

REASONS FOR TENDENCY
AMONG THE YOUTH OF WESTERN EUROPE
TO JOIN ISIS

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Introduction

ISIS or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria is an armed group with the Wahhabi and jihadist ideology, mostly known as a transnational terrorist group. The group occupied northwestern parts of Iraq and northeastern parts of Syria in 2014. The main goal of ISIS is to revive Islamic caliphate and domination within the main parts of the Islamic world and to rule according to Sharia (in its Wahhabi interpretation) (Congressional Research Service, 2015). The takfiri-Salafist militants of ISIS who called themselves “the Islamic State” after 29 June 2014 recruit themselves from different geographical backgrounds. With the use of modern technologies and social network, ISIS established a network and a magazine entitled “Dabiq”. The rapid expansion of its activities, violence, belief in a divine mission, multinational membership, and transnational ideology of terrorism makes their growth rate high among radical groups. A large area from Jordan to Libya and from Belgium to Indonesia has been under their ideological influence. According to the report of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, more than 20,730 foreign militants have joined ISIS worldwide and the number is growing daily

(ICSR, 2015). Approximately more than 6,000 of these militants come from Western countries, such as the US, the EU, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Moreover, hundreds of them come from former Soviet Republics, however most of these fighters come from the Arab world. There are different views about reasons for joining ISIS. Many analysts and policy-makers try to understand how this group managed to recruit such a large number of young members from Western countries, young girls included. The expansion of ISIS paved the way for attracting extremist individuals from all over the world, regardless of their religious beliefs. The outlook of Western youth joining ISIS is horrifying, given the fact that some of ISIS missions have targeted European security. Thus, regarding the dire consequences of the expansion of ISIS, a keen study of different aspects of this phenomenon is highly needed.

The aim of this paper is to study the reasons for joining ISIS by Western youth. It tries to answer the following question: what are the main causes for Western youth to join ISIS? Geographical variety of ISIS members, internal and external factors involving the tendency towards ISIS, and the consequences of these Western members of ISIS return to their homeland are among issues which have been considered in this paper.

Theoretical basis

Globalization and terrorism

It appears to be quite likely that globalization can be linked to political difficulties in a number of countries. Paul Wilkinson noted that modern terrorism has been a reaction to globalization (Wilkinson, 2003: 124). Globalization is a very complex process, one that has been defined in a bewildering variety of ways. There is, however, at least some general agreement on broad outlines

in the economic sphere; globalization involves “the widening, deepening, and speeding up of international connectedness” (McGrew, 2011: 275). Globalisation, however, goes beyond simple increases in economic interactions, as it includes cultural, military, political and social dimensions (McGrew, 2011: 277), in involving the movement of goods, services, people, ideas, and cultures across geographical space (Held, 1999: 16). There are a number of factors likely to contribute to increased levels of globalization. For example, recent increases in overall globalization have been attributed to a favourable conjunction of technological, political, and economic circumstances (Castells, 2000: 104). Frequently, one of the consequences of the movements of ideas and materials is that socially dissimilar groups will be brought into closer physical proximity to each other, possibly leading to increases in conflict (Lia, 2005: 23). In the long term it is possible, however, that increased contacts among dissimilar groups and their homogenization can reduce terrorism (Black, 2004: 2), that time has obviously not come yet.

Globalization can bring benefits. It has been suggested that the countries that have been most involved in the process of globalization are the countries that have benefitted the most from it (Cernat and Vranceanu, 2002: 119-136). Greater economic interactions with the outside world, however, can also lead to greater anxiety about the social and cultural changes that come with economic adaptations (Margalit, 2011: 264). The level of inequality existing in societies can moreover increase, as local groups and individuals have to adapt to external actors, with new competition from elsewhere in the global economy, and other changes in their situation or position in the world. The spread of market capitalism associated with globalization in the 19th and 20th centuries has frequently undermined the structure of local economies (Clausen, 2003: 263-292). Traditional economic systems, although

frequently characterized by high levels of internal inequality, usually have some mechanisms of reciprocity that include obligations on the part of both the well-off and the less well-off. More modern economic practices, however, can undermine the reciprocity elements without any beneficial reduction in levels of inequality, thereby increasing societal tensions. Under these circumstances, even though globalization frequently generates economic growth and increased wealth at a societal or national level, only some groups will benefit while other groups will suffer. One recent study found that increased trade, the traditional form taken by economic globalization, has been associated with reduced inequality; however, financial globalization, and especially direct foreign investment, have been associated with greater inequality (Jau-motte, 2013: 271–309). Of course, financial globalization and direct foreign investment represent a more modern form of globalization. Financial globalization doubled its impact during the period of 1990–2004.

Groups that are disadvantaged by the changes that accompany globalization could naturally question the leaders, groups, or political systems associated with these changes. Such opposition may take acceptable forms through existing political channels, but it can also take more violent forms when disadvantaged groups cannot gain satisfaction by peaceful means. The importance of globalization as a contributor of conflict can be observed in the fact that symbols of modernity that come with globalization have often been among the targets for attacks (Duiker, 2003: 30). Ironically, the violent opposition can in turn weaken governments and make it more difficult for them to manage the changes that are occurring or to meet the resulting challenges (Clausen, 2015: 154). This type of situation can result in a vicious circle of unrest and challenges that continue to reduce the capacities of government, inducing political decay instead of political

development (Huntington, 1965: 386–430). Globalization has also provided increased opportunities for dissident groups to strike across greater distances against any external actors that they see as enemies (Black, 2004:21). The idea that a terrorist group can strike across these greater distances (as exemplified by the case of 9/11) intensifies the feelings of insecurity that terrorist activities are designed to generate (Goldman, 2010:32). This level of insecurity has been further increased by the globalization of the media (Goldman, 2010:37).

