the same time he focuses on his personal project, he committed to our team to help other youngsters still “pro-Daesh”. Participating in the deradicalization process of other young individuals often represents a crucial and necessary step leading to the person's own radicalization exit. Public debate focuses on the evidence of the “repentant” individual's sincerity. Experience proves the level of disengagement of this “soon repentant” individual does not matter, because testifying to emphasize the misleading dimension of the “jihadist” propaganda will always have a positive impact both on the broadcaster and the receiver:

“ *My life project would be to pass my high school diploma, a BTS¹⁵⁵, and then get married. I really like business and the idea of traveling and doing business overseas. I'm still interested in helping poor people and do humanitarian work but for now, it's just a wish. I still didn't plan anything concrete to complete this project. Regarding my relatives, everything goes well now. Since I quitted all these things, I have been speaking much more. We can talk about it, even about my religion. They better understand now because the more I talk, the more they understand. And now I can understand them too as well as their worries. Now, I am more able to think by myself but I still ask for scholars' opinions. I know we must not follow them blindly but look for their sources. I try to be interested in others' opinions. If I find other opinions and they appear to be true, I will select the right ones. I do what*

¹⁵⁵French diploma passed after a two year program, equivalent to a Certified Electronics Technician degree.

*I want. Nobody will dictate me who I should follow, and it includes my brothers. If they get offended, I don't care, that's their problem. With my friends, everything goes very well. They are mostly Muslims but I have two or three friends with different beliefs. They are old friends I have known since I was a kid. I have never really broken up with them, except for practicing handball. I play football with my brothers as well as friends from the neighbourhood. Muslims or not, I don't care. I'm close to my brothers but I have good relationships with others. We even hang out when not doing sport. Sport is very important to me, it helps me vent my frustration and go above and beyond my limits. (...) I want to help others to contribute positively and help them leave "that". That's why I like to come to the CPDSI sessions. To me, we need to present concrete evidence (hadiths and verses) to those attracted to jihadist groups. When you know the *din*, you normally don't accept people telling you bad things like that which are not related to religion. However, I realize that I was so committed that I wouldn't have been able to listen to others, those who do not think like "us", and I would have rejected the evidence; particularly considering that to them, we are miscreants. So that's hard. They won't listen to you. Even if you provide evidence, they will tell you it comes from miscreants. I realize I was lost. When I see youngsters who want to leave, I feel them lost too.*

(Fabien, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

Najet is in a phase where she considers that some humans, "even non-Muslims", can be trusted. Her radicalization exit slowly progressed as it was not possible to find her an alternative commitment (she was identified as "Zeus"). Her "passion for weapons" can only be deconstructed through a cognitive approach. For youngsters attracted to the promise of omnipotence, it is not possible to find an alternative commitment in the police and the army – institution for which they failed the admission tests, or wished to apply to before radicalization. A body guard training seemed to be a good compromise and we succeeded in rallying the young girl.

Now, my educators, my psychologist and the CPDSI force me to work on my need to take arms. They say I need to understand why arms attract me. I still don't know how to answer this question but I understood that the Dawla used my urge for violence and my hatred towards society to make me want to join them. Now, I'd like to join the army or become a police officer. It would allow me to find what I am looking for, but in doing good around me this time, and work for a "good cause". Considering my records, I doubt it is possible. I've been advised to go take a look at some body guard trainings. I'll see... I really don't miss the brothers of the Dawla. I feel anger towards them. I blame them for all the months and years they took from me. I felt manipulated and betrayed by the way they treated me and how they rejected me. I know how to explain it but I felt affected by the fact they didn't even take the time to take to me about religion just as they did for others. Today, the most difficult thing is to realize the person I became and try to forgive me. I caused a lot of harm. I threatened many people. I said awful things that I truly believed in at that time. Now I deeply regret it. I don't know if forgiveness is possible and a happy ending possible, but I hope so... I still don't trust the government, but I believe some humans are good, even non-Muslims. It's painful to admit it but I witnessed it. And I saw that those who



pretend to be “true Muslims” can lie to their “sisters”. I improve... I still believe that only Allah’s law can build a better world, but I know that those who pretend to be jihadists are not the good ones. I hope that one day, real Muslims will build a real place for Muslims; and if they need to defend themselves, they will accept women to fight.

(Najet, see full interview in the annex of Livre Blanc, Les désengagés)

This last testimony shows how important it is to propose an alternative commitment, including to minors: not being able to play a key role in fighting injustice keeps being painful for the young individual who mourned both his former “jihadist” group and the utopia of the ideology of the divine law.

Videos of massacres of children leads you to violence... You become extreme and it incites you to do inhuman things. I am a very sensitive person and it was unbearable for me. I couldn’t accept not to do a thing. Especially when countries don’t take actions... Including your own country... Someone must intervene... Filling my emptiness... We’re offered only one alternative: joining Daesh. Nobody offers us a solution to fight against this situation. NGO didn’t want me to work for them because I was a minor. Without going to the field, I could have participated, doing quests, things like that... That would have protected me from Daesh. It wouldn’t have been “Daesh or nothing”. I could have contributed at my own level. In province,¹⁵⁶ I could participate in anything. Until now, I felt pain from not being able to fight against injustice and massacres. It is too unbearable to watch this on TV and not being able to do a thing. It made me feel sick... So many emotions... Now I took some distance: I understood the truth about those groups identifying themselves as “jihadists”. But I still feel hypocritical not to do a thing to defend poor people. If I lived in Paris, I would participate in a charity at least to send clothes to Syrians... I would be able to find volunteering opportunities here and there... It would help me to settle down, because I still often make nightmares about not doing anything to help these massacred children. We, the youngsters who wanted to join Daesh and then understood who they really were, should develop a Muslim NGO to help massacred Muslims. It would be a legal and fair NGO which wouldn’t be armed, terrorist and political, only humanitarian.

(Adult, atheist family, middle class, convicted for participation in a terrorist enterprise)

To find a commitment matching the person, it is necessary to identify which needs the “jihadist” discourse and group responded to. Identifying the commitment motive of the young individual is crucial as the “jihadist” group’s promise had control over the individual because it proposed an answer to his needs.

¹⁵⁶The term “province” makes reference to any zones in France but Ile de France (region of Paris).

TO CONCLUDE PART III, WE CAN PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTUALIZATION¹⁵⁷ OF THE RADICALIZATION EXIT:

To sum up, the distance taken from the “jihadist” ideology occurs when the young radicalized individual ends up facing inconsistent information with regard to the idea he had on the “jihadist” actions and goals. The discourse has control over the individual because the latter is looking for an answer to his existential questions. As he feels immersed in a sort of consistency between his needs and his commitment within the “jihadism” framework, it is necessary to let and lead him to realize the gap between the myth presented by the recruiters (for example, a better world), his personal motive (protecting himself against discrimination), and the real declination of the ideology (becoming accomplice of the extermination of all those who think differently). Once this double consistency breaks, and through the repentant individuals’ testimonies, the radicalized person can start a long process of retro-analysis on his doubts that will lead him to exit radicalization. Just like in the technic of motivational interview¹⁵⁸, the deradicalization methodology must beforehand identify the first personal motives of the individual to then place him in front of the various contradictions caused by his commitment to a “jihadist” group.

So the radicalized individual can think by himself, he must be personally shaken by the evidence provided by the repentant individual, and realize by himself the inconsistencies between his need and the promise made by the recruiters, and then between this promise and the reality of actions on the field. The radicalized individual himself must be able to argue from the elements provided by the repentant individuals to become aware of the gap between the promises and the truth.

The mirror effect between the repentant individual’s testimony (or from anyone else credible who would provide new information on the radical group and the truth of its actions) and the commitment motive of the radicalized one shakes the latter because he does not distrust those testimonies, ignoring they are meant for him. The emotional destabilisation breaks the “cognitive insularity” to open up a counter-argument.¹⁵⁹

To summarize our experimentation in one sentence, we can say that we have showed to “jihadists” that what was presented as “strictly divine” is actually a human creation.

We noticed in part II that the motives mentioned by the young individuals to explain their commitment do not exactly match the eight thematic categorized identified by our team (and validated by Professor Cohen’s team).¹⁶⁰ **It reflects the meshing between the conscious reasons expressed by the youngsters and more unconscious motives linked to their history.**

¹⁵⁷This attempt of conceptualization has been built in collaboration with Marie Martin, co-author of two articles previously quoted.

¹⁵⁸MILLER William Richard, ROLLNICK Stephen, MICHAUD Philippe & LECALLIER Dorothée (2013). *L’entretien motivationnel : Aider la personne à engager le changement*. Paris: InterÉditions.

¹⁵⁹GUIDÈRE Mathieu, *Les nouveaux terroristes*, Autrement, 2010.

¹⁶⁰CAMPELO N., BOUZAR L., OPPETIT A., HEFEZ S., BRONSARD G., COHEN D., BOUZAR D., Joining the Islamic State from France between 2014 and 2016: an observational follow-up study, in *The Lancet psychiatric*, forthcoming.



It represents an argument in favour of an analysis methodology taking into account the conscious and unconscious processes. The findings of our interdisciplinary approach show that it is necessary to take into account the conscious and unconscious aspects of the commitment¹⁶¹ on a case by case basis, through the recognition of the conclusions that shook them (the international and domestic social political dysfunctions), the provision of a reading grid other than the conspiracy theory, the instruction of new ways to control their emotions and behaviours in a situation of stress, and the deconstruction of defence mechanisms¹⁶² they developed (particularly under the pressure of the “jihadist” discourse). By taking into account their commitment motive, we changed our interpretation grid of the reality as well as consequently the “objective stress” based on the nature of the stressful situation, and the “perceived stress” based on the subjective perception of the latter.¹⁶³ Both cause the violent behaviour.

Acknowledging their observation (on international and domestic social-political dysfunctions) is individualized. For example, the “statement” of individuals committed under “Daeshland” motive consists in saying that according to them, their life environment is not suitable and its solution would be to build a fairer world based on the divine law. The “statement” of individuals committed under “Mother Teresa” motive consists in mentioning the existence of victims that would have been caused by an oppressor. The proposed solution to which they adhere is expressed in a way saying it is their responsibility to alleviate the situation. **This conscious conceptualization of the problem is strengthened by the unconscious mechanisms of altruism.¹⁶⁴ The “jihadist” discourse often uses various defence mechanisms unconsciously strengthening a dysfunctional solution consciously chosen by the “jihadist” under the influence of the individualized propaganda.** Under “Zeus” motive, for example, the will of omnipotence usually expressed by young individuals at risk of auto destructive behaviours and more rarely of delinquency punishable by law finds an outlet to express aggressive and violent impulses with absolute impunity.

¹⁶¹Depending on the individual conception of commitment in the “jihadist” project, these conscious and unconscious processes interact with some radical discourse arguments. The psycho-analytical approach of the defence mechanism and the behavioural-cognitive approach of coping are both studied together for the first time by Henri Chabrol and Stacey Callahan (2013) : *Mécanismes de défense et coping*, 2nd Edition, Paris : Dunod. They propose a conceptual framework allowing to take into account both the dysfunctional compensatory solutions proposed by the “jihadist” discourse and the individual’s internal problems.

¹⁶²Defence mechanisms are defined by the ‘Manuel diagnostique et statistique des troubles mentaux DSM-5’ (4e éd.), Masson, p. 964, like mechanisms which: “serve as intermediaries eliciting the individual’s reaction to emotional conflicts and external stress factors. Some of those mechanisms are most of the time inadequate (for example: projection, cleavage, and acting out). Other mechanisms (for example: termination and denial) are adequate or not depending on their intensity, inflexibility, and the context in which they occur.” This descriptive definition of defence mechanisms emphasize several relevant elements with respect to the young individuals’ radical commitment leading with time to a project based on extreme choices that:

- Can be considered as the “individual’s reaction”, in connection with external stress factors emphasized in the above paragraph;
- Introduce specific individual emotional determinant factors;
- Probably imply inadequate defence mechanisms when the choice consists in leaving for Syria and sometimes the intent to act out. Serge Hefez emphasizes the cleavage mechanism for some young people who become radicalized without changing their usual behaviour, and alarming their entourage who does not suspect a process of violent radicalization.

¹⁶³BRUCHON-SCHWEITZER, M. et DANTZER, R. (1994). *Introduction à la Psychologie de la santé*. Paris : PUF, coll. Psychologie d’aujourd’hui.

¹⁶⁴At this stage, we won’t give further details on the difference between mature and immature defence mechanisms. However, we can postulate that individualized tools of their propaganda aims at an excessive activation of mature defence mechanisms, and settles a virtual context fostering immature defence mechanisms. For example, individuals committed under “Mother Teresa” motive activate the principle of altruism and create a virtual context fostering the activation of the rationalization mechanism.



Consequently, the professional team must not only acknowledge the individualization of “jihadists” conscious statements (international and domestic social-political, dysfunctions) but also the individualization of unconscious defence mechanisms.

We noticed, for example, that altruism, defined as “a response to conflicts and internal or external stress factors, through the dedication to others’ needs; (...) where the subject receive bonuses directly from others’ responses, or indirectly by proxy”,¹⁶⁵ applied to young individuals committed under the sub-categories of “Mother Teresa” and “Lancelot”. In this context, the young individual’s gratification is indirect as it does not come from those who are supposed to benefit from his altruism (Syrians who are actually killed by the “jihadist” group when they do not pledge allegiance), but the radical group which strengthens the will to commit by this mean. This specific psychic operation in which the “jihadist” discourse succeeds in exploiting the humanist values of young individuals turning against themselves and their society, as described in part II. This exploitation can be analysed under the unconscious mechanism of altruism and the gratification strengthening from the group.

The second identified defence mechanism, particularly for young individuals committed under the motives of “Sleeping Beauty”, “Fortress”, and “Saviour”, is the anticipation. Anticipation, when “anxious”, becomes a problem as “the subject feels an important level of anxiety which is strengthened by thoughts exaggerating the difficulties (...) far from preparing the subject to face the situation, it can lead to dysfunctional responses”.¹⁶⁶ Even though the concern with regard to the protection of self and one’s family (present for “Sleeping Beauty”, “Fortress”, and “Saviour” profile types) can seem on some level legitimate, the radical solutions adopted, and the subjective and objective threats perceived by the individual make this defence mechanism inadequate (and dangerous).

We also identified the “displacement”. This intermediary defence mechanism described as neurotic is defined as “a response to conflict and stress by transferring a feeling or reaction from an object to another one used as a substitution usually less threatening”.¹⁶⁷ (...) This mechanism is close to acting out. Consequently, the aggressive or sexual impulses can be transferred, and act on another object.”¹⁶⁸ This mechanism seems to apply mostly on young individuals showing commitment motives such as “Lancelot” and “Zeus” (but also “Fortress”), characterized by a premeditation quite explicit to act out, linked to a will to restore justice or impose one’s will to oneself or someone else.

Besides the “displacement”, the second intermediary neurotic mechanism is the “reactional formation”. This one is defined as a response to conflicts and stress “by substituting thoughts or unacceptable feelings with other behaviours, thoughts or feelings completely opposite”.¹⁶⁹ Some arguments make us believe that this defence mechanism applies to young individuals

¹⁶⁵DSM-IV, *Manuel diagnostique et statistique des troubles mentaux* (4e éd.), Masson, p.755) ; CHABROL ET CALLAHAN (2013), *Mécanismes de défense et coping*. Paris : Dunod, p. 26.

¹⁶⁶CHABROL & CALLAHAN, 2013, *Ibid*, page 25.

¹⁶⁷DSM-IV, *Ibid*, p. 755.

¹⁶⁸CHABROL & CALLAHAN, 2013, *Ibid*, page 32-33.

¹⁶⁹CHABROL & CALLAHAN, 2013, *Ibid*, page 35.



committed under the motives of “Daeshland” and “Sleeping Beauty”. First, the individual reject of the current environment, whose motivations depend on a case by case basis, is replaced by an idyllic representation of the world as described by “jihadists”. In the case of “Sleeping Beauty”, the young girls’ relational difficulties with men are replaced by a romantic relationship with a virtual or fantasized stranger. Those girls have clearly been weakened after experiencing sexual assaults. The conscious adherence to both of these beliefs (an idyllic world and a perfect romantic relationship), despite the absence of evidence of their existence and their unlikelihood when compared to other facts, could be explained by the involuntary and unconscious activation of the reactional formation. For these two motives (“Daeshland” and the ideal world, and “Sleeping Beauty” and the perfect protector), another defence mechanism is systematically used: the “idealisation”.

We can find several other defence mechanisms which allow to better deconstruct the unconscious operation corresponding to each commitment motive:

- Omnipotence is essentially visible in the commitment motive of “Zeus”, in addition to narcissistic defences of an overstatement of their self-esteem and capacities (the latter applies to the commitment motive of “Lancelot” too);
- The projection, defined by “the responses to conflicts and stress factors by wrongly attributing one’s own unacceptable feelings, impulses, and thoughts to another person”,¹⁷⁰ applies to young individuals whose commitment motive is “Lancelot”. The projection transfer applies to the soldiers of the Syrian army and implies a will of revenge as a manifestation of their own aggressive impulses;
- The belittlement, defined as “a response to conflicts and stress factors by attributing to oneself or others exaggerated defects”,¹⁷¹ seems to apply in an implicit way for young girls whose commitment motive is “Sleeping Beauty”. They always consider themselves, in an implicit way, unable to protect themselves and limit men as protectors. This belittlement, as it is unconscious and involuntary, explains this observation mentioned in our reports¹⁷²: “We note that “the sitarian,¹⁷³ niqabian,¹⁷⁴ or jilbabian¹⁷⁵ detoxification” lasts for numerous months as the young brainwashed woman need to learn again how to protect herself differently”. Regarding the psychic care of those young girls committed under the motive of “Sleeping Beauty”, representing 31,6% of our sample of women¹⁷⁶ (including all social classes), the self-esteem can represent a therapeutic tool seen as relevant as it can be accessible by simple cognitive technics focusing on conscious processes. It also could alleviate unconscious defence mechanisms playing a key role in the belittlement;

¹⁷⁰CHABROL & CALLAHAN, 2013, *Ibid*, page 65.

¹⁷¹CHABROL & CALLAHAN, 2013, *Ibid*, page 54, reference to the DSM-IV, *Ibid*, p. 755.

¹⁷²Findings of the CPDSI, 10 February 2016, page 25, cpdsi.fr

¹⁷³Full veil hiding the body, face and eyes of the person.

¹⁷⁴Full veil hiding the body and face of the person

¹⁷⁵Full veil hiding the body and hair but showing the person’s face only.

¹⁷⁶See table 17a of the report “RISK MECHANISMS AND PROTECTION FACTORS”.

- The rationalisation, defined as “a tendentious justification resorting to logic or ethics allowing the subject to hide himself from his true motives that are not perceived by his consciousness. The rationalisation substitutes a plausible reason socially, morally, or narcissistically acceptable to a motive less acceptable”¹⁷⁷ and which seems to concern all the motives but by different means. The rationalisation constitutes an interesting immature defence mechanism for several reasons. First, the idea that it may implied in any commitment motives needs to be tempered as the young individuals do not unconsciously rationalize the same motives explained by a set of arguments presented as Muslim. The believer of “Daeshland” probably rationalizes his escape from a world of discriminations and social injustice. “Mother Teresa” rationalizes the gift of self. The “Licit Suicide” rationalizes his will to die. The “Fortress” rationalizes his need for restraint. The “Sleeping Beauty” rationalizes her protection strategy. Finally, the “Saviour”, “Lancelot”, and “Zeus” seem to rationalize premeditation for acting out.

In addition, the rationalisation conveys the legitimation of violence. In other words, violence is legitimated and consequently raised by the defence mechanism of rationalisation. This hypothesis could explain why some individuals who commit for humanitarian reasons for example end up adhering progressively to beliefs linked to violence contrary to their conscious explicit motives. It would be caused by the unconscious and uncontrollable power of rationalisation. The involvement of this unconscious mechanism in any commitment motives could explain the imperviousness of young individuals once brainwashed to rational arguments provided by their entourage.

To follow-up the “deradicalization” of “jihadists”, we finally used the same defence mechanisms to propose alternative commitments that are compatible with the social contract. For those committed under the motives of “Lancelot” and “Mother Teresa”, we used the mechanism of the gift of self to offer them real humanitarian projects. For those committed under the motives of “Sleeping Beauty”, “Fortress”, and “Saviour”, we took into account their need for anticipation to propose alternative commitments, etc.

Testimonies show that young deradicalized individuals were more impacted by an alternative commitment rather than an alternative discourse. We could think that the alternative commitment first allows to adjust the defence mechanism more than the alternative discourse.

Please find below the table 13 of the report “RISK MECHANISMS AND PROTECTION FACTORS”. It offers an insight on what we just analysed

¹⁷⁷CHABROL & CALLAHAN, 2013, *Ibid*, page 69.

CLINICAL DENOMINATION COMING FROM THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY ELABORATED WITH PROFESSOR COHEN'S TEAM	ANALYSIS OF THE ACTUAL NEEDS OF THE RADICALIZED PERSON, SOMETIMES TRANSFORMED BY THE "RADICAL" NARRATIVE, ACCORDING TO HIS ENGAGEMENT MOTIVE	REMINDER OF SPECIFIC AREAS OF WORK (OR ALTERNATIVE ENGAGEMENTS) TO PROPOSE AN ALTERNATIVE WAY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS OF THE RADICALIZED INDIVIDUAL
LANCELOT		
<p>Violence, Expression of a need for justice, heroism, interest for guns, fight, army, homosexual feelings, expression of difficulties to interact with others, however altruism.</p>	<p>Needs to build a world of solidarity, brotherhood and justice for oppressed people, to find a group of peers, to confront dangerous situations, for valorisation, for recognition, to prove that he is a man</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deconstructing his rationalization of violence by making the individual fully aware of his actual motivations ; - Making him ponder his tendency to look towards others in order to seek for support (affiliation defence mechanism) ; - Working on his need of altruism and his devoting mechanism to others' needs ; - Deconstructing the transfer of the aggressive urges he engaged in his commitment ; - Making him ponder the relational aspect by proposing him collective groups so that he can bound again and feels like he belongs to something: group therapy; collective sport; roams with a support group, etc. ; - Making him ponder his self-esteem (also with his family).
ZEUS		
<p>Violence, interest for guns, megalomania, adventure, fight "manly value", no lack of self-esteem, no search for tenderness</p>	<p>Need for power, to get the upper hand on authority figures, to defy death, for self-confidence, for valorisation, for equal treatment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deconstructing the transfer of the aggressive urges he engaged in his commitment and his omnipotence mechanism ; - Working on his need of altruism and his devoting mechanism to others' needs ; - Enrolling him in a risky sport that works on the matter of boundaries in order to help him find a compensatory activity to restore his self-esteem ; - Pondering rupture camps involving a difficult mission, such as a rite of passage trial to revalorize him ; - Working on the relation to the father and the father's figure - Working on the symbolic relation of law and the integration of limits/ boundaries.



THE SAVIOR		
<p>Feelings of responsibility and guilt towards others and his relatives, fear of hell, history with relatives that suffered</p>	<p>Need to free from his responsibilities, to be a saving hero for the one he loves, to refocus and listen to himself, to be reassured on the future of the people he loves close to death, to be reassured on the end of the world, to be reassured on the other side</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deconstructing his rationalization of violence by making the individual fully aware of his actual motivations; - Making him ponder his tendency to look towards others in order to seek for support (affiliation defence mechanism) ; - Working on his anxious anticipating (and guilt-provoking) mechanism ; - Working on his familial relationships so that he could take back his place as a child ; - Making him ponder the needs of his family to relieve him from his responsibility (with an institutional or associative support).
DAESH LAND		
<p>Expression of loneliness and guilt, resignation, loss of interest and hope for the real world</p>	<p>Need for a world more egalitarian, of justice, for a brotherhood world, to be active, for spirituality and religious belief, to fight against evil forces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deconstructing his rationalization of violence - by making the individual fully aware of his actual motivations; - Making him ponder his tendency to look towards others in order to seek for support (affiliation defence mechanism) ; - Make him fully aware of his repression and his totally contrary choice (“reactional formation” defensive mechanism) ; - Orientating him towards NGO / Political parties / Reflection or citizenship movement; - Working with him the juridical notion of secularism (laïcité) so that he could appropriate the notions of legality and duty and could be armed towards an interlocutor that would reproach him of being “too believing” or “ostentatious” ; - Making him ponder the notion of utopia and the idealization mechanism ; - Pushing him towards the study of political sciences and religious sciences.



FORTRESS		
<p>Intense sexual fantasies and activity, feeling of guilt when happy, fear of sexuality, excess of violence, no search for protection or in group belonging, frequent history of abuse</p>	<p>Need for content, for purification, to be free from the part of evil inside him, to stop feeling guilty and being free from his own obsessions, for redemption, for liberation/rest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deconstructing his rationalization of violence by making the individual fully aware of his actual motivations ; - Making him ponder his tendency to look towards others in order to seek for support (affiliation defence mechanism) ; - Working on his anxious anticipating (and guilt-provoking) mechanism ; - Trying to lead him to consult a psychiatrist as soon as possible ; - Ponder the help of an association specialized in addiction.
LICIT SUICIDE		
<p>Depressive feelings, risk taking behaviours, suicidal behaviour, frequent history of abuse</p>	<p>Need to be free from his existential suffering, to find a sense to his life, to find/build a self-esteem, to find a legitimacy to his death, to find a place, to be useful</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deconstructing his rationalization of violence by making the individual fully aware of his actual motivations,; - Making him ponder his tendency to look towards others in order to seek for support (affiliation defence mechanism) ; - Working on his anxious anticipating (and guilt-provoking) mechanism ; - Leading him to consult a doctor for an antidepressant treatment ; - Helping him live a project in which he has his own place and a where he is useful (essential).
MOTHER TERESA		
<p>Feelings of responsibility and guilt, feeling of being evil, fear of sexuality, suicidal behaviour and interest for death, expression of sacrifice</p>	<p>Need to be useful, for valorisation, to find a sense to his life, to participate to a fairer world, to be free from his guilt, to modulate his empathy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deconstructing his rationalization of violence by making the individual fully aware of his actual motivations ; - Making him ponder his tendency to look towards others in order to seek for support (affiliation defence mechanism) ; - Working on his need of altruism and his devoting mechanism to others' needs ; - Enrolling him in a humanitarian activity ; - Pondering humanitarian rupture camps ; - Pondering trainings on "humanitarian/donation professions", etc. ; - Working on empathy regulation.



SLEEPING BEAUTY (FEMALES ONLY)		
<p>Expression of loneliness, search of an ideal love, no territory, feelings of persecution, identification to an “oppressed people”, suicidal behaviour and interest for death, frequent history of abuse</p>	<p>Need for protection, for eternal love (by God), for respect of herself, to fill her abandon feeling, for self-esteem, for independence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deconstructing her rationalization of violence by making the individual fully aware of her actual motivations ; - Making her ponder her tendency to look towards others in order to seek for support (affiliation defence mechanism) ; - Working on her anxious anticipating (and guilt-provoking) mechanism ; - Making her fully aware of her repression and totally contrary choice (“reactional formation” defensive mechanism) ; - Working on her depreciation mechanism (of herself and men) and the eventually suffered sexual abuses ; - Pondering a specialized association on domestic violence (to work on the matter of romantic hold) ; - Working on her relation to the father and the father’s figure.

Important comment

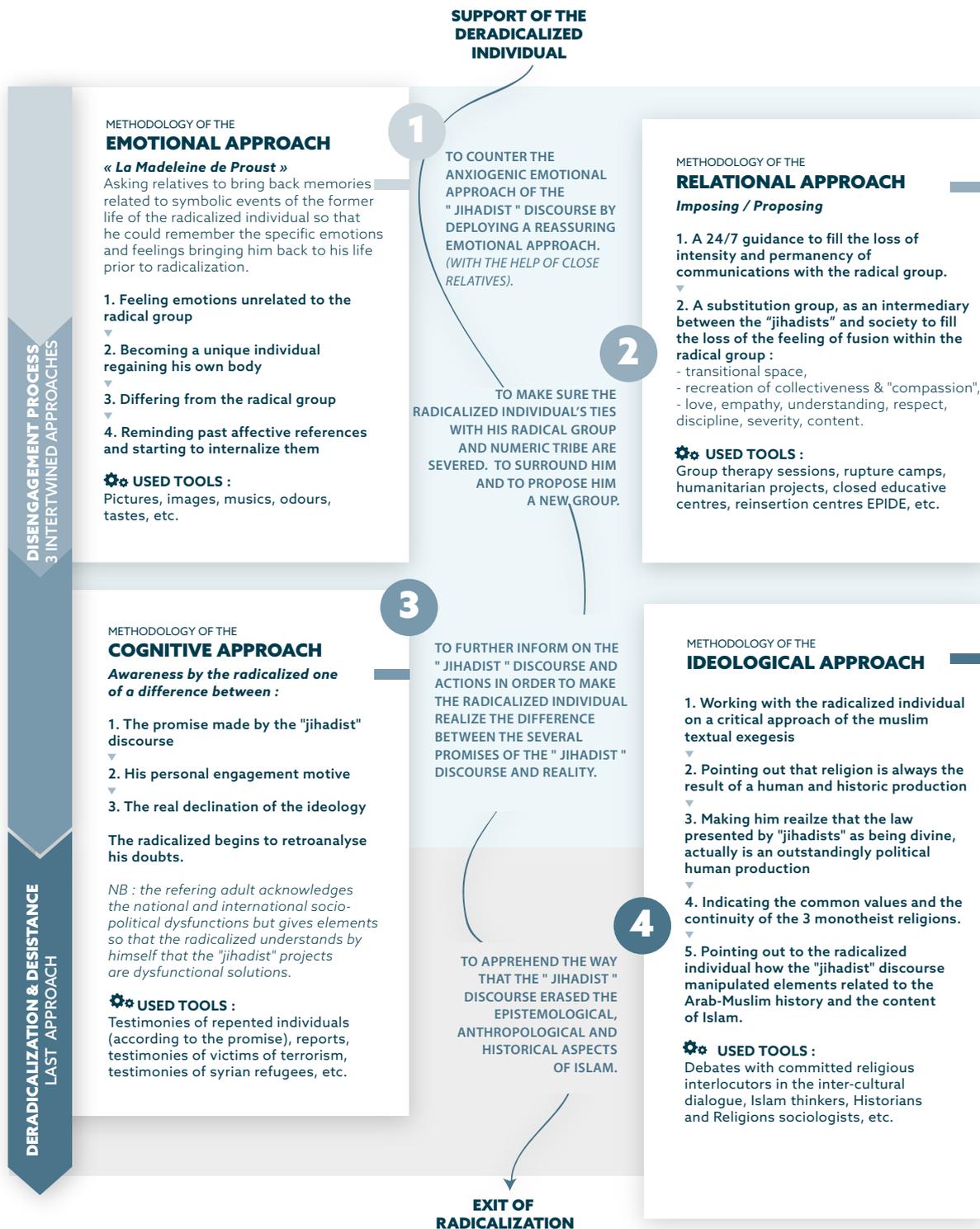
It is no coincidence if the analysis of our statistics shows the existence of a link between the fact that the person has been monitored by a psychologist before his/her radicalization and the success of the deradicalization process.¹⁷⁸ We could think that the young individuals kept in their memory the marks of the human psychic reasoning that has been elaborated during their former psychotherapy. When an individual experienced a deconstruction of his/her depression or problems, he/she became aware of the links between what he/she lives or lived, the human subjectivity (way to live and experience events), and the way to decrypt events and “read the world” (understanding its complexity). In some way, the individual kept in mind (consciously or unconsciously) the significance of the human factor. Yet, the “jihadist” discourse attempts to destroy this human factor. Limiting the radicalization phenomenon to a theological issue would be like positioning oneself as a mirror of the “jihadist” ideology.¹⁷⁹ Instead of deconstructing it, it would strengthen it.

¹⁷⁸Table 22 of the report “RISK MECHANISMS AND PROTECTION FACTORS” (part. II.1.2: three variables linked to the place of the psychologist which positively impact the young individual’s future). Following these findings, we asked to the psychoanalyst Alain Ruffian to propose primary prevention tools (See annex of the report herein).

¹⁷⁹It does not mean that the theological arguments are not necessary and useful. The “theological discussion” or the “alternative theological discourse” is part of the deradicalization process, if it is used at the right time. We used it once the cognitive opening started. If we do not wait for the right time, the theological argument will be counterproductive as it would confirm what the radical group expected.



We propose the following summary scheme:



ANNEX 1: SURVEY REPLIED BY RELATIVES WHO COLLABORATED IN THE COLLECTION OF DATA FOR THE USE OF THIS REPORT

ANNEX 1.1 - DATA ON THE LIFE GOALS BEFORE THE INDIVIDUAL'S RADICALIZATION, AND THE SOCIAL AND FAMILY CONTEXT

How was the family structure before his/her radicalization?

Based on parents' jobs

Do both parents work? Do they work a lot, with specific work schedules (part-time, full-time, freelance, etc.)?

Did the parents (or one parent) stop working to raise the kids (particularly the mother, and if so: did she decide to work home-based such as babysitting jobs)?

Social environment in the family

Which social environment does the individual live in? Which neighborhood? Which social class? What kind of job (for the parents and/or the young adult)? Does the individual have any sisters and brothers?

Parent's commitment

Does the individual have one of his/her parents committed in any kind of movement (revolutionary, feminist, activist, a particular sensitivity for humanitarian causes, for animals...)? If so, do you feel like your child has been impacted by one of these causes?

Relationship with his/her parents

What kind of relationship does the individual have with his/her parents?

Was there a cohesive relationship with one parent, or perhaps both parents?

How are the parents with religion (religious or not, which religion, etc.)?

Do they tend to foster dialogue within the family or don't they dare talk about it by fear of conflict?

At the family level, is the child perceived as introvert or extrovert?

Does the young individual have any difficulties expressing his/her emotions/feelings?

Do the parents consider themselves as more or less strict or flexible?

Situation of the parental couple

Are the parents still in couple or divorced? If divorced: was the divorce difficult? As a source of conflict? What kind of relationship is maintained between the two parents? Did the parental couple still exist after the divorce? How old was the child when the parents divorced? What kind of relationship does the child have with both of his/her parents? Is the individual part of a blended family? If so, what kind of relationship does the individual have with his/her father-in-law or mother-in-law?

Relationship with the family or the blended family

What kind of relationship does the individual have with his/her half-brothers and half-sisters if any?

What kind of connection do his/her brothers and sisters have to religion?

The migratory history and the link to the soil

Is the individual from a recent or distant migratory history? What kind of connection does the individual have to the memory, history and territory of his/her native country or country of origin? And with the neighborhood or city he used to live in?

ANNEX 1.2 - WHAT KIND OF YOUNGSTER WAS HE/SHE BEFORE HIS/HER RADICALIZATION?

Education

How did school go? What kind of education did the individual have?

How were his/her relationships with “key adults” surrounding him (professors, educators, grand-parents, others)? Was he/she or did he/she want to be a class representative?

Relation to law

Is there any information with regard to the individual’s connection to law and authority? Were there any criminal records?

Was he/she a delinquent?

Personality disorders, violence, addiction

Has he ever been identified as having personality disorders?

Was he/she an anorexic, a drug addict or a person subject to any other kind of additions? Did he/she cut himself/herself? In the individual’s family and entourage, are there any disorders (depression, suicide attempt, etc.)?

Are parents aware of such disorders in previous generations? Are there any family secrets or taboos the child could have suffered from?

Has he/she ever had any major health issues?

Injustice and social devaluation

Does the individual’s family and/or he/she have any financial difficulties? Which ones? If so: did it affect him/her? Does he/she feel devalued?

Strong pains

Did he/she experience any important betrayal from a friend or any abandonment?

Did something die? If so, who? What was the cause (disease, accident, suicide, age, etc.)? Was the death sudden? How old was the person who died? How old was the child when the person died? Can he/she talk about it easily?

Did he/she experience any physical assaults? Did a relative experience any physical assaults?

Love

Has he/she ever had any stable romantic relationship?

How does he/she feel about the “other gender/sex” or the same gender/sex? Did he/she feel lust for that person?

Sexuality

How does he/she feel about sexuality?

Was he/she involved in any situations of sexual assault as a perpetrator or a victim?



Group

Has he /she ever been linked to/involved in other radical groups (far-right, far-left, gangs, etc.)?
Was he/she a loner as a kid or did she/he have a group of friends?
Was he/she a leader or member of a group?

Sport

Did the individual practice sport? If so, did he/she practice a collective or individual sport?
Was he/she a club member?
Was he/she a leader in a group?
Did he/she practice sport for fun or competition?
How much was he/she involved in this activity?
Did he/she do activities at risk?

Behaviours with regard to breaks

Did he/she have any such behaviours when he/she was a kid?
Did he/she have any behaviours at risk?
Did he/she go through a period of delinquency?
Did he/she do drugs? Did he/she drink alcohol? Did he/she take medication?
Did he/she show any depressive, suicidal or morbid tendencies? If so, based on which motives?
Did the child ever talk about death?
Were there any periods of time when the individual left the family (if adult) or conjugal (if in couple) place?

What do we know about the way he/she radicalized?

The conversion moment

Was the conversion and/or radicalization sudden or progressive? Did he/she talk about it to his/her relatives spontaneously? If so, how (progressively in changing the truth sometimes, sudden, challenging, ect.)?
Who did he/she live with before his/her conversion (parents, his/her own place, in couple, etc.)?

Personal religious search

Did he/she hang out with Muslims in his/her entourage? Did he/she only hang out with Muslims?
How did he/she perceive Islam?
What kind of interest did he/she have for religion? For how long has he/she had such interest?
How did he/she behave during his/she conversion to Islam?
Did he/she practice religion?

Communication with the radical group

How was he/she contacted? (If physical contact: who? How? When? If contact via Internet: which websites did he/she go on? Did he/she listen to any preachers in particular?)
Did he/she mostly read documents? Watch videos? Listen to audios? Which ones particularly impacted him/her? Why?
Was he/she on social networks? Which ones?

Content of the conversations between the individual and the radical group

What did attract him in the radical discourse (utopia? Something else?) ?

What did they tell him/her? What did they offer him/her?

Did he/she receive any advice on how to escape from adult? His/her parents? The police?

Did he/she have any doubts about being in contact with them? If so, which ones?

When did he/she adhere to the group/its discourse?

Did he/she have any doubts during his/her enrollment? If so, which ones?

Influence from his/her entourage

Family? Friends? Other?

Can this influence be seen as a grip? A romantic grip? A friendly grip?

Is it possible to identify a person from his/her entourage that would have had some influence on him/her during his/her radicalization process?

Detection of his/her radicalization by his/her entourage

When did his/her entourage become aware of a change in his/her cognitive system (his/her way of thinking, talking, and acting)?

Who was the first person who became aware of the situation (mother, father, a family member, a friend, at school, etc.)?

Did he/she withdraw himself/herself?

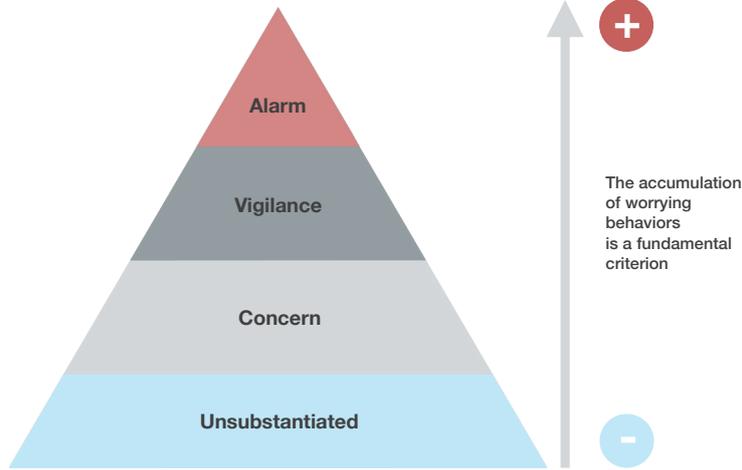
Who with? His/her friend circle? His/her family? At work? At a social level?

ANNEX 2: WARNING INDICATORS



PYRAMID OF BEHAVIORS

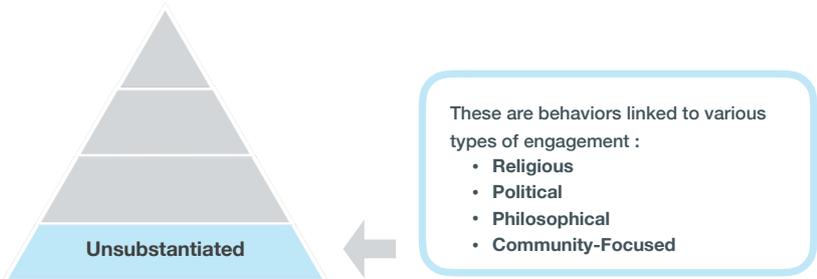
This Pyramid of Behaviors cannot replace in-depth analysis of each situation.



Redesigned schema for the report harmony
CPDSI's criteria were adapted from the tool developed by the CPRMV



BEHAVIORS THAT DO NOT COME UNDER « JIHADIST » RADICALIZATION

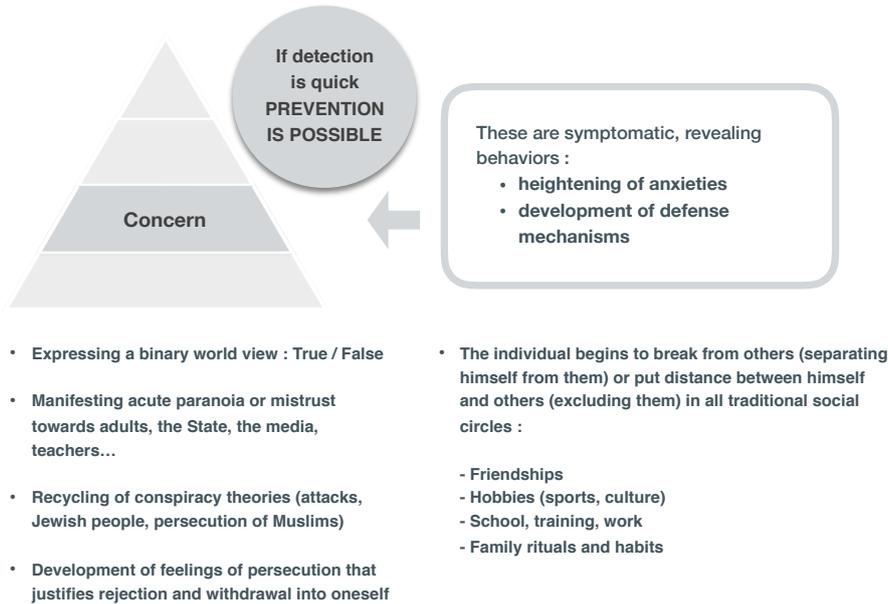


- Ostensibly display religious signs (headscarf, beard, jewels, items, etc).
- Using discourse tinged with religious references.
- Campaigning for / protesting in support of a cause (without calling for or using violence).
- Asking to eat according to a specific religious diet (halal, kosher, without pork, without meat, etc).
- Reflecting, going to a place of worship, praying at fixed times according to religious instructions.
- Reading religious texts (buying books, videos / going to conferences).

Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Dounia Bouzar — 2017

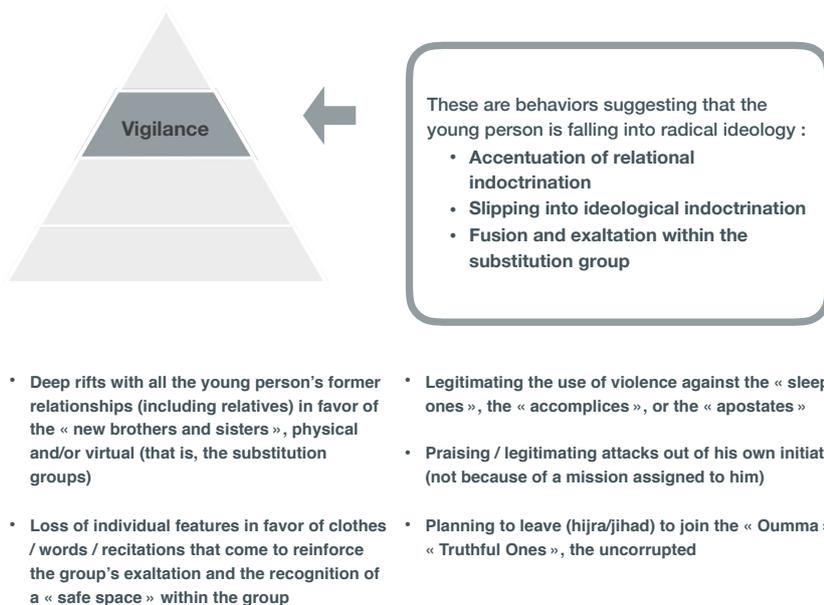


BEHAVIORS CALLING FOR THE PROFESSIONAL TO BE ATTENTIVE AND REACTIVE



Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Dounia Bouzar — 2017

BEHAVIORS CALLING FOR THE PROFESSIONAL TO BE VIGILANT AND ALERT THE AUTHORITIES (IF NOT DONE ALREADY)



Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Dounia Bouzar — 2017

EXTREMELY WORRYING BEHAVIORS, ENGAGED / ACTING OUT



- Consciously (specific mission) participating in the recruiting process (encouraging their adhesion to violent ideology and their departure from France)
- Doing everything to join / support the cause : going to the frontline (alone or in a group), material and / or financial support, etc.
- Committing or planning terrorist attacks with the intention of causing death in the name of one's ideology
- Praising terror attacks
- Spreading ideology through social networks and the internet

Redesigned schema for the report harmony
Written by Dounia Bouzar — 2017

ANNEX 3: OUTIL LEXICAL



ANNEX 4: LIVRE BLANC « LES DÉSENGAGÉS »