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ANTOINE PHILIPPE BAUDON

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# TO JIHAD AND BACK HOME

MAKING SENSE OF FRENCH INDIVIDUALS ENGAGEMENT WITH MILITANT SALAFI-JIHADISM  
AND THEORISING THEIR DISENGAGEMENT

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A thesis submitted for the partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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March 2017

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Cover photo: Graffiti in Darayya chronicling the Syrian uprising. Photo from [u/goftarenik](#).

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DECLARATION

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This thesis is the result of my own work. Material from the published or unpublished work of others which is used in the thesis is credited to the author in question in the text.

*Durham, England, March 2017*

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Antoine Baudon,  
March 4, 2017



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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis theorises a disengagement framework to disengage French individuals engaged with the militant salafi-jihadi movement and criticises the French government's response to this growing phenomenon. To make sense of disengagement, engagement must first be made sense of. Engagement is examined through Social Movement Theory, especially via incentives, frames, networks, and the repertoire of action. Specifically, this thesis makes sense of why and how French individuals engage with the pan-Islamist movement through the Salafi-quietist and Tabligh movements. Then, it makes sense of French individuals engagement with the militant salafi-jihadi movement, namely, via a focus on the Algerian Groupe Islamique Armé, al-Qaeda, and Daesh. The pan-Islamist movement is seen as the phenomenon's inception: a movement proselytising individuals to turn against Western society. While the pan-Islamist movement is non-violent, the militant salafi-jihadi movement is a violent sub-movement. The French government has only responded, since the 1980s, by force towards the militant salafi-jihadi movement but has not responded to the pan-Islamist movement. In fact, some politicians have been reticent to prevent, even criticise, the pan-Islamist movement's spread. With the phenomenon's evolution, especially the Syrian jihad, the French government's hard counter-terrorism approach is inadequately adapted. It has created a soft approach in 2014. Yet, it follows the controversial notion of mental manipulation that neither counter-acts the pan-Islamist movement nor the militant salafi-jihadi movement.

Via the examination of engagement, this thesis can both critically analyse the French hard and soft approaches and uncover lessons for disengagement in the hopes of establishing a disengagement framework. That is, a soft social approach. This is not a social approach through job creation and improvement of socio-economics. Rather, this is a framework wherein individuals are given the chance to belong and participate into society. That is, they are engaged into the French Social Contract. If needed, disengagement programmes can be included. Overall, this thesis aims at a policy recommendation for the creation of a nationwide disengagement framework and an adaptation of France's counter-terrorism strategy.



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

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<b>AIS</b>	Armée Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Army), Algeria	<b>FNMF</b>	Fédération National des Musulmans de France (National Federation of Muslims of France)
<b>AQAP</b>	al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula	<b>FN</b>	Front National, France
<b>AQC</b>	al-Qaeda Central	<b>FSA</b>	Free Syrian Army
<b>AQI</b>	al-Qaeda in Iraq	<b>GIA</b>	Groupe Islamique Armé (Armed Islamist Group), Algeria
<b>AQIM</b>	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb	<b>IAI</b>	Islamic Army in Iraq
<b>AQIS</b>	al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent	<b>ISI</b>	Islamic State of Iraq
<b>CAPRI</b>	Centre d'Action et de Prévention contre la Radicalisation des Individus (Action and Prevention Centre Against Individual's Radicalisation), Bordeaux, France	<b>ISIL/ISIS</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham
<b>CCIF</b>	Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France (Collective Against Islamophobia in France)	<b>JN</b>	Jabhat al-Nusra (The Support Front for the People of the Levant), Syria
<b>CIPD</b>	Centre Interministériel de Prévention de la Délinquance (Interministerial Centre for the Prevention of Delinquency), France	<b>LR</b>	Les Républicains, France
<b>CFCM</b>	Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (French Council of the Muslim Faith)	<b>MAK</b>	Maktab al-Khidamat (Afghan Services Bureau)
<b>CPDSI</b>	Centre de Prévention Contre les Dérives Sectaires Liées à l'Islam (Centre for the Prevention of Sectarian Drifts Linked to Islam), France	<b>MENA</b>	Middle-East and North Africa
<b>DDR</b>	Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reconstruction	<b>MIA</b>	Mouvement Islamique Armé (Armed Islamic Movement), Algeria
<b>DST</b>	Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire (Directorate of Territorial Surveillance), France	<b>MIVILUDES</b>	Mission Interministérielle de Vigilance et de Lutte contre les Dérives Sectaires (Intra-Ministerial Mission for the Surveillance and Fight against Sectarian Drifts), France
<b>EIG</b>	Egyptian Islamic Group	<b>MSJM</b>	Militant Salafi-Jihadi Movement
<b>EIJ</b>	Egyptian Islamic Jihad	<b>MSJO</b>	Militant Salafi-Jihadi Organisation
<b>EPIDE</b>	Etablissement Public d'Insertion de la Défense (Public Establishment for Insertion and Defence), France	<b>MWL</b>	Muslim World League, Saudi Arabia
<b>FAF</b>	Fraternité Algérienne en France (Algerian Brotherhood in France)	<b>PLO</b>	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
<b>FIS</b>	Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front), Algeria	<b>SFRAEM</b>	Société Française de Recherche et d'Analyse sur l'Empire Mentale (French Society for the Study and Analysis of Mental Manipulation, SFRAEM)
<b>FIPD</b>	Fonds Interministériel de la Prévention de la Délinquance (Inter-Ministerial Funds for the Prevention of Delinquency), France	<b>SMT</b>	Social Movement Theory
<b>FLN</b>	Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front), Algeria	<b>TTP</b>	Tehrik-i-Taliban, Pakistan
		<b>UOIF</b>	Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (Union of Islamic Organisations of France)

Part I

BACKBONE & BACKGROUND



---

## INTRODUCTION

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From June 2014 to December 2015, 27,000 to 31,000 individuals have rejoined the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone under the banner of violent militant salafi-jihadi organisations (MSJO) to wage global jihad (Sofan 2015), though for most, this fight does not concern them. These individuals, men and women, from as young as 15 to those in the mid- to late-30s, from wide ranging origins and socio-economic and political backgrounds, come from France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, Tunisia, Algeria, the Gulf States, the USA, and even Australia. This phenomenon is not new, only its size and scope are novel. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, numerous examples exist of individual that engaged, despite their country of origin's reticence, in conflicts which did not concern them: the International Brigades in Spain from 1936 to 1939, the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua in 1979, the Afghan jihad against the USSR from 1979 to 1989, the Bosnian war from 1992 to 1995 or even the Chechen war from 1994 to 1996.

As engaged individuals are not directly concerned with the conflict they join, it is interesting to examine why they leave their families, friends, employment, and lifestyle behind and how they engage with a far away, often dangerous, cause which promises, unlike mercenaries, uncertain future rewards. A first lead would be the ideological dimension wherein the grandiose discourse of two opposing camps, each with their vision of the world, clash: believers versus unbelievers, communism versus anti-communism or fascism versus anti-fascism. As Mourad Fares (aka Abu al-Hassan, his war name), a French online recruiter for Jabhat al-Nusra, now in prison, puts it: 'in Islam, there are no borders nor nationalities: Muslims form one and only community. [...] This is the third and last world war which has begun here. The entire world against Islam'. Individuals engaging with the militant salafi-jihadi movement (MSJM) believe these organisations to be the centre *par excellence*, which reflect their identity, to fully practice their faith with other believers who hold the same truth, live away from unbelievers and their anti-religious innovations, and increase their chances of accessing paradise. Further, individuals get a high from being close to a world changing event. As Souleymane puts it, a 24 year old French mechanic gone to Syria in the spring of 2013 with his wife and son, 'this is a great historic period and I want to be a part of it (...). We do not know when the Mahdi [saviour] will arrive and I want to be there' (quoted in Thomson 2014a).

However, ideology, though a necessary mechanism, is not sufficient in explaining engagement. Why would individuals engage in high risks and costs protest? They do so because participation in-itself offers more reward than the end result. That is, the organisation offers individual incentives through a collective endeavour, which, in the case of this thesis, is a utopian Islamic state and world order. The MSJM promises a break-away from Western societies, via, for example, life under divine law and order and paradise. Incentives alone, however, are not sufficient either in explaining engagement. A second mechanism is framing, that is, how the organisation conceptualises its fight and its environment. To mobilise individuals, organisations aim to have a similar frame to potential recruits. To align individuals within their own frame, organisations resonate real or create imagined grievances. For example, militant salafi-jihadi organisations (MSJO) rely on the real grievances, like legal limitations to Islam in France via the full ban of burqas, and on imagined grievances, like the West's perpetual victimhood of Muslims worldwide. Similarly, frames alone are not sufficient in explaining engagement. To create frame alignment, organisations utilise networks to get in contact with individuals or for individuals to get in contact with them. Networks include friends, family, neighbours, internet forums, and more. Networks are both real, like face-to-face contacts, in mosque, prayer rooms, gymnasiums or parks, and virtual, in online forum, online discussion boards or social media. Organisations' networks rely on proselytism to engage with the individual, so that she or he may then engage. Similarly, networks alone do not explain engagement. The organisation has to be credible in its concrete actions. Hence, the repertoire of action acts as a *bone fide*. When a MSJO performs an attack, which is often considered terrorism in the West, for most individuals, anger and disgust arise. For others, awe, credibility, and potential support arise. Through their violent and non-violent actions, organisations demonstrate their capabilities and how they wish to attain their goals. In the case of Daesh, for example, the establishment of an Islamic caliphate. Similarly, however, the repertoire of violence alone is not sufficient in explaining engagement. Taking together, however, these four mechanisms (incentives, frames, network, and repertoire of action), within a historical and socio-political context, can explain engagement's whys and hows.

Individuals also disengage from the MSJM and its organisations. While growing older matters, other factors exist. Individuals can either be pushed out by the organisation's activities which they find inappropriate or inadequate and/or be pulled out by counter-movements, like the society from where the individual was recruited, or intra-movement rivals. A question arises: can disengagement be engendered? If so, how and under what conditions?

Faced with an ever growing, yet not new, phenomenon of French citizens' engagement with the pan-Islamist movement<sup>1</sup>, the MSJM and its organisations, the French government has opted for a counter-terrorism approach based on security, also known as a 'hard' approach. This approach consists of laws aimed at punishing terrorist acts, the belonging and intention to participate in a terrorist

<sup>1</sup> See [chapter 7 section 4.1](#) for more details

movement or organisation, data collection, strong surveillance, and police and armed forces patrols to name a few. However, focusing solely on a 'hard' approach is ineffective when it comes to preventing engagement and engendering disengagement. In fact, the literature on counter-terrorism and violent movements supports, empirically and through field work, that strictly following security measures is an insufficient approach. It must be combined with a 'social', or soft, approach. The exact nature of the social approach is still under debate. This mix needs to be determined vis-à-vis the context in which counter-terrorism, engagement, and disengagement are occurring. To that effect, since 2014, France has added a 'soft' component to its counter-terrorism strategy. However, this component is based on the mental manipulation (or sectarian drift) approach; an approach that does not properly ascertain the problem at hand nor offer apt responses. Since late-2015/early-2016, France has added other 'soft' components in the form of an online counter-discourse and deradicalisation programmes. However, these components are not apt either as their conceptualisation of the pathways-out of militancy are erroneously based on wrong premises of engagement.

For this thesis, disengagement is not solely a security issue; rather, it is a societal issue. Security measures, such as extra policing and judicial investigations, are necessary to prevent attacks, if and only if they do not violate civil liberties. However, such measures are insufficient to prevent engagement and engender and aid disengagement. Since engagement also affects the French nation, the adaptability of the French Social Contract (see below) needs to be put forward to prevent the inception and furthering of engagement and to engender and aid disengagement. That is, disengagement is, as Le Clézio (2015) aptly wrote, a fight against injustice, the abandonment of youths, the oblivion which some in French society succumb to, and the lack of sharing cultural and societal success 'to cure the disease that corrodes the foundations of our democratic society'.

## 1.1 THE INVESTIGATION

This thesis makes sense of why and how French individuals engage with the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-jihadi movements and its MSJOs to theorise how and why disengagement can be aided and/or engendered. For some authors, the social approach implies the eradication of engaged individuals' grievances, through, for instance, creating jobs, increasing political rights or reducing discriminations and victimhood. This thesis, however, views the social component differently. French citizens have the same rights and duties as everyone else, and even if they suffer from discriminations, difficulties in accessing the job market and/or difficulties in living a certain form of Islam, these are not the sole reasons for engagement. Their reasons for engagement are rooted in the repudiation of the idea of the nation-state as superior to their misconception of religion. The spread of this repudiation began in France in the 1970s and 1980s by the pan-Islamist movement through the Tabligh and Salafi-quietist movements, both imported through Gulf states' growing influence.

The pan-Islamist movement and MSJM have a common ideological basis but differ in their utilised means. The pan-Islamist movement is non-violent (that is, a soft movement) while the MSJM is both violent and non-violent (that is, a hard movement). In fact, the MSJM was born-out of the pan-Islamist movement's evolution during the Afghan jihad. The importance of the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-jihadi movements is not simply about why and how they led to al-Qaeda's inception. It is also, firstly, about the sub-set relationship between MSJOs, the MSJM, and pan-Islamist movement. This implies that disengagement from a MSJO does not necessarily imply disengagement from the MSJM. Similarly, disengagement from the MSJM does not necessarily imply disengagement from pan-Islamism. Therefore, throughout this thesis, MSJOs must be seen as sub-sets of the MSJM, itself a sub-set of pan-Islamism. This creates layers to engagement and disengagement, and commonality of incentives, frames, networks, and the repertoire of action to all MSJO, the MSJM, and pan-Islamism. That is, pan-Islamism's mobilisation tools are utilised and personalised by the MSJM and MSJOs to mobilise individuals toward supporting and/or engaging in violent militancy. In sum, one of the three cannot be examined without examining how it affects and is affected by the two others.

Therefore, the rise and spread of pan-Islamism through France from the 1980s to today and the repercussion on French society must be examined. That is, how the pan-Islamist movement conditioned some in French society. The MSJM and MSJO are then examined in detail to make sense of why and how some French citizens altered their support from unaffected by the initial movement or non-violent support towards it, to salafi-jihadi militancy, whether violent or non-violent.

Since this phenomenon is world wide, the international context must also be examined. Specifically, the Middle-East, because it is from there that the repudiation of the secular nation-state emerged. People from the Middle-East blame the secular nation-state for their social and economic misery as this form of government lacks religiosity which is not fitting with Islamic communities and its weakness in preventing autocratic governments from taking over. The pan-Islamist movement and its parallel MSJM argue for a new form of governance through an Islamic caliphate. This is not framed as a return to the past but as the creation of a state and form of governance that takes advantage of development all-the-while respecting a form of Sunni Islam.

To make sense of engagement's whys and hows, this thesis utilises Social Movement Theory (SMT) in a synthesised and inter-disciplinary manner, as it offers a multitude of analytical tools: the contextual and temporal use of violence; the linkage between macro, meso, and micro-level factors; the linkage between an organisation's interest, ideology, and structure; the state's role; and an organisation's internal dynamics. These tools make sense of the context(s) in which a movement lives and how they affect one-another. To uncover why and how movements mobilise individuals, the incentives to engagement, the way engagement is framed, the networks that facilitate engagement, and the repertoire of action that demonstrates a movement's capacities are then detailed. Through this examination, it is also possible to uncover reasons why engagement occurred or could have occurred. Co-jointly to this

analysis, examination of French counter-terrorism strategy and its adaptation to the evolution of the pan-Islamist and militant salafi jihadi movements and MSJOs is undertaken to make sense of its effects on and how it is affected by engagement and disengagement.

To theorise disengagement, this thesis also utilises SMT and relies on the lessons learned from the evolving French counter-terrorism strategy and lessons learned as to why and how disengagement occurred (that is, factors increasing the likelihood of disengagement) or could have occurred. Further, it also relies on field work and an overview of strategies taken abroad to disengage individuals.

The peculiarity of this thesis is not its approach *à la française*. Rather, it is its conceptualisation of the phenomena. Thus, violent militancy does not only attack the French state but also the French nation. Since the nation is also a target, it also needs to respond. The nation can focus on the social, political, cultural, economic, and identity conditions, processes, and activities that result in violent militancy. As such, the term social contract is utilised.

Nearly as old as philosophy itself, social contract theory is an idea that an individual's moral, social, and political obligations depend upon a contract (or agreement) made with the society they live in. Without such contract, humanity would live in a state of nature. The notion of social contract began with Socrates' argument as to why Crito ought to remain in prison and accept the death penalty. Social contract theory, however, was firstly fully examined by Thomas Hobbes (Hobbes 2008 [1651]). John Locke (2003 [1689]) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (2013 [1762]) wrote in favour of the theory, which increased its dominance in modern Western philosophy. In the twentieth century, John Rawls' (2005a & 2005b) Kantian approach to social contract theory gave it new momentum, which was then followed by David Gauthier (1986 & 1990) and others. The twentieth century also brought new criticisms, in particular from feminist (Baier 1994; Di Stefano 1991; Held 1993; Pateman 1988) and race-conscious writers (Mills 1997) which argue that social contract theory is an incomplete view of an individual's moral and political life, and may, actually, hide the contract's parasitical subjugation of individuals' classes.

Hence, the term social contract is utilised as it encompasses social, political, cultural, economic, and identity factors that affect an individual's engagement and disengagement. It is understood here that the French nation has a social contract, characterised by the French state's laws, the nation's principles, values, and culture that regulate life in France. This social contract is aptly called the French Social Contract. Similarly, militant organisations also have a social contract, through which they challenge nations' social contracts and put them in conflict with their own as a way to engage individuals. Militant organisations' social contracts offer incentives to engaged individuals, are propagated with their social networks, and are conceptualised by an organisation's framing and repertoire of action. To prevent the inception and/or furthering of engagement and aid and/or engender disengagement, the French Social Contract is a tool civil society can use in co-operation with the state's tools. That is, a mix of soft (i.e.: non-violent) and hard (i.e. : violent or legally repressive) approaches. In sum, this means concep-

tualising leaving a militant movement as rejoining society.

The overall aim is not the creation of a disengagement centre. Rather, it is the theorisation of a disengagement framework. That is, a set of incentives, frames, networks, and a repertoire of action (in which disengagement programmes exist) that create pathways out-of engagement at the global level. And, if needed, these tools can be personalised to tailor the prevention or furthering of an individual's engagement, and the engendering or furthering of an individual's disengagement.

Based on this conceptualisation, this thesis follows three themes, each with its sets of research questions.

- Engagement:
  - *Why and how do French individuals engage (or not) with the pan-Islamist movement and the MSJM and its organisations?;*
  - *How are these movements and organisations related?;*
  - *How does this relationship affect and is affected by engagement and disengagement?.*
- The French counter-terrorism strategy and apparatus:
  - *What is France's counter-terrorism strategy and apparatus, and how has it adapted to the phenomenon?*
  - *How does this strategy affect engagement and disengagement?*
- Disengagement:
  - *Why and how do some French individuals disengage (or not)?*
  - *Can disengagement be engendered and/or furthered? If so, how and under what conditions?*

These three themes come together to make sense of French individuals' engagement and disengagement, and the French government's responses. The goals of this thesis, however, are more modest than sweeping generalisability. It seeks to offer new insights into the processes of engagement and disengagement. To do so, it explicitly engages broader bodies of comparative research and theories related to social movements, (non) violent militancy and (counter) terrorism. Rather than functioning merely as the outcome of a single case, this investigation builds upon, and hopefully contributes to, research on social movements, (non) violent militancy, and (counter) terrorism. It also seeks to fill a gap in the literature by addressing disengagement. Though empirically situated in a non-Muslim country, this study offers some theoretical and conceptual tools of analysis that can help address engagement and disengagement with the MSJM and its MJSOs more globally. This thesis thus places itself as a starting point for theoretically informed research on disengagement.

## 1.2 STRUCTURE

To make sense of engagement and theorise disengagement by answering the above research questions, this thesis is structured in the following way. **Part I** continues with **chapter 2**, a methodological discussion where this thesis' chosen case study, chosen and rejected methods and challenges to data collection, and data analysis are detailed. Secondly, **chapter 3** details this thesis' chosen theory (SMT) and the reasons other theories were rejected, all-the-while performing a literature review on the literatures on engagement and disengagement with non-violent and violent movements, including terrorism. It then synthesises a SMT framework to make sense of engagement and theorise disengagement.

**Part II** represents this thesis' empirical showcase utilising SMT as a consistent frame of analysis to explore and explain the principal aspects of the changing dynamics of the militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon. Throughout this part, lessons for disengagement are uncovered and France's evolving counter-terrorism approach is assessed to offer policy recommendations by constructing an adaptive response, both hard and soft, rooted in the French Social Contract concept, to the ever-evolving militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon. For this endeavour, **chapter 4** details the Sunni soft pan-Islamist movement's rise, transformation into the militant pan-Islamist movement, and why and how individuals engaged. It then makes sense of how the militant pan-Islamist movement transformed into the MSJM through al-Qaeda's inception. This serves to demonstrate the common ground amongst the soft pan-Islamist movement and the MSJM (and its MSJOs) that engages individuals. **Chapter 5** examines the French structural context and the arrival of Islam within it in the early 1960s, its increased visibility thereafter, and the pan-Islamist movement's arrival. It seeks to make sense of why and how Islam's evolution influenced engagement and disengagement with different forms of Islam, and Islam's current standing in France. **Chapter 6** examines why and how individuals engaged with the Groupe Islamique Armé, the importance of small decentralised networks in France, and the impact of a MSJO's end. **Chapter 7** examines why and how individuals engaged with al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda's adaptation to its evolving context, and in turn, the effects on engagement and disengagement. Then, it holds a discussion on prison's role in pathways-to engagement. **Chapter 8** begins by detailing the theoretical basis for the French soft counter-terrorism approach (i.e.: mental manipulation) to explain engagement. Then, this chapter critically assesses this approach all-the-while making sense of why and how individuals engage with Daesh. Finally, **chapter 9** begins by critically assessing the current French counter-terrorism strategy, including prison's role in pathways out of engagement. Then, and based on strengths and weaknesses of the French approach and the lessons learned for disengagement from previous chapters, it constructs a disengagement framework.

Finally, **Part III** concludes. Throughout, this thesis' aim is not to describe the militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon or to give anecdotal evidence. Rather, it presents a contribution, by no means final, to an ongoing process of trying to explain and understand why and how individuals engage and disengage

from the MSJM and MSJOs, based on conversations with actors trying to prevent engagement and engender disengagement, and readings of academic texts (on joining and leaving militancy), newspaper interviews, governmental report, militant propaganda, individuals' accounts, internet commentators, and field actors' accounts. This analysis is space-, time-, and perspective-specific and its conclusions are open to revisions and are intended to invite debates rather than close them.

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## METHODOLOGY

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This chapter details the reasons for the selected methodology, France as the single-country case study, justifies the opted-for and non-opted for methods to collect data, and finally, it details challenges to data collection and how data was analysed. That is, this chapter aims at detailing how this experiment was undertaken.

### 2.1 METHODOLOGY

The theory utilised throughout is Social Movement Theory (SMT). Why it has been chosen over others, such as psycho-pathological theory or macro-sociological theory, is detailed in the following chapter. Yet, SMT is not utilised as a stand-alone theory.

Theories from different disciplines can work together. Such theoretical approaches can be intra-disciplinary (working within a single discipline), multi-disciplinary (individuals from different disciplines working together, each drawing on their disciplinary knowledge), cross-disciplinary (viewing one discipline from the perspective of another), inter-disciplinary (integrating knowledge and methods from different discipline) or trans-disciplinary (creating a unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives). This thesis utilised SMT in an inter-disciplinary way to widen its viewpoints, reduce its biases, and increase its methodological tool-set. Firstly, it draws on sociology for ethnomethodology – the study of how individuals conceptualise their everyday world. This is useful in making sense of frames utilised to illicit engagement and disengagement. Secondly, from anthropology, the ways of conducting interviews is utilised (more details below).

