



Bouzar Expertises

Cultes et Cultures

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD & WHICH TREATMENT FOR THE CHILDREN OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES?

A comparison between Daesh and other
totalitarian groups

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>> **SUMMARY**
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We thank the **Fondation Quilliam** for their report about the Kalifat's lion cubs.

A big thank you to the professor **Marielle Rispail** (University of Grenoble) who kindly re-read and corrected this report.

Specialized for 10 years in the area of fight against discrimination issues, religion management and prevention of the violent radicalization, the Bouzar Expertises office has created in 2016 the **Virtual Library NOORONLINE**. This completely free platform makes available for any user, thematic videos and reports about the "Jihadist's" radicalization prevention and the religion management, in order to share the expertise of several specialists (geopoliticians, theologians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, etc.). The report « Les lionceaux du califat, une répétition de l'Histoire » (*The Kalifat's lion cubs, a repetition of history*) appears in this continuity of work.

WARNING TO READERS

This report is the result of a detailed archives and audiovisual media search, to analyze the processes of propaganda and recruitment made for children trapped in the middle of "Jihadist's" groups, as other children before in history have been trapped by other totalitarian ideologies.

Our pedagogical bias is to immerse the reader in an auditory experience where he/she can view and / or hear the ideology dedicated to children under "Jihadist's" groups, to better understand the psycho-trauma caused and then propose appropriate and effective care.



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SUMMARY

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SYNTHESIS

>> DOUNIA BOUZAR FOREWORD

The purpose of this report is to help strengthen the tools of the often-powerless professionals who now take care increasingly of this profile of children, so they can protect themselves from the inevitably anxiety, emotional, ideological and political dimensions that this subject causes.

For several months, with my team, we furthered the question of the national trauma, searched for the different situations and extremist's children's path, cross-checked the law and psychology, viewed the videos of the recruiters, studied what was being done abroad, and identified the similarities and differences with the other totalitarian ideologies of modern history.

This was all the more important since the last research I did revolted a part of the society, even though this experiment proved to be an operational success. Indeed, when I discovered in 2015 the real impact produced by the testimonies of young people who had realized the great gap between the false promises of Daesh's propaganda and the reality of the action of this totalitarian group, I went ahead into this experiment that gave us hope. I was obsessed with the idea to disengage the hundreds of young people we were taking care of from the violent extremism... I wanted to communicate about the effectiveness of the testimonies of "repentant" who could provoke what psychologists call "cognitive dissonances" among pro-jihadists. Those techniques, from my perspectives, would allow any professional to do the same.

But by sharing this experiment, by communicating on it, I involuntarily ignored the context of national trauma, in which France has been since the Toulouse attacks of 2012. When I shared the Farid Benyettou testimonies in the book *Mon Djihad, Itinéraire d'un repent* (My Jihad, a repentant's path) the point was about sharing an analysis so there would never be others "Farid Benyettou"...When we chose to publish the book at the time of the Charlie Hebdo attack's commemoration, it was in order to restore hope in the ability of a former network leader to assume responsibility for the blood he had on his hands towards a mourning country. Instead of giving hope, these communications hurt those I wanted to help, who felt that I did not respect the memory of the dead and the suffering of the attack's victims. I made a mistake. I did not understand it at that time.

After 17 years as an educator in the Judicial Protection of Youth, I am and I remain a researcher. The job of a researcher is to search. Good ideas do not come from conventions. The role of researchers is to try bold and innovative approaches. I have always believed that my dual identity as a former educator and academic was a strength, but for the first time, it was complicated in the fight against radicalism in which I have been committed myself for more than 10 years. Today, I still face the same equation that I still do not know how to solve: we have to experiment to be able to conceptualize. And it is impossible to pretend to conceptualize without experimenting. Between the two, we have to communicate on the intermediate steps to check and adjust them ...

With this report, I hope to be able to share these elements about the children of extremists in a more constructive and explanatory way this time... for who foster links in the shadows, with youth can re-appropriate them and continue to innovate. Whatever the difficulties encountered in this long work, I continue to believe deeply in the human and human chains that can be woven (that we must weave) in the face of those who preach death and hatred.

PRÉFACE

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DE PIERRE
CONESA,

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DE LA DÉFENSE

Was Dounia Bouzar wrong (or right) to deal with the radicalization process in 2006*, especially among children, before everyone else? The wave of attacks that hit France in 2012 (Mohamed Merah) and especially in 2015-2016 (249 dead and more than 900 injured) shocked the country. The political class and many scholars seemed to consider that the very idea of "counter-radicalization policy" and even more so of "de-radicalization policy" was politically incorrect, culturally sensitive, was a violation of the freedom of conscience (religious) and why not to human rights. A report classified "secret defense" had been entrusted to a prefect (noblesse oblige!) in 2013 so especially not communicated to the public debate. A journalist from La Croix who had read it was even summoned and heard by the DCRI. The report proposing nothing, was the subject obscene?

Dounia had already delivered a lot of work on this subject. When "Defusing radical Islam, these sectarian excesses that disfigure Islam" was published in early 2014, she was contacted by many families whose children were recruited to go to Syria and she created the "Prevention Center against Sectarian Drifts related to Islam "(CPDSI). I myself (with private funding from the Foundation for Victims of Terrorism) published a report in December 2015 "What counter-radicalization policy in France? (Downloadable from www.favt.org) one month before the killings against Charlie Hebdo. The polite silence that greeted him was matched only by the interest he aroused in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks.

The terrorist news has caught up with us. Not because the phenomenon of terrorist risk was ignored but because policy makers preferred to treat it only by police methods. Prime Minister Manuel Valls was the first to qualify Jihadist Salafism in January 2015 when previously all hid behind generic terms like "radical Islam, fundamentalist Muslims ...", thus putting in the same bag all the Muslims. Dounia Bouzar was then solicited, consulted, looted. The Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Delinquency (ICPD) was quickly given the urgent task of dealing with radicalization as if it concerned delinquency ... →

* Dounia Bouzar, *What education facing religious radicalism?* Ed Dunod, 2006, result of an action research conducted for the Research-Studies-Development Department of the National Training and Study Center of the Judicial Protection of Youth, with the preface by the Director of Judicial Protection of Youth

PRÉFACE



DE PIERRE
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DE LA DÉFENSE

The French experts could be counted on the fingers of one hand. By experts, I mean researchers (such as Farhad Khosrokar, Ouisa Kies, etc.) who conducted interviews in prison, associations wishing to alert the authorities (including management associations of Muslim mosques who felt the Salafist surge) and workers or psychologists who have followed the wounded families by the radicalization of a member of his family or having children in care to lead them to a "de-radicalization" (as the association of Dounia Bouzar). The CIPD (now CIPDRadicalisation) by the miracle of administrative texts) addressed Dounia (and others). But the media and political turmoil on radicalization unleashed petty passions and jealousies. Dounia Bouzar was immediately denigrated by those who missed the subject or by those who wanted to reduce it to a single "product of the Moslem religion". Political Islam interested than more the processes and methods of radicalization and above all, the indispensable psychological, educational, social, police and religious policies to protect young people.

Supreme media error, Dounia reached out to Farid Benyettou, former member of the Buttes Chaumont group who helped many Salafists in Syria, who is now dedicated to the fight against radicalization. She candidly thought that a repentant had more to contribute in a de-radicalization program than an academic expert. Many of the critics who took offense at this recruitment have never been in jail or met with jihadists, but how important! For having done so, along with others, in cycles of de-radicalization organized by the prison administration, I can attest to the effectiveness of this type of testimony.

Academic knowledge focused on the phenomenon of religious radicalization, but not on the militant strength and the capacity to convince the discourse on young people. It is this work devoted mainly to a teenager population followed since 2014, organized in syntheses and programs of actions, that we deliver here Dounia Bouzar. To this, she added an enormous historical work of comparison with the other totalitarian ideologies carried out by her multidisciplinary team, in order to show how Daesh was inspired by both Hitler Youth, child soldiers and other mobilities. extremists, and to identify similarities and differences. This work has no equivalent to our knowledge.

P. Conesa

SYNTHESIS

>> HISTORIC REMINDER

The use of child soldiers has not started with Daesh and is not a “jihadism’s” feature. On the contrary, the use of underage is a frequent thing in the war History and can be observed beyond Syria and Iraq. This role of child-fighters has been repeated again and again in the History (for example the “Marie-Louise” in France under Napoleon at the beginning of the 20th century) and has grown throughout the 20th and 21st centuries to reach its modern peak with the terrorist group Daesh. Because the methods used lean on innovative ways of communication. As we have explained since 2014 in our report « [La métamorphose opérée chez le jeune par les nouveaux discours terroristes](#) », CPDSI, September 2014 (The metamorphosis operated over young people by the new terrorist lines), Daesh and contemporary terrorists groups use the most elaborate technological ways of our time to consolidate a new propaganda shape. There is a consensus among researchers about this topic.

We will see that "the kinship between totalitarian regimes" allows to observe similarities in the mechanisms used to disseminate propaganda, but also in the objectives. Some aspects also intersect with the techniques used on child soldiers : *“The role of children among the «kalifat» represents both a highlight and an acceleration of more global trends in matters of child-soldiers indoctrination. We can also see some similarities with Nazi Germany on this systematic children’s indoctrination in schools and training camps in ISIS territories. The systematic abductions and forced recruitment employed by African armies are also process used by Isis, in Syria and Iraq. Finally, Isis leaders have also been inspired by other terrorist groups using children in their operations and have done it in a very large scale.”* If Daesh is not, strictly speaking, a rebel group, an army or a new Nazi form, it knows how to take back techniques already proven in history.

SYNTHESIS

>> PART 1

*“THE INTEREST OF
DAESH TO MOBILIZE
CHILDREN IN ITS ARMY”*

THE INTEREST OF DAESH TO MOBILIZE CHILDREN IN ITS ARMY

Talking about Daesh’s children is a subject encompassing very different situation. First, we must understand that children are used both as bait (photos symbolizing the rebirth based on purity to phish the utopians or guilt photos of dying babies to phish the humanists) and as recruitment goals (generation that will take over).

There is a diverse targeting of those who are recruited. Must be distinguished :

- European children indoctrinated by their parents,
- those kidnapped by one of their parents without the knowledge of the other,
- those indoctrinated directly by Daesh, via social networks, from the age of 12.

Concerning the Syrian or Iraqi children, there is also:

- the children kidnapped by Daesh (children raids mostly of Yezidi tribes, but not only),
- the children enlisted by Daesh (Daesh promises them to meet their needs and those of their families).

We will use our feedback to talk about the various situations of European children.



SYNTHESIS

>> PART 1

*“THE INTEREST OF
DAESH TO MOBILIZE
CHILDREN IN ITS ARMY”*

Once inside Daesh, the missions of the children are diversified. We resume and complete the classification made by the Quilliam foundation in excellent book “The Children of Daesh” (WWW.inculte.fr)

Children can become:

- spies,
- preachers,
- «poets»,
- soldiers,
- « cleaners»,
- kamikazes.

A special place is given to girls in this part, as this subject has been an important part of our research, since they constituted 60% of the young people who were sent to us by prefectures and by families. In June 2015, the official figures estimated that there were 35% of French women engaged in the “jihad”. We found out that they were recruited earlier than boys (12 years old instead of 15) and above all, we have also been able to find out, in a quantifiable way, that girls are detected earlier than boys by their relatives. Explaining why they manage to cope more easily: at their first behavioral and cognitive changes, both families and educational services take care of them, even if what underlies their multi-disciplinary care is sometimes gendered representations. (sexists).



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>> PART 1

*“THE INTEREST OF
DAESH TO MOBILIZE
CHILDREN IN ITS ARMY”*

The abuse of girls by “jihadists” is paradoxically a factor making disengagement easy, as this abuse is far from the promises made to them by the “jihadist” line during the indoctrination step. But our work shows that it is the awareness of the gap between the motive of personal commitment of the young people (search for protection, desire to build a better world, promise to save children killed by Bashar Al Assad, etc...) and the reality of the “jihadist” group’s identity and action (totalitarian political project that multiplies abuses and use terrorism) which causes the emergence of the first doubts of the radicalized-one.



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SYNTHESIS

>> PART 2

“THE CHILDREN’S INDOCTRINATION”

Daesh is a new product that has capitalized former processes, developed and tested by other totalitarian ideologies. We find some aspects of “Hitler Youth”, “child soldiers”, “Saddam Cubs” but also Stalinist regimes or Khmer Rouges.

1 - An emotional and relational approach

In the book “Français radicalisés” (French radicalized), written from testimonials of the “Jihadists” that we have taken care of during two years, we have shown that the “jihadist’s” indoctrination includes ideological, cognitive, emotional and relational dimensions. For children, the emotional approach goes through a new father figure: *“The common point of totalitarian dictatorship leaders is to present themselves as natural leaders who will save the world with a disruptive ideology that claims utopia (new city) in uchronia (new era). (...)”*. But the Daesh’s leader has it on both ways, profane and sacred. Once he has manipulated history and memory to become a providential man, he will at the same time evoke the Muslim ethic that does not allow to divinize a leader (which would make him an idol and so would violate the sacred principle of Unity of God / “Tawhid”) and adopt a strategy where he glorifies only God. This is the big difference between the Daesh totalitarianism and other political ideologies: it is not the superiority of the race that determines who “possess the Truth” but the superiority of the good interpretation of the divine word, granting all power increased tenfold. The leader appropriates the omnipotence of God by pretending to act in His name.



SYNTHESIS

>> PART 2

“THE CHILDREN’S INDOCTRINATION”

At the relational level, the search for a peer group by children escaped neither the notice of Nazis nor of the Daesh’s leaders. Enlistment in a totalitarian ideology always includes a sectarian dimension leading the individual to a kind of disaffiliation if the family is not radicalized too. This is what we have called "relational recruitment" in our studies about the young “jihadists” from their testimonials, here is an excerpt : *“I was very attached to them, I needed their presence, it was as if I had become addicted, (...) I had the feeling they were my sisters, that we were the same, that my place was there, near them. (...) They had become my family, my brothers, my sisters, they protected me against the outside world, against myself.”*

2 - To regenerate by regenerating society

The idea that renewal comes through the destruction of the past is not new. This goal of regeneration is found in all totalitarian ideologies. It removes the old emotional, memorial and historical references of individuals, in order to standardize them and lead them to no longer think, so they follow the path of their new group. Having the feeling of being similar accentuates the fusion within the group. The identity of the group supersedes the individual identity. Each totalitarian group accentuates the physical similarities between the members of the group to increase the feeling of being "the same": hair dyed in black, uniform, clothing that destroys the identity contours, destruction of personal objects, etc.



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>> PART 2

"THE CHILDREN'S INDOCTRINATION"

The regeneration of Man and the world, already brandished by secular totalitarianism, is all the more advocated by this totalitarianism, which claims to be inspired by God. Since its emergence, the "jihadist's" line promises the regeneration of the world and of men by replacing the human law by the divine law. According to their totalitarian ideology, only their interpreted divine law can manage a society perfectly. To fight against arbitrariness and corruption, they must get rid of everything that has a link with the human, which hinders the purity of the divine.

But unlike secular totalitarianism, it is not a matter of creating a new world but of returning to an idyllic past. It means that the use of Islam in the "Jihadist's" project of "regeneration of Man and the world" includes two different registers:

- the divine law is presented as an absolute truth because it would be the Divine Word and the human dimension of any religious interpretation (historical, anthropological and political) is denied;
- a pathogenic relation to the past, where religion is a means and a pretext for creating an apologetic story of Muslim History (as if there were no distinction between a religious system and historical processes, hence the immense work of the Franco-Algerian anthropologist, Mohammed Arkoun, who wanted to distinguish the religious ideal from historical forms in which it has been implemented, both in terms of representations and political practices.) The "jihadist's" line considers that each historical step and / or human construction marks a distance from the "true message" of Islam and therefore wants to get back to the "initial point".



SYNTHESIS

>> PART 2

"THE CHILDREN'S INDOCTRINATION"

3 - Inspire a sense of persecution in order to claim self-defense

The feeling of persecution plays a predominant role because it will justify the use of violence to defend themselves. It is part of the stressful emotional approach that initiates any radicalization process, to the extent that the "jihadist's" line wants to lead the young people to be wary of anyone outside the radical group and to invest the radical group as the only reassuring area. At this point, the radical line proposes compensatory dysfunctional solutions that are supposed to represent "the way out" of the stressful situation. The indoctrination therefore goes through the "fear of the Other", the one that does not belong to the radical group.

In summary, like the adult, the child is immersed in a paranoid worldview, where he/she must be wary of all those who are designated as responsible for the "evil". This view strengthens the fusion within the group and the isolation vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Any group wary of the outside falls back automatically and naturally on itself. The feeling of persecution is used in all totalitarian ideologies among children as well as among adults.

4 - From persecution feeling to the hatred of the other

The radical line gradually urges to hate all those who do not make allegiance to it, so those who have another analysis of the situation and / or those who choose other alternative solutions than group's solutions. At this stage, the radicalized-one is convinced to have discernment, to possess "the Truth" and rejects those considered asleep or accomplices of the enemies. He/she has a binary worldview, with good people on one side and bad people on the other. The videos show that the younger the child is, the more the emotional stressful approach will go through emotional register, convincing the child that he/she must avenge his/her parents ...



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"THE CHILDREN'S INDOCTRINATION"

5 - The trivialization of violence at school

These so-called areas of schooling are the perfect places for children's indoctrination. School is the incubator stage for totalitarian ideology, before the training camp, formatted to relay the Daesh's ideology. Like the "Nazi-Germany", subjects that do not contribute to the ideology's development have been removed from the "education" imposed by Daesh. From the first years of schooling, the goal is to transmit the totalitarian ideology to children by developing a universe and a warlike lexical, by using books similar to the ones used by the Hitler's youth, here in color. The same exercises are proposed in Daesh's "textbooks", than in Nazi's books, accustoming the child to an omnipresent warrior and murder environment. We find in all the textbooks, published by Daesh, the same process of militarization than we find in the Nazi's textbooks.

Children are noticeably trained at the same age (between 5 and 8 years old), but Daesh goes further on the propagation of the ideology in terms of technical and technological means (videos for children, video games, etc.) The "jihadist's" indoctrination process is strengthened by the support of the digital since it proposes applications for computer and telephone, for very young children in order to learn letters. These applications rely on the child universe and is mixed with violence in order to sublimate it.

It is not about raising a new generation of people involved in creating an ideal society in Syria or Iraq, as the recruiters dangle it, but to create a generation of fanatical fighters able to kill all those who would not submit to their project. To prevent children from escaping indoctrination, home schooling has been banned by Daesh.



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>> PART 2

"THE CHILDREN'S INDOCTRINATION"

6 - The glorification of the dead by pictures and songs

The role of the visual through media and culture has been heavily invested by totalitarian regimes. Brain imaging studies indicate that information received through images, as opposed to texts, tend to elicit faster and stronger emotionally responses. Both channels (image and text) engage different models of cognitive processing. The more the convictions go with a strong emotional charge, the more they are permeated. The less complex the information is, the easier it is memorized.

The precursors of this propaganda's tool via images are the Nazis. They are the first to include war dead worship in their propaganda media for new generation of future soldiers conditioned to blindly obey to the Führer.

Like the Nazis, the Daesh's "jihadists" have taken an additional step thanks to the mastery of current communication tools, including of course the Internet and social networks. Among the Nazis, the cult of the dead was instilled through textbooks or films, but the Hollywood look alike audiovisual production of Daesh has made possible to take a step in the veneration of soldiers who died as martyrs for the "cause". These productions are presented on the Internet to all supporters, including to Daesh's children



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>> PART 3

“CHILDREN’S TRAINING CAMPS”

The common goal (called "self-defense" or "resistance") will encompass the entity of the psyche and affects, leading to a kind of double dehumanization: of the child and of his/her future victims :

Dehumanization of oneself: we have seen that in all totalitarian groups, indoctrination tries to lead children to perceive human bond as an evidence of weakness or fragility, including with their own parents. Gradually, they reject all the feelings that constitute the human being. But until then, ideology denied the child as a thinking being. From training in the camps, ideology denies the child as a living being, for the benefit of the ideology. In other words, he/she will harden and feel nothing. During the Daesh’s training, the child gets blow to be used to the pain. The hardened child ends up identifying himself/herself to the group’s cause and only exists through it, even if he/she has to kill or to be killed for it. Dr. Haing, a survivor of the Pol Pot death camps in Cambodia, explains this process: *“Attacking or witnessing scenes of violence develops the aggressiveness of the child. It is in a defense reaction that the child imitates his torturer. Our American colleagues call this "coping" (...)”*.

Dehumanization of others: Children are not just trained to kill all who do not belong to their group, they teach them to dehumanize victims in order to facilitate their killing. The one who has been designated as "Enemy" no longer appears as an ally but as a simple thing, and so everything is allowed without any feeling of guilt. This dehumanization can occur with the way of naming the Other – ““they squeak like pigs when they are afraid” -



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“ CHILDREN’S TRAINING CAMPS ”

But it can also be done by dismembering dead bodies, in order to eliminate their human appearance. Generally, children are trained to sadism by practicing on animals. It is obvious that the care for a child who has gone through a training camp is different of the care for a child who has “just” been indoctrinated at school, because he/she has known the extreme violence. He/she has experienced trauma but has also developed a paranoid perception of the world that will lead him/her to develop violent behavior.

The difference between the child-fighter and the child indoctrinated by a totalitarian ideology lies in the fact that the first one can be dehumanized by a dehumanizing treatment, while the second, if he/she can undergo the same kind of dehumanizing training, is also "educated" in an ideology that gives him/her a kind of justification for violence. It is not possible to claim that a child "adheres" to this justification, but it offers a kind of world's grid of reading defining a logic in which he/she is immersed. Conversely, some child soldiers are enlisted with any ideology and suffer such violence that they become violent only to survive.

We have studied in detail the dehumanization's processes:

- among “Hitler Youths”;
- among totalitarian regime stanilian, Khmer-red, etc.
- among African totalitarian regimes;
- among Daesh.



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>> PART 4

“CONDITION OF THE INDOCTRINATED CHILDREN, RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION”

Even if Daesh was inspired by children's recruitment methods initiated by other modern totalitarian groups, we cannot compare the care of children indoctrinated and / or enlisted by the “jihadist” group to child soldiers or Nazi children.

In fact, a life-threatening situation characterizes the recruitment of child soldiers, who often fight to not starve or to prevent their families from being killed; their dehumanization is more the product of combat training than the result of an elaborate ideological process. Programs that support child soldiers are dedicated to their professional training and the search for their families (to precede their reunification).

And for the Nazi children, the geopolitical context was different: they were enlisted by governmental authorities and not by a small terrorist group which is opposed to the authorities of the state. Their dehumanization was the product of their ideology that considers the Jew, Gypsies and Homosexuals extermination as the condition to regenerate society, but this last one was spread by political authorities of the State.

There are however some similarities.



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>> PART 4

“CONDITION OF THE INDOCTRINATED CHILDREN, RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION”

1) The traumas of the child related to a terrorist group, are identical to the traumas of child-soldier

Can we consider that children involved in terrorism have a similar status than child-soldiers or children enlisted in other totalitarian ideologies? The *“Enfants et contre-terrorisme”* report (Children and counter-terrorism) made by the UNICRI (United Nations Interregional Institute of Research on Crime and Justice) from 2016, points out that there is *“a striking dissonance between the approach taken for children involved in terrorism and the approach taken for child soldiers in armed conflict. Child fighters are widely treated as victims and are not prosecutable, and international law recognizes their need for rehabilitation and reintegration. While children involved or engaged in activities related to terrorism are likely prosecutable and can have long prison sentences. Yet, in some cases, the difference between the child soldier and the child involved in terrorism is not very obvious”*.

This is the case of psycho-trauma experienced by these children in an identical way. All the children who lived in the war zone do not come back traumatized because some of them have, despite everything, been protected by their parents. But knowing how to diagnose trauma of children returning from a war zone is essential to their care, especially since they are all brutally separated from their mother when they land at Charles de Gaulle airport. While parents are detained, the assessment of their physical and mental health is immediately made at their arrival, knowing that the trauma suffered by children goes beyond physical injury and the danger of death related to war zones. The observations made following the first returns of Daesh's children show different kind of traumas.



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As recommended by the RAN, it therefore seems essential that social workers who take care of Daesh's children can diagnose and recognize trauma.

This is fundamental for two main reasons:

- the child who has suffered trauma usually does not remember it and develops symptoms that can be misunderstood and badly treated;
- the support of the minors will consist in reassuring them about their entourage whom they learned to consider as their "Enemy". They must learn to trust the human and gradually society and its democratic system based on human laws. Children arrive with a double handicap: an ideology that has taught them to be wary of "Others" and a possible trauma that has made them lose faith in adults. The feeling of paranoia caused by a trauma adds to the feeling of paranoia caused by indoctrination;
- There is also a third dimension we can add to the first ones : the brutal separation from the mother can also be traumatic.



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>> PART 4

“CONDITION OF THE INDOCTRINATED CHILDREN, RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION”

2) To consider the national trauma

The first thing to do with these children is to re-socialize them as soon as possible. But the DDR programs (Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion) for child soldiers and the RAN explain that the first global obstacle of this rehabilitation path is the stigmatization of these children by traumatized societies, particularly in France because of the recent attacks.

To ignore that point would be counterproductive, because the rejection that will live those “terrorism’s indoctrination victims” can revive their distrust and anxiety. When teenagers or young adults recognize that they made a mistake and want to involve on prevention to prevent their peers from joining Daesh too, society is not ready to accept their repentance. Daesh’s children are only seen as the future generation that will take the ideological succession as double agents, conditioned and locked in this ideology forever. This is the caricature of the famous motto “terrorist someday, terrorist forever”.

Terrorist actions affect the individual and society in a multidimensional way. They damage individual values and freedoms and go with what is called in psychology the “loss of identity feeling” and the “random death”.

The society attacked by radicalism, become radicalized too.



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The RAN states that this dimension cannot be hidden in order to guarantee the rehabilitation of children. Rehabilitation must be put back in a social context that considers both the trauma of the community and the individual trauma of the child. Especially since it also changes how the social worker is seen: he/she will not be perceived the same way if he/she takes care of an abused child or a child coming back from Daesh. He/she must be aware of the collective trauma and the way in which it impacts his/her own representations and representations of his/her relatives. The stigmatization of these children may lead some policy makers to lock up this people in the same place with many other radicalized young people, which will only encourage them to mistrust the society again and to feel melancholy of the former fusion within the group, whereas it comes to confronting them individually with other worldviews so they can question the indoctrination received within Daesh.

This post-attack reaction is completely anticipated by the “jihadist” thinkers and far right ones. It strengthens amalgams inducing discriminations too against Muslims and Arab people. The “jihadist’s” line needs hatred against Muslims to justify its own hatred. Discrimination against Muslims and Islamophobic lines strengthen Daesh, to the extent that they validate its vision of the conspiracy against Islam.

It therefore seems important for social workers to be aware of the interactive issues beyond them to take care of this generation of children who are traditionally called the "sacrificed-ones" but who are still lucky enough to be alive and able to change their deadly destiny.



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“CONDITION OF THE INDOCTRINATED CHILDREN, RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION”

3) To consider the legal framework

The social worker works within the legal framework. His/her activity is a sort of contract that society entrusts to him/her and his/her position puts him/her at the crossroads of several disciplines: psychology, sociology, law, etc. The legal framework is all the more important to know that it reflects the evolution of society on how to apprehend the human, and in this case the child and the minor.

The article 19 of the *International Convention concerning child rights* (CIDE = New York Convention), signed in 1989, prohibits all forms of violence against children, including any physical or mental violence, intentional or not, as well as any abuse. States present at the Convention have agreed to take measures to promote the physical and psychological recovery and reintegration of witnesses and child victims in their respective societies. This obligation arises from Article 39 of the Convention and applies to support and assistance measures in general and to criminal prosecution in particular. Child witnesses are generally considered as victims of the crime (s) they have witnessed, even if they do not have this technical legal status in legal proceedings. Thus, both witnesses and child victims in contact with the judicial system enjoy protection. In addition, Article 38 requires member States to take all possible measures to ensure the protection of children affected by armed conflict. Children recruited and exploited by violent extremist and terrorist groups may also be victims of violence considered by the optional Protocols of the Convention on child Rights, including by the optional Protocol about the involvement of children in armed conflicts, the Article 4 of this Protocol states that recruitment and exploitation of children by non-State armed groups in hostilities, is totally forbidden.

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For its part, Chapter I, Section C, Article 4, paragraph 3 of Protocol II of the *Geneva Conventions*, prohibits the recruitment of children under the age of 15, by non-State armed groups. The article 4 of the *optional Protocol of the Convention on Child Rights* about the involvement of children in armed conflict has a broader definition as it considers children under 18 years old.

The words “terrorist groups” and “extremist violent groups” have only vaguely been defined by law and United Nations ask “*Member States to define them in accordance with their international obligations*” in the field of Human Rights. A criticism was made about this lack of definition and therefore the lack of impact that recommendations and obligations linked to this phenomenon may have, since the phenomenon itself is ill-defined. This may partly explain the difference in treatment between the child-terrorist and the child soldier (see next paragraph).

The report “*Children and counter-terrorism*” of UNICRI (United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute) of 2016 recalls that the line of the special representative of the Secretary-General about children and Armed Conflict and by many NGOs is that children under 18 recruited by groups, whether by force or voluntary, whether they are active combatants or just having a supporting role, should not be prosecuted for membership or for acts as combatants, but should be reintegrated and rehabilitated through a range of different rehabilitation justice programs. The SRSR about children and armed conflict goes further and urges governments to ensure that any child arrested for security reasons is treated primarily as a victim.

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The UNICRI report “Enfants et contre-terrorisme” (Children and counter-terrorism) notes that there is a big difference in treatment between “terrorist children” enlisted by terrorist’s groups and child soldiers, who can also be used as kamikazes, porters, spies, messengers, watchers or even sex slaves. Yet, as the RAN report points out: *“Just like child soldiers, children returning to their country of origin can be considered as victims and, in some cases, also as perpetrators of violence at the same time”*. The report insists on the fact that in many cases it is extremely difficult to distinguish the difference between child soldiers and terrorist children, at the conceptual, factual and legal levels. In fact, some children will be treated as “terrorism’s suspects” simply because governments, with or without international support, designate armed groups as “terrorists”.

In the same logic, in France, experienced practitioners (Thierry Baranger, Laurent Bonelli et Frédéric Pichaud) regret that the logic of specialized juvenile justice - which considers and treats the causes of the act - is more or less erased by the anti-terrorism justice- which focuses just on the act. Let recall the primacy of the educational over the repressive for minors, of 1945, constitutionalized as a Fundamental Principle Recognized by the Laws of the Republic (PFRLR) August 29, 2002 by the Constitutional Council. The primacy of education over the repressive implies that all criminal responses have an educational dimension, even the detention.



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However, authors point out that since the law of September 9, 1986 relating to the fight against terrorism (No. 86-1020) has dedicated the Paris Court of First Instance in this area, the two justices – children and anti-terrorism justice- must collaborate since even if the minor is dependent on the Juvenile Court, the investigation is led by a specialized magistrate of the Paris Court of Justice and the public prosecutor is represented by section C1 of the prosecution (specialized in anti-terrorism).

As a result, *“in court, the argument that the defendant is "a danger to society ", a "threat to national security", takes precedence over minor status considerations (such as personality under development) and limits the range of criminal convictions that are actually delivered”*.



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>> PART 5

“SUPPORT OF INDOCTRINATED CHILDREN, REHABILITATION AND RECOVERY”

1) The care of children over 12 years old goes through the acknowledgement of their share of victimhood and share of responsibility

The thinking of the Quilliam Foundation and those of the child-soldier specialist Mouzayan Osseiran-Houballah go in the same direction as ours, following our experience over 12-18 years old recovery. The release of radicalization cannot begin without having previously accompanied the radicalized-one capable of discernment in the awareness of his/her responsibility.

We have been able to check that, if he/she has not recognized "his/her share of victimhood", the minor cannot be held responsible for his/her actions, because the recognition of his/her responsibility must go through the recognition of the responsibility of the person who has hurt him/her where appropriate. And if he/she has not recognized "his/her share of responsibility", he/she cannot be a victim. One does not go without the other. Very often, and especially in adolescence, being able to see oneself as an author first of all means being able to establish oneself as a victim and *vice versa*. The radicalized minor, both author and victim, must recognize both his/her share of “victimhood” and his/her share of responsibility.

There are two “victimhood’s” dimensions:

- the radicalized-one must recognize that he/she has been manipulated by the radical group ;
- he/she must also be aware that his/her previous vulnerabilities and / or traumas have made this manipulation easier...



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According to our feedback, most of the young people who have been then radicalized had all experienced untreated and / or non-conscious trauma in their early childhood.

The social worker must remember that some trauma patients do not remember their trauma and develop some strategies to forget, to protect themselves. There can be several kinds of trauma, which can be added together:

- a trauma that occurred during infancy, which had not been treated and “discussed” : let recall the statistics of the young people we have followed, from 12 to 28 years old (see Français radicalisés, l'enquête) :
 - . 73% of young people report having experienced a symbolic or real abandonment;
 - . 70% have experienced severe trauma or psychological abuse;
 - . 48% were qualified "depressed" by medicals;
 - . 35% were treated by a psychologist ;
 - . 32.5% had cut themselves or attempted suicide ;
 - . 30.5% have experienced at least one physical violence that they consider to be serious;
 - . 31% have experienced sexual violence or rape;
 - . 22.5% had sought refuge in drugs or alcohol and felt "addicted" to their substance..., before their radicalization.
- a trauma that took place during his/her radicalization: the trauma can also come from videos watched during radicalization. Many psychologists believe that the viewing of many scenes of extreme violence on the Internet can be a trauma. But it can also come from the radical group: some young girls were abused sexually or not, when they started to go around with some radical group members

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- a trauma once they were engaged: the trauma was caused by them. For example, the young radicalized-one had denounced someone who was whipped or killed; he/she had indoctrinated a younger-one who left on war zone and was killed, etc. In this case too, the social worker will have to make him/her recognize his/her share of “victimhood” in this type of behavior through which he/she now considers himself/herself as "a monster".

The fact of not being reduced to his/her actions, the fact of being a “victim” in the eyes of the social worker allows the radicalized-one to remember the part of humanity that is still in him/her, and then to assume his/her responsibility.

Recognize themselves as victim and as author goes through an external and internal work. The recognition of the "perpetrator-victim" status also affects judicial processing

For example, when our work showed that girls were more easily removed from radicalization than boys we were able to analyze that this difference was largely explained by social perceptions of their share of "victimhood". Indeed, representations and stereotypes related to gender of some institutional workers encourage them to better consider the complexity of the engagement of girls and to mandate a quasi-automatic psycho-educational follow-up (which appears to be one of the guarantees of radicalization's exit).



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In fact, the prefectural and police authorities require more multidisciplinary "exit from radicalization" treatment for girls than for boys.

We can make the hypothesis that sexual representations interact in the analyze of radicalized people cases: boys are perceived as more violent than girls, and therefore less easy to "un-radicalize". The police or prefecture departments have more confidence in girls to reintegrate society and question themselves about their radicalism. A girl is seen as someone who will harm herself: "surrogate mother" within the group, submissive wife and devoted to her husband locked inside her home, etc. A boy is perceived as someone who can hurt others: use bombs, attack physically someone, etc.

Therefore, the anti-radicalism cells of the police prefectures tend to transmit more "girls files" to field workers and more "boys files" to specialized police services. For the same reason, girls are also less easily indexed as "jihadists" than boys. Institutions will more easily diagnose them as "non-violent radicalized" (pietist Salafists) or in adolescence crisis (with the need to break free from their mother for example). More evidence is needed for institutions and authorities to validate the diagnosis of "jihadist" for a girl. For example, watching a Daesh's propaganda video can be seen as a proof of a membership to the "jihadist" project for a boy, and as an indoctrination tool for the girl. The boy, for the same facts, will be "suspected violent".



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We have resumed the research carried out by the psychologist Pignol, about the authors-victims of sexual crimes, to propose a tool for social workers, to help them concretely, beyond stereotypes and mental representations, to lead the young person to accept his/her share of victimhood and his/her share of responsibility, from the example of the minor who had indoctrinated “a younger than him” and who is dead in battlefield. It is only from this accompaniment than a radicalized-one can really go forward in his/her recovery in accordance with the social contract.

2) The care of children under 12 years old goes through the acknowledgement of their trauma and the upgrading of their potential

The care of children under 12 years old differs from the care of the older ones. The individualization of care will depend on the path and state of the child, on the level of radicalization of his/her family environment, on the information we have about his/her history, on his/her personal psychological and family characteristics (brothers and sisters), etc.

To evaluate the indoctrination’s level of a child under 12 years old, it is a question of finding educational supports which will reinject complexity in his/her everyday life, to check if the child accepts / handles this complexity (or not). Indeed, the totalitarian worldview encloses people in a binary logic. There is never any scale, any action is measured in alternative terms: yes or no (knowing), for or against (belief), good or bad (moral). It is this binary logic that leads to a break with “others”.



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It is up to professionals to not repeat this kind of relationship with these young people: everything that would be in the realm of power and knowledge would lead unintentionally to have a line that would look like to the radical line operating like this, and to strengthen it, by symmetrical effect. On the contrary, the educational objective is to propose an area of freedom where the young person can ask questions and find answers. The point is therefore to rekindle him/her by using sensation and feeling vein.

Practical experimentation can also be used to assess / check the radical worldview of the child (if there is one), and its level of severity. Use the fun to assess the indoctrination's level of the child also allows to present him/her new ways of thinking, new worldviews without urging him/her to choose between the world of his/her parents (so-called religious reference) and the world of school (reference, so-called scholar). By adding a new range to the parent's references, without criticizing them, the professional gives the freedom to all the children to question certain opinions and values of their parents without getting away from them.

For example, we propose the example of a child who refuses to drink at the same tap than non-believers.

The overall goal is to reassure the child so that he / she can trust adults again. To facilitate his/her rehabilitation, it is necessary to have an approach not limited by the work over the trauma experienced. Valuing everyone's potential appears to be a fundamental approach. The RAN states that *"it is important to foster the development of fundamental points such as interpersonal skills, emotional management, stability of family life, etc., so these children can have the opportunity to contribute positively to society"*

>> (see our tool-sheets)



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Cultes et Cultures

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3) The family, is the base of the care for the 0 to 18 years old?

Recreating family ties was part of denazification. Indeed, after the war, "the antifascists" describe the hell of Nazism as an aggression of the individual and the family. We have seen, through the first parts, that the break with the non-radicalized family is part of the first stages of the children and adolescent's recruitment

Among Daesh as in all other totalitarian ideologies, children have gone so far as to denounce their own father. Even when the family is radicalized, the radical group takes over the biological family anyway. The leader becomes the father.

The radical group, in any case, becomes a substitution group that destroys the individuality of the recruits to strengthen the fusion within the group. The place of the family, in care process, therefore, appears as a fundamental parameter.

- Should we use the extended non-radicalized family when the parents are incarcerated ?
- When the parents come out prison, when can the child be handed over to them ?
- Is the foster family better than the educational home?
- Etc.

The break with the family does not facilitate the exit of children from radicalization. The RAN has repeatedly pointed out that family separation makes difficult the care of children. The RAN report recommends that child custody can be offered to the child's non-radicalized family.



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The feeling of abandonment is not the only negative consequence of a family separation. Family support will also help when social workers will start to lead the child or adolescent to question his /her certainties about the definition of his/her group (those who will save the world) and the definition of "others" (the non-believers who want to eradicate Muslims because they know that they (Muslims) have the solution to save the world).

We can call it “un-radicalization” “disengagement”, “free will work”, “youth empowerment”, it does not matter... Still, the psycho-educational work will question the worldview inculcated to the minor underpinning his/her presence in Syria, the violent actions of adults, and now the incarceration of the parents...

If we refer to our 12-15 years old follow-up experience, the role of the extended family, including non-radicalized grandparents is fundamental to the process of re-affiliation. This mainly concerns the recall of the old cues erased by the indoctrination: affective, historical, memorial, etc. cues.

We have shown that recruitment has caused a cognitive change through the erasure of the past. The “jihadist” line operates a disaffiliation of the individual by putting him/her in a substitution’s community and giving him/her the illusion of belonging henceforth to a sacred mythical lineage. If the whole family does not toggle together in this new identity, the radical line multiplies the arguments to create a break with the original family.

During the follow-up of the young person, the extended non-radicalized family occupies a privileged symbolic place to restore the old identity cues erased by the indoctrination and revive the founding elements of the history of the young person.



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Thanks to statistics made from the two-years follow-up of 450 jihadists, we can affirm scientifically two results:

- the reassuring relational approach is a condition for any cognitive and ideological work in the process of disengagement;
- the family is the better to implement this *"reassuring relational counter-approach"*, against the anxiety approach put in place by the jihadist line. Indeed, *"the statistics show that our failures (20% of our sample) was made up by 65% of adults and 35% of minors. They prove the effectiveness of the reassuring emotional approach implemented with the families, preliminary step of the disengagement cognitive remobilization"*.

Learn to diagnose the connection between family and the “jihadist” ideology must therefore become a priority, so to not automatically separate the children from their grandparents, but also to respond to the judge's requests when they ask the social workers about the possibility of returning the children to the parents when they will live prison.

Although there is no recipe, we will share the example of a "family diagnosis", to give leads to social workers.



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EXAMPLE OF A TOOL-SHEET :

RELEASE OF
RADICALIZATION
METHOD, IN 4
DIMENSIONS

REMINDER OF THE 4
DIMENSIONS OF THE
INDOCTRINATION'S
PROCESS

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Processus de RADICALISATION

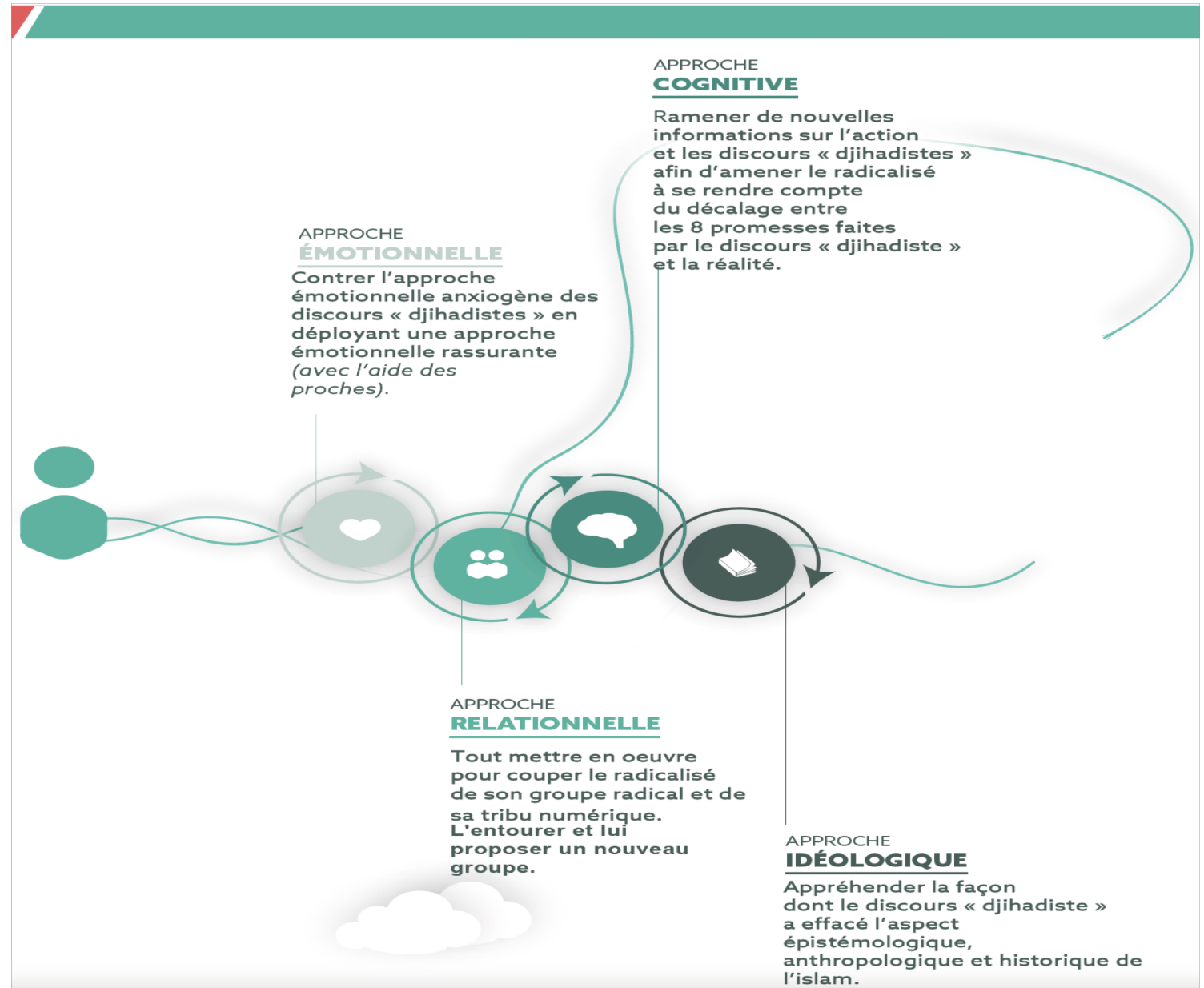


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RELEASE OF
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METHOD, IN 4
DIMENSIONS

REMINDER OF THE 4
DISENGAGEMENT'S
DIMENSIONS



SYNTHESIS

EXAMPLE OF A TOOL - SHEET:

RELEASE OF RADICALIZATION METHOD, IN 4 DIMENSIONS

DETAILS AND TOOLS OF THE 4 DISENGAGEMENT'S APPROACHES

(drawings made for the research project «Practices»; quoted in the book «Français radicalisés, L'enquête », Ed. de l'Atelier, 2018)

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Q ZOOM SUR LA DÉRADICALISATION



To go further and get all the analysis and videos, photos, historical texts, feedback, statistics, tool-sheets, appendices, read the full report :

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD & WHICH TREATMENT FOR THE CHILDREN OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES?

A comparison between Daesh and other totalitarian groups

For any question : administration@bouzar-expertises.fr