The effects of globalization are not always negative. Some forms of interaction with the world system have been linked with lower levels of transnational terrorism (Li and Schaub, 2006: 55). Analyses of outbreaks of civil wars, on the other hand, have shown mixed results in terms of their relation to globalization, but provide at least some indication of a connection (Flaten and de Soysa, 2012: 263–292). If such is the case, globalization can be both a blessing and a curse. Countries that have become more integrated into the global system may eventually be able to increase their stability, but countries undergoing the process of integration or facing the shocks that come with globalization may be likely to suffer greater disruptions or problems (Bussman and Schneider, 2007:79–97).

There has been significant evidence that globalization has led to political violence in different eras and locations. In even earlier times, increasing globalization was linked with violent outbreaks. In the ancient world, the incorporation of Judea - first into Greek empires and then into the Roman Empire - led to changes in the economic structure of the local society and marginalization of some groups in the province (L. Derfler, 2011:2). The incorporation of Judea and Israel into earlier empires had not challenged the basic economic and social systems of the Jewish community, unlike the challenges presented by the Greek and Roman states. One consequence

of this disruption was a series of Judean revolts against the Greeks and the Romans. These revolts initially relied on terrorism and guerrilla warfare and then eventually on conventional battles (M. Lutz and J. Lutz, 2013:7). The Boxer Rebellion in China in the late 19th century was in many ways an ethnic and cultural reaction to globalization and the resulting intrusion of foreign ideas into traditional Chinese society. The attacks by the Boxers against Chinese Christians and foreigners used classic terrorist techniques designed to expel foreign influences (Chesneaux, 1972: 13–15). Eventually, the Boxers were able to escalate to open warfare against foreigners and even gained assistance from some regular military units and elements of the political elite.

In more recent times, left-wing extremists that were active in the latter part of the twentieth century were vehemently opposed to the global spread of capitalism (R. Pillar, 2001: 63). World systems theory suggests that modernized states are responsible for underdevelopment and the failures of states on the periphery of the global system (A. Shad, 1998:72). The increasing reach of multinational corporations that came with globalization was seen as an unmitigated evil that had to be opposed by violence. Violent groups with right-wing ideologies have also been reacting to what they perceive to be the negative effects of globalization. The current debates about immigration in Europe and the United States are another manifestation of such popular concerns. Populist groups have frequently opposed the immigration of people from culturally and religiously dissimilar areas (Bjorgo, 1995:9). The Red Scare in the United States after World War I was a similar reaction to the spread of what many in the United States saw as radical and dangerous leftist ideologies such as socialism, communism, and anarchism that threatened the American way of life (Coben, 1964: 52–57). Opposition to foreign influences is not restricted to ma-

majority populations. Smaller ethnic communities have also seen their cultures in danger of being overwhelmed or absorbed by larger groups as a consequence of the homogenizing trends that are often associated with globalization and thus often resort to violence in “self-defense” (Dingley and Smith, 2002:102). It has been suggested that terrorist actions directed specifically against the United States have been a reaction against the cultural globalization that comes with greater contact with the West (Lizardo, 2006: 149–186).

Religious terrorism increased greatly towards the end of the twentieth century. On several occasions various religious groups have reacted negatively to the challenges that come with globalization. Globalization by its very nature has the potential to undermine traditional religious values in societies. Western secularism has threatened indigenous cultures and local religions exposed to the broader world (Cronin, 2012: 134). The spread of ideas linked to globalization can actually promote rebellions rooted in religion, a reaction to the threat of global homogenization. One consequence of increasing globalization and the spread of secularization has been a resurgence in religious beliefs, including fundamentalist views, in all of the world’s major religions (P. Huntington, 1996: 97–98). There are Jewish extremist groups in Israel that have reacted to globalization not only by targeting Palestinian Arabs, but by attacking Jewish citizens that they see as too secular. Islamic groups have clearly responded to threats that globalization represents to them (Ousman, 2004:69). The global jihad has represented a continuing response to the threat that exposure to the broader world has represented to Islamic communities. The earlier violence involving Palestinians, especially the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), was more of a nationalist response to the presence of Israel rather than a religious one, but reflected at least in part the ef-

fect of globalization. Boko Haram (“Western Education is Forbidden”) in Nigeria is just one of the latest manifestations of this trend. The economic dislocations that came with globalization have marginalized many individuals in northern Nigeria, including groups of Muslims who have lost both their economic and social status. Many of them have been attracted to Boko Haram (S. Eveslage, 2013: 49). Elsewhere, militant Hindus in India have attempted to drive out foreign religious influences. Muslims have been the major targets, but Christianity is also considered a threat to extremist Hindus. Some right-wing groups in the United States that are opposed to foreign influences and immigrants have a clear religious element in their ideologies. The Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan that launched the sarin gas attacks on the Tokyo subway reflected a high level of concern about the cultural and religious changes that came with globalization (M. Lutz and J. Lutz, 1998: 95). The effects have been universal “as the globalization of culture tends to promote fundamentalism or Puritanism in almost all religions” (Cesari, 2011: 1–2).

Globalization has had an additional effect on the prevalence of terrorism and the techniques used. The presence of modern communications and transportation has provided opportunities for violent organizations to learn from each other, to communicate with members in distant locations and to reach out to potential recruits. It also provides greater opportunities for violent groups to attempt to influence external actors with their attacks. Although anarchists practiced an early form of leaderless resistance attacks with their assassination campaigns, this type of terrorism has become more prevalent with the Internet and social media. The Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIL) has demonstrated all too well the potential that modern forms of communication have for recruiting potential foreign fighters to its ranks and incite others to undertake lone wolf attacks on their home ground. Mod-

ern transportation linkages have facilitated travel, allowing the launching of terrorist attacks in foreign countries.

Clearly, globalization can engender religious, ethnic, economic, and ideological opposition movements with splinter groups of them engaging in violent responses, including the use of terrorist tactics. Globalization may cause such violence, contribute to it, or be largely irrelevant in some cases. Since there is no single cause for terrorism, globalization will not explain all outbreaks of violence, but there could well be some connection. Therefore, the basic hypothesis to be tested in this article is whether or not higher levels of globalization can be associated with higher levels of terrorism. The analysis of terrorist incidents in the Middle East and North Africa provides an opportunity to determine whether various levels of globalization have, in fact, led to more terrorism, at least for the countries in the MENA region.

Finally, it can be said that terrorism can be interpreted taking into account these two approaches. First, on the basis of dialectical logic, as an antithesis of democracy, nationalism, civil rights, and capitalism. Second, on the basis of discourse theory, it is the “other” against modernity. Thus, ISIS can be considered as a product of the globalization process. The fundamental Islamic groups may be shaped to counter dominant global culture and ISIS can be considered as one of these resisting groups.

The patterns of ISIS recruitment among Western youth

Recruitment is one of the main factors leading to survival and existence of a political or religious movement. Thus, groups and movements try to use any provocative measures to attract suitable members. Given the fact that the growth in number of loyal members can lead to empowerment of a cult, groups of this kind try to ease the way of recruitment, and in consequence various types of people

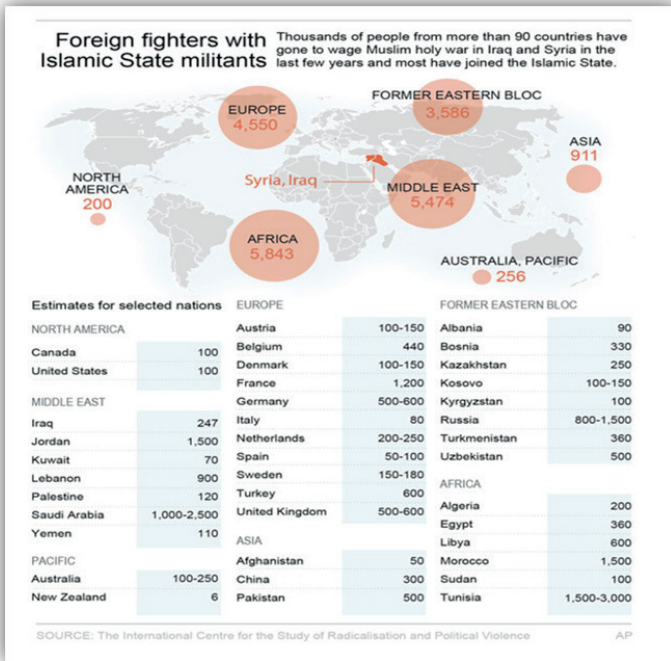
join these groups, people that differ in terms of age and social background.

As a transnational terrorist group, ISIS managed to get members from all over the world. It can be considered a young organization. In a report entitled “Western Foreign Fighters Innovations in Responding to the Threat the Institute for Strategic Dialogue categorizes active militants in Syria to be aged between 18 and 29 and emphasizes the fact that fighters in Syria are much younger than militants in the war in Afghanistan. To be more specific, these young fighters from the Syrian arena are between 15 to 17 years of age, while the jihadi militants joining Afghan terrorist groups were between 25 and 35 (Briggs, 2014). According to estimates, the French militants are about 27 and Belgian and English ones are 23.5 years old (Pantucci, 2014). These statistics reveal the fact that the network of ISIS human resources is remarkably swift and composed of young people and when we mention members attracted by ISIS, we simply mean young people.

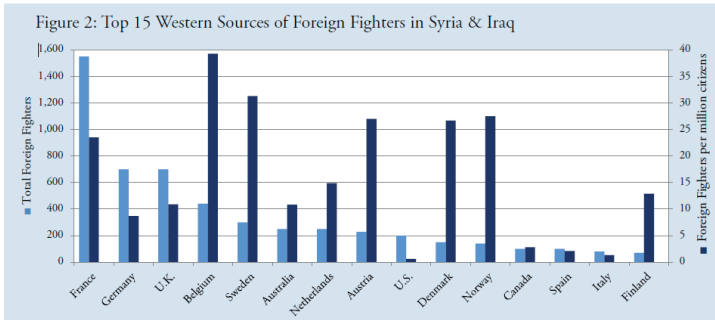
The fact that Western people join ISIS can increase threats to the interests and security of Western countries. This is not the first time when Western fighters engage in outside fights. There are many other historic examples. For instance, joining the rebellion against the regime installed in Afghanistan by the Soviets (Hegghammer, 2010) or joining the Chechens in their fight against Russia in 1995 (Al-Shishani, 2009). However, in the aftermath of the unrest in Iraq and Syria, many foreign fighters joined ISIS, which cannot be compared with the past. In fact, the number of militants from small countries, such as Denmark or Belgium, who joined ISIS is higher than the number of all Western militants who joined any outside struggles (Report Cities Conference on Foreign Fighters to Syria, 2014).

ISIS membership; a geographical overstretch

According to the report of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, more than 20,730 foreign militants have joined ISIS worldwide, i.e. 11,000 militants from South East Asia, 3,000 from the former Soviet Republics, 7,000 from Western societies such as the US, the EU, Canada, Australia, New Zealand (ICSR,2015).



According to the latest estimates, up to 6,000 Western militants have joined ISIS. Most of them come from major European countries, such as France, Great Britain, and Germany. Many come from such countries as Belgium, Denmark, and Switzerland, which is noticeable, taking into account the population of these countries (ICSR, 2015).



Data sourced from government figures and government sources, cited in: International Centre for the Study of Radicalization, United Nations, *Die Welt*, Soufan Group, *The Sunday Times*, *Le Monde*, *The Local* (Norway).

Other countries whose militants have joined ISIS in Iraq and Syria (ibid.) include Tunisia (1500–3000), Saudi Arabia (1500–2000), Morocco 1500, Jordan 1500, Russia (800–1500), Lebanon (900), Turkey (600), Libya (600), Pakistan (500), Uzbekistan (500), Egypt (360), Turkmenistan (360), Bosnia (330), China (300), Kazakhstan (250), Australia (100-250), Algeria (200), Tajikistan (190), Kosovo (100-150), Israel (120), Yemen (110), Canada (100), the US (100), Kyrgyzstan (100), Sudan (100), Albania (90), Kuwait (70), Somalia (70), Serbia (50–70), Ukraine (50), Afghanistan (50), Qatar (15), the UAE (15), Bahrain (12), Macedonia (12), and new Zealand (6).

TABLE I: Rest of the World (ICSR, 2015)

Estimate	Country
50	Afghanistan
90	Albania
200	Algeria
100–250	Australia
12	Bahrain
330	Bosnia
100	Canada

Estimate	Country
300	China
360	Egypt
120	Israel/Palest. Territories
1,500	Jordan
250	Kazakhstan
100-150	Kosovo
70	Kuwait
100	Kyrgyzstan
900	Lebanon
600	Libya
12	Macedonia
1,500	Morocco
6	New Zealand
500	Pakistan
15	Qatar
800-1,500	Russia
1,500-2,500	Saudi-Arabia
50-70	Serbia
70	Somalia
100	Sudan
190	Tajikistan
600	Turkey
360	Turkmenistan
1,500-3,000	Tunisia
50	Ukraine
15	United Arab Emirates
100	United States of America
500	Uzbekistan
110	Yemen

Other sources which have been provided in different reports categorize countries according to these three factors: countries with the total number of ISIS members,

countries with maximum per capita ISIS membership with regard to their population, and countries with maximum per capita ISIS membership with regard to their Muslim population.

Tunisia with more than 6,000 citizens in ISIS is the most important contributor of ISIS members. Saudi Arabia with 2,500 is second and Russia, Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon are among the countries which have many citizens in ISIS. Among European countries, France (1700), Britain (760), and Germany (760), are in the lead.

In terms of population, Tunisia also holds the first rank. For every million of this country's population, 546 people have joined ISIS. Regarding the statistics and this index, small countries such as Maldives, Kosovo, Bosnia, Kyrgyzstan, and Macedonia are in a dire situation.

The last index shows the number of citizens of a given country that joined ISIS compared to the overall Muslim population of the country. According to this index, Scandinavian countries are in the lead. Finland has 42 thousand Muslim citizens, and 70 of them have joined ISIS. This means the rate would be 1,546 members a million. Ireland, Belgium, Sweden, Austria, Denmark, and Norway rank just below Finland in the list. Other noticeable countries according to this index are Tunisia, Maldives, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Reasons for the tendency among Western youth to join ISIS

Findings of this article show a complex of internal factors rooted inside Western societies, which are the main factors playing a role in making Western youth join ISIS, namely contextual (identity and spiritual crisis in the West, Islamophobia, social pressures and discrimination, poverty), psychological and provocative (psychological problems, excitement, sexual motives, such as jihad marriage), along with intriguing external factors rooted

Total fighters		Fighters per capita		Fighters per capita of Muslims	
Tunisia	6,000	Tunisia	546	Finland	1,591
Saudi Arabia	2,500	Maldives	500	Ireland	725
Russia	2,400	Jordan	303	Belgium	699
Turkey	2,100	Lebanon	200	Sweden	631
Jordan	2,000	Kosovo	129	Austria	619
France	1,700	Libya	95	Trinidad and Tobago	616
Morocco	1,200	Bosnia	87	Tunisia	547
Lebanon	900	Kyrgyzstan	86	Denmark	544
Germany	760	Saudi Arabia	81	Norway	529
United Kingdom	760	Macedonia	70	Maldives	508
Indonesia	700	Turkmenistan	68	France	342
Egypt	600	Montenegro	50	Lebanon	335
Belgium	470	Tajikistan	47	Jordan	307
Tajikistan	386	Belgium	42	Montenegro	270
Bosnia	330	Trinidad and Tobago	36	Australia	269

in ISIS teachings, i.e. beliefs (religious motives, jihad, martyrdom, and reviving caliphate), activity (military achievements of ISIS), and propaganda (massive use by ISIS of social network, media and mosques).

Internal reasons for joining ISIS by Western youth

Contextual causes

(identity, political, social, economic, and cultural factors)

Various reasons have been mentioned as reasons for new waves of Islamism according to religious and sociological studies of the West. Briefly, the main reasons are: identity crisis, lack of morality and spirituality in personal aspects of life, looking for an alternative way to counteract emotional problems among some Western youth, failure of the immigrant minorities to blend into the Western society and lack of loyalty in that matter, a way to show dissatisfaction with social discrimination and overt or covert racism towards immigrants and Muslims in some Western societies.

The tendency towards different versions of Islam mostly guides youth to moral and reasonable interpretations of religion, but some of these young people may get attracted to political or financial initiatives of extremist groups, and in the worst scenarios, terrorist Wahhabi groups such as ISIS.

Arendt argues that totalitarianism is in fact a brutal ideology, which reflects the loneliness and identity problems of the masses. This is in fact a result of historical changes, which leads to isolation and fragmentation of a large group of people (Arendt, 1958: 253). A totalitarian domination of ISIS can be attractive in a situation of loneliness, which is common in the West and nowadays some Western citizens define their identities in the context of mythical concepts such as ISIS. Thus, according to this theory blue-eyed members of ISIS can cause crises

in the West not just by means of suicide attacks, but far beyond. It is clear, however, that this identity crisis shows itself in Counter-Enlightenment, postmodernism, and romanticism.

Moreover, the socio-economic atmosphere of Europe, economic crises, limits, and anti-Islamic behaviour in Europe paves the way for the rise of Islamic terrorism.

According to Michael Rado of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, “in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the number of suspects arrested for terrorism in Europe has been 20 times greater than in the US”. Many French and German experts believe that only a small group of Islamist terrorists had extremist tendencies before migration to Europe. Most of these terrorists are of middle-class background, They suffered a cultural shock in Europe and got attracted to extremism. As a result of value change, these youth find themselves in a secular, materialist society, which is completely different when confronted with their Islamic values.. Out of frustration they seek new identity which can be easily found in Islamic extremist groups waiting for such easy targets (Council on Foreign Relations, 2013).

Also, some youth who have to face poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy cannot imagine a glowing future after joining extremist groups. Will McCants argues that when urbanism is about 60 to 80 percent and youth unemployment is about 10 to 30, extremist groups are likely to expand, which is clearly visible, for example in the French speaking countries. It can be said that apart from the anti-Shia ideology, ISIS seeks a socio-economic war. In fact, ISIS has targeted the harmed classes of society for its source of recruitment. Some of the members of this group have economic and social motives, which is obvious among young members from Southeast Asia and Africa.

Thanks to financial support from Saudi Arabia, ISIS established centres in Europe, officially in order to pro-

mote religious believes, but actually in order to expand fundamentalism. These centres concentrate their efforts on recruiting young people. They provide these young people with financial support. In some cases, a fixed salary can be promised along with other interesting proposals, e.g. of marriage, etc. Those systems take advantage of propaganda and extend offers of financial support in order to lead frustrated Western youth to commit suicide terrorist attacks.

Psychological and intriguing factors

Research shows that many of those who join terrorist groups face dire situation and failure in their personal lives and suffer from mental or psychological problems. Individuals with multiple failures and frustrations tend to join extremist Islamic groups in order to be involved in jihad. (Phillips and Eisikovits, 2014)

Many Western young people have joined ISIS because of their desire to evade psychological problems, have more exciting experiences, and build an identity. Concentration on sexual needs is one of the main means, applied by ISIS, of attracting young Muslims living in Western countries. Taking advantage of this physical need has always had a great influence on the armed members of this group. On the one hand, they create false motives for these people, and on the other hand, they adversely affect the health and security of the targeted society. When a violent ideology puts emphasis on tension-full interactions, including free sexual affairs, it is dangerous mentally and, in the meantime, can turn into rage. Finally, one of the causes why young people join ISIS is an experience of jihad marriage.

In addition, using military weapons and equipment is a dream for those who display such interests . This may explain why people of this kind join ISIS.

Theresearch done by Efraim Benmelech and Esteban F. Klor of the US National Bureau of Economic Research,

presents analyses of the geographical roots of ISIS members and reasons for their membership in this terrorist group.

Researchers from this group believe that economic problems are the primary causes of their membership. Some believe that growing economic inequality and the existence of poor countries offering fewer job opportunities can pave the way for extremism, although the above mentioned data do not support this idea. In fact, rich Western countries are more prone to provide these groups with their own Muslim citizens. According to these statistics, with a 10-percent growth in GDP of these countries, the chance of their citizens joining ISIS rises by 1,5 percent.

This research shows that the countries with higher human development indicators have more ISIS members. One may conclude that if economy is not so important in joining ISIS, political factors are important. Some believe that political oppression and lack of chances for political participation lead individuals towards ISIS, although this idea is also undermined by statistics. According to statistics, many well-developed economies with open political systems provide most members of ISIS.

If economic and political factors cannot explain the mechanism of joining ISIS, what can account for an increase in the number of European members of ISIS?

According to this research, two factors can be considered in this regard. First, the Muslim population of a country. Second, interestingly, is isolation of the Muslim population which can increase the possibility of this minority joining ISIS.

Researchers representing the institute argue that European countries face religious and ethnic isolation. In other words, in a homogeneous European country, the immigrant population is more likely to join ISIS (Benmelech & Klor, 2016).

The Islam in the «Banlieue» phenomenon

The specific interpretation of Islam which provided justification for Paris terrorist attacks is not Shia nor Sunni. It is fundamental in nature and known as Islam of *Banlieue* which is a reference to French suburbs filled with angry Arab youth. These frustrated people follow the American gang pattern.

The youth from these suburbs are neither French nor Arab. They speak French with Arabic accent and follow the forms of African-American resistance. They do not gather in mosques or for Friday prayers, they hang around the streets, drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana.

Group discipline, enforcement of the hierarchy of power, wrongdoing and illegal behaviour (such as drug trade, theft, street fights), the position of weapons, brotherhood and gang loyalty, are more typical of American gangs rather than a religious sect.

Seeking causes and motives of the Paris terrorist attack in religious texts or Islamic history brings only confusion and feeds the attitudes of extremists and racists who are the key players of this story. Protecting mosques and religious centres, putting pressure on the Middle Eastern immigrants and refugees, concentrating on Islamophobia in order to reach political gain are among the disadvantages of improperly conducted analysis of terrorism in Europe.

Independent analysts are obliged to present deeper alternative analysis of the world events by challenging formal and reductionist narrations presented by mass media. They must prevent dire and shocking events from being used as means for political gains and masses from being strayed in different directions.

In this regard, the authors are about to describe the internal situation of Paris in the 1980s and 1990s. Like any other metropolis, it has different layers, with the historical layer, best known around the world, as the outside

layer. In deeper layers we can find, however, harsh dynamism of social interactions, which can hardly be found in other developed countries.

In those years Paris was divided between different gangs from the suburbs. Skinheads were young white racists with bold heads and tattoos on their shoulders and arms. They attacked Arabs and Africans. This group caused panic among young foreign-born individuals and dreadful rumours about their tortures were spread. One of their most well-known tortures was a “Glasgow smile”, in which a wound is caused by making a cut from the corners of a victim’s mouth up to the ears, leaving a scar in the shape of a smile. This was the worst nightmare of any Arab or African youth at that time.

“Starters”, well-known for their American “Starters” jackets, were among groups that used knives, paper spray, and fire arms for extortion and murder. Their victims were mostly Arabs because they were aware that these victims have limited possibilities of complaining and the police are not keen on hunting suspects in such cases.

“Zoulous” were young coloured Africans who gathered to defend themselves against racist gangs – and the police systematic violence. The group was well-known for large chains around their necks and bias for their ethnic origins. They did not allow “others” to join in and despite many Arab demands, they did not risk their lives for white people.

There were a threat to Arab young people in that period, which was worse than any other threats, apart from brutality of the French police (CRS). The term *sans bavure*, which was common among the police, referred to the kind of beating which leaves no traces. Choking, torture with handcuffs, repeated slapping, insulting and humiliation were among the methods used by them just for fun. These acts sometimes caused death of the victims. Thus, some young Arabs while resisting arrest made sure that

some bruises and marks are left on their bodies as this could prevent *sans bavure*.

At that time, the French sometimes called Arab citizens “melon”. This trigger word to humiliate the Arabs made them furious. It was even used in a comic TV show and no one was concerned about Arab dissatisfaction with the term.

Clearly, Arab citizens were in such a dire condition that it is hard to believe that this could ever happen in the cradle of democracy with more than two hundred years history of the French Republic. They were oppressed under a systematic social, economic, political, and media mechanism which had done its best to prevent them from any progress and this made them really angry. In this context, the Islam in the *Banlieue* has appeared as a safe haven for these people and gradually it turned into terrorism in the heart of France and Europe (asrdiplomacy.ir).

The main reason for this can be negligence of the Western society towards these young people, in consequence of which they have rejected the values of this community.

Those members who joined ISIS can represent the second or third generation of Muslims who arrived in Europe because of poor economic situation or attracted by job opportunities. This second generation cannot blend into mainstream society and are considered outcasts.

Some of these young people who integrated into the Western society can find suitable jobs, if only they enjoy proper education. In this situation they will be in the company of the natives. For example, after a day at work a young German white male invites his colleague to have a beer. Surly this invitation cannot be extended to a Muslim. The European society is free and open, it is not, however, a good place for a true Muslim. These people have their own beliefs and have no choice except for forming their own caste, which due to lack of job opportunities, mostly gets involved in wrongdoing.

From the ethnic and linguistic aspects, Germany has issues with Turks. They have their own markets and restaurants, and listen to their own music in Turkish. Even Angela Merkel mentioned integration and ability of these Turks to speak German. The French suffer the same misfortune due to their former Arab colonies.

There are other countries which have issues with fragmented minorities. For example, Chinatown can be easily found in many states of the US. There is even a proverb saying that “a Chinese person can be born in the US and die aged 80 without speaking a single word in English. Problems that such people encounter have been shown in the movie “Revenge of the Green Dragons”.

People who fail to blend into a society, are mainly forced to do low-skill service jobs, such as dishwashing or cleaning. They develop inherent frustration and pass this feeling on to the next generation. Thus, such feelings gradually turn into rage and a way must be found to get rid of them. In other words, we can see a mixture of material and spiritual pressures and discriminations.

*External reasons for why youth join ISIS
Beliefs (religious motives, jihad, martyrdom,
reviving caliphate)*

Philosophical and basic principles of Al-Qaida and ISIS are founded on Salafism. In their school of thought, the era of the holy prophet of Islam was the purest. The rapid expansion of Islam at that time is a sign of this purity. Salafists believe that Muslims have strayed now. The jihadist Salafism formed Al-Qaida and the extremist leaders managed to turn Salafism from a religious interpretation to an aggressive ideology. In this ideology, the extremist followers prevail, whether kill or be killed. According to this ideology other religious groups will be branded infidels that is why they are called Takfirists. The

main motto of this ideology is “Sharia or martyrdom” (Borum, 2007:40).

The radical Salafi ideology which can be categorized in jihadi movements, such as Al-Qaida, not only illustrates behavioural guidelines, but can be considered as a framework for understanding and interpretation of events. This ideology emphasizes the primary (aggressive) jihad and the (global) international network approach. According to this approach, Islam needs warriors not scientists. Al-Qaida leaders believe jihad is the main principle of Islam and more important than prayer, fasting and the Hajj. They believe “if a Muslim is not dedicated theoretically and practically to Jihad, he does not understand Islam”. Even Iman Alzavaheri, the leader of Al-Qaida ordered his followers: “Muslims should not wait for order of jihad, because jihad against Americans, and their allies is written to anyone” (Knowlth, 2008). Abu Bakar Bashir, the leader of the Indonesian Islamic Society and the East Asia Al-Qaida branch argues: “martyrdom is a fundamental religious principle and other principles depend heavily on this principle” (Atran, 2006:139). In this version of Islam believing in God and the prophet is equal to participating in jihad.

ISIS as a Neo-Salafist Takfirist group emphasizes caliphate, jihad, and martyrdom. They believe in reviving caliphate and following the caliph even if he is a tyrant. In terms of jihad they honour themselves and other Takfirists. They have made the circle of Islam so narrow that many Muslims who do not accept their ideas (especially Shias) can be called infidels. These ISIS terrorists try to buy their passage to heaven by suicidal acts of terror (jihad) and martyrdom.

According to this approach, jihad is more than a religious principle. They promote jihad to be the primary principle of Islam. Takfirists believe that jihad and war and terror of God’s enemies is a necessity and part of invi-

tation to create the Islamic government. They use divine verses to justify before Wahhabi and Salafist Sheiks jihad and acts of terrorism against Muslims and non-Muslims. Thus, the essence of jihad in the Salafist- Takfirist movement is terror which is different from Ikhwani peaceful multidimensional approach. Another important aspect of jihad in this framework is instrumentalism. Despite the attitude of Sunni jurisprudence which allows jihad only with the consent of religious leaders, Takfirists have simplified the terms of jihad and made it a powerful tool to counter their enemies.

Some terrorists who commit acts of terrorism with religious motives have lived in Europe or the US and suffered from materialism and immoralities. While seeking a solution, they have been deceived by ISIS and brainwashed with Takfirist teachings. In order to reach the everlasting redemption they got stuck in a dreadful game of this terrorist group.

In its propaganda, ISIS emphasizes a spiritual duty of “Hejrat”, i.e. migration to caliphate and jihad more than any other duty. These two are very important in ISIS projects of caliphate. One of the main goals of ISIS is to build a large Islamic government. ISIS condemns the concept of nation states and believes that nationalism, democracy, and secularism are equivalent to idolatry. The ISIS interpretation of religion is a key to unification of its members for caliphate which has been introduced as a divine project. Their magazine ‘Dabiq’ uses international militants from Chechnya, India, China, Syria, Iraq, the US, France, Germany, and Australia (Hegghammer, 2010).

There are some actions which have made ISIS interesting for young people. These are: reviving caliphate, enforcement of Sharia law, and a promise of building the government based on the principles of justice, equality, and support for the poor and needy, ISIS success in building a regime despite different pressures, slogan on equal-

ity of all races in the distribution of power, obvious ISIS challenges against traditional laws and regulations, emphasis on material life and pleasures along with spiritual growth, and a possibility of a distant pact with the caliph.

ISIS media initiatives

As a Salafist-Takfirist group in the Middle East, ISIS uses a wide range of communication systems to expand in the region. Its propaganda is so effective that the group manages to recruit from all over the world (Jabareen, 2015) .

One of the main aspects of globalization used by ISIS is the new communication system and technology. Expansion of social network with almost no control over the circulation of information makes this information available to everyone. It is obvious that various ideas can appear in this atmosphere and result in self-awareness. The expansion of this communication technology affects fundamental groups. The first step is propaganda and recruitment. Thus, the media committee is one of the main organs of ISIS. Media has played a key role in the group's expansion as it has proven that in the rise of a fundamental ideology, collision of thoughts between this idea and pluralist ideas is necessary. In this process, the fundamentalist ideology has grown more radical and violent. As for ISIS, violence has been heightened in this process and needs Takfirists to confront the pluralist world. Moreover, the media have prepared a suitable ground for ISIS propaganda and hegemony in the region. In this regard, ISIS uses psychological warfare to achieve its objectives.

The presence of ISIS in the media is a very important issue. ISIS leaders emphasize cyber space and their endeavours to take advantage of the high capacity of this space is a proof of its importance. ISIS simply makes cyber space a tribune for its propaganda and uses websites to reflect its radical thoughts. For example, they release

pictures and films of their viscous terrorist acts on their Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. They have even produced software to be installed on the phone and provide their supporters with the latest news. The pictures and films presenting their acts are produced professionally in high quality. They describe their military operations in Syria and Iraq in details. Mass executions, executions by hanging, crucifixions, and other inhuman acts of these terrorists have been released in cyber space. These are high quality materials, which means that they have access to proper equipment and professional technicians. They produce their films in English or provide English subtitles to ensure they are effective. They terrorize people through these films and pictures and meanwhile try to present a good image of themselves. They release films that show ISIS members feeding animals or giving chocolate to each other. ISIS tries to create a presentable image in which people simultaneously get frightened by violent acts and awed. In fact, ISIS tries to present a phony image of itself in cyber space in order to attract and recruit some people. Frustrated elements of society from the heart of Europe, which have always dreamt of a utopia, slide down to ISIS and join terrorists.

Generally, ISIS paves the way for being joined by Western young people through such measures as: attention to masses instead of religious, political, or social elites, taking advantage of new communication technology, terrorizing through media, different ways of recruitment, exploiting Islamic signs and slogans, mosques, and religious centres.

*Consequences of the return of Western ISIS
members to Europe and the US*

Terrorism has become a costly challenge for Western countries in recent years. As the most powerful terrorist

group, ISIS can harm Western societies, but it has characteristics which make it different from other terrorist groups. Although it caused bloodshed in the Middle East, no conscious observer can deny its global effects.

It is inevitable that foreign militants join ISIS and that its numbers grow exceedingly. Many of those who return from Syria and Iraq may not be terrorist threats to the West. The question arises who is to identify those that are likely to pose a threat? Many of these foreign fighters may be radicalized. For example in May 2014, one of the US citizens who was an Al-Nusra member died in a suicidal bombing attack on al-Assad troops in Syria. In fact, Syria and Iraq war may raise a new generation of terrorists.

Meanwhile, European authorities are deeply concerned about considerable migrations from European countries to jihadi conflict zones. These concerns get more serious when these individuals return more radical having committed a wide range of criminal acts. The annoying question for Western security centres and organizations is what will happen if thousands of jihadi participants of Syria and Iraq return home? They are those who have been the most brutalized in this war. Security analysts believe these jihadists pose a threat to Western Europe more than to any other place in the world.

The fact that thousands of French, British, Austrian, and German citizens are among ISIS terrorists has created panic within Western security organizations. Those individuals were easily allowed to leave the country in the hope that they may be able to speed up the process of al- Assad's demise. Now it has become a disaster for security officials in Europe. Each of these terrorists can cross borders of the Schengen area in order to carry out terrorist acts in Europe. Moreover, some of these terrorists with Western citizenship have yet to be identified by Western security organizations. Many of them entered

Syria or Iraq through a third country, such as Turkey, and given the circumstances, it will be very hard to identify them. Now, Western security organizations face two parallel threats: the radical right-wing extremists and Western Takfirists who are returning home having experienced dire and violent situations in Syria and Iraq. Thus, the crisis is grave and EU members will pay high price to prevent other terrorist attacks by ISIS.

The terrorist attack on the French satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris on 7 January 2015, the attack on the Thalys train in France on its way from Amsterdam to Paris on 21 August 2015, the Brussels attacks on 22 March 2016, shootings at a gay nightclub in Orlando, the United States on 12 June 2016, the attack on a cargo truck on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, France, on 14 July 2016, and waves of arrests in Belgium and Germany put returning Jihadists under the spotlight. But among Western countries some— and most notably France, Belgium, England, Germany, and Netherlands — may be of strategic value for terrorist missions.

Conclusion

With progress in the globalization process, different cultures have come closer to each other, which poses a challenge to the traditional patterns of culture. Many compatible cultures have merged into a dominant culture; others have defined it as a threat and chose the confrontation option. It seems that Islamic fundamentalist groups, in response, have created those minority cultures, which in their worst shape manifest themselves in ISIS. In fact, ISIS is a junction for radical Islam, terrorism, and globalization. Globalization and its pressures cause resistance, such as Islamic violent radicalism. On the other hand, globalization provides access to new communication technologies, which empowers terrorist groups,

makes them global. Thus, taking advantage of new propaganda techniques, ISIS have managed to recruit many young people. ISIS power should not be evaluated just in terms of occupation of some parts of Syria or Iraq, but in providing financial resources and recruiting militants from all over the world. In this regard, the fact that young people join ISIS should be interpreted in the context of social and political circumstances along with the psychological situation of Western youth. A complex of discriminations and social and political pressures towards young Western Muslims, along with the moral crisis in Western society, pave the way for jihadist teachings. When these elements mix with violent tastes, or psychological problems or even pure desire for martyrdom, they can create a pro-ISIS group of young Western Muslims. Finally, it can be said that there is a collection of internal and repulsive reasons, which are the main factors playing a role in making Western youth join ISIS, namely contextual (identity and spiritual crisis in the West, Islamophobia, social pressures and discrimination, poverty), psychological and provocative (psychological problems, excitement, sexual motives, i.e. jihad marriage), along with intriguing external factors rooted in ISIS teachings, i.e. beliefs (religious motives, jihad, martyrdom, and reviving caliphate), activity (military achievements of ISIS), and propaganda (massive use by ISIS of social network, media and mosques).

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