Thirdly, from history it merges the *Linear* and *Everyman* theories. The *Linear Theory* holds that history is about progress. The world is constantly going forward toward an ultimate unknown destination. Although patterns may appear throughout history, there exist no real repetitions. *Linear Theory* relies on cause and effect: event A occurred, then event B occurred because of A. The *Everyman Theory* holds that the world's direction is shaped by ordinary individuals rather than elites. Thus, everyday individuals (e.g.: workers, farmers or merchants) shape history. To fully understand history, the everyday life of these groups of individuals must be understood. This thesis does not aim to fully explain history, but

rather, explain a phenomenon. Thus *Linear Theory* is merged with the *Everyman Theory*, where in *Linear Theory* is utilised for its cause and effect, and *Everyman Theory* for its reliance on everyday individuals. Specifically to this thesis, for example, French citizens join the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone because Daesh has, in part, created a favourable environment to wage jihad - an environment that was favourable for Daesh's inception.

Finally, from socio-psychology, Amoyel's and Boukhobza's (2016i: 172; Amoyel 2015 & 2016; Boukhobza 2015 & 2016ii) vectors of radicalisation are utilised to psychologically conceptualise factors that positively affect an individual's psychological engagement. These vectors are: communitarianism<sup>1</sup>, identity, anti-Semitism, conspiracy theory, and victimhood. Communitarianism creates new identities. However, since these identities are disassociated from French society, they are rejected by French society, implying that individuals feel victimised. Simultaneously, anti-Semitism creates both feeling of victimhood and feeds conspiracy theories that portray victimhood because of a worldwide plot wherein the Jews control the world. In turn, this victimhood creates feelings of humiliation, and this humiliation must be righted. The following model (Amoyel 2015 & 2016; Boukhobza 2015, 2016i & 2016ii) details the six steps undertaken to right the wrong of victimhood.

1. Victimhood
2. Resentment
3. Deferral
4. Exclusivism
5. Exclusion
6. Taking action

Movements rely on individuals feeling victimised because of their faith through real and imagined events. From there, the movements instil in proselytised individuals a feeling of resentment toward the French Social Contract. That is, they should dislike what makes them feel like a victim. In fact, they take this dislike as far as deferral from society. Since individuals are not part of society, they are exclusive. That is, they are privileged. As privileged members of this group, they are excluded from society. Now, it is up to them to take action to right the wrong of victimisation. That is, take action (Amoyel 2015 & 2016; Boukhobza 2015, 2016i & 2016ii).

This model is useful when making sense of why individuals are motivated to engage through certain incentives and frames versus others. However, it is not the full picture as it focuses on micro-level factors. From step one to five, despite different incentives and frames (as presented in the following chapters), movements proceed similarly. What sets them apart are the means offered to individual to

<sup>1</sup> [subsubsection 5.1.2.1 p.65](#) explains this term further. For now, suffice to say that communitarianism designates attitudes or aspirations of some communities (e.g.: religious, ethnic) to disassociate themselves from the rest of society.

right their wrongs. Such meso-level factors are not sufficiently included in this model. Similarly, macro-level factors are not sufficiently included, nor is engagement's 'how'. This model can thus be tied with SMT to strengthen SMT's micro-level explanation.

In sum, this thesis utilises SMT in an inter-disciplinary way with sociology, anthropology, history, and socio-psychology to widen its points of views, reduce its biases, and increases its tool set. This allows the thesis to be more apt at seeing the militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon through different angles yet in focused ways to make sense of it.

## 2.2 SELECTED CASE

This thesis is based on a single-country case-study. On one hand, one case study provides an opportunity for detailed and exploratory research, and the generation of new theoretical insights. On the other hand, it limits the ability to generalise to other cases. Without more research, it is difficult to determine how well a model or theory can be applied to other cases without particular empirical research. Thus, this thesis findings are also limited to its case - France.

This thesis focuses on French salafi-jihadi militants for five reasons. Firstly, this is a growing phenomenon in France. In recent years, many French citizens, male and female, from 15 years old to late-thirties, and various socio-economic, ethnic, and religious background, have increased their support for the MSJM and MSJOs, either verbally or physically, to the point where thousands of individuals have left and joined MSJO, to fight alongside them in Syria and Iraq, or in some cases, come back home to engage in terrorist activities.

Secondly, France's principle of *laïcité* coupled with secularism implies different interpretation of religion's role in France, and hence, how to respond to individuals engaged with and disengaged from militant salafi-jihadi organisations. Thirdly, France has the largest Muslim and Jewish populations in Europe which affects debates on salafi-jihadism, militancy, and Islam in France.

Fourth, France follows a principle of assimilation to integrate foreign individuals and cultures into its social and political context which implies that any new idea must assimilate to French culture; thus, any foreign idea which cannot assimilate is rejected. However, this becomes an issue regarding religion since individuals have freedoms of expression and religion. This factor affects and is affected by individuals' engagement and disengagement from the MSJM and MSJOs.

Finally, France, which has always taken a tough stand on terrorism since 1986, has only recently moved to seeing engagement and disengagement with MSJOs through a social lens, implying a lack of critical analysis of recent actions by the French government. These five reasons make France a case study with particular dynamics, all-the-while falling into a literature gap regarding disengagement from salafi-jihadi militancy.

Although one case is utilised, the phenomenon's global context will be referenced as France's context cannot be studied without consideration of broader international factors. Even though France is different than the rest of the world, it also has commonalities with it. Thus, sameness and difference must be embraced as contingent to the case in which they occur.

Although the country case-study is only based on France for in-depth contextual analysis, three MSJOs, al-Qaeda, the GIA, and Daesh, are chosen to understand engagement's and disengagement's evolution through time and their effect on the context and the context's effect on them. These three MSJOs were chosen in particular because they belong to the same MSJM movement and the broader pan-Islamist movement, and have recruited French citizens. While al-Qaeda and Daesh are examined until 2016, the GIA's analysis ends in 1996. After this time, the GIA became decadent and transformed itself into a criminal organisation and, as a consequence, lost support from al-Qaeda. Thus, from this point on, it is no longer considered a MSJO.

Numerous other militant organisations have recruited French citizens over the years, especially in the Syrian jihad. These include MSJOs like Ansar al-Sharia, Ansar al-Islam, the Mujahirin Alliance and Jaysh al-Mujahedeen to name a few, and non-MSJM organisations like the Kurds (see [Figure 4](#)). However, data collection on engaged individuals is very difficult to come by for these organisations. Thus, only major MSJOs have been chosen. Further, future projects could thus include small MSJOs for even more details and understanding.

## 2.3 METHODS AND DATA

The methodology that forms this thesis' basis was undertaken over a 26 month period, from September 2014 to November 2016, with field work occurring from June 2015 to November 2016. The approach is mix-methods, with intertwined qualitative and quantitative data, and with evidence based on a combination of primary and secondary sources.

### 2.3.1 *Selected Methods and Data Collection*

The research began with an extensive review of the literatures in anthropology, history, political science, social psychology, and sociology, which have inter-disciplinary fields like Islam (in France and worldwide), Islamism, terrorism, recruitment and engagement, radicalisation and deradicalisation, and violence (gang, extremist, separatist, and terrorist groups). The literature review simultaneously included readings regarding the utilised and non-utilised theories to aid in choosing the best fitting theory to the case, and empirical accounts for data on why and how individuals engage (or not) and disengage (or not). Theory readings include journal articles and academic books. Empirical evidence was collected

from journal articles, books, (auto)biographies, published reports by governments and NGOs, newspapers and magazines, propaganda material, online forums and discussion boards, and hash-tags from social media accounts of those in and outside the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone, in English, French, and Arabic. If the source was in Arabic, a trusted source was asked to translate.

The literature gap on disengagement quickly became apparent, and thus, the need for field work to fill this gap. Also, the French government's conceptualisation of the phenomenon via the mental manipulation approach was not read in any theoretical or empirical works other than in Bouzar's works (2014 & 2015; Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014), thus the need for field work to understand what this approach is, its strengths and weaknesses, and why it was chosen to guide policies. Therefore, field work had two aims. Firstly, it aimed at uncovering the whys and hows of French individuals' engagement, lack of engagement, disengagement, and lack of disengagement, and how these were affected and affecting the French and Syrian-Iraqi contexts. That is, information sought SMT's dynamics: incentives, frames, networks, repertoire of action, internal dynamics, role of the state, interest, ideology, and how the macro, meso, and micro-levels are linked to one another. Secondly, and simultaneously, since the French government was following another theory not detailed in the literature for militancy (broadly speaking), other than the author working with the French government, field work was undertaken to understand this theory (its dynamics, reasons for usage, and limitations). Since the theory is seen negatively by this thesis, field work also helped in collecting data for a critical analysis (see [chapter 8](#)).

Interviews were undertaken in two parts. The first part occurred from June to early-July 2015, and the second from September 2015 to November 2016, because interviewees took July and August off for vacation. The field work's timing was impacted by terrorist attacks. During the first part, six months after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, interviews were full of energy to find a solution to this phenomenon. The beginning of the second occurred after the Thalys and Saint-Quentin-Fallavier attacks. At this moment, interviewees became somewhat more critical of the French government's lack of response. The 2015 November Paris attacks profoundly affected fieldwork. Interviewees seemed less magnanimous toward returnees and even more critical towards the French government's responses - especially the state of emergency and its lack of effect on engagement and disengagement. The 2016 14 July Nice attack was also very profound as many interviewees are based in Nice. Worldwide attacks acted like a wake-up call for some interviewees as this made them realise that the phenomenon was worldwide. Such perspective was seen in interviewees' responses as, after worldwide attacks, their answers started to incorporate factors that were not solely Franco-French (that is, international structural factors), and they began including international cooperation as a necessary tool to deal with engagement and disengagement (that is, France needs to work with other countries).

Different types of interviews were conducted. Some were semi-structured, wherein closed and open-ended unambiguous questions following a script were utilised. The script depended on the in-

formation sought, such as knowledge on mental manipulation or an NGOs approach to radicalisation. Closed questions were asked for facts. For example: 'in the Alpes-Maritimes is the militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon growing, plateauing or decreasing?'. Open-ended questions were asked to compare data across interviews yet allowing interviewees to introduce or expand topics they felt were significant. Ethnography was thus utilised to see whether interviewees did not want to talk about a certain theme or were not so forthcoming with details. For example, government official rarely discussed religion whereas NGO and community members did more frequently. This in turn shaped the interview's themes and topics. Despite utilising ethnography, field work was not aimed at an ethnographic study. All questions were written down, and interviewees were given the option of having the list of question during the interview. This showed preparedness and the interviewee's general direction. However, if the interviewee decided to describe in detail a relevant subject or theme not present in the question list, the interview became unstructured. If an interviewee did not seem to understand the point of a question, it was clearly explained or the question reformulated. As such, the vocabulary was simple and jargon-less. However, if jargon was utilised, it was clearly defined before a question. For example, this thesis draws a distinction between deradicalisation and disengagement while some field actors do not. Thus, the distinction was explained. In fact, this became a good starting point to many conversations as it offers a way of seeing the interviewee's point of view.

Some interviewees became collaborators in the creation of this disengagement framework (Patrick Amoyel, Amélie Boukhobza, and Marik Fetouh). Thus, the second and third interviews were unstructured, while the fourth and fifth meetings were conversations where they learned from me as much as I learned from them. The interviewee and I both knew the general direction of the conversation, but not the specificities. These interviews were very useful in sharing knowledge and views of the issue. For example, I had a one hour discussion with Patrick Amoyel as to why I do not use the word 'radicalisation'. This led us to see the phenomenon eye-to-eye even though we have differing terminology. Such collaboration does imply that a lot of information was received and exchanged.

Many interviews were informal. For example, UNIMSED, a Nice-based mediation NGO, invited me to attend and speak at its work-meetings, in Marseille in September 2015 and Nice, in December 2015, to aid it in establishing a mediation centre against radicalisation. Many attendees had valuable insights, wide ranging experiences, and made key comments. Some gave explicit oral agreement for their comments to be used in this thesis, while with others, this prompted semi-structured interviews to collect more details. Thus, even though interviews were informal, they led to many in depth conversation and discussion of the subject at hand.

During some interviews, claims were made for which accuracy could not be ascertained. In this case, the interviewee was asked to give more details. If this proved unfruitful, other interviewees were asked about these claims and their thought about them. For example, 'someone from another NGO said X, what are your thoughts?'. In general, this occurred when interviewees gave opinions presented as facts rather than facts themselves. Asking others to verify accuracy began discussion of these opinions

and their roots. In all instances, these opinions whose assumption were on shaky grounds emanated from individuals who followed the mental manipulation approach. Thus, discussing these opinions with individuals whom do not adhere to the mental manipulation approach, aided in forming a strong critical analysis and argument against the mental manipulation approach.

During interviews with NGOs relying on mental manipulation, I disagreed with many of their assumptions. Rather than challenge their assumptions directly, probing via the *Tell-Me-More Probe* approach or staying silent until the interviewee talked again were utilised to receive more details and understand the logic behind their assumption.

No voice recorder was used but notes were taken – as is the custom in France. Of course, each interviewee gave consent for note taking. Notes were then transcribed after each interviews and saved on an ‘air gapped’ computer – one that has never been connected to the internet nor has Wi-Fi capabilities. This proved useful to secure data, especially after interviewing a mother, whose daughter is in Syria as she asked for anonymity. All interviews were formal yet friendly, even with government officials. The fact that I was French from a British university was well received. In fact, all interviewees were generous in their time slot allocation and willingness to participate. This made the interviews quite efficient. Although Durham is not far, they recognised, and appreciated, my coming to them, and thus were focused and on point. Furthermore, all interviews were conducted with ethical approval from Durham University and its codes on ethical conduct governing research involving human subjects.

In total, 76 interviews were undertaken. Individuals were identified through the literature or news reports, while others were identified through snowballing and collaborations with NGOs. Interviews were conducted with individuals from six categories: 8 militants, of which 6 are disengaging (the interviews, using my questions, were conducted on my behalf – more below), 1 is engaged (the interview was with her mother), and 1 disengaged; 44 NGO members dealing with radicalisation and deradicalisation (this number re-counts interviewees if they have been interviewed more than once); 5 community leaders and members in areas where recruitment has occurred; 9 government officials dealing with engagement, radicalisation, and disengagement; 4 members of stop-djihadisme; and 6 academics focusing on radicalisation in France. Interviews were occurred in and around Bordeaux, Marseille, Nice, and Paris (see [Figure 12](#) in [Appendix A](#)).

This approach gave first-hand insights from various perspectives, depending on the interviewees’ proximity to the phenomenon. Needless to say, these interviews do not constitute a representative sample. Nevertheless, they have proved useful in understanding the phenomenon and substantiating and complementing secondary findings.

Three sets of quantitative data from the literature and the French government are utilised. The first, the *Trajectoires et Origines* survey aims to identify the impact of origins on living conditions and social trajectories in France while taking account of other socio-demographic characteristics: social environment, neighbourhood, age, cohort, sex, and educational level. The data was collected by INED

(the French Institute for Demographic Studies) and INSEE (the French National Institute of Statistics and Economical Studies). This data set is used descriptively to demonstrate how integration in France is not properly working and in turn gives some individuals in the community the feeling of not belonging to French society. The main limitation of this data set is that some countries of origins are not included, such as East Asians and Latin Americans.

The second set, from Godard and Taussig (2007) and updated through a discussion with Godard, lists the number of mosques and prayer rooms per *département* that are either Salafi or Tabligh controlled. The limitation of this data set is its age - 9 years old. During a discussion with Godard (2015b), he clearly claimed that the numbers had increased. Therefore, the data is somewhat updated in Godard's latest book (Godard 2015a). This data set is also only used descriptively to depict the spread of the pan-Islamist movement in France.

The third set (see Figure 7 and Figure 8) details the number of radicalised individuals in France. This data is collected by the CNAPR (see subsection 9.1.2.1). This data set is utilised descriptively to show the trends in French individuals' engagement. It could have been very interesting to perform statistical analyses with this data to correlate radicalisation per *département* with indicators (such as age, gender, unemployment rate, graduation rates or violence) per *département* and to correlate radicalisation per *département* with Godard's list of mosques and prayer rooms per *département* and at the city level, even neighbourhood levels. However, the CNAPR's data is not suitable for statistical analysis for two reasons. Firstly, the CNAPR's consideration of who is radicalised or not is not very rigid and has changed over time. Secondly, the data set only includes individuals who have contacted the government (whether the CNAPR or the police and gendarmerie). Hence, numerous individuals are not in the data set. Therefore, this data set is only utilised to depict a general trend of engagement in France rather than for inference statistics.

### 2.3.2 Rejected Methods and Data Collection

In fact, numerous other methods were rejected. Statistical inference, probability and distribution statistics, time-series regression, dichotomous and polychotomous response models, and estimate and random models, to name a few, are not utilised because of the impossibility of collecting sufficiently good data and the available data's lack of sufficient precision. However, collecting good data across multiple countries to perform such statistical models could provide insight into common factors in pathways-to and pathways out-of engagement.

Surveys were not utilised because this thesis does not aim at getting a sense of opinions about the militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon. Rather, it focuses on factors affecting and affected by it. For such data collection, interviews with practitioners were utilised as, depending on the information given and

the way the information is presented, additional more detailed, questions could be asked. Had a survey been done, it would have lacked sufficient depth.

No experiment was undertaken because this thesis aims to theorise why and how disengagement occurs and can be engendered. This thesis is not aiming to disengage individuals today. However, this thesis tries to make sense of the militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon to create policy recommendation in the form of a disengagement framework to then disengage individuals.

The comparative method is not utilised because this thesis does not aim at comparing French individuals' pathways-to and pathways out-of militancy with individuals from other European countries and/or MENA. Rather, this thesis aims to make in-depth sense of the French context. However, a comparison of the in-depth analysis of individuals' pathways-to and pathways out-of from multiple countries (and continents) is necessary to formulate a world wide response to the militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon as common factors may be combated with common means.

Finally, no engaged individuals are interviewed. This is not because of the ethical consideration. In fact, ethical approval to interview engaged individuals was received. It is not about access either, as engaged individuals can be accessed online. This method was rejected because of the accuracy of the given information. How am I to know if the individual's arguments are truly her/his rather than simply mimicry? While browsing forum and sub-reddits on [Reddit](#), such as [r/Jihadinfocus](#) and [r/SyrianCivilWar](#), numerous engaged French individuals were identified. After a quick overview of their post-history, it was clear that they were engaged and willing to discuss and debate with others. Yet, their discourse was primarily mimicry, had little personalisation, and would bring nothing not present in the current literature. Thus, while uncovering personalised whys and hows to engagement is possible, this would have brought little newness. This method was thus rejected. Instead, this thesis relies on others' work on this manner, including, but not limited to Boukhobza (2015, 2016i & 2016ii), Bouzar (2015 & 2016), Bouzar, Caupenne, and Valsan (2014), Jacqueline (2015) Thomson (2014a & 2016), and Vignolle and Ahmed-Chaouch (2015).

It could also have been very interesting to interview disengaging and disengaged individuals as very little is said about them in the literature. However, none were identified with the method above. I did meet Mourad Benchellali in September 2015 and Abdelghani Merah in December 2015 but we were unable to set-up an interview afterwards. Luckily, Amélie Boukhobza, from Entr'autres in Nice, offered me the chance to ask questions to engaged individuals that were prevented from joining the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone, she is in contact with through her work as a psychologist for the French government. Although they declined talking to me, they did not mind Amélie asking questions on my behalf. She provided details on six individuals: two girls from Daesh, two men from Daesh, and two men from Jabhat al-Nusra. This gave new and revealing data and insights on engagement and disengagement.

Throughout 2016, David Thomson, a journalist focusing on jihad, in collaboration with *Les Jours*, online independent journalists, published the profiles of five French returnees they are in contact with:

three men and two women (Thomson & Les Jours 2016a, 2016b, 2016c & 2016d). On 1 December 2016, their stories, plus two more, were compiled into a book (Thomson 2016). This investigation gave great insight into why and how disengagement occurred and insights into a returnees lifestyle.

### 2.3.3 *Challenges to Data Collection*

The main challenge of data collection regards finding individuals who are or have engaged and/or disengaged. Although no engaged individuals were interviewed, the literature has sufficient details on profiles of engaged men and women from the GIA, al-Qaeda, and Daesh. While this only offers data collection on their engagement and not their disengagement, such data is still very useful and insightful. From the literature, 40 French profiles with sufficient details were uncovered. Since this phenomenon is worldwide, 20 profiles from individuals from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom were also used. In the cross-country literature however, very few disengaged profiles are detailed. Thus, Boukhobza's offer is both very generous and extremely useful. This did not occur with other NGO because they either could not get consent or our working relationship is not strong enough to warrant a positive answer.

Data collection on the number of engaged (or radicalised) individuals is very difficult. A true number is outright impossible and my best efforts would not yield better data than the CNAPR. Thus, such data was not collected despite its potential statistical use.

The most prominent challenge however, was interview access. While NGOs and local communities were in general very responsive, many in the French government - Ministries (Interior, Defence, and Justice) and *préfectures* (Alpes-Maritimes, Gironde, Paris, Rhône-Alpes, and Yvelines,) - were unresponsive. Emails for interviews were never answered and phone calls never received a follow-up. Contact with Dounia Bouzar (head of the CPDSI and main champion of the mental manipulation approach) was successful in February 2016 but no answer was given when asked for a meeting date. This is probably because in February 2016, the CPDSI did not renew its bid-for tender with the government as the main deradicalisation centre in France. This implies that many insights are unfortunately not included. While this reduces the range of perspectives on the phenomenon, it does not affect the overall argument.

It was originally intended to talk to family members of engaged individuals for their insights. Jacqueline's (2015) interview was a turning point. This two hour interview was very emotional for both of us - she cried on more than one occasion. She was thankful for my empathy and that my willingness to listen to her problem was in a non-judgemental way to understand it and also friendly rather than strictly for academic work. However, she said: 'I am going to spend the rest of the afternoon crying at home. One hour of talking about this is two hours of crying'. Therefore, talking to families was reassessed. Knowing it causes tremendous pain, are these interviews key to the thesis? Although

insightful, they are not. Thus, family accounts are from the literature, such as Abdelghani Merah's account (Jordanov 2015), and interviews with NGOs.

#### 2.3.4 *Data Analysis*

Data was analysed based on the thesis' inter-disciplinary approach. That is, information on SMT's dynamics was sought: incentives, frames, network, repertoire of action, internal dynamics, role of the state, ideology, interest, etc. Since the dynamics affect one another, data classification is not rigid but can be multi-category. This helps in formulating the overall argument as the multi-classification demonstrated why and how dynamics influence one another. Therefore, the manner in which the phenomenon is conceptualised affects the data. Thus, an understanding of this manner is required before classifying data. For example, a piece of literature or interviewee may classify a factor as Y whilst I would classify it as X because of our different conceptualisations. This information is used to make sense of engagement and disengagement. Thus, for the empirical literature review, data was classified based on these dynamics. For field work, two types of data classification were followed. On one hand, interviews were conducted to make sense of mental manipulation. Thus, field work data was analysed to see how it fits into the mental manipulation theory. That is, does our field work data support the mental manipulation theory's claims? On the other hand, interviews were conducted to seek data on the engagement and disengagement dynamics and the French specificities. This field work data was analysed and classified in said dynamics.

#### 2.3.5 *Limitations*

This methodological approach has five limitations. Firstly, because of access limitations, the direct insights of engaged and disengaged individuals is lacking. Although the literature offers details on about 40 profiles and Boukhobza offers six proxy interviews for disengaged individuals, this thesis falls into the recurring lack of access to militants. This is not a hindrance for the overall argument, yet some new details and data because of the evolving phenomenon may have been missed. Therefore, in recognition of this limitation, no law-like conclusions regarding engagement and disengagement are made. Rather, I try and make as much sense of the phenomenon as possible with the available data.

Secondly, relying on journalistic articles is dangerous as the press can be misinformed which occurs because insights and data about clandestine organisations are difficult to acquire and, as journalists are storytellers, gaps between facts can, at times, be filled with inaccuracies and/or speculation. To reduce this limitation's impact, elements of the thesis that rely on journalistic articles cite two different articles, and only if both are from reputable newspapers. To reduce this limitation's impact, individuals' profiles are not this thesis' main focus; rather, they inform the analysis of the wider phenomenon.

Thirdly, relying on autobiographies implies relying on memories and self-reporting. Even if individuals attempt to provide factual information, their accuracy is limited by their memory's reconstruction. Further, inadvertently, individuals may remember and reconstruct past experiences with their current beliefs. Furthermore, self-reporting of certain biases may not always be present. To reduce this limitation's impact, personal accounts inform the wider phenomenon rather than being this thesis' main focus.

Fourthly, this empirical study lacks a relevant control group: individuals with similar background and lifestyles who, despite having the opportunity, did not engage. Although a control group exists, very few individuals are willing to talk about it. This is because it may be punishable by law and/or others in their environment, and they are thus protecting themselves and/or others. An examination of why and how this group did not engage would be highly relevant to make sense of the lack of engagement. This lack of control group study implies that any findings and interpretations of this phenomenon are hypotheses.

Fifthly, close collaboration with Entr'autres yielded a lot of data, some of which could not be double-checked or confirmed. The reputation of the Entr'autres team was not put in question but due-diligence on good data had to be upheld. Therefore, a triage of data given was undertaken. Firstly, the sources of any data or claims were asked for, and in all but two cases, this was sufficient. When the sources of data and claims were not given and these sources could not be verified in the existing literature, even after a weeks or months, they were presented to other interviewees for their opinions. If interviewees agreed with the truthfulness of the data or claims, such data and claims were included in the thesis. Such need for clarification only occurred twice and regarded claims toward the mental manipulation approach by the government. These claims regarded the fact the prefect N'Gahane did not want religion as part of a deradicalisation programme and that he was close to Dounia Bouzar. This was verified by asking him directly.

Finally, this thesis does not aim to make a definite claim as to engagement or disengagement. Rather, it aims, more conservatively, at making sense of the militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon in the hope of painting a clear picture. Further, the phenomenon is ever evolving. Hence, some conclusions' relevance may change – for the worse or the better. Thus, this thesis' conclusions are not to be interpreted as law-like or definite, but as relative.

In sum, the thesis' limitations emanate from the lack of access to militants, whether engaging, engaged, disengaging or disengaged. While this reduces details and data, and creates no law-like conclusion, the phenomenon is nevertheless sufficiently detailed and understood to make sense of it and offer policy recommendations.

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

Following a methodology that encompasses an inter-disciplinary approach to SMT through sociology, history, socio-psychology, and anthropology, this thesis utilises a mix-method approach to make sense of the militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon and offer policy recommendations. This thesis refrains from establishing universal law-like conclusions about engagement and disengagement, as each phenomenon is unique (because of agency and context for instance). Rather, this thesis posits a number of underlying mechanisms that seem to explain why and how individual engage (or not) and/or disengage (or not). What are the key terminologies and this thesis' theoretical approach are now detailed.



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## THEORETICAL APPROACH

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This chapter argues that a synthesised Social Movement Theory (SMT) framework can be utilised to make sense of engagement and disengagement. But, what do engagement and disengagement really mean? To answer these question, this chapter's first section debates and characterises key terminology used throughout this thesis. Secondly, this chapter characterises social movements. Thirdly, it overviews how SMT evolved overtime while detailing why SMT is used instead of other theories. Fourthly, SMT's relevance to terrorism<sup>1</sup> is detailed. Fifthly, debates about SMT are discussed. Sixthly, SMT's limitations are addressed. Finally, how this thesis synthesises SMT as a theoretical framework is detailed. In sum, this chapter demonstrates the pertinence, analytical advantages, and flexibility of utilising a certain terminology (i.e.: militancy, engagement, and disengagement) and SMT.

### 3.1 TERMINOLOGY

Since the phenomenon studied is highly context dependent, rigid definitions cannot be used. Terminology needs to fit the subject, and not the other way around. Therefore, this thesis characterises terminologies based on their contexts and as objectively as possible. While characterising enables researchers to better grasp their subject, future comparative studies are limited if other researchers have different characterisations. To this end, terminologies' characteristics are explained to demonstrate how they were established rather than simply listed.

#### 3.1.1 *Militancy*

The study of militant Islam inevitably leads to the study of terrorism and the Middle East. Understandably, both Islam and militant Islam originated in the Middle East, and today, the region is home to most Muslim countries and militant organisations. Pre-2001, militant Islam was studied in the Middle East as a Middle Eastern phenomenon, for example, via the cases of Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Palestinian territories. Post-2001, and the attacks in European capitals, resulted in the study of Muslim communi-

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<sup>1</sup> While this thesis moves away from utilising the term terrorism, it is utilised throughout this chapter as it is the term utilised to name one of this thesis' field of studies.

ties in the West (Boyer 1998; Godard 2015a; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012; Wiktorowicz 2005b). Many studies utilising the term terrorism opt for a definition and move on. Very few characterise it. While there does not exist an agreed definition for the term, it can be characterised as a violent tactic meant to further political aims and spread a message of intimidation and recruitment (Crenshaw 2011: 23; Hoffman 2006: 40; Richardson 2007: 4-7; Schmid, Jongman & Horowitz 1988: 28). The organisations under study in this thesis (al-Qaeda, GIA, and Daesh) utilise terrorism. However, they also utilise other violent tactics (such as guerilla warfare, extortion, targeted assassinations, kidnapping and/or torture) and non-violent tactics (such as propaganda making, state building, and/or humanitarian efforts). Hence, referring to them as terrorist insufficiently characterises them. Further, referring to an individual or organisation as terrorist implies that their actions are 'bad' because we are the targets. Clearly, killing unarmed civilians is bad. However, utilising the term terrorism depicts a clear lack of objectivity, and does not offer any analytical tools other than exceptionalism.

To remedy this reductionist characterisation, two terms are utilised: militant and an ideology. Militancy is understood as political activism to bring about fundamental change to society. The word militant allows the means and ends to be neutrally analysed. The use of militancy is, however, not without problems either because it is a broad term. Therefore, the subject's (either an individual, an organisations or a movement) driving ideology is attached. This depicts what the subject is advocating for. Since the subjects studied in this thesis refer to themselves as Muslim, they are classified as such. Classifying them otherwise is the work of theologians, and analytically, Islam can be utilised to frame their ideology. Therefore, these individuals are considered militant salafi-jihadis, organisations are considered militant salafi-jihadi organisations (MSJO) and the overall movement is considered the militant salafi-jihadi movement (MSJM).

This leaves one question unanswered: when can a subject be considered a militant? A subject is considered a militant when she/he is engaged. When can someone be considered engaged?

### 3.1.2 *Pathways-to Engagement*

Many studies of terrorism consider involved individuals and organisations as radicals. Radicalisation is an over-time process which is different for each individual, involves various dynamics, numerous factors, and is neither an over-night process nor influenced by one factor (Borum 2003; McCauley & Moskalenko 2008; Moghaddam 2007; Precht 2007: 32-37; Silber & Bhatt 2007; Wiktorowicz 2005b).

Numerous models have been created to explain why an individual radicalises (Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014; Bouzar 2016; Borum 2003; McCauley & Moskalenko 2008; Moghaddam 2007; Precht 2007: 32-37; Silber & Bhatt 2007; Wiktorowicz 2005b). However, all these models are too focused on individual (i.e.: micro-level) factors rather than including organisational (meso) and structural (macro) level factors. Another limitation is the term radicalisation itself.

Radicalisation, like terrorism, does not have an agreed upon definition. The word radical has no meaning on its own: it needs to be relative to something else, something that is 'mainstream' in the society and period of time it is studied in. For example, Yves Saint Laurent making trousers for women is fine today, yet 50 years ago, it was radical - the time and mainstream ideas have shifted. In other words, different cultural, political, and historical contexts result in different notions of radical. Hence, if an individual, organisation, movement or ideology is labelled as radical, it must be said in relation to which context and a norm (Mandel 2009; Neumann 2013; Sedgwick 2010). Secondly, radicalisation assumes the necessity of radical beliefs as precursor to violent actions. This is known to not always be true: many individuals involved in violence do not hold 'radical views' and most individuals who hold 'radical views' do not engage in violence (Wiktorowicz 2005b). While developing 'radical beliefs' is one pathway to engagement and violence, many other pathways exist because they are affected (and affect) multiple factors at the macro, meso, and micro-levels. That is, numerous mechanisms affect different individuals in different contexts at different times.

To incorporate a tri-level factor analysis (macro, meso, and micro), this thesis relies on the notion of pathways-to engagement. That is, what are the conditions and factors which created engagement (and disengagement). Therefore, the pathway approach implies examining variables within a delimited context - in this case, France and the Middle-East since the late 1970s - and how these variables affect and are affected by pathways-to and pathways out-of engagement as the contexts evolve.

Through pathways-to engagement, the question in the previous sub-section - when can someone be considered engaged? - can be answered. For this thesis, an individual is considered as engaged when she/he aids the MSJM or MSJOs to further their ends. Aid ranges from sharing propaganda, to not reporting illicit activities to the authorities, to outright participation in logistics or violent actions. There exist one pathway per individual, and the delimitation between engaged and not engaged is very fluid and porous. Further, the individual does not have to fully adhere to the ideology to be considered a militant, nor undertake violent actions

While radicalisation focuses on the end-point of a process, pathways-to engagement focus on which conditions pushed an individual to engage, which conditions furthered engagement and how engagement is sustained. This conceptualisation can also be utilised to make sense of pathways out-of engagement and answer when an individual is considered disengaged.

### 3.1.3 *Pathways Out-of Engagement*

Deradicalisation is a process implying a cognitive shift at the organisational or individual levels; a fundamental change in understanding/ideology. Alongside this cognitive shift, an organisation (or individual) de-legitimises the use of violent means to achieve its ends, while also gradually moving

toward accepting social, political, and economic changes (Ashour 2009: 5-6; Fink 2008: 3). Similarly to the radicalisation literature, the deradicalisation literature lacks a tri-level linkage.

Chernov-Hwang, Panggabean and Fauzi (2013) examine deradicalised jihadis in Indonesia and put forward the emotional, psychological, rational, and relational factors which lead militants to deradicalise. Bouzar's (2016) model of deradicalisation for French individuals focuses on past memories and rejecting conspiracy driven radical Islam. These two studies solely focus on micro-level factors. Ashour (2009) argues, utilising a synthesised SMT framework, that the causes of deradicalisation occur at behavioural, organisational, and ideological levels, wherein four variables (charismatic leader, state repression, both internal and external social interaction, and selective inducement) interact to favour deradicalisation. Similarly, Jacobson (2010) focused on individual disengagement and deradicalisation. He found that personal and idiosyncratic reasons such as disappointment with leadership and the jihad lifestyle, corruption within organisations, and envy and jealousy as significant factors affecting disengagement and deradicalisation. Jacobson, however, says little about the macro-level factors. Finally, El-Said and Harrigan's (2013) comparative study of 8 Muslim countries' deradicalisation programmes, only uncovers macro-level best practices while forgoing micro and meso-level factors.

Disengagement implies individuals (or organisations) moving-away from undertaking or supporting violence and a violent ideology, but not necessarily de-legitimising them. That is, individuals renounce violence and parts of an ideology calling for violence. Factors affecting an individual's disengagement are affected by, and affect, the micro, meso, and macro-levels (Bjørge & Horgan 2009; Horgan 2009).

Wasmund (1986) argues that pathways out-of terrorist organisations involve factors paralleling what activists wishing to leave racist groups face, such as the loss of identity and community or the fear of sanctions from the group and rival groups. Bjørge (2009: 47) examined why members of extreme-right groups leave: life outside the group appears more attractive as the group does not fulfil members' social and psychological needs. These processes are the same for terrorism, even though an extra obstacle exists. For a terrorist, a likely alternative to continued terrorist activity is a prison sentence or heavy questioning by intelligence services, which generally does not apply to racist activists (although they do to some). Crenshaw (1991) follows Hirschman's (1970) theory examining actors' alternatives when they become dissatisfied with an organisation they belong to. She uncovers that disaffected members have three basic alternatives: leave the group by either completely breaking free or joining or establishing another group which fulfils their social and psychological needs; reform the group to fulfil these social and psychological needs; or reaffirm their dedication and loyalty by increasing their participation in activities. Horgan (2014) and Jamieson (1990: 10-16) describe a complex and gradual process of dissociation which suggests the existence of a process of leaving as complex as the process of joining.

Disengagement and deradicalisation do not have to be disassociated. In fact, disengagement can be viewed as coming before deradicalisation in the process of leaving violence behind. This thesis focuses

on disengagement for four reasons. Firstly, and as will be demonstrated throughout, engaged French citizens have little to no knowledge of the militant salafi-jihadi ideology, even Islam. Therefore, ideology is not a root cause for engagement. Thus, while ideology needs to be part of a disengagement framework, it is not the root factor. Secondly, because driving factors of disengagement go beyond ideology, disengagement can be both individual and collective. A disengagement framework (theorised in this thesis) can collectively disengage all-the-while offering individual disengagement assistance. Assistance ranges from one action out of a repertoire of action to a coupling of actions through a disengagement programme (see [subsection 9.2.4](#)). Thirdly, disengagement is more concrete, less pejorative, and more measurable than deradicalisation. It is more concrete as it implies ceasing support, which is measurable, while repudiating an ideology is difficult to truly assess. Further, labelling an individual radical implies that she/he is a problem for society - some individuals rejoiced to being labelled radical as they are seen as an identified enemy of the state. While engaged individuals' actions are illicit (even criminal), a framework needs to remain neutral to forgo alienation. Finally, disengagement is a much more modest and attainable endeavour than deradicalisation, allowing this thesis to make tangible policy recommendations.

When is an individual considered disengaged? An individual is considered disengaged when she/he moves away from aiding a movement or organisation utilising violence and/or an ideology calling for violence. This includes ceasing support for the MSJM, ceasing support for a MSJO and the MSJM, or ceasing violent actions amongst a MSJO and no longer supporting that MSJO, any other MSJO, and the MSJM. Since ideology is linked to violence, renouncing violence entails moving away from the ideology, but not necessarily de-legitimising it. Therefore, unlike deradicalisation, an individual can still adhere to parts of an ideology and be considered disengaged rather than having to completely fundamentally change her/his conceptualisation of the ideology to be considered deradicalised. That is, while both deradicalisation and disengagement include a cognitive shift, disengaged individuals have moved away from violence and an ideology while deradicalised individuals have de-legitimised violence and an ideology.

In this thesis' case, an individual that has moved away from salafi-jihadism to the pan-Islamist movement, say through Salafi-quietism, can be considered disengaged, despite Salafi-quietism's lack of compatibility with France's ways of life. Therefore, it is important to have a disengagement framework in place that creates pathways out-of engagement and pathways toward rejoining society, utilising individuals, organisations, and networks that are compatible with France's ways of life. SMT can help in making sense of the pathways and establishing a disengagement framework.

## 3.2 CHARACTERISING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

There is no one agreed characterisation of what a social movement is. Characterisations range from those formulating social movements as 'little more than expressions of preferences, that movement organisations are supposed to mobilise and turn into real action' (McCarthy & Zald quoted in Diani 2003: 6) to those regarding them as 'the actors of central conflicts in society, embodying fundamental oppositions regarding the direction of the historical process' (Touraine quoted in Diani 2003: 5-6). Despite these characteristic differences, for Zirakzadeh (2006), social movements have (at least) three characteristics. Firstly, social movements aim to change predominant social order through the attempt of constructing a new social order. Secondly, social movements mobilise individuals from wide ranging social and economic backgrounds who do not have the wealth or social prestige to have their own interests directly and 'routinely articulated or represented in the political system' (Zirakzadeh 2006: 4). Finally, social movements typically use 'confrontational and disruptive' tactics alongside the legal system's conventional ones (Zirakzadeh 2006: 4). This thesis characterises social movements as (1) a collection of informal networks, based on (2) a collective identity, which mobilise against (3) clearly identified common opponents, through the frequent use of (4) various forms of protest (della Porta & Diani 2006: 20-22).

SMT's term 'social' is misleading because social movements are profoundly political. They are political via their aims of transforming power relations and the state. Yet, they are social since they are not products of state institutions because movements act 'outside of institutional or organisational channels' (Snow, Soule & Kriesi 2004: 11). The distinction between social movements' social and political characteristics arise from current conceptions of the modern state where there is an artificial distinction between society (the social) and the state (the political) (Gunning & Baron 2013: 9-10). In the cases of the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-jihadi movements, this distinction is unhelpful since these movements challenge world order (political) with reasoning rooted in improving the *umma* (social).

The pan-Islamist movement can be characterised as social movement since (1) it is composed of various and numerous organisations (e.g.: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic universities in Saudi Arabia), based on (2) the collective Islamic identity (e.g.: Salafism and Tabligh), which mobilises against (3) Western forms of governance, through the frequent use of (4) religious proselytism and propaganda dissemination. The MSJM can also be characterised as a social movement since (1) it is composed of various and numerous organisations (e.g.: al-Qaeda, Jabhat al-Nusra, Daesh) and inspired networks (e.g.: Buttes-Chaumont), based on (2) the collective salafi-jihadi identity, which mobilises against (3) the West and unbelievers, through the frequent use of (4) terrorist and guerilla tactics.

### 3.3 SMT'S EVOLUTION

SMT is not a 'theory' strictly speaking. Rather, it is a series of conceptual approaches with the intent of being a 'theory' by offering an explanation for the emergence and behaviour of a movement (Gould 2003: 233-235). The limitation of utilising multiple conceptual approaches is that this may lead to treating SMT as a laundry list: discuss grievances, check; discuss resource mobilisation by the organisation, check; discuss ... etc. However 'in our better moments we demand of our theories that they say a bit more about the interrelation of these factors, their etiology, and their contingent effects' (Gould 2003: 234-235). In this thesis, SMT is utilised following the latter approach to make sense of engagement and disengagement. This section details the evolution of six conceptual approaches and their relationship.

Early on, social movements were explained through socio-psychological explanations: systematic inequalities, psycho-pathologies or both. From this, the *relative deprivation model* emerged (Gurr 1970). It holds that violent protests are driven by frustration emanating from systematic inequalities .

Two critiques to socio-psychological explanations emerged. The first critique, *resource mobilisation model*, claims that neither systematic inequalities nor psycho-pathologies explain why movements occur in some contexts and not others. In fact, there is no evidence for psycho-pathological deviance as cause of engagement with a movement (Corrado 1981; McCauley 2007; McDermott & Zimbardo 2007; Ruby 2002; Turco 1987; Weatherston & Moran 2003). The *resource mobilisation model* supposes that movements are dense social networks that incorporate resources, elites, and innovative mobilisation and tactics. That is, the model focuses on organisational dynamics and rational actors. Using this model, studies examined how a movement's outcome was affected by organisational structure, intra-movement competition of resources and members, and supporters' support (Zald and Ash 1966; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Morris 1981; Jenkins 1983).

The *political process model* criticises the *resource mobilisation model* (and socio-psychological explanations). For this model, available networks, resources, and organisational structure do not explain a movement's emergence or its form. In this model, movements adapt to the 'political opportunity structure' they are in: political system (Chenoweth 2010; Dalacoura 2006; Eubank & Weinberg 1994; Hegre et al. 2001; Li 2005; Li & Schaub 2004; Pape 2003; Weinberg & Eubank 1998), regime repression state counter-protest tactics (Zimmerman quoted in Brockett 1993: 458; Muller 1985), roles of political institutions (Aksoy, Carter & Wright 2011; Crenshaw 1981: 383; Eubank & Weinberg 1994 & 2001; Eyerer 1998; Schmid 1992; Weinberg and Eubank 1998), socio-economic conditions (Goldstone 2002: 8-9; Østby 2008: 143), and elite realignments (Goldstone 2002: 15). With Marxism's re-emergence, this model also focuses on ideology. Namely 'cognitive liberation', wherein structural inequalities are seen as conquerable if prevailing conditions, resources, and opportunities are re-evaluated (Gunning 2009: 159).

The second critique of the *relative deprivation model* is the *greed model*. It argues for similar claims as the *relative deprivation model*. However, it also supposes that opportunity and greed cause movements to emerge (Collier & Hoeffler 2002). There, however, exists two limitations to the *greed model*. Firstly, it fails to explain why a certain ideology is chosen, like salafi-jihadism. Instead, socio-economically alienated individuals and organisations could have opted for any other ideologies, like right-wing or left-wing ones, that directly address their grievances. Hence, the socio-cultural dimension of the chosen ideology is not fully explained by socio-economic explanations. Secondly, empirical studies on greed have selective sample populations of members from lower and lower-middle classes. However, such samples do not fully explain the engagement of upper-middle and upper class individuals. In fact, several studies of individual terrorists have failed to find any direct connection between their participation in terrorist activity and their levels of education and economic status (Atran 2003; Hudson 1999; Ibrahim 1980; Krueger & Laitin 2007; Krueger & Malečková 2003; Russell & Miller 1983). With such a selective focus, socio-economic explanations fail to explain individuals' engagement as they do not provide a general framework for the causes of engagement.

*Framing theory* followed *resource mobilisation's* focus on micro-mobilisation, but also included the framing of identities, opportunities, and the repertoire of action. The aim of framing is to detail how movements reinterpret, bridge, amplify or extend current cultural 'master frames', life experiences, and ideologies to mobilise current and non-activists (Snow, Rochford & Benford 1986, Gamson & Meyer 1996; Benford & Snow 2000; Tilly 1997, 1978, 1986 & 1995; Traugott 1995).

*New social movement theory* followed the *political process model's* focus. However, it also focused on three overlooked factors, culture, emotions, and identity, but ignored organisational dynamics on movement outcomes. What is 'new' is its focus on post-industrial societies that were less hierarchical and class-focus, and emphasised identity and life-style (Cohen 1985; Johnston, Laraña & Gusfield 1994; Melucci 1985). A number of studies also focused on emotions, drawing on social psychology (Goodwin, Jasper & Polleta 2000; Jasper 1998).

Because SMT is a series of conceptual approaches, these six approaches can be synthesised into a custom-made model because they overlap and complement one-another. For example, the *new social movement* model's focus on culture and identity and the *political process* model's focus on state practices fill each-other's gaps. A synthesis also analyses the interaction between different factors. For example, how state practices toward a movement or its organisational structure affects framing and tactics (Gunning 2009: 159-160). To establish a synthesis, the following analytical tools from the six conceptual approaches are utilised.

### 3.4 ANALYTICAL TOOLS

A synthesising of multiple models offers a range of intertwined analytical tools: contextual and temporal analysis; linking macro, meso, and micro-level explanations; linking interests, ideology, and structure; state's influence; and internal dynamics (Gunning 2009).

#### 3.4.1 *Context and Temporal Analysis*

Because social movements do not exist in a vacuum, the context they live in, how it affects them, how they affect it, and their history need examination.

##### 3.4.1.1 *Contextualising Violence*

SMT contextualises violence and investigates the interaction between a militant organisation, the movement the organisation is a part of, and the wider political system and society. Militant organisations are usually founded by members of a particular movement as a response to a crisis within that movement (della Porta 1992: 12). For example, al-Qaeda is a part of the MSJM and is born out of the movement's lack of traction in the Afghan jihad because of its non-violent approach. Similarly, Daesh is born out of the MSJM because of, in part, the movement's lack of materialisation of a caliphate. Even the small decentralised al-Qaeda inspired cells worldwide are part of that broader social movement. All these organisations and 'cells' cannot be understood without a broader analysis of the Islamist movement from which they are born. Analysing violence as one aspect of the movement rather than in isolation has three consequences.

Firstly, violence is one of many tactics within the movement's and organisations' repertoires of action. This explains how violence emerges and transforms into other tactics. Secondly, violence is thus placed within the wider social context. This pushes the examination beyond tactical and ideological reasons toward intra-movement rivalries, ideological debates, and the movement versus the state(s) and counter-movements to explain why certain forms of violence are chosen. Thirdly, this pushes for the conceptualisation that violence is chosen through a dynamic process affected by members' and organisations' experience and organisational structured rather than a static disposition to violence (Gunning 2009: 161-162).

This is why this thesis utilises militant/militancy over terrorist/terrorism. Using the term terrorism implies exceptionality, when in fact, terrorism is only one of many tactics. Since the term militant is not always violent, this usage reflects the large and more various forms of actions. Through this perspective, violence is not simply a tactical choice or an ideological imperative. Rather, violence is seen as going through cycles affected by changes: ideological, religious, cultural, and/or availability of resources. As these change and evolve, so does the violence. These cycles, coined as protest cycles

by Tarrow (1995), are shaped by an organisation's conception of violence, other movements' and the organisations' (violent) actions, and state practices. Broader social and political dynamics are hence necessary to explain militants' behaviours, whether violent or not.

Further, this perspective implies that violence's form, utility, and morality are constantly contested amongst the organisation or movement. For example, when al-Qaeda leadership debated the 'near' versus 'far' enemy, many militants left the group in contestation, but not necessarily the overall movement. Furthermore, this perspective examines members as active rather than static as they move across organisations and movements. Consider the huge numbers of members that left Jabhat al-Nusra when Daesh declared its caliphate, or the many disillusioned members who left the GIA after its brutal massacre of Algerian civilians. Militants can also change roles in the organisation, from violent to non-violent, and vice-versa. Here too, utilising the term militant is superior to terrorism because wider dynamics are studied rather than violence.

#### 3.4.1.2 *Violence's Historicity*

Beyond context, violence has history as it does not appear without precedent. This history affects violence's form and evolution, influences the militant organisations and movement utilising this violence, and concerns the wider community within which militants identify.

Movements go through phases, during which tactics evolve (Tarrow 1996: 53). At the start of a protest cycle, movements can differ significantly from those emerging, in terms of tactics, organisational structure, and membership (McAdam 1996: 31). Thus, a movement's temporal location in its cycle of protest must be taken into account for comparison with another movement (Tarrow 1996: 53). An SMT framework pushes observers to factor this in. Further, historical analysis examines why violence was adopted in the first place. Through SMT, it is possible to demonstrate why and how the decision to use violence arose through an examination of a movement's incentives, frames, and objectives (della Porta 1992).

There exists counter-examples of individuals turning to violence following an organisation's or movement's ideology and tactics without being 'members' of that organisation or movement - so-called lone wolves. However, lone wolves do not truly exist because, even though they do not have membership, they have been affected by the organisations and movements' actions and rhetoric (which is aimed at inciting action after all), and state and intra- and counter-movements' reactions. An SMT framework encourages moving away from static socio-economic and or psycho-pathological characteristics as predictors of militancy. It adopts a dynamic model wherein militancy is the outcome of rational and relational dynamics (Gunning 2009: 164-165).

### 3.4.2 *Linking Macro, Meso, and Micro Explanations*

A second analytical tool is the integration of macro, meso, and micro explanations. Many studies examining structural (i.e.: macro-level) factors attribute terrorism to either too little of a factor or too much of it. These factors range from horizontal societal inequalities (Goldstone 2002: 15; Malik 2009; Østby 2008: 143), to overall favourable conditions for insurgency (Collier 2000; Collier & Hoeffler 2002; Fearon & Laitin 2003: 88; Martin 2006; Opp & Roehl 1990), rapid changes in demographics (de Sherbinin 1995), scarce resources (Homer-Dixon 1991) or globalisation (Blomberg & Rosendorff 2006; Lia 2009). However, such studies focus on systemic imbalances and forgo meso and micro-level analyses. 'Without additional empirically-grounded analyses of meso and micro factors, it is impossible to explain why repression, reform or legitimisation triggers violence in one case while deterring violence in another' (della Porta 1995: 5-7).

Similarly, some studies focus on meso-level characteristics like type of organisation (Stern & Modi 2007), level of available resources (Passas 2005 & 2007; Stern & Modi 2007), relationship to constituency (Bueno de Mesquita & Dickson 2007; Ly 2007), strength of affiliate networks (Stern & Modi 2007: 21-29), and charismatic leadership (Freeman 2014: 668; Haslam & Platow 2001: 1474; Post 1986: 676; Spencer, 1973: 342, Willner & Willner 1965: 77 & 79). Other meso-level studies focus on ideological characteristics. However, meso-level investigations are also unsatisfactory as they assume that a certain ideology implies a certain choice of tactics (della Porta 1995: 6). Further, tactics are not static - they change as they adapt to the movement's changing environment. Neither organisational nor ideological explanations take into account the macro and micro-level factors.

Thirdly, many studies attribute too much importance to psycho-sociological frustrations such as relative deprivation (Brock Blomberg, Hess & Weaponer 2004; Davies 1962 & 1973; Gurr 1970; Wiberg quoted in Lia 2005: 11), social distance (Black 2004: 18), and masculinity and sexuality frustrations (Baruch 2003; Kaufman 2003; Lewis 1990; Mesquida & Wiener 1999). However, although these studies link macro with micro-level factors, they cannot fully explain why frustrations at times lead to violence and not at others. Likewise, other studies rely heavily on psycho-pathological factors (Bouzar 2014, 2015 & 2016; Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014; Kernberg 1985: 29-30; Laqueur 1987: 76-93; Lia 2005: 9; Schmid, Jongman & Horowitz 1988). However, psycho-pathological explanations are highly criticised, not only for depriving terrorist causes of their political and socio-economic factors and context, but also and mostly on empirical grounds (Corrado 1981; McCauley 2007; McDermott & Zimbardo 2007; Ruby 2002; Turco 1987; Weatherston & Moran 2003). Psycho-sociological and psycho-pathological studies forgo any and all examination of meso-level factors.

To link macro, meso, and micro-level explanations and how they affect one another, a SMT framework can be utilised. However, following a SMT framework does not imply that such study will not fall short of properly analysing a movement. It is up to the observer to not privilege one level, type of

factors or analytical tools over others. If an observer does so, the reason why must be explained and its impact on conclusions mitigated.

#### 3.4.3 *Linking Interests, Ideology, and Structure*

SMT also provides a framework to analytically integrate interests and ideology, and conceptualise them as 'fluid and shaped by group dynamics and changing social and political structures' (Gunning 2009: 167). That is, movements' actions are not affected by interests, ideology or structure, but rather by interests, ideology and structure altogether. Interest and ideology cannot be studied apart from the social contexts disseminating them and their shaping socio-economic and political contexts.

For example, in Algeria, the GIA's development of a more closed, inward-looking organisational structure and an exclusive, increasingly violent, vanguardist ideology was influenced by the increasingly violent state response and the AIS/FIS rivalry. This in turn created a sense of 'paranoia' within the GIA's ranks that the organisation was infiltrated. However, the GIA's brutal massacre of civilians emanated from its interpretation of its ideology - an interpretation al-Qaeda disagreed with (Hafez 2004).

#### 3.4.4 *The State's Role*

The state's role is emphasised through the *political process* model. However, most studies focus on state repression and its effect on protest tactics (Araj 2008; Brockett 1993 & 1995; Davenport 2005; della Porta 1995; Hafez & Wiktorowicz 2004; Khawaja 1993; Lichbach 1987; Moore 1998; Muller 1985; Opp & Roehl 1990). While conclusions regarding the effect of state repression differ widely, all concur that state practices are an important factor. Because a substantial amount of research had already been carried out, SMT offers a sophisticated conceptual framework for thinking about the impact of state practices.

However, there exist the need to move beyond a state's role as repressive and include a state's other roles, like its lack of repression or its supportive response. Consider the rise of the the Salafi and Tabligh movements in France. They spread through France because of the state's lack of response toward them despite these movements being fundamentally opposed to France's conception of community life. Yet, these movements laid the foundation for networks utilised by the MSJM.

Since the state is the biggest player in altering a movement's context (whether through negatively or positively influencing means), its actions toward the movement and rival movements must be analysed and integrated into the synthesised SMT framework.

### 3.4.5 *Internal Dynamics*

A synthesised SMT framework can also analytically examine internal dynamics' impacts on an organisation's behaviour. Chosen means, cost-benefit calculation of available options, internal factions, interests, identity, and end goals, to name a few, are affected (and affect), for example, access to resources, recruiter members, local support, and relations with intra-movement rivals (Gunning 2009: 171-172).

However, as discussed in [chapter 2](#), because of the illicit nature of militant movements, some factors, including internal dynamics, cannot properly be examined. Therefore, despite SMT's claim to being more inclusive of analytical tools, this may be unrealistic in some cases because of the subject's nature. Thus, while the framework may investigate internal dynamics, the methods may not be able to follow. This limitation reduces the impact of conclusions rather than the theory's usability.

## 3.5 FRAMEWORK DEBATES

SMT does, however, have three framework debates (Bayat 2005; Buechler 1995<sup>2</sup>). These debates are discussed as they frame how this thesis considers analysed data about social movements. If other research were to be undertaken with new data regarding the French case or with new cases altogether, knowing how movements were framed enables future comparative work between the results. This framing, however, is not done for the sake of potential future comparative work, but for the recognition of how this research perceives and analyses patterns.

The first debate is whether social movements are characterised as defensive or progressive. For Habermas, social movements are primarily defensive as they react to state and market intrusions into modern society. However, Habermas does not argue whether social movement can, or will, become progressive in social transformations (Thomassen 2010). Because the MSJM (and MSJOs) recruits Westerns, it is defensive as it propagates values of Islam over local Western values and aims to revert its political landscape to ancient traditions. However, it is also pushing for a change of political landscape and world order in the Middle-East, which is progressive; hence, Habermas' characterisation does not fit. For Cohen (1983), social movements are more than defensive because they pursue progressive social change in the civil society where they exist. These changes are both a defence of the self and a push toward democratisation, which work in complimentary ways. Cohen's argument does not fit either because the MSJM defends the self by creating a political landscape where Islam is put first, yet it does not push for democratisation; quite the contrary. Democratisation could thus be argued in a more general sense of 'political change', yet Cohen argues that social movements become vehicles of societal modernisation. The MSJM it is not pushing for societal modernisation but rather for societal

<sup>2</sup> Buechler considers a fourth debate: whether 'new social movements' really are new; a debate this thesis does not incorporate as it has been settled.

submission to its conception of Islam. For Rucht (quoted in Buechler 1995: 449), social movements are progressive regarding social rationalisation but defensive regarding system intrusion. That is, modernisation produces conflicts around democratisation in a progressive manner but also provokes protests against the side-effects of modernisation. Rucht's characterisation does not hold either because the MSJM is anti-system through its aim of establishing an Islamic caliphate (in the long run for al-Qaeda and now for Daesh) and thus reversing the balance of power. Being unable to characterise the MSJM as either reactive or progressive makes understanding disengagement harder. Because of this thesis' focus on the societal reasons for engagement and need to improve societal conditions for disengagement, a progressive argument suffices because it entails improving engaged individuals' social contract with society rather than defending the status quo.

The second debate is whether social movements are characterised as political or cultural. All movements require a frame for representational or symbolic function, which is the role of culture, even in basic ways (McAdam 1994). All-the-while, all movements take a political stance, whether explicit or implicit, even in basic ways (Buechler 1995: 451). Regarding the MSJM, it is social in the sense that individuals are leaving because they are dissatisfied with France, but it is also political because it is fighting for a new world order. Because of this thesis' focus, the MSJM is considered socio-political as considering it either social or political is insufficient in understanding it (and its organisations).

The final debate is from which class individuals are drawn or is this even central to the characterisation of the movement. Clearly, militant salafi-jihadis are not based on a particular class. Two strategies exist to forgo the class issue. One is by arguing that the identities of a movement's constituents have shifted to status, gender, race, ethnicity or nationality (Buechler 1995: 453). This strategy does not fit as the MSJM has no such recruitment preferences. Rather than relying on a homogeneous base, Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin (1990) offer another strategy, wherein a movement's constituents are drawn from a similar ideological identification which challenges the dominant structure of the West. In their example, they draw upon a socially diffuse base mobilised via value-based politics. This is possible because capitalist states have grievances which cross class-boundaries and affect members of different social groups and classes, allowing recruitment across class (Steinmetz 1994). Hence, class is not a central characterisation. Because the recruits joining the MSJM come from a wide-ranging background which crosses classes, there is no need for a class focus.

### 3.6 LIMITATIONS

As stated above, SMT is a series of conceptual approaches intended to offer an explanation for the emergence and behaviours of a movement (Gould 2003: 233-235). A clear limitation is that users may simply check-off the conceptual approaches and call that a SMT approach. This thesis has gone beyond this simply list checking by making sense of the relationships between the factors of the conceptual

approaches, their cause and effect, and their possible effects. That is, this thesis is not a passive user of conceptual approaches but created a synthesised framework of SMT to force the examination further.

Secondly, as SMT emerged to explain Western social movements occurring in Western political systems, it would appear that the theory would lead its users to seek movement structures and dynamics present within Western contexts that may or may not be existing, or may behave differently in non-Western movements within non-Western contexts. To overcome this limitation, this thesis, as it follows a constructivist approach, did not pre-assume any movement structure within the MSJM (including in its MSJO and the pan-Islamist movement) as it strives to overcome biases and pre-supposed ideas. This is done by starting with a blank-slate. That is, the movement was analysed individually from the ground-up. From this analysis, the movement's structure was uncovered rather than pre-supposing a structure and filling the gaps with the current literature and field work. In turn, this uncovered organisational dynamics such as internal dynamics, the state's role and its effects on the movement, and the contextualisation and historicity of violence and uncovered this thesis' four mechanisms (i.e.: incentives, frames, networks, and repertoire of action).

A third limitation is that, until recently, SMT studies assumed a difference between religious and non-religious movements, because such studies assumed a separation between religiosity and secularism or considered non-Western movements inclined to irrationality, violence and/or fanaticism. More generally, however, social science studies have been unable to develop and understand the role of spirituality within social movements structures and dynamics. By analysing the movement from the ground-up, internal dynamics were uncovered and analysed rather than assumed. Thus, the role of religion became a factor that contextualised actions rather than a factor assumed as causing rationality or irrationality. That is, research uncovered how religion rationalised certain actions, like Daesh's takfirism rather than assume they are irrational or even insane.

Fourthly, SMT does not provide built-in methodological tools. A thesis utilising SMT could thus be accused of providing 'just-so' stories rather than methodologically rooted analyses. In the aim of developing a robust testable theoretical synthesised framework, this thesis strives to provide solid empirical data. It does so by choosing methods within a constructivist approach to prevent biases, break potential pre-conceived ideas, and offer new ways of 'seeing', all in the aim of collecting new and usable data. Further, this data is analysed and displayed in ways that make sense of patterns rather than simply confirming known patterns.

Finally, a good theory almost guarantees that it will have to be modified as more evidence is collected and analysed. If the empirical evidence does not change the understanding of a phenomenon, then it either did not need to be said because it was already extremely well understood or the mode of enquiry is deeply flawed and only allows 'seeing' that which reinforces pre-existing ideas. Currently, SMT does not force its users to 'see' counter-intuitively (Lyon 2016). By following a constructivist approach that forces the recognition of potential biases and pre-conceived ideas, this thesis strives to 'see' counter-intuitively. That is, in choosing methodological tools and approaches, this thesis did not

simply use known methods, it sought new methods. Further, during interviews, it utilised interviewees' points of view to see patterns differently or new patterns altogether.

### 3.7 RELEVANCE TO TERRORISM STUDIES

SMT is relevant to terrorism studies as it offers analyses that move beyond violence. That is, violence is seen as one of many tactics available to an organisation. An SMT approach to Daesh's use of violence, for instance, pushes analysts to go beyond territorial fights and international attacks and investigate its state-building process, local governance and social programmes, relationships with local Sunni tribes, and how these are affected by changes in the prevailing political opportunity structure of the Syrian and Iraqi state actions, international coalition intervention, and changing levels of popular support both locally and abroad. In turn, this wider analysis of the repertoire of action helps observers make sense of how a movement affects its environment (e.g.: state, public, recruits, rivals) and how its environment affects its decision making and actions.

Although non-violent and violent movement dynamics differ, SMT's analytical tools are suitable to examine both, and in turn, how a movement went from non-violent to violent and/or violent to non-violent. Like non-violent movements, violent movements are dependent on resources, local support, and justifiable actions. Like violent movements, non-violent movements are affected (and affect) their socio-economic and political contexts, state actions, and ideological debates (della Porta 1995: 22; Gunning 2009: 160).

SMT does not study a movement in a vacuum, but rather, as part of a wider movement. This allows the investigation of how militants move from one movement to the other because of intra-movement dynamics and external contexts. For instance, Daesh, a MSJO, has numerous ex-Jabhat al-Nusra members, some of which were al-Qaeda members. Early al-Qaeda members were initially part of the non-violent pan-Islamist movement. This is because the boundaries between movements are fluid and members of different organisations can consider themselves part of the same wider movement. However, belonging to different organisations makes them consider one another as 'comrades [gone] wrong' (della Porta 1995: 12).

SMT thus offers a rich toolbox to analyse movements and engagement with movements. It also allows for an analysis of disengagement from movements.

### 3.8 SYNTHESISED SMT FRAMEWORK

To understand why and how individuals disengage, it must first be understood why and how they engage. The above analytical tools can be synthesised into a framework to make sense of engagement.

However, any engagement analysis must analyse how individuals are mobilised, and not just how the movement behaves.

To make sense of engagement, this thesis' SMT framework will firstly analyse the movement via six analytical tools: a contextual and temporal analysis; linking macro, meso, and micro-level explanations; linking interests, ideology, and structure; examining the state's influence; and detailing internal dynamics. Then, this framework will examine how mobilisation at the grassroots level is engendered through four mechanisms: incentives, frames, networks, and the repertoire of action. These mechanisms are studied as affecting and affected by one another, the movement, and their environment. That is, they are fluid and adapt to socio-economic, political, and cultural change. Through this framework, lessons for disengagement can be uncovered. That is, why and how engagement ceased or could have been prevented.

Through this synthesised SMT framework, this thesis theorises that disengagement can be made sense of. That is, the same six analytical tools and four dynamics are utilised to theorise why and how disengagement can be engendered. While individuals disengaging from the MSJM or an MSJO are not rejoining another movement, SMT's dynamics can nevertheless be utilised to mobilise individuals away from participation.

### 3.8.1 *Incentives*

The first mechanism examines how organisations mobilise individuals via selective incentives. Following a rational actor model, movements attract new members by appealing to individuals' interest and become more than mobilisers of resources and rational orientators of action. This creates a conundrum: why would an individual engage if he or she can benefit from the end result any way? This is particularly pertinent to MSJOs since their end goals produce collective goods accessible to all Muslims. Because participation entails high risks and costs, engaging defies the logic of the rational actor model. Thus, if organisations do not further the common interests of their members, they may often perish (Olson 1965: 6-7). Therefore, movements create appeal by providing 'selective incentives' (Olson 1965: 61) which are more than simply economic but interpersonal rewards (Collins & Guetzkow 1964) and 'prestige, respect, friendship, and other social and psychological objectives', like moral incentives, opportunity for action, need to belong, desire for societal status, and acquisition of material reward (Olson 1965: 60-61; Wilson 1974). That is, incentives represent what individuals gain from participation with the movement rather than riding the wave of success.

Regarding disengagement specifically, pull and push factors can be utilised as incentives to leave (listed in [Table 1](#)). 'Push relates to negative social forces and circumstances which make it unattractive and unpleasant to remain in a particular social environment; whereas, pull refers to factors attracting the person to a more rewarding alternative' (Bjørge 2009: 36).

PUSH	PULL
Disillusionment with the organisation's leadership (whether means or ends) Personal trauma (physical or psychological) from violence Stress and exhausting of staying within the organisation's illicit lifestyle	Desire for a 'normal' lifestyle, such as finding a career or beginning a family Competing social relationships or pressure by family and friends

Table 1: Disengagement's Push and Pull Factors

However, leaving a movement is not sufficient on its own as individuals must be incentivised to participate in society. That is, certain factors preventing individuals from disengaging exist: the level of stigmatisation still present after leaving the group; no assistance is available whether in the form of moral support, social reintegration or new identity formation; and lack of outside empathy and sympathy.

### 3.8.2 *Frames*

Frames represent how the surrounding environment is contextualised by individuals and organisations. Frames provide answers to five essential questions: Who is the enemy? What is the problem? What is the solution? What are the legitimate means to achieve the desired ends? How does the current fight fit into a larger context? (Willner & Willner 1965: 79). Individuals often join movements to express deeply held values, commitments, and beliefs, also called 'moral shocks' (Jasper & Poulsen 1995: 498; Johnston, Laraña & Gusfield 1994). Thus, individuals are motivated by more than self-interest and obtaining benefits. Movements therefore elicit participation as a response to perceived moral duty or obligation driven by these moral shocks, irrespective of risks, costs and benefits affecting engaged individuals. In either case, engagement occurs only when there is 'frame alignment' between the individual and the organisation: when the organisation's framing resonates with the individual's own contextual interpretation. To create alignment, organisations rely on real and imagined grievances. Frame alignment, created through networks, depends on the frame's empirical credibility, the personal salience of the frame for the potential volunteer, and the 'articulator' of the frame her/himself, all-the-while competing against frames from governments, counter-movements, and intra-movement rivals (Benford & Snow 2000: 619-627; Snow, Rochford & Benford 1986).

### 3.8.3 *Networks*

Social movements are not organisations, not even of a peculiar kind; rather, they can be formal or informal networks (della Porta & Diani 2006). Regardless of the social movement definition utilised, all definitions' frameworks incorporate network mechanisms (Diani 2003: 6), as networks are integral to

social movements. Here, networks follow the conventional view wherein they are 'sets of nodes, linked by some form of relationship, and delimited by some specific' boundary (Diani 2003: 6-7). Nodes can be individuals or organisations (including states). Both types of nodes are put into relationship either directly (i.e.: explicit interaction) or indirect (i.e.: assumed interaction). Either relationships can be single or multiple (subject to whether nodes are linked by one or more relationship types), and vary in their contents, strength, and emotional intensity. Boundaries are not always clear-cut and are overlapping and porous. For some, boundaries are predetermined by the analysis, while for others, boundaries only include nodes which are related to each other via some relationship (Diani 2003: 6-7). This thesis follows the latter view. Whichever definition of networks is chosen, networks promote mechanisms like mobilising and allocating resources, producing and circulating information, circulating meaning and mutual recognition (though not always), negotiating agreed aims (Diani 2003: 10), through four types of networks: friendship, kinship, discipleship, and worship (Sageman 2004: 107-120). Further, they are central to three mechanisms which are fundamental to social movements' dynamics: environmental, or externally generated influences on conditions affecting social life; cognitive, or shifts in individual and collective perception, identity, awareness or commitment; and relational mechanisms, or shifts in connections among networks, called brokerage (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2001: 25-27).

#### 3.8.4 *Repertoire of Action*

The fourth mechanism, repertoire of action, is a concept developed by Tilly (1977, 1978, 1986 & 1995; Traugott 1995) that seeks to capture the methods of protests' historical peculiarity which reflect both their historical and national-geographical location (Tilly 1995: 26). Organisations tend to follow a set of tactics within a repository and rarely diverge from them unless they follow a 'moment of madness' (Tarrow 1995: 90). As new tactics imply new response from the enemy, the organisation would need a new way to be resilient; such ways may require strategies and resources which are not at the organisation's disposition (Tarrow 1995: 110). Further, repertoires are highly contextual as different contexts facilitate different struggle types (Piven & Cloward 1979: 20); furthermore, repertoires are socially inherited ways of acting in specific situations as movements need social norms to account for order (Durkheim quoted in Schilling 2005). Repertoires of action are examined because they are tangible violent and non-violent activities performed by movements to achieve their goals, attract new volunteers, and sustain support.

Taken together, these mechanisms bridge micro-level and macro-level explanations through meso-level explanations. They do so by bringing movements, networks, and mechanisms into focus. That is, at the micro-level, social movements' actors interpret their situation through sets of contested and changing frames (from injustice frames, protest frames, to action frames). At the meso-level, actors then mobilise non-members via mechanisms such as 'attribution of threat and opportunity, social appropria-

tion, framing of the dispute, and arraying of innovative forms of collective action' (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2001: 28). The movement's networks facilitate the development and spread of these frames. At the macro-level the overarching structure and the way it contextualises the social movement, affects the opportunities and constrains that influence behaviours and interpretations, by the actors and the general population. The micro/meso bridge is how individuals find similar interpretations in an organisation or network, and the meso/macro bridge is how the organisation or network responds to its changing structural environment. In sum, this synthesised SMT framework intertwines all three analytical levels and their mechanisms.

### 3.9 CONCLUSION

This thesis' characterisation of militancy, engagement, and disengagement fits the subject at hand rather than the other way around. It also permits moving away from simply studying violence and radical beliefs. Rather, it permits making sense of rational actions deemed unacceptable in the context in which they are performed. Hand-in-hand with this conceptualisation of terminology is a synthesis of SMT that also moves away from simply examining violence, but analyses movements and individuals altogether.

SMT is a well suited theory to make sense of pathways-to engagement and pathways out-of disengagement with (non-)violent militancy. It permits an integrated approach that combines macro (e.g.: structural conditions), meso (e.g.: ideology, interests, internal dynamics), and micro-level (e.g.: individual motivations) explanations. This combination enables the study of mass movements' fluid transformations as an adaptation or a response to their changing environments, and their environment's adaptation and response to movements' actions. SMT also moves beyond studying violence to studying the broader movement's repertoire of action, which in turn allows it to study the engagement of members from non-violent to violent movements, and vice versa. Although SMT is not trying to explain why a specific individual engaged (or disengaged), it offers more detailed explanations than psycho-social and psycho-pathological approaches. Similarly, although SMT is not solely explaining why structural changes occur, it offers more details than structural studies. Finally, SMT fits well with an inter-disciplinary approach because it recognises multiple views of the world and the limitation of its world view in its synthesis.

Part II

THE SHOWCASE



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## FROM THE SOFT PAN-ISLAMIST MOVEMENT TO THE MSJM AND MSJO

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This chapter begins by examining the rise of the Sunni soft pan-Islamist movement, its transformation into the militant pan-Islamist movement by Abdullah Azzam, and why and how, through SMT, individuals engaged. Secondly, it makes sense of how the militant pan-Islamist movement was transformed into the militant salafi-jihadi movement (MSJM) through the inception of militant salafi-jihadi organisations (MSJO), including al-Qaeda. The aim is to demonstrate the common ground between the soft pan-Islamist movement and the MSJM/MSJO to mobilise individuals. Throughout, lessons learned for why and how disengagement occurred or could have occurred are uncovered. Finally, France's counter-terrorism response to these movements' transformations is detailed to demonstrate French counter-terrorism's evolution toward existing threats.

### 4.1 PAN-ISLAMIST MOVEMENT

#### 4.1.1 *Soft Pan-Islamist Movement*

The 1960s saw, firstly, the creation of international Islamic organisations: the Muslim World League (MWL) in 1962 as the remnants of the caliphist movement, and the Organisation for the Islamic Conference, via King Faisal of Saudi Arabia's anti-Nasser diplomatic policy. Simultaneously, Saudi Arabia experienced an education boom and saw the opening of numerous Islamic universities. This boom created the largest concentration of Islamic religious institutions, in the Jedda-Mecca-Medina triangle, located in the western Hijaz region, some of which were understaffed. Secondly, the 1960s saw the repression of the Muslim Brotherhood beginning in Egypt in 1954, then in Syria and Iraq in 1958. Thousands of well-educated Muslim Brotherhood members sought and gained refuge in Saudi Arabia and found employment in understaffed Saudi universities, including Jedda, Mecca, and Medina, and in international Islamic organisations. Their positions in Saudi Arabia allowed them to export their discourse and invite foreign visitors (Hegghammer 2010a: 80-81; Landau 1990).

The pan-Islamist ideology came from a gradually incremental rhetoric through a corpus of writings and speeches rather than one ideologue. While resting more on political and economics aspects than

on a religious standpoint, the ideology focused on the importance of Muslim unity and outside threats. It was conspiracy driven, alarmist, xenophobic, and self-victimising, and utilised Muslims' suffering worldwide as its case-support. (Hegghammer 2010a: 83; Landau 1990: 5). These themes, and others, echoed those of previous pan-Islamist movements and anti-colonial activists worldwide, yet had a more global distribution through massive propaganda. These included the MWL's weekly *News of the Muslim World* and its monthly *Journal of the Muslim World League*, published in both Arabic and English, alongside the Muslim Brotherhood's two flagship magazines *al-Mujtama*, published in Kuwait from 1969, and *al-Dawa*, produced in Egypt from 1976. With increased budgets and new technologies, the quality and level of distribution markedly increased in the 1970s, and by the 1980s, these magazines were colour printed on glossy paper, discussed fault-line wars, Muslim solidarity appeals, and both national and international Muslim politics, and included vivid representation of Muslims' suffering. To encourage activism, every magazine contained ways for charitable donations to be made. The 1970s and 1980s also saw the rise of Islamic charity networks that monitored the Muslim world's humanitarian situations and were to rapidly deploy if a crisis occurred, one of which being the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Hegghammer 2010a: 83-85; Landau 1990; Sageman 2004: 2-3). This pan-Islamist ideology and movement laid the following six premises to achieve Muslim unity:

1. The need for a strong central authority to lead pan-Islam and to impose its ideology - generally vested in the caliph;
2. The rallying of the entire Muslim world to the cause;
3. Obedience of Muslims everywhere to their leader, the caliph;
4. Total solidarity with the cause, even at the risk of sacrificing personal or local interests;
5. Readiness for common action - political, economic, even military through the Holy War or jihad;  
and
6. The establishment of a state comprising all Muslims everywhere (Landau 1990: 5-6).

By 1985, the movement led to mujahedeen and a militant pan-Islamist movement. Abdullah Azzam became one of the most prominent ideologue of a militant movement based on the premises of the pan-Islamist ideology and movement.

#### 4.1.2 *Abdullah Azzam's Militant Pan-Islamist Movement*

The primary and most effective mobiliser of fighting mujahedeen worldwide, rather than humanitarian mujahedeen, was Abdullah Azzam. Azzam, a Palestinian Muslim Brother, from Jenin, North Palestine, held a doctorate in Sharia from al-Azhar University, in Cairo Egypt, taught at the King Abdul Aziz University, in Jedda, under the MWL, where in the late 1970s Osama bin Laden had been his disciple

(Hegghammer 2010a: 80; Zahab & Roy 2004: 14). Initially, from 1982 onwards, Azzam authored numerous tracts, the most influential being *Defence of the Muslim Lands, Join the Caravan* (1991), and *The Signs of The Merciful in the Jihad of the Afghan*, made cassettes and video tapes, and gave talks regarding recruitment all around the Arab world. Azzam is the one that moved the pan-Islamist discourse from soft to militant, although it is unclear what made him do so:

[Azzam] may have genuinely believed that the twentieth-century Islamic legal orthodoxy on jihad - which gave nation-states a veto on their citizens' foreign military activities - was wrong. After all, the classical legal tradition did not mention nation-states. Moreover, as a stateless individual twice forcibly displaced, and as a native of an occupied territory that neighbouring governments had failed spectacularly to liberate, he had few reasons to entrust states with the defence of the Muslim nation. He may also have had a more instrumentalist motive, namely, to encourage the creation of a transnational fighting force that could eventually support other Muslims under occupation, such as those in his native Palestine (Hegghammer 2010a: 87).

His discourse incentivised individuals worldwide to engage in the Afghan jihad.

#### 4.1.2.1 *Incentives*

In *Join the Caravan*, Azzam (1991: 5-6) detailed sixteen reasons urging Muslims to perform jihad:

1. In order that the disbelievers do not dominate;
2. Due to the scarcity of men;
3. Fear of hell-fire;
4. Fulfilling the duty of jihad, and responding to the call of the Lord;
5. Following in the footsteps of the Pious Predecessors;
6. Establishing a solid foundation as a base for Islam;
7. Protecting those who are oppressed in the land;
8. Hoping for martyrdom;
9. A shield for the umma, and a means for lifting disgrace off them;
10. Protecting the dignity of the umma, and repelling the conspiracy of its enemies;
11. Preservation of the earth, and protection from corruption;
12. Security of Islamic places of worship;
13. Protection of the umma from punishment, disfiguration, and displacement;

14. Prosperity of the umma, and surplus of its resources;
15. Jihad is the highest peak of Islam; and
16. Jihad is the most excellent form of worship, and by means of it; the Muslim can reach the highest of ranks.

Throughout *Join the Caravan*, Azzam quoted scripture and classical jurists to demonstrate that jihad meets the religious and military criteria, to further incentivise engagement. For example, to justify responding to the call of god, Azzam quoted the following Koranic passage: 'Go forth, light and heavy, and strive with your wealth and selves in the Path of Allah; that is better for you, if only you knew.' {Qur'an 9:41}' (Azzam 1991: 10). Further, Azzam incentivised engagement by demonstrating the dire situation of Afghan Muslims and the mujahedeen:

But the situation is more serious, and gravely momentous, and the Muslims in Afghanistan are in severe distress and definite, menacing peril. This blessed jihad was established by a handful of youths who were nurtured in Islam, and by a group of scholars who devoted themselves to Allah. But most of this first generation has fallen in martyrdom, and the second generation has advanced. This second generation has not been fortunate enough to receive the same share of upbringing and guidance, and have not come across a stretched-out hand showing an interest in teaching and training them. Such people are in dire need of somebody who can live amongst them to direct them toward Allah and teach them religious regulations (Azzam 1991: 20).

Furthermore, Azzam maintained that jihad was a religious duty, and that every able Muslim had to participate, though some excuses exist: blindness, terminal illness, the oppressed, those who cannot come to the battlefield. He discussed why and how excuses do not apply to prevent dis-incentivisation

Perhaps some people find justification for themselves for avoiding jihad by the fact that many of the Afghans are not at an acceptable level of Islamic training, and they therefore make excuses for themselves, on the basis of some irregularities, to sit back. But the refutation of this is that the jurists have documented that it is obligatory to perform jihad even with an extremely sinful army. [...] Some others excuse themselves by claiming that their presence in their country is necessary for the purpose of education and upbringing. For such people, we present the words of al-Zuhri: '*Sa'id Ibn al-Musayyib went out to battle at the point where he had lost the use of one of his eyes*' (Azzam 1991: 21, sic).

For Cook (2005: 130), Azzam's call to battle was based on the hope that warfare would revolutionise Muslim society and turn it away from failure and impotence. Incentivisation was further helped by the 1980s US logistical and financial support of the Afghan mujahedeen as this gave the Afghan jihad much needed momentum. Azzam incentivised Muslims through frames of fighting in Afghanistan because Islamic law commands it, the situation is too dire, and a diplomatic solution is not possible.

#### 4.1.2.2 *Frames*

Azzam's pre-jihad discourse was framed through the already echoed soft pan-Islamist discourse, which had credibility as he had taught at King Abdul Aziz University, a MWL institution, and was a Muslim Brother (Hegghammer 2010a: 87-88). For any individuals that read soft pan-Islamist writings, the leap towards Azzam's militant pan-Islamism was not a sizeable one. The pro-jihad discourse framed the fight as preventing unbelievers' dominance, as Muslims were living in subjugation, where 'thousands of women who are being raped in their homes' (Azzam 1991: 22). This frame demonstrated how the *umma* faced an existential threat as the Afghan conflict is the latest of many massacres of Muslims and occupation of Muslim land. In fact, five of the sixteen incentives in *Join the Caravan* regard the *umma* (see items number 7, 9, 10, 13, and 14 above). This frame was firstly aligned through the use of Islamic law requirement, wherein defending the *umma* and Muslim territories is a responsibility of all able Muslims. Secondly, Azzam himself practised his preaching, which gave credibility to his call to Muslims everywhere to come to Afghanistan and fight, and provided numerous examples of capable men living for Islam and jihad, rather than pursuing wealth and status (Cook 2005: 130). For example, the tenth issue of Azzam's *al-Jihad* magazine commemorates the death of Abdul Samad, one of the magazine's own journalists, who was killed while covering a story in Jalalabad after he decided to pick up a weapon and fight (Cook 2005: 112). Thirdly, victims are systematically referred to as blood relations: brothers, sisters, mothers or children to create a bond with proselytised individuals (Azzam 1991; Hegghammer 2010a: 74). These frames personalised the message to engage individuals and were propagated through wide networks.

#### 4.1.2.3 *Network*

In Afghanistan, Azzam established the *Maktab al-Khidamat* (Afghan Services Bureau, MAK), in 1984, funded by Osama bin Laden, housed in the *Bait al-Ansar* (House of Supporters), in Peshawar, Pakistan, whose aim was to channel recruits for the Afghan jihad, aid them with administrative problems, and assign them to an Afghani resistance party. In fact, most mujahedeen who passed through Peshawar were inspired by Azzam's works, helped by the MAK or both (Hegghammer 2010a: 85-86; Sageman 2004: 35). The MAK also had offices in Western countries through affiliated mosques which sent funds and recruits, and distributed propaganda. In 1986, Azzam settled in Peshawar and taught at the International Islamic University of Islamabad - his position was paid by the MWL (Hegghammer 2010a: 87). In early 1987, Azzam and bin Laden established a training camp for foreign mujahedeen in the eastern Afghani region of Khowst, on the Afghan-Pakistani border, and named it *Masada* (the Lion's Den). Because *Masada* laid on mujahedeen supply lines, the Russians attacked it in the spring of 1987. Bin Laden and a small group of mujahedeen held their ground and resisted several assault waves by Soviet Spetznaz special forces. Among the participants in the battle were Hassen Abdel Rab el-Saray, a thirty-five year old Saudi who carried out the 13 November 1995 Riyadh attack against a Pentagon

leased building; Abu Zubayr Madani who was killed during the Bosnian jihad in 1992; Khattab who launched the 1999 autumn offensive in Chechnya; and Sheik Tameen Adnani. After the Soviets withdrew with heavy losses, the battle became a major media coup and bin Laden's reputation spread over the Muslim world, especially in his native Saudi Arabia (Sageman 2004: 35-36; Zahab & Roy 2004: 15 & 18).

Internationally, Azzam's publications and war efforts were spread worldwide through azzam.com, now defunct, and by a close friend of his, Sheik Tameen Adnani, who collected funds, incentivised others, and even fought. Adnani promoted global jihad worldwide in local Muslim communities from Nigeria, to Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Sweden, and even Venezuela and the United States (in Tucson, Arizona; San Francisco, California; and Orlando, Florida). At each stop, he generously distributed cassettes, *al-Jihad* magazine, and numerous other promotional materials. Local sympathising Muslim communities would then copy these materials which would 'spread like wildfire' (Azzam quoted in Cook 2005: 113). Adnani even captivated local media outlets to ensure the coverage of his speeches. Furthermore, Adnani's own son, Yasir, transported *al-Jihad* issues to Qatar, even though jihadi propaganda was banned. Adnani's adventure stop in 1989 when he fell ill and died in Florida (Brachman 2009: 113).

These networks were not very dense and had somewhat weak links until recruits arrived in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, they were effective at propagating tailored incentives and frames to combat and relied on one-on-one proselytism. Further, a large and various repertoire of action, both violent and non-violent, depicted the movement's actions to elicit and sustain engagement.

#### 4.1.2.4 *Repertoire of Action*

Initially, from 1982 onwards, Azzam authored numerous tracts, the most influential being *Defence of the Muslim Lands*, *Join the Caravan*, *The Signs of The Merciful in the Jihad of the Afghan*, and the *al-Jihad* magazine, made cassette and video tapes, and gave talks regarding recruitment all around the Arab world. *Al-Jihad*, launched in 1984, had an initially 'amateurish' format and was 'basically mimeographed' (Cook quoted in Brachman 2009: 112) though it filled its design lacunae with progressive substance, in terms of global news coverage and presentation of the global jihad ideology, and its first-hand field presence through correspondents (Brachman 2009: 112). In 1986, *al-Jihad* had a 'huge leap' forward, both in terms of format, from black-and-white mimeographs to glossy colour paper, and content, as the magazine ceased covering stories unrelated to Afghanistan, and in 1987, Azzam increase staff and included outsourced stories (Cook quoted in Brachman 2009: 112). Regardless of security or logistical challenges, *al-Jihad* was released monthly. This continuous flow of information kept the public apprised of Muslims' suffering and the constant need of support in terms of manpower, finances, and logistics.

*Al-Jihad's* popularity across jihadi communities is owed to Azzam's unique approach, wherein all are included rather than elitism, and discussions are stimulated, such as raising awareness of a global

jihad movement's establishment (Brachman 2009: 112-113). Further, Azzam was the only writer to be vividly explicit about martyrdom and the human consequences of fighting, like crippling, suffering or corpses; rather, the literature at the time idealised, glorified, and focused on the spiritual significance of fighting and obtaining martyrdom (Cook 2005: 129). Furthermore, Azzam's descriptions also vividly describes the crimes allegedly committed against the *umma*, in Afghanistan and elsewhere, like Palestine: the occupation of territory, the raping of women, the killing of children and the elderly, the desecration of mosques, and the extraction of resources (Azzam 1991; Hegghammer 2010a: 73). This repertoire personalised the crimes committed against Muslims to elicit and sustain support and engagement.

Initially, this repertoire of action was not considered as part of an extremist movement as mujahedeen received governmental support early on. However, the increasing discourse on the requirement of martyrdom, global jihad, and anti-West propaganda marked the beginning of the move away from discourses accepted by Western governments and societies.

#### 4.1.3 *Lessons for Disengagement*

Two disengagement lessons arise from the above (Hegghammer 2010a: 90). Firstly, as this will be demonstrated throughout the following chapters, factors influencing engagement with the Afghan jihad, such as the rhetoric of solidarity amongst Muslims and the presence of conflicts hurting Muslims, are still present today. These messages are consistent through time as they rely on three recurring frames: unity amongst Muslims, identity, and victimhood. As the engagement of mujahedeen relied on simple messages of solidarity and altruism rather than complex theological arguments, anti-West propaganda should be the focus. To do so, pan-Islamism's factual errors and potentially different interpretations of scriptures and jurists must be utilised to undermine the movement's 'victim' narrative. Further, actually resolving the problems which are levered by the movement implies taking away engagement incentives and reduces the engagement frame's breadth. Furthermore, to prevent recruitment, Western government need not solely repress militant organisations but rather enhance 'the appeal of national civil and military institutions so as to facilitate greater identification with the state and fellow citizens' (Malet 2010: 113) through state nationalism and 'local forms of identification' (Hegghammer 2010a: 90) - what this thesis characterises as the French Social Contract. 'Rather than confronting [foreign fighters] in the field or attempting to disrupt their mobilisation, establishing alternative identities for them as citizens would be the most efficient means for preventing their participation' (Malet 2010: 114).

Secondly, governments need to actively prevent conflict to prevent foreign fighters (i.e.: mujahedeen) from trying to solve the conflict themselves. The Afghan jihad became violent because the humanitarian and diplomatic sides of the conflict did not ameliorate the situation. Further, Western states need to

adapt their policies to the fact 'that the majority of Muslims view foreign fighters and international terrorists differently' (Hegghammer 2010a: 90). Since 9/11, Western states have had the propensity to see both phenomenon as one which has created numerous communication problems between the Muslim world and the West.

## 4.2 AL-QAEDA'S INCEPTION

This section examines how al-Qaeda came to be a formal organisation, how its ideology, influenced by Ayman al-Zawahiri, became global salafi-jihadism, and how it became the base of the global salafi-jihadi movement. Finally, it details disengagement lessons learned.

### 4.2.1 *The Afghan Jihad's End*

The Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in February 1989. Throughout the conflict, the billions of dollars of assistance from foreign governments, including the Saudi and American governments, to the Pakistani Intelligence Services and multiple militant jihadi organisations, including the MAK, allowed the Afghan jihad to keep gaining positive momentum. For Bergen, however, who interviewed Osama bin Laden in 1997, there are no links between the CIA and the MAK:

The story about bin Laden and the CIA - that the CIA funded bin Laden or trained bin Laden - is simply a folk myth. There's no evidence of this. In fact, there are very few things that bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and the U.S. government agree on. They all agree that they didn't have a relationship in the 1980s. And they wouldn't have needed to. Bin Laden had his own money, he was anti-American and he was operating secretly and independently (Bergen 2006).

Nevertheless, even though the mujahedeen's impact, whose numbers vary from as low as '3,000 and 4,000' (Hyman quoted in Brown 2008: 25) to 'anywhere from twenty-five, forty, and even one hundred thousand' (Brown 2008: 25), on the Soviet-Afghan war was marginal at best (Hyman quoted in Brown 2008: 27-28), their mobilisation laid the foundation for the current global jihad. Some of the incentives utilised to mobilise mujahedeen are still utilised and framed similarly today. The mujahedeen and other militants, who developed strong and dense bonds with one another, strengthened these personal and financial networks across numerous countries after the war's end. These militants, with knowledge and experience in combat, from guerrilla warfare to terrorism, have utilised these skills, networks, and resources to strategically develop their repertoire of action for other conflicts - other conflicts framed under the call of a global jihad, like in Algeria during the mid-1990s. The organisation at the forefront of this globalised jihad is al-Qaeda, and its inception was also influenced by Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ).

#### 4.2.2 *Ayman al-Zawahiri*

After Egyptian President Nasser's death in 1970, Anwar al-Sadat arrived in power and put into action Islam against Communism. He released numerous activists from jail, who then congregated onto new universities' fertile political grounds. By the mid-1970s, various small militant organisations had formed, which included a Muslim Brotherhood (who were banned at the time) organisation called the *al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya* (Islamic societies). By 1970s' end, numerous radical organisation emerged on the fringes of *al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya*. Abdessalam Faraj, an electrical engineer, through his strength of character and ideological sophistication rested on the writings of Ibn Taimiya and Qutb, lightly united these organisations. On 6 October 1981, a group led by Faraj assassinated President al-Sadat (Burke 2007: 151-152). Ayman al-Zawahiri, from Cairo, graduated from medical school in 1974. During the Afghan-Soviet jihad, al-Zawahiri travelled to Peshawar as a doctor for the Red Crescent, tending to both refugees and wounded mujahedeen. During the repression which followed al-Sadat's assassination, al-Zawahiri, like thousands of militants, was jailed and tortured. With this crackdown, the weakly unified militants split into numerous organisations, with al-Zawahiri's EIJ and the *Jamaa Islamiyya* (Egyptian Islamic Group, EIG) amongst them (Burke 2007: 152; Sageman 2004: 26-34). Despite being different organisations, both followed *da'wa*, or proselytising Islam, and violent struggle as this would achieve the Salafi aim of 'compelling good and driving out evil' (Burke 2007: 152).

Al-Zawahiri spent four years in prison, and after his release in 1984, returned to Pakistan by 1985 (Burke 2007: 153). There, he re-established the EIJ, was joined by Sayyid Imam al-Sharid (a.k.a Dr. al-Fadl) from the Cairo organisation, and published the monthly magazine *al-Fath* (The Conquest) (Sageman 2004: 34). The EIG also established itself in Afghanistan. Since both organisations viewed the Afghan conflict as temporary, they wished to then bring the jihad to Egypt afterwards. To do so, al-Zawahiri strategised getting close to bin Laden for the EIJ to receive exclusive support. He did so by medically caring for bin Laden, and through this affinity, gradually suggested trusted EIJ members for key positions in the MAK (Sageman 2004: 35).

#### 4.2.3 *Global Jihad Doctrinal Disputes*

The Soviet's withdrawal voided jihad's traditional legitimacy and began a debate on what to do next. Mujahedeen leaders came to the consensus of establishing a base for jihad, *al-Qaeda al-Jihad*, that would support a global jihad. They, however, were split into two sides regarding the global jihad's doctrinal significance. Mujahedeen who stayed to continue fighting became disillusioned with these factions' infighting and reluctantly returned home. Afghanistan's lack of stable government and continuous infighting led to the emergence of the Taliban, or 'student' in Pashto.

On a more traditional side stood Azzam and most MAK recruits, which stayed on. Azzam argued for a global jihad presence in the Muslim world's periphery where infidels had conquered or were threatening Muslim lands, like Bosnia, central Asia, Kashmir, Palestine, and the Philippines. In these states, al-Qaeda was to establish a Muslim state - that is, an Islamic caliphate. This flows from Azzam's message of unity amongst the *umma*. On the other side, the Egyptians, who could not return home for fear of political persecution, argued to use al-Qaeda as a platform to overthrow the Egyptian government, following Faraj's past work. The Egyptians wanted to use the MAK funds and the *Masada* camp to train militants back home. Azzam rejected these arguments and refused to sanction overthrowing Muslim governments because he disliked the *takfir* notion (declaring an individual as an apostate or a non-Muslim) as it spreads *fitna* (sedition) within the *umma*. Yet, the Egyptians advocated *takfir* because it is central to the argument that non-pious Muslim leaders should be overthrown. Azzam issued a *fatwa* arguing that utilising jihadi funds to train terrorists violates Islamic law (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 36-37).

In November 1989, a remote controlled car bomb killed Azzam and two of his sons in Peshawar - the assassination is still unresolved. Azzam's assassination severely weakened the traditional jihad faction, which allowed the remaining leaders to follow the jihadi doctrine they wished for - salafi-jihadism. This altered how global jihad was incentivised, framed, networked, and the utilised repertoire of action. Even Bin Laden, Azzam's *protégé*, was eventually persuaded by the EIJ, though at the time of Azzam's death, he had returned to Saudi Arabia (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 37).

#### 4.2.4 *Osama bin Laden*

In August 1990, like many mujahedeen, Osama bin Laden returned home. However, the Afghan jihad created combat ready men with higher level of religiosity than before. When these men returned home, they quickly became disenchanted by their government's secular culture and corrupt religious regimes. This dynamic reinforced their interpretation of Salafi Islam (Orbach 2001; Sutton & Vertigans 2006). During this time, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Salafi mujahedeen despised Hussein as he was a secular ruler that rejected Islam. Bin Laden offered the services and manpower of his mujahedeen to protect Saudi Arabia. However, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia refused and instead opted for the stationing of American troops in the kingdom. This decision angered Bin Laden and Salafi mujahedeen as they perceived foreign troops in the land of the two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina, as desecration of this sacred soil. Bin Laden criticised the kingdom for this choice and was then put under house surveillance (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 37-39).

While in-fighting still occurred in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal, salafi-jihadis were also fighting worldwide. In Egypt, the EIJ and EIG started violent campaigns against Egyptian officials, though the EIG also targeted Christian Copts. In Algeria, the GIA was fighting for the Algerian govern-

ment's removal. In Indonesia, Jemaah Islamiyah was formed to establish a Southeastern Asian Muslim state. In Kashmir, Pakistani mujahedeen targeted officials. In the Philippines, Abu Sayyaf was formed to fight against the Christian central government. And in South Yemen, bin Laden seemed to have been involved in instigating jihad. By 1990, global jihad was not a coordinated affair but rather, a collection of local jihads, each receiving training and logistics from al-Qaeda, though they had to raise their own funds or receive financial support from Muslim charities. Al-Qaeda became a formal organisation, made up of a cluster of jihadi cells, that supported the global jihad. Its jihadi doctrine was double: *à la* Azzam at the periphery of the Muslim world and *à la* Faraj against the 'near enemy' in Egypt and Yemen. At this point, al-Qaeda seemed to not be targeting the 'far enemy', the US and the West. As the central node, al-Qaeda needed a location central to the jihad, as in the early 1990s, Peshawar lost its appeal because, after the Soviet withdrawal, there was nothing left to do locally. (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 38-39).

In June 1989, General Omar Hassan al-Bashir, in alliance with Hassan al-Turabi's National Islamic Front, took power in Sudan and established an Islamic government. Al-Turabi envisioned Sudan as the headquarter for an international *umma*. To achieve his vision, al-Turabi needed manpower and hence decided to allow any Muslim, regardless of nationality, to settle in Sudan. The Muslims who arrived tended to be un-welcomed elsewhere. After a visit with al-Turabi, al-Qaeda leaders opted to move their headquarters from Peshawar to Khartoum (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 39). The location may have also been influenced by al-Zawahiri's past presence in Khartoum. Exactly when al-Zawahiri first reached Khartoum is unclear. However, according to Jamal al-Fadl, EIJ was training militants before bin Laden arrived in 1992, so it is likely that al-Zawahiri arrived there first (Burke 2007: 153). Al-Qaeda's leadership did keep a presence in Afghanistan with infrastructure (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 39).

By 1992, al-Qaeda's ideology followed a global salafi-jihadism (i.e.: the MSJM) and acted as the base of a network which reached every corner of the Muslim world.

#### 4.2.5 *Lessons for Disengagement*

From the return of foreign fighters, two lessons for disengagement arise. Firstly, what should be the level of magnanimity regarding punishment toward returning fighters? In the case of Afghan mujahedeen, their combat was legitimate, even sanctioned by foreign countries. Hence, magnanimity should be high. But what of those that fought in a war unsanctioned by their home state?

The exact magnanimity regarding punishment offered to each individual must be determined on a case-by-case basis. It is possible to define a *goldilocks zone*<sup>1</sup>. That is, the upper and lower levels of magnanimity. This can be found by asking questions to evaluate: whether the individual is a danger to her/himself and society; the appropriate level of punishment; and the truthfulness of the individ-

<sup>1</sup> In astronomy and astrobiology, around each star, there exists a region within which a planet can orbit for it to support liquid water. This is called the habitable zone or the goldilocks zone, from the metaphor of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

ual's disengagement. The last one is very important as jihadis believe in *taqiyya*, the dissimulation of practices. That is, they pretend to have repented even though they still intent to continue their activities.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of questions that can be asked. Most of these questions are also asked by the *juge d'instruction* (see subsection 4.3.2 below) to determine the level of punishment and prison time: has the individual committed any infractions to join the combat zone (such as stealing to pay for travel)? What is the individual's criminal record? Was a weapon purchased? Has she/he violated human rights? What was the engagement's intent (e.g.: offer humanitarian aid, curiosity, or outright fighting)? How long was the individual's engagement? Has she/he engaged any other individual? Does she/he has a project of undertaking an attack back home? What activities were undertaken during the stay in the combat zone? Does the individual still adheres to the militant salafi-jihadi ideology? Does the individual have strong contact with engaged individuals? Is the engagement sincere? What are the individual's available support networks at home (e.g.: stable family and friends or unreliable family and friends)? (Amoyel 2015; N'Gahane 2015; Trévidic 2013).

The answers to these questions will help identify whether the individual is actually repenting for her/his actions and is willing to reintegrate society (high magnanimity offered), whether the individual is between two worlds and needs assistance (high/medium magnanimity offered), or whether their return to France is a geographical relocation to continue their activities (low magnanimity). Irrespective of the level of magnanimity offered, all individuals need support as support can act like a pull factor. Therefore, no magnanimity is not an option.

Secondly, and intertwined with magnanimity, returners need to be reintegrated in society. Any discussion on reintegrating ex-combatants is reminded of Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR), defined as:

Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons from combatants and often from the civilian population.

Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces and groups, including a phase of 'reinsertion' which provides short-term assistance to ex-combatants.

Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. It is a political, social and economic process with an open time-frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level (United Nations Peacekeeping 2016).

DDR is 'an integral part of post-conflict peace consolidation and is prominently, featuring prominently in the mandates of peacekeeping operations' (UN Peacekeeping 2016). DDR's disarmament and

demobilisation fall outside of this thesis's scope as disarmament is seen here as moving from violent to non-violent means rather than laying down weapons and accepting a peace process, and demobilisation is modestly seen as collective or individual disengagement rather than movements and organisations disbanding altogether. In the existing literature, DDR's reintegration component is seen in three ways: reinserting ex-combatants economically and politically in society (UN Peacekeeping 2016), reintegrating ex-combatants socially in society (cf. Leff 2008 and improving ex-combatants' social capital) and a blur of both (cf Colletta 1997 and integrating ex-combatants economically). In fact, the dividing line between reinsertion and reintegration is not always clear in the literature (Ball & van de Goor 2006: 3). This thesis is not arguing for reinsertion as it is:

the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilisation but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools (Ball & van de Goor 2006: 2).

That is, a first stage short-run bridge aimed at getting returners to be physically within society. However, their belonging to and participating in society is not addressed at this stage. Therefore, this thesis is arguing for long-term reintegration as getting individuals to belonging to and participate in society's well-being and advancement. Without any reintegration, they will not be able to rehabilitate themselves into society and will not have the tools to adapt their world-view to society's current make-up. Thus, what could be acceptable in society but not in their world-view may cause discomfort in, even abhorrence of, society. The aim of reintegration is to discuss what and how an individual expects society to act, what and how society expects the individual to act, and how any gaps can be remedied. Such discussion occur through activities<sup>2</sup> like mentoring (Ajana 2015; Kilic 2015; Ruffion 2015) and/or talking to social workers (Azazen 2015) or psychologists (Amoyel 2015; Boukhobza 2015; Juy-Erbibou 2015; N'Gahane 2015).

#### 4.3 FRANCE'S EVOLVING COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY AND APPARATUS

Political violence, including terrorism, is not uncommon in France. In fact, four types of 'terrorism' have existed in France since the end of World War II: anti-colonial groups in North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, and South-East Asia seeking to oust French colonial influence; leftist groups, such as Action Directe from 1979 to 1987, fighting American 'imperialism'; regional separatists, such as Basque, Brittany, Corsica and the DOM-TOM regions, seeking independence; and trans-national terrorism challenging French foreign policy world wide, which includes Islamist militants (Gregory 2010; Shapiro & Suzan 2003).

<sup>2</sup> These activities, and others, are detailed in [subsection 9.2.4](#).

Since 1969, the French national police has been keeping a database *Fichier des personnes recherchées* (file of wanted people). Filing an individual does not allow arrest, but it does allow rating the individual as dangerous and allows her/his surveillance. There exist 21 different file types, of which *S* for *Sûreté de l'État* (threat to national security), *V* for *évadés* (escaped criminals), and *TE* for *opposition à l'entrée en France* (entry into France forbidden). Individuals that are surveilled because of their links to the MSJM or a MSJO are filed as *S*. Each file contains the individual's identity, a physical description or a photo, reasons for listing, and instructions if the individual is discovered. Each file is rated from *S2* to *S15* (2 being the highest, 15 the lowest). These indicate the measures and precautions law enforcement officers need to follow when dealing with the individual. Each file is updated every two years. This practice is still ongoing and has not changed much since.

In the 1980s, France's counter-terrorism strategy and apparatus changed by adapting to the threats menacing the French state. However, in uncovering these threats, the rise of militant pan-Islamism, the inception of the MSJM or al-Qaeda were not listed. In fact, this thesis was unable to find any information pertaining to French individuals engaged in the Afghan jihad and their whereabouts afterwards. If they returned to France, it can safely be assumed that French intelligence services kept a very close eye on them (N'Gahane 2015). Yet, the overall French strategy and approach did not change. That is, during the early 1990s, the Afghan jihad, the MSJM, and al-Qaeda, seem to not have been deemed as threats to France and its security.

#### 4.3.1 *Sanctuary Doctrine*

Prior to the 1980s, French governments continuously followed a counter-terrorism strategy of 'sanctuary doctrine'. That is, an attempt to isolate France from international terrorism by establishing the French territory as a sanctuary for and from international terrorism. This implies that French policies and territories remained as neutral as possible. In turn, implying that international terrorists can achieve nothing and fear nothing in France, 'where their members could operate with impunity, as long as they did not perpetrate acts of terrorism within France or against French interests' (Shapiro & Suzan 2003: 69). This sanctuary doctrine is not without drawbacks, however. For example, political tensions arose with rivals of sheltered terrorist organisations, such as with Israel with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the United States with the *Fractions Armées Révolutionnaires Libanaise*, and numerous terrorist logistical and financial networks were established in France, such as the PLO's support network in France (Shapiro & Suzan 2003: 70-71).

The doctrine failed after a wave of attacks in the 1980s, especially after 12 attacks in February, March, and September 1986 by the Committee for Solidarity with Near Eastern Political Prisoners linked to the war in Lebanon. During this time, France established uncommon preventative measures, such as detaining suspected terrorist for questioning for four days instead of 24 hours, increasing the number

of uniformed police on the streets, and random identity and bag checks - all of which are quite common today (Shapiro 2007; Shapiro & Suzan 2003). It is claimed, despite government denial, that the attacks ceased because the French government accommodated requests by states sponsoring terrorism, such as Syria (Marion 1987). That is, France altered its foreign policies.

#### 4.3.2 *Law of 9 September 1986*

As a response to increasing insecurity, the French government enacted the *loi relative à la lutte contre le terrorisme et aux atteintes à la sûreté de l'Etat* (law pertaining to the fight against terrorism and attacks against the state's security) on 9 September 1986. The law defines terrorism as 'acts committed by individuals or groups that have as goal to gravely trouble public order by intimidation or terror', and creates judicial procedures. More importantly however, the law established France's counter-terrorism pillars by centralising the fight against terrorism within the French government and creating new institutions.

The new institutions were the *Unité de Coordination de Lutte Anti-Terroriste* (Anti-Terrorist Coordinating Unity, UCLAT) in the Ministry of the Interior, and the *Service pour la Coordination de la Lutte Anti-Terroriste* (Anti-Terrorist Coordinating Service), later renamed the 14<sup>th</sup> Section of the Parquet de Paris, in the Ministry of Justice. These units are in charge of all terrorism cases and information flows pertaining to terrorism. That is, they connect all intelligence and police services within the French government. In fact, all judicial proceedings for terrorism go through the Trial Court of Paris if, for a local prosecutor, an act falls into the definition of terrorism above. If so, the case is handed to a specialised prosecutor or magistrate within the Paris court. Thus, only a small section of prosecutors and investigating magistrates deal with terrorism, in turn, making them the leaders of France's fight against terrorism (also implying that the French government has no power over which cases are and are not prosecuted). This is because the investigating magistrate (*juge d'instruction*) is a mix of the Anglo-Saxon prosecutor and judge. She/he is neither an advocate for defence or prosecution, but rather, conducts an impartial investigation to determine whether a committed crime is worthy of prosecution. To conduct this investigation, investigating magistrates are given wide powers: search warrants, subpoenas, even wire taps. Further, each magistrate specialises in a form of terrorism - Islamist, separatist or anarchist for instance (Hellmuth 2015; Trévidic 2013; Schmitt 2010: 35; Shapiro 2007: 135-141; Shapiro & Suzan 2003: 76-79). When an individual returns from a combat zone where terrorists are present, she/he is brought in front of this anti-terrorism investigating magistrate. This magistrate then searches for all available information regarding the individuals' actions and decides whether the individual can be tried for terrorism or not (Trévidic 2013).

The law of 9 September 1986 thus formed the two pillars of French counter-terrorism: the duality of judiciary-intelligence within the same service, and the re-inscribing of *l'association de malfaiteur* into

the penal code to prosecute individuals and groups in a criminal court. This became a move toward repression - that is, a hard approach - jointly undertaken by the Justice and Interior ministries. However, this law (with hindsight) has drawbacks. Firstly, the law did not have much of a preventative arm toward engagement. That is, it focused on preventing attacks rather than prevent the plotting of attacks. Secondly, the law focused mainly on prosecution of terrorism and did very little to deter engagement. Thirdly, no soft component was introduced. Therefore, engaged individuals had no incentive to disengage if they were caught and imprisoned. Further, if the organisation supported or aided by an individual ended, they had no incentive to disengage from the wider movement.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter began by examining what the pan-Islamist ideology and movement was and what its means and ends were. Then, it detailed how Abdullah Azzam took this movement's incentives and ideology and framed them in violent ways, and with Osama bin Laden, established the MAK. Subsequently, the MAK became al-Qaeda, and under the influence of Ayman al-Zawahiri, was framed as the global salafi-jihad vanguard against the 'near enemy' and then the 'far enemy'. That is, the formation of the MSJM and the first MSJO. This chapter has thus demonstrated the common grounds between the soft pan-Islamist movement and the MSJM/MSJO.

From this movement transformation, four lessons for disengagement have been learnt:

1. Since engagement relies on simple messages of solidarity and altruism, disengagement's frame should focus mainly on anti-West populist propaganda;
2. Conflicts need to be prevented so that foreign fighters do not try to end conflicts themselves.
3. Disengaging and disengaged militants must be helped to belong and participate in society's improvement to ensure the success of disengagement;
4. To do so, there exist levels of magnanimity that are too high or too low offered to aid reinsertion.

Regarding France's approach to counter-terrorism in the 1980s, it changed from following a 'sanctuary doctrine' to being built upon two pillars - the duality of judiciary-intelligence within the same service, and the use *l'association de malfaiteur* to prosecute individuals. However, this approach lacked a soft component, and thus neither prevented engagement nor gave any incentives toward disengagement. For instance, no prison programmes for imprisoned individuals under terrorism charges were established, making prisons pathways-to engagement (see [section 7.5](#)).

As demonstrated from the case of returnees from the Afghan jihad, for disengagement to effectively work, disengagement needs to be established as actions that engage individuals and French society toward the same goals rather than a simple move-away from a militant organisation.

# 5

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## THE FRENCH CONTEXT

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This chapter examines the structural context, France, that saw the arrival of Islam in the early 1960s and a rise of the pan-Islamist and salafi-jihadi movements soon after. It seeks to make sense of how Islam's history and *mal être* in France today influences engagement and disengagement with different forms of Islam, namely the Tabligh movement, Salafi-quietism, and salafi-jihadism (sub-movements of the pan-Islamist movement). To do so, it examines three hurdles that Islam in France has to overcome: France's difficult relationship with religion, France's difficult relationship with immigration, and Islam's *mal être* in France. Simultaneously, through SMT, this chapter examines the rise and propagation of the Tabligh and Salafi movements to understand why and how individuals engage with these two forms of Islam. Further, this chapter uncovers lessons learned as to why and how disengagement occurred or could have occurred. Finally, Islam's *mal être* in France today is examined to understand how this current situation contributes socially, politically, economically, and culturally to individuals' engagement and how this situation can be improved to engender and/or aid disengagement.

### 5.1 FRANCE : A CONSERVATIVE NATION

France is, generally, against foreign ideals as it is a conservative nation that resists change. It is well-known that France is against *la malbouffe* (unhealthy eating) as it goes against its culinary culture. However, France also has a troubled relationship with religion, as it goes against its secular and laic ideals, and with immigration, as it must follow assimilation to the French ways of life.

#### 5.1.1 *France and Religion*

From Clovis 1<sup>st</sup>'s baptism in 492 to the law of 9 December 1905 separating state and Church, France had been a Christian nation. The French law capitalised the word *Eglise* (Church) to encompass all religious institutions, whether individual churches or the papacy, and all other religions. From this law stems French secularism, the separation of Church and state, and the concept of *laïcité*, the guarantee of freedom of religious expression, which goes hand-in-hand with freedom of expression (Long

2006). Socially, however, *laïcité* is interpreted as forbidding public expression of religion. For many, this implies that religion is to be kept in the private sphere. Such interpretation flows logically from the reasons why secularism and *laïcité* came about, as they represent long efforts, by *les lumières*, to abandon and shun religious traditions and replace them with science and reason as the forces holding society together. In 1881, Jules Ferry, the Prime Minister, established free education and, in 1882, made education mandatory and laic. In this *école républicaine*, all religious doctrines and teaching are erased from the curriculum.

In essence, the Law of 1905 privatised religion and delegitimised any government involvement in religious matters (and vice versa), and in the process, religion lost its social legitimacy. However, the relegation of religion to the private sphere is impossible in the context of Islam (Césari 2006: 232-243). France now has a paradox regarding religion: on one hand it regards *intégrisme* (integration) to the French culture by all people in France as crucial, while on the other hand, it respects *le droit à la différence* (the right to be different), a fundamental right in the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen* (Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen) of 1789 (Bernand 2006). Political and social reactions to Islam in France have revealed the fault lines of the French Republic's legal formulation of *laïcité* and its social manifestation. Some examples include the 15 March 2004 law banning wearing ostensible religious symbols in public building, including Muslim head-scarves in schools; the 10 April 2011 law banning wearing the burqa; and the summer 2016 *arrêtés municipaux* (bylaws) banning religious symbols on certain beaches, like in Cannes, aimed at banning the burkini.

The on-going debate today is thus whether *laïcité* needs to adapt to Islam or whether Islam needs to adapt to *laïcité* by establishing an *Islam de France*, instead of a multitude of Islams brought from other countries, leading to an *Islam en France* (Césari 2006: 232-243; Kepel 2012). As of the end of summer 2016, *l'Islam de France* has yet to be formally organised (see [subsection 5.2.3 on p.77](#) for a discussion on Islamic organisations in France). After the failed 2005 attempt by the French government to establish the *Oeuvres de l'Islam de France* (Works of French Islam), it is pushing for the establishment of the *Fondation de l'Islam de France* (Foundation of French Islam). Meant to regulate, for example, the funding of mosques and Islamic practices in France, it is seen as controversial by many Muslims. In fact, some Muslims are asking why they are not left to undertake this themselves rather than a secular state (Le Monde 2016b). For other Muslims, especially those following certain forms of Islam, such as Salafism, Tabligh or salafi-jihadism, these laws are seen as an attack on Islam and individuals that follow *l'Islam de France* are apostates. This reinforces their interpretation of the Koran and the Sunna (Thomson 2016: 289). Further, this implies that *laïcité* and other laws are geared against Muslims, reinforcing conspiracy theories and feelings of victimhood (Thomson 2016: 282).

French secularism and *laïcité* restrain religion from growing in France and constrain it to the private sphere. Whereas Christianity and Judaism have, more or less, submitted to these laws, Islam has not - in fact, it is challenging these ideals. This challenge is negatively perceived by many French citizens,

and in turn, Islam is negatively perceived. This is the first factor influencing Islam's *mal être*. Islam is further negatively perceived and continuing its *mal être* because it is a product of immigration - another ideal with which France has a difficult relationship.

### 5.1.2 *France and Immigration*

Islam suffers equally from French society being very conservative and reticent when it comes to change. In a society that demands foreign ideals to assimilate to its cultural practices, norms, and values, Islam's challenge of this ideal is not very well welcomed.

#### 5.1.2.1 *France's Assimilation Policy*

The integration of immigrants can follow the theory of multiculturalism, wherein societies recognise and accommodate cultural minorities, including immigrants, and allow these minorities to participate in society through their cultural communities (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul 2008: 160; Kymlicka 1995 & 2001; Kymlicka & Norman 1994; Parekh 2006). That is, immigrants follow their practices, norms, and values within the practices, norms, and values of their welcoming state.

France, however, follows a different theory: assimilation. France's conservatism toward immigration dates back from its *mission civilisatrice* (civilising mission) during colonialism, whose aim was to assimilate colonies to French society. This was done, in part, because Muslims in French colonies had cultures, values, and lifestyles that were too far apart from French society (Paris 2002: 638). Thus, an assimilation policy intends to impose practices, norms, and values upon immigrants, implying that they must forgo some of their cultural and religious practices, norms, and values that are seen as antithetical to French values (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul 2008: 163; Bodemann & Yurdakul 2006). Currently, this is especially true of some practices derived from some influences of Islam (Okin 1999), such as wearing the burqa (Fournier & Yurdakul 2006).

In their effort to integrate immigrants into society, both assimilation and multicultural theories have their merits and limitations. However, France is often criticised for its assimilation theory. This is because the explanation of assimilation given above is incomplete. In France, assimilation is coupled with another concept: *solidarité* (solidarity). That is, there exists a coincidence of interests. For French society, an individual that does not assimilate is not demonstrating solidarity with others as she/he is trying to disassociate her/himself from society. If the individual is disassociated, how can we be demonstrating solidarity together? Such mis-comprehension of the French system was seen recently when France was criticised for its burkini-bans<sup>1</sup>. However, the burkini issue represents another concept highly disliked in France: communitarianism.

<sup>1</sup> This is not to judge the burkini-bans, but rather, to judge how the negative Anglo-Saxon responses to the burkini-ban were structured.

Communitarianism is used in this thesis to mean a system that develops the formation of communities based on certain characteristics (e.g.: religious, ethnic) that purposefully disassociate themselves from society and harm integration by dividing the nation. While this thesis recognises the work of communitarians (such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, and Michael Walzer), their works are not utilised because, as Anglo-Saxon authors, they rooted their logic in multicultural countries and forwent France assimilation policy and forgot France's notion of solidarity. As Pierre-André Taguieff wrote, communitarians have been 'led astray by the mirage of multiculturalism' (Taguieff 2001: 134).

France's integration policy thus requires more work on behalf of immigrants (whether first, second or third generation) than multiculturalism. This is even without incorporating the extra dynamics of the French language - a strictly regulated and difficult language to learn where any *faux pas* is not easily forgiven. Coupled with this difficult to adapt to policy, French society is very conservative when it comes to change. This implies that French society itself does not often make the first step toward welcoming immigrants. That is, the door swings both ways, but French society wants immigrants to do most, if not all, of the initial work. French society therefore could be more welcoming and a bit more lax when it comes to foreign ideals. That is, challenges to the French Social Contract will always occur. However, for French society, such challenges can only come from 'French people' as any outside challenge is by definition wrong. Such attitudes need to change as they are harmful toward foreigners and French society itself as societies are always evolving.

Throughout this thesis, when 'acceptance and belonging to French society' is mentioned, it assumes the assimilation-solidarity theory. But, what does this mean? A spectrum can be constructed wherein at one end, individuals neither accept nor belong to French society, and at the other, they accept and belong to French society. That is, do they accept the French Social Contract or do they reject it?

Rejects and Does Not Belong to French Society		Accepts and Belong to French Society
Does not learn about French norms, values, practices	↔	Learns about French norms, values, practices
Does not adapt to French norms, values, practices	↔	Adapts to French norms, values, practices
Challenges the French Social Contract for disassociation	↔	Challenges the French Social Contract for association
Argues for communitarianism	↔	Fights for solidarity
Does not participate in the political process	↔	Participate in the political process
Argues for change for the good of one's religious community	↔	Argues for change for the good of French society
Does not try to participate socio-economically	↔	Tries to participate socio-economically
Does not try to participate culturally	↔	Tries to participate culturally
Does not learn French	↔	Learns French

Table 2: Assimilation-Solidarity Spectrum

This Assimilation-Solidarity Spectrum can be utilised to determine whether an individual is trying to assimilate to French society or not (keeping in mind French society's reluctance toward some new comers). This spectrum is not to say who is French and who is not. It is meant to try to quantify an individual's assimilation to French society.

The aim of this sub-subsection is not to judge whether assimilation is better, equal or worse at integrating immigrants compared to multiculturalism; rather, it is about making sense of how Muslims fit within French immigration and their assimilation within French society, and simultaneously, demonstrating that France is not very welcoming and makes being on the right side of the spectrum above difficult. It can safely be assumed that assimilation is here to stay as, even if the state wishes to change its policy, it will take time for French society to adapt as a whole.

### 5.1.2.2 *Islam within Immigration*

Clearly, per [Table 3](#), Islam in France is a product of immigration as 43% of immigrants and 45% of descendants with two immigrated parents register as Muslim, while 1% of the majority population in France registers as Muslim, and overall Muslims represent 8%, or about 5.1 million, of France metropolitan's population of 64 million.

	Immigrants	Descendants with two immigrated parents	Descendants with one immigrated parent	Majority population	Population in Metropolitan France
No religion	19%	23%	48%	49%	45%
Catholic	26%	27%	39%	47%	43%
Muslim	43%	45%	8%	1%	8%
Protestant	4%	1%	1%	1.5%	2%
Orthodox	3%	1%	0%	0%	0.5%
Jewish	0.5%	1%	2%	0.5%	0.5%
Buddhists	2.5%	1%	2%	0.5%	0.5%
Other	2%	1%	1%	0.5%	0.5%

Table 3: Religious Denomination (Simon & Tiberj 2010: 124)

Muslim immigrants originate, as per [Figure 1](#), primarily from three regions, Turkey, the Sahel in Africa, and the Maghreb (Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria), and some others arrive from Central and Western Africa and other countries.

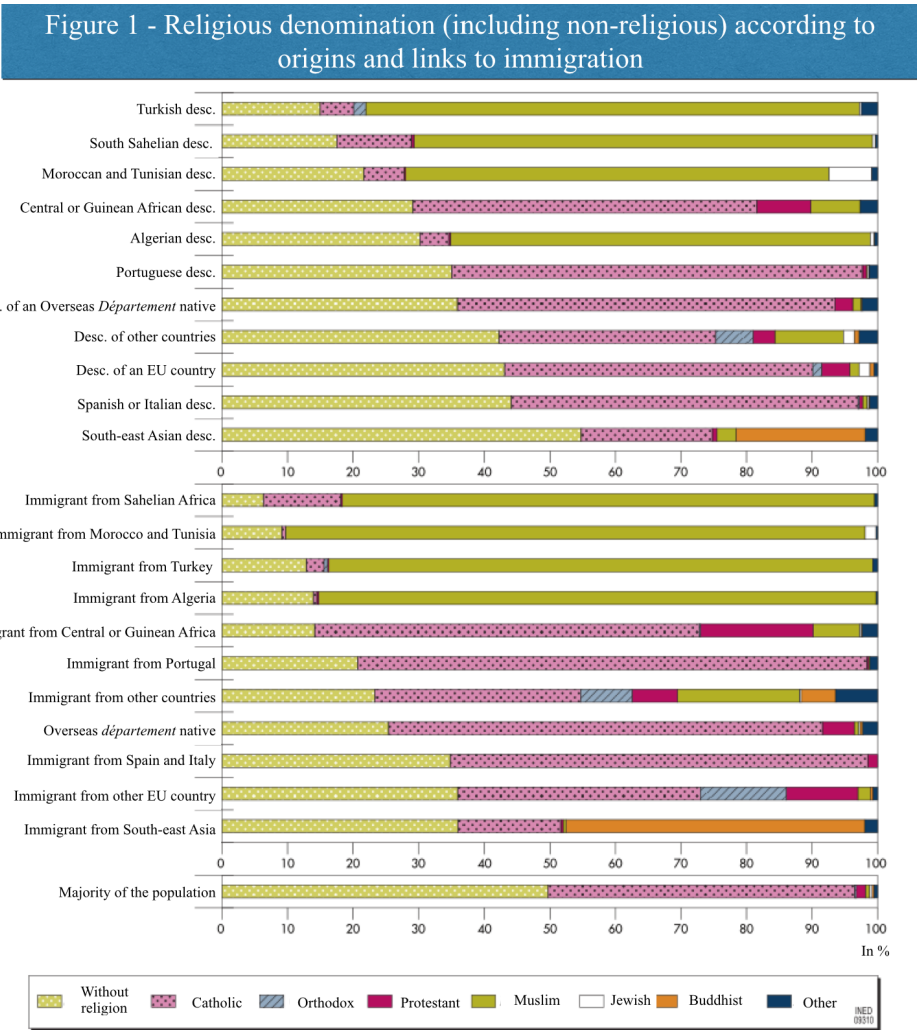


Figure 1: Immigrants’ Religious Denominations (Simon & Tiberj 2010: 125)

5.1.2.3 *Is Islam Altering French Society?*

On top of suffering from an image of being foreign, Islam suffers from the notion that it is altering French society. This altering of society is not fundamental, but rather visible. Both Muslims and Jews attach high importance to religion, 78% and 76% respectively, as per Table 4, while other religions attach little to no importance to religion. However, Jews in French society represent a fraction of the population, 0.5% as per Table 3, and are highly present and visible with synagogues, Jewish cemeteries, wearing the Kippah, and Kosher butchers. However, when it comes to Islam, mosques, Muslims headscarves, and halal butchers, which are not very present, relative to Jewish symbols, create outcry. Such outcry is thus based on a misconception of what these symbols represent and the fact that they alter society.

	Little or not important	Somewhat or very important
Catholic	76%	24%
Muslim	22%	78%
Protestant	53%	47%
Orthodox	52%	48%
Jewish	24%	76%
Buddhists	48%	52%

Table 4: Importance of Religion (Simon &amp; Tiberj 2010: 126)

#### 5.1.2.4 Do You Feel French?

France's conservatism toward change implies that many migrants and their descendants do not regard themselves as 'seen as French'. As per Table 5, immigrants from Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia, and Algeria do not feel as though they are seen as French, on average, in 62% of cases. Africans from the Sahel, at 72%, are the only group above where a higher proportion believe they are not seen as French. Among descendants of Turkish, Moroccan, Tunisian, and Algerian immigrants, the proportion of those who believe they are not seen as French decreases to 46% for Turks (a -26.9% change), 43% for Moroccans and Tunisians (a -30.6% change), and 39% for Algerians (a -37.1% change). Despite the decreases, the proportions still very significant. These proportions are only better than Africans from the Sahel at 60% (a -16.6% change). Nevertheless, all four groups' numbers are high compared to other groups where such lack of integration is quite rapidly resolved between the immigrated generation and the descendant generation, except for the African immigrants from Central and Western Africa who do not feel as though they are seen as French in 53% of cases of immigrants and their descendants feel the same in 30% of cases (a -43.4% change).

	Migrants	Descendants	$\Delta$
Africa (Sahel)	72%	60%	-16.6%
Turks	63%	46%	-26.9%
Morocco & Tunisia	62%	43%	-30.6%
Algeria	62%	39%	-37.1%
Africa (Central & Western)	53%	30%	-43.4%
Portugal	41%	13%	-68.3%
Spanish & Italian	35%	7%	-80%
Other European	50%	5%	-90%

Table 5: Immigrants and Descendants Seen as French (Brinbaum et al. 2010: 134)

#### 5.1.2.5 Have You Experienced a Racist Situation?

This lack of being seen as French goes hand-in-hand with racist occurrences since, as per Table 6, Africans from Central and Western Africa, who are mostly Catholic, have suffered more racist events (55% for immigrants and 60% for descendants) and have less individuals who are not exposed to racism (12% for immigrants and descendants) than Africans from the Sahel, who are mostly Muslim,

	Experienced a racist situation	Has not experienced a racist situation but feels exposed	Does not feel exposed to and has not experienced a racist situation
Country of birth of immigrants			
Algeria	35%	35%	30%
Morocco & Tunisia	38%	34%	28%
Turkey	25%	31%	43%
Africa (Sahel)	41%	38%	20%
Africa (Central & Western)	55%	33%	12%
Overall	32%	29%	39%
Country of birth of parents of immigration descendants			
Algeria	49%	31%	20%
Morocco & Tunisia	50%	28%	22%
Turkey	44%	32%	25%
Africa (Sahel)	58%	31%	12%
Africa (Central & Western)	60%	25%	15%
Overall	36%	25%	39%

Table 6: Experience of Racist Event (Brinbaum et al. 2010: 135)

(41% of immigrants and 58% of descendants have experienced racism and 20% of immigrants and 15% of descendants have had no exposure to racism). Immigrants and descendants from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, and Turkey suffer less racism and are less exposed to racism than Africans, although the numbers are still quite high: on average 33% of immigrants have experienced a realistic event or feel exposed to racism and, on average, 48% of descendants a racist event while, on average, 30% fell exposed. However, on average, a third of immigrants do not feel and have not been exposed to racism, but this number drops to, on average, 22% for descendants. Even though Muslim immigrants' descendants feel, on average, as though they are more seen as French, they suffer more racist events because they are taking their religion beyond the private sphere, as opposed to their parents who were more quietist, which collides with France's conservatism. This clash is indeed because of Muslim immigrants' and descendants' origins, since racism is due, as per [Table 7](#), for immigrants from Africa, to their skin colours, while all other immigrants face discrimination based on their origin.

	Skin Colour	Origin
Country of birth of immigrants		
Algeria	14%	85%
Morocco & Tunisia	24%	87%
Turkey	6%	77%
Africa (Sahel)	81%	52%
Africa (Central & Western)	86%	44%
Overall	34%	70%
Country of birth of parents of immigration descendants		
Algeria	20%	83%
Morocco & Tunisia	31%	80%
Turkey	5%	75%
Africa (Sahel)	87%	43%
Africa (Central & Western)	89%	46%
Overall	28%	65%

Table 7: Motives for Discrimination (multiple answers allowed) (Brinbaum et al. 2010: 132)

### 5.1.3 Conclusion

Such conservatism toward religion and immigration makes it difficult for some new ideals to find their place in France. Indeed, Islam is the perfect example of these troubled dynamics. Islam is seen as a cause for concern because it is a product of immigration that visibly alters society. In a society where foreigners are expected to assimilate, Islam is asked to justify why French society must allow it not to assimilate and continue to effect change. It is in this unfriendly context that Islam has appeared and evolved. Yet, Islam in France is living a *mal être* because it is also unable to give one unified voice to answer these questions.

## 5.2 HISTORY OF ISLAM IN FRANCE

During the early 1960s, the increasingly industrialising French economy required more workers that were found in France's ex-colonies in the Maghreb: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. These workers were most commonly unmarried men who had left their families behind to come to work in France on limited-time contracts and lived in the *banlieues*, suburbs of large cities (Boyer 1998). This began the first generation of Islam in France: *l'islam des darons*<sup>2</sup> (Kepel 2012).

### 5.2.1 The First Generation

*L'islam des darons* was the sole form of Islam's social expression in France and remained politically invisible until the beginning of the 1980s. This social expression continued individual migrant workers'

<sup>2</sup> *Daron* is old-French slang for father, and *daronne* for mother, with a connotation for strong authority

home-country practices in a quietist fashion since they transplanted their Islam to France (Dassetto & Bastenier 1984 quoted in Kepel 2012: 156). Because their stay in France was temporary, their religious practices were also temporary, and formed an *Islam en France* (Islam in France). However, the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973 began altering the first generation's quietist profile. With the oil prices rising, France's industry reorganised labour to compensate for higher production costs through mechanisation, dramatically increasing unemployment, especially amongst migrant workers. Unexpectedly, the migrant workforce did not return home as they had nothing to return to since the Algerian War was ongoing. Instead, they brought over their wives, children, and immediate family, and began establishing a foothold in France (Boyer 1998). This increase in France's Muslim population inevitably led to an increase in Islam's presence in France, but socially only: the number of Islamic prayer rooms grew from three dozen in 1970 to about 300 in the late 1970s. These prayer rooms were more or less spontaneous, run by migrants, and self-financed the arrival of an imam from their home-country. Simultaneously, some prayer rooms saw imams arriving from wealthier Gulf Monarchies, the Tabligh movement, and the rise of Shi'ism's presence after the successful 1979 Iranian revolution (Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

With these series of events, and others, altering Islam's quietism in France, Maghreb countries began structuring the informal *Islam des darons* into an *Islam de France* (France's Islam), which began propelling Islam on the political scene. While the Algerian government created a structure via *La Grande Mosquée de Paris* and the Moroccan Government created a structure via the *Fédération Nationale des Musulmans de France* (National Federation of Muslims of France, FNMF), in the end, neither structure predominated. With the ongoing civil war, the Algerian government was out of financial and political strength to support the *Grande Mosquée de Paris*, and the FNMF never took over because the French government decided that Algeria was to be its sole interlocutor to structure *l'Islam de France*. However, in 1989, the French government reversed its policy and decided to opt for the creation of a consistory institution with non-state actors. This continuously unstructured Islam opened a breach for other interlocutors to enter the game, an opening quickly seized by the Tabligh movement and the *Union des Organisations Islamiques de France* (Union of Islamic Organisations in France, UOIF), an organisation close to the Muslim Brotherhood (Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

### 5.2.2 *The Tabligh Movement*

While the Algerian and Moroccan governments were trying a top-down process to create an *Islam de France*, the Tabligh movement utilised a bottom-up approach to rise in France's *banlieues* and played an important role in the re-Islamisation of migrants and the conversion of individuals with European backgrounds, away from any structure other than its own. Created in 1927 in India by Muhammad Ilyas, the Tabligh Jamaat (Society for the Protection of Islam) follows an apolitical and non-violent

doctrine, which advocates bringing Islam back to its origins as Muslims had fallen victim to Hindu and Western cultural temptations. This return should occur via intensive religious discipline following strict and literal imitation of the Islamic virtue model represented by the prophet Mohammed and his companions. The aim is to remove all impious behaviours and thoughts from everyday life that could corrupt true Islamic life. The movement forbids the worship of idols, saints, and tombs, and its members are recognisable by their long beards and djellabas. This 'born again' movement follows a patient strategy that breaks any links between corrupting environments and faithful individuals to link them into an authentic *umma* (Islamic community) with strict submission to god. The Tabligh movement's revivalist message and its missionary like-approach to spreading Islam gave it the nickname of the 'Jehovah's Witnesses of Islam' (Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

#### 5.2.2.1 *Incentives*

The Tabligh movement's incentives are quite straightforward: living a pure and strict Islamic life, which pleases god, and belonging to a closed and close community. There exist little to no risks and costs to joining the Tabligh movement yet the reward, pleasing god and paradise, are everlasting and invaluable. These incentives are reminded to followers daily via the doctrine's six principles: declaring one's faith, daily praying, knowledge of god, respecting other Muslims, sincerity, and preaching god. Living in an isolated community, away from temptations, that follows very strict Islamic practices increases the sense of belonging and of properly pleasing god. Further, through the action of bringing new followers to the movement, via proselytism, a follower has accomplished a duty toward god and increases his chances of accessing paradise. Via this grass-roots approach of religious proselytising, the movement has been the engine of re-Islamisation in deprived *banlieues* where unemployment and drugs reigned (Godard 2015aa; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

#### 5.2.2.2 *Framing*

The Tabligh movement frames itself as apolitical, non-violent, and offering a true practice of Islam, following the prophet's, and his disciples', ways. In the 1970s and 1980s, it aligned its frame by offering individuals personal and spiritual reconstruction. This proved fruitful as individuals, migrants and Europeans alike, had fallen victim to France's de-industrialisation and unemployment crisis (Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012). However, to attract new non-Muslim members, the movement's frame alignment had to be in French and about French social matters. To adapt, the Tabligh movement firstly learned to function in French, as a French sermon was offered after the Arabic one on Thursdays, the day when the community assembled to determine the objectives of the next days' 'outings', to mobilise the maximum number of followers for the Friday prayer. With this knowledge of French, frame alignment could be undertaken, via proselytism, towards Christians by presenting Jesus' place in the Koran, and Atheists by critiquing Darwinism and affirming creationism. This reconstruction,

search for meaning, and somewhat adapted close community gave followers continuous incentives to remain engaged with the movement (Abderraouf 2000; Kepel 2012).

As this unemployment crisis is still going on today, the Tabligh movement can still utilise this frame alignment to forge new members. To engage youths:

it is explained that religion is easy and that sins do not prevent one from practising as we are practitioners despite sins: Ramadan, saying the Shahada before bed, or not eating pork. Girls are not pushed to wear the veil immediately as it can be a blocking point, rather, it is pushed as a practice through the natural progression of faith' (Abderraouf 2000: 39).

However, this is not a sufficient approach to engage youths, as the movement had to adapt further to the youths' willingness to participate in France's civic life by altering its social, demographic, and cultural stances. A central civic duty for youths is the improvement of their *banlieue* (Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012). Kepel's 2010-2011 (2012: 184) study collected numerous testimonies which demonstrated that, during the 1980s, the Tabligh's 'outings' did adapt to civic life as they were the essential component in the re-Islamisation of ex-drug dealers and users by removing them from such lifestyle. As Abderraouf wrote, the Tabligh movement's social role is to combat delinquency and addictions:

One time, we were in the mosque, with many older followers while the younger ones were on the side, near a large centre of drug dealing and sinning. I [Abderraouf] ask the group what should be our objectives and they all answered: 'reconnect the younger and older followers and bring closer those who do not pray' (Abderraouf 2000: 60).

This form of civic duty on behalf of the Tabligh movement gives individuals incentives to engage and stay engaged. In doing so, the Tabligh movement found itself in a frame-competition against Salafism (see below), which has a strong social component to its practice of Islam, that keeps sapping Tabligh followers. Tabligh networks have been infiltrated and exploited by Salafi-purists who reject its unifying message with the Indian subcontinent rather than the birthplace of the prophet, Saudi Arabia, and militant salafi-jihadis who reject the Tabligh movement's non-violent vision of Islam (Sageman 2004: 5-6). In reaction, the Tabligh movement started encouraging its youths to, firstly, be knowledgeable on Islamic jurisprudence to counter Salafi's religious claims, which are based on Saudi *ulemas* (Islamic scholar), and, secondly, be more discreet (Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

### 5.2.2.3 *Network*

Initially, the Tabligh movement was head-quartered in Belleville, in Paris' 20<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, in what is familiarly known as a *markaz* (centre). This *markaz*, the Ar-Rahma mosque (the Merciful), is where initial followers engaged with the movement. In the mid-1980s, after the Tabligh movement's adaptation to its changing context, it moved its head-quarter to Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-Denis, 93)<sup>3</sup>, in

<sup>3</sup> French départements are identified by a unique number which will be referenced alongside a département's name for mapping reference. Maps of France with major cities and departments are provided in [Appendix A](#).

Paris' northern *banlieue*, where it could be closer to individuals requiring its civic assistance. The Saint-Denis mosque, amidst the poverty and drugs of park *la Légion d'honneur*, built around a large prayer room, displays no ornaments, and has minimal equipment, such as a room for ablutions and a shoe locker, is the hub of the movement's repertoire of action to incentivise new recruits and hold together its community. Until 1986, the Tabligh movement was headed by a Tunisian shopkeeper, called an *emir*. Since, it has been headed by a nine-member *shura* (counsel), which meets in the Saint-Denis facility. It acts as the last resort decider for France when decisions cannot be taken in the *shura* at local mosque, city, or regional level. This *shura* is itself under the *shura of ulemas* that meet at the Tabligh movement's head-quarter in Nizamuddin, Delhi (Kepel 2012).

Mosques and prayer rooms affiliated with the Tabligh movement are present all over France: Paris (75) and its Ile-de-France region, Aulnay-sous-Bois and Sevran (Seine-Saint-Denis), Val-de-Marne (94), and Essonne (91), but also further away in Creil (Oise, 60), Rouen (Seine-Maritime, 76), Roubaix and Tourcoing (Nord, 59), Mulhouse (Haut-Rhin, 68), Lyon (Rhône-Alpes, 69), Dreux (Eure et Loir, 28) the Moroccan headquarters for France's west, Bordeaux (Aquitaine, 33), Toulouse (Haute-Garonne, 31), Perpignan (Pyrénées-Orientales, 66), Marseille (Bouches-du-Rhône, 13) with its imposing Khalid Bin al-Walid mosque, and in overseas department, like La Réunion, an island south-west of Madagascar (Godard & Taussig 2007: 417). This wide and robust physical network allows the Tabligh movement to be physically present near centres of hardship in *banlieues* all over France and personally spread followers through proselytism to engage new members.

#### 5.2.2.4 *Repertoire of Action*

The Tabligh movement's repertoire of action follows Ilyas' recommendation of religious and social proselytism. Religious proselytism, implies that members have the individual responsibility to promote the Tabligh's Islam, by travelling, like the Prophet, from one mosque to another. At each stop, Tabligh members are to talk to as many members of said mosque, spread the Tabligh movement's six doctrines, and leave with 'born again' Muslims. These new Tabligh members are then to follow a similar path. Social proselytism implies 'outings' wherein Tabligh members are to meet misdirected Muslims and non-Muslims, in the *banlieues* ravaged by unemployment and drugs, to bring them spiritual comfort and re-socialise them through a personal and exclusive deepening of their religion. The Tabligh movement's members operate at the grass-roots level, away from publicity and politics, and in informal ways. The Tabligh movement opens its mosques to anyone and, via these numerous facilities, sends through foreign Tabligh followers to preach in France, wherever they may be needed (Godard 2015a; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

#### 5.2.2.5 *Lessons for Disengagement*

Although the Tabligh movement has been present in France since the 1960s, it reached its height in the 1980s and has been in decline ever since. Two obstacles to its propagation initiated its downsizing.

When adapting to a younger French audience, the movement did not take into account the youths' education in *l'école républicaine* - an education based on reason and logic. These youths sought a movement with intellectual content, yet did not find solace in the Tabligh movement.

The cultural gap between immigrated workers and youths coming to further their studies, even if they are from the same country, is enormous. How can we ask these workers to preach to individuals with more education than them while they have always had to deal with individuals from their background? [...] When it came time to bring [the youths] closer to the movement, we were unable to. The movement began to fade in 1992 (Benhamila quoted in Kepel 2012: 185).

Because of this lack of frame alignment, youths sought their answers in competing frames, especially in Salafism. To fill this intellectual gap, the Tabligh movement began to send individuals to study in the Tabligh movement's international network of mosques, yet as of 2011, they were still not visible in the Tabligh movement's French mosques (Kepel 2012).

The second obstacle was the Tabligh movement's marginalisation during the organisation of *l'Islam de France* due to its apolitical nature. Therefore, for younger individuals who wished to be Muslim and French, the Tabligh movement's isolation was not a durable solution. Today, the movement is well implemented, controls a significant number of mosques, and has a solid membership amongst the *darons*, but constitutes mostly a passage through which the number of young new members engaging equals the number of members disengaging. This is disengagement, and not deradicalisation, as disengaged members:

[h]ave kept a noticeable level of piety - even when the practices have been put into perspective. Some have stayed broken away from French society, against which they have built a cultural barrier [...]. Others have kept from their period amongst the Tabligh habits of order, devotion, and seriousness, turned into qualities that they have transferred to the real-world to become efficient and respected professionals in various fields - from entrepreneur to deputy mayor (Kepel 2012: 187).

Kepel's research clearly depicts disengagement: a behavioural change away from the organisation but not a cognitive shift away from the ideology. Individuals have disengaged from the Tabligh movement because the movement was unable to adapt to the changing environment Islam was a part of in France (see second and third generation below) and thus could not sufficiently incentivise sustaining engagement versus other movements and competing frames, like Salafism. Further, its network was infiltrated by Salafis which countered the Tabligh movement's preaching. Here, pull and push factors are in play. The push factor is that the Tabligh movement made it unpleasant and unattractive for some, especially youths, to stay engaged because of its lack of adaptability to the changing environment. The pull factor is the Salafi movement's ability to offer a movement which is a more attractive and incentivising alternative.

From the Tabligh movement, three disengagement lessons are learnt. Firstly, there needs to be an alteration to the context in which a movement exists in a way that negates a movement's offered incentives and frames. In this case, the social and political situation of the *banlieues* needs to be improved, by resolving grievances and offering actual prospects to those in the *banlieues*, as the Tabligh movement relied on the misery of the French *banlieues* in its social proselytism. Secondly, a competing frame of belonging and participation in French society needs to be established. It is not sufficient for the French government to offer employment to those in the *banlieues*, it must also make sure that they are socially and politically present in French society and participate in the French Social Contract, because *métro, boulot, dodo*<sup>4</sup> is insufficient. Similarly to the Tabligh movement, the sense of belonging matters, and the Salafi movement shifted this sense in its favour by personalising and incentivising engagement. Thirdly, these incentives and frames must be propagated, like the Tabligh movement, at the grass-roots level for individuals to feel some sort of connection with the French state, other than run ins with the Police and paying taxes.

### 5.2.3 *The Second Generation*

The second generation, *l'islam des frères* (the brotherhood's Islam), saw the politicisation of *l'Islam de France* and two new actors: the French state and students belonging to, or close to, the Muslim Brotherhood (Kepel 2012). The structure of *l'Islam de France*, which began in 1989, was to be through a consistory institution, finally created in 2003 and called the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman* (French Council of the Muslim Faith, CFCM). This created a rapprochement between the French government and non-state Islamic actors, although the most structured expression of this relationship was through the UOIF (Godard 2015a; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

The UOIF was, at first, an interlocutor of choice because it was emancipated from *l'Islam des darons* controlled by foreign governments and seemed to lead to the organisation of *l'Islam de France*, via the underlying structure of the CFCM, over the weakening FNMF. The relationship between the French government and the older UOIF members, however, turned sour. Although the UOIF played a major role as the last resort interlocutor, it did not bring up social, political and cultural problems encountered by immigrant Muslims because it was not an organisation representative of France's Muslim population. Further, the relationship amongst younger and older UOIF members was also sour, as the younger members' Islam was anchored in their French citizenship and the older members had their Islam anchored elsewhere. Because the UOIF could not properly resonate Muslim voices in France, it entered a crisis in 2001 (Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

The enactment of the 2004 law banning the Islamic veil in school was the tipping point of this crisis which pushed the youths, born and raised in France, to disengage from the UOIF and, in turn, engage

<sup>4</sup> A French adage for the same old everyday work routine: metro, work, sleep.

with political parties from the extreme-left or the green party, as these political parties offered themes focusing on social and political issues in the *banlieues*, all-the-while preserving the youths' Islamic values. The breaking point for the UOIF came after the 2005 riots, which were prompted when two teens, Bouna and Ziyed, died of electrocution when they hid in an electrical complex while fleeing from the police. The UOIF's fatwa calling for peace had no effect on calming the riots. This lack of control and resonance with the younger Muslim population, and its inability to block the law banning the veil, proved once and for all the UOIF's lack of influence on youths. By the late 2000s, with fewer and fewer youth members, the UOIF came under control of older *darons* who brought the organisation closer to the Tunisian party in power, Nahda, while the CFCM was brought closer to Morocco with the election of a Moroccan, Mohammed Moussaoui, and *la Grande Mosquée de Paris*, under Dalil Boubakeur, was close to Algeria (Godard 2015a; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012). This meant that France's process of a consistory Islam failed and foreign states took back control of *l'Islam de/en France*.

During this fracturing of *l'Islam de France*, Muslim Turks increased their presence in French mosques without influencing the national organisation of *l'Islam de France*. However, they did perpetuate Islam *mal être* by preaching without knowledge on French culture:

Transferred Turkish imams, for example, arrive in France as social workers rather than imams. They speak broken French, have never seen an Armenian in their lives, do not know that France recognises the Armenian Genocide. Most transferred imams have never received education on the Holocaust, Islamophobia, the death penalty ... They do not have these important elements of context, or play a role in the communities (Goulet quoted in Mouterde 2016) .

The lack of an established *Islam de France* is another factor negatively affecting Islam's *mal être* in France. However, the arrival and rise of Salafism is another negative influence.

#### 5.2.4 *Salafism*

During this time, Salafism undertook the Islamisation of France's *banlieues* away from any structure other than that called for by Saudi *ulemas* based in Medina and Mecca. For Salafis, there cannot be an *Islam de France* as there exists only one true Islam: the way of life of the prophet and his followers, the *salaf*. Salafism overtook the Tabligh movement through its adaptation to the *banlieues'* way of life and cyberworld presence. Salafism has become the preferred form of Islam for individuals seeking to rebuild themselves after a strong identity break. This is especially true of Kabyles and harkis Algerians and European converts. They are not well equipped to know rights from wrongs in Salafi discourse as their national and religious networks and knowledge are less present to educate them than Moroccans and Turks.

#### 5.2.4.1 Tenets of Salafi Factions

Salafis believe that Islam has become decadent because it strayed away from the righteous path of god. Salafis follow a puritanical approach to Islam that provides principles and a method for applying religious beliefs to contemporary issues all-the-while abandoning religious innovations. This creed implies

- ✦ strict adherence to the concept of *tawhid* (the oneness of god);
- ✦ strictly following the Koran, hadiths, and *sunna's* rules and guidance laid down by the path of the prophet Mohammed and his followers;
- ✦ ardent rejection of human reason, logic, religious innovations;
- ✦ and the desire to please god.

Salafis eliminate human subjectivity and self-interest biases to identify the singular truth of god's commands. From their perspective, there is only one legitimate religious interpretation, implying that Islamic pluralism does not exist. A return to these authentic practices of the Prophet Mohammed and his companions will, in the Salafi view, return Islam to its past glorious and grand age. Although Salafis share the same religious perspective, factions have resulted from the inherently subjective nature of religious jurisprudence toward new issues and problems (Hegghammer 2009; Lacroix 2009; Meijer 2009; Qutb 2002; Wiktorowicz 2005a & 2006).

*Tawhid* is the crux of the Salafi creed and includes three components that Salafis consider necessary to be accepted as a 'real Muslim'. First, Allah is the sole creator and sovereign of the universe. Second, god is supreme and entirely unique. As the Koran mentions god as the supreme legislator, humans are bound to follow *sharia* (Islamic law) in its integrity. Thus, Salafis reject secularism and the separation of religious institutions and state, as these suggest the superiority of human-made laws and institutions over divine governance. Third, god alone has the right to be worshipped. For Salafis, this goes beyond forbidding the association to others in worshipping god. They regard every act as an act of worship if it is in accordance with *sharia*. Any deviant behaviours thus indicate submission to something other than god (Hegghammer 2009; Wiktorowicz 2005a & 2006).

To protect *tawhid*, Salafis argue that Muslims must strictly follow the Koran and the *sunna*. Because the prophet's companions (the *salaf*) learned Islam directly from him, they provide an accurate portrayal of the prophet's behaviours and ways, and are thus followed for guidance. Hence, any other sources of guidance would lead Muslims astray and would be considered innovations which threaten *tawhid*. Such innovations present in Islam, like other cultures, norms, and human rationality, logic, and desire, result from Islam's expansion. As Roy (2002) argues, Salafis try 'deculturation': the de-linking of Islam from any cultural context. A large part of the Salafi mission, within globalised Islam (as discussed in [chapter 4](#)), is the expansion of this community, which transcends local space and traditions,

by eliminating cultural innovations (Hegghammer 2009; Lacroix 2009; Qutb 2002; Wiktorowicz 2005a & 2006).

Even though all Salafis share the same tenets and jurisprudence approach, they often consider different interpretations of contemporary social and political conditions and different behaviours to follow in response, which has produced three major factions: the quietists (also called purists), the politics, and the jihadis (Wiktorowicz 2006). The quietists emphasise non-violent methods of propagation, purification, and education, and view politics as a diversion which encourages deviancy. Politics came about when the quietists of Saudi Arabia issued a *fatwa* allowing American troops to be stationed in Saudi Arabia to fight against Saddam Hussein in the 1990-1991 Gulf War, which the politics considered as out of touch with current world affairs. They emphasise the Salafi creed's applicability to political arenas, which they view as key because it impacts social justice and the right of god to be the sole legislator. Finally, jihadism, based on the writings by, for instance, Abdullah Azzam, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad abd-al-Salam Faraj, and Abul A'la Maududi (Azazen 2015), emerged during the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union as they take a militant position and argue that current world affairs call for violence and revolution (see [chapter 7](#)). All three factions share a common creed yet are split as they offer different contextual interpretations and framing of the contemporary world, not because of beliefs, and propose different repertoire of action as a solution to the problems created by the world around them (Hegghammer 2009; Lacroix 2009; Meijer 2009: 3-13; Wiktorowicz 2005a & 2006).

#### 5.2.4.2 *Politics and Violence*

According to Wiktorowicz (2006), each movement within the Salafi creed has a different relationship to politics and violence based, not on the creed, but on framing and contextualisation of national and international affairs. This is key, as a changing environment can change this current taxonomy, even create new ones. As will be demonstrated in [chapter 8](#), Daesh is a militant salafi-jihadi organisation but it is also a takfiri organisation - a non-present characteristic in past MSJOs.

1. *Quietists*. Quietists are ardent oppositionists to activism, whether violent or non violent, because it is an innovation from the West. As activism connotes politics, quietists consider themselves the vanguard who protect *tawhid* and Islam's purity from corruptive influences, like Christians, Jews, and the West in general, by utilising active ideological programmes to prevent the spread, usage, behaviours or thought processes of corrupting influences<sup>5</sup>. Such search for purity creates isolationism, both physically and regarding interfaith dialogue. Quietists express two charges against politics and jihadis. Firstly, even though both accept the Salafi creed, they have failed to follow the *sunna* and have thus committed *irja* (the separation of belief and action). Secondly,

<sup>5</sup> This is actually a contradiction because quietists are activists for purity and political activists for a particular formation of society. For some, like Soufiane (2016), an ex-Takfiri, this implies, in France today, no difference between a quietist and a politico other than the type of politics they are undertaking. This thesis follows Wiktorowicz taxonomy because it depicts changes within the Salafi movement yet agrees with Soufiane that the difference between quietists and politics is their utilised political activism tactics.

politicos and jihadis portray human desire, which is in opposition to Salafism. While quietists follow greater jihad, they have enormous disdain against jihadis as the killing of Muslims is never acceptable. In sum, quietists follow a purist and quietist version of Islam, based on contextual framing and interpretation rather than creed (Meijer 2009: 17-24; Wiktorowicz 2005a & 2006).

2. *Politicos*. Politicos rose with the arrival of the Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s. During 1970s, many took teaching positions in Saudi universities and became influential on campuses and book-stores, initiating the pan-Islamist movement. After the quietists' *fatwa* regarding the stationing of US soldiers in Saudi Arabia during the 1990 Gulf War, some younger Salafi scholars questioned whether senior quietists were out-of touch with their surrounding political world. This challenge of authority was accompanied by deference of senior quietists framed as relics of a bygone era that preached antiquated ways which could not address more pressing local and international issues. The politicos framed themselves as more knowledgeable about current world affairs and considered themselves better equipped to interpret and address crises and issues at all levels, like the Gulf War, and hence more relevant and in-touch with Muslims. Therefore, politicos follow non-violent activism which stems from contextual interpretation and framing rather than creed (Wiktorowicz 2005a & 2006).
3. *Jihadis*. The jihadi and politico factions, during the early 1990s, were somewhat blurred. Toward the mid-1990s, the Saudi regime began heavy repression toward politico dissidents, which created a void filled by jihadis (Wiktorowicz 2006). The jihadis, like the politicos, critiqued quietists, not about the creed, but about their unwillingness to put this creed into practice by addressing injustices toward Muslims caused by the Saudi regime and what they portrayed as its American and Zionist masters. The jihadis stand out because of their framing and use of violent methods (Hegghammer 2009; Wiktorowicz 2005a & 2006: 225). Regarding jihad within these three currents, Lia (2009) advocates a word of caution. Salafi-jihadis are not necessarily 'radicalised elements within - or as a by-product of - a broader Salafi phenomenon' (Lia 2009: 282). Lia argues that jihad, like the one in Afghanistan versus the USSR, can be legitimate and thus not 'radical Islam'.

A Salafi's interpretation of the relationship between politics and violence is hence a result of framing and contextual interpretation of national and international affairs rather than creed. This has allowed Salafis to adapt to the French context and grow their numbers by adapting their religious offering to the French people's needs and offering adaptive solutions to right their wrongs. This adaptation has allowed it to engage numerous individuals from various backgrounds and age-range.

For the following SMT analysis, only Salafi-quietists in France are considered, as salafi-jihadism requires an organisation to further the engagement of members into violence, which is the purpose of the next three chapters.

#### 5.2.4.3 *Incentives*

Salafi-quietism offers clarity of Islam, which alters and empowers identity by farming a universally alternative model of social action and truth. Salafism's penetration into individuals' lives, whether young or old, Muslim or not, from the *banlieues* or not, is driven by alternative social, political, economic, and cultural practices than those of Western societies that have alienated them. Salafism reinstates a pure and 'authentic' intellectualised faith, through an identity, which is a message that resonates with a wide and various audience. This identity transforms disgruntled youths, politically repressed people, and discriminated against immigrants into chosen ones and members of *al-firqa al-najiya* which offers a privileged access to truth. Salafism's appeal lies in both a religious discourse, through the golden age of Islam present during the Islam of the prophet and the salaf and the promise of paradise, and an identity discourse, through 'communitarianism' and the Islamisation of individuals (Boukhobza 2015, 2016i & 2016ii), wherein individuals opt-out of society, reject French society and values, and create of a superior community based on its framing of *tawhid*. Belonging to this society gives a feeling of exclusivity. Salafism's power of Islamisation creates a new Salafi identity that requires an active religious role, such as time management which revolves around the mandatory five daily prayers, and a social role, such as the markings of exterior forms like clothing and beards to stress the difference between 'us' and 'them'. In France, some Salafis refuse certain occupations and avoid the 'contamination' of their purity by not interacting with *kufar* (unbelievers). This new identity is a form of empowerment to solve modern day identity issues (Lacroix 2009; Meijer 2009: 13-17; Wiktorowicz 2005a & 2006). Here lies a paradox: whilst Salafi-quietists consider themselves apolitical, offering an alternative social and political life-style is political activism (Soufiane 2016). Therefore, although they do not participate directly in the democratic process, they are political actors.

These incentives are typically strongest for individuals of Algerian or European descent for three reasons: they often lack a clear national identity as their long stay in the *banlieues* has cut them off from such an identity; they lack the religious knowledge to fall back on, compared to Turks and Moroccans (Kepel 2012); and they do not feel as though they belong to French society, sharpening the need to find a way to belong (Khosrokhavar 2014).

#### 5.2.4.4 *Framing*

Since Salafi-quietism's frames were discussed above, this sub-subsection examines its frame alignment. Salafism's 'communitarianism' is a mobilisational tool that relies on the creed's ability to morally up-stage opponents (Haykel 2009), like parents, elites, dominant cultural and socio-economic values, and the laic French institutions, via its basic absolutist premise of 'we are better than you' (Adraoui 2009). This feeling is a form of empowerment for immigrants' children as they now have the feeling of getting closer to a tailored superior knowledge, instead of an education in the devalued *écoles républicaines banlieusardes*, filled with ethnic markings, social difficulties, and fled by the middle class, that offers, at

best, mediocre future prospects. The students escape their predestined social life and become the best students in a class whose subject is about the pure and authentic Islam (Kepel 2012).

Salafism's intra-faith competing frames are the Tabligh movement and salafi-jihadism, while counter-frames are the French state's Social Contract. As seen above, Salafism overtook the Tabligh movement by offering a framing of the current French social and political context which offered more incentives and a better equipped repertoire of action. Further, the Salafi movement is born out of Saudi Arabia, the land of the prophet and his followers, whereas the Indo-Pakistani region of the Tabligh movement, a proof for Salafis that the Tabligh movement is not the true Islam. Salafism roots in Saudi Arabia and its links with *ulemas* of the pan-Islamist movement offer a frame which is intellectualised in the land of the prophet and not a far away place like the Tabligh movement.

In frame competition against the salafi-jihadis, which are abhorred by Salafi-quietists, jihadis are utilising a similar approach that politicians used against the quietists: jihadis are calling the quietists' isolation archaic, improper, and not defensive enough against the West's and the Zionists' evil in Muslim lands. For jihadis, the purists' isolationism tactic is archaic since it does not offer a repertoire of action toward changing current world affairs. A similar critique against Salafi-purists made by Salafi-politicos in Saudi Arabia in the mid-1970s. Even though France is not a Muslim land, some purists argue that staying is acceptable because it is a land with a Muslim presence and thus is *dar al-shahada* (land of testimony). For jihadis, this is unacceptable as France is *dar al-kufr* (land of unbelievers) and an *hijra* to a true and authentic Muslim land is required. Finally, jihadis call for action to aide Muslim in need, such as those in Syria, with violent methods if necessary. This frame carries tangible actions which incentivise engagement rather than following the purists' repertoire of praying. Although the jihadis have sapped followers from the quietists, this is on a small scale as, firstly, the quietists' incentives and way of life are sufficiently rewarding and less risky and cost bearing for numerous followers, and secondly, hardened quietists are less likely to switch camps (Khosrokhavar 2014: 151-152). However, the common base of both factions implies fluidity and thus potential switching during the beginning of a pathway-to engagement. That is, one faction can feed mobilisation to either factions as engagement progresses. These common frames are why the militant salafi-jihadi movement cannot be disassociated from the pan-Islamist movement, and vice versa.

In the end, Salafi-quietism's biggest frame competitor is the French Social Contract. Numerous youths do not want to participate in Salafism because of the proscribed isolationism. Rather, they wish to be civic in their lives and see Islam as compatible with French society. Ironically, in spite of these attitudes, quietists are more integrated into French society that they would concede. Their isolation is in part due to their postal code which puts off employers, but also because of the men's style of a djellaba cut calf-high, with an untrimmed beard, moustache, and shaved heads, all-while following very strict prayer times and not wanting to work with women, even shake the hands of women, make them unemployable. For women, their face hidden behind a black veil gives no prospect of finding employment (Godard 2015a; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012). Although they

reject contacts with *kufar*, purists do have economic relations, as long as their loyalty remains to their community. It is through this loophole that they become imbued with the materialistic culture of the modern consumerist society, like texting on iPhones and *rocking* Air Jordans (Adraoui 2009: 374-375; Meijer 2009: 17). For example, some Salafis dominate certain diversified *banlieues*, which is not very isolationist, while other neighbourhoods are avoided because they are dominated by *kufar* (Meijer 2009: 16).

Despite competing frames, Salafi-quietism's frames and frame alignment are still, to this day, attracting new followers as they are dually propagated by physical and virtual networks.

#### 5.2.4.5 Networks

Initially, only large cities saw the rise of Salafi mosques. Paris and its *banlieue* was one of the first regions, with the Tariq Ibn Ziyad mosque in Les Mureaux (Yvelines, 78), the office for the *Ligue Islamique Mondiale* (World Islamic League) in Mantes-La-Jolie (Yvelines), mosques in Argenteuil and Pontoise (Val d'Oise, 95), Corbeil-Essonnes and Longjumeau (Essonne, 91), Villeneuve-la-Garenne (Hauts-de-Seine, 92), Stains (Seine-Saint-Denis, 93), and Vitry-sur-Seine (Val-de-Marne, 94). Outside Paris, mosques near bastions of Algerian immigration fell to the control of Salafis in Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing, and in Romans, near Lyon. In Marseille, Salafism rose via an Algerian Salafi current which has been getting closer to Saudi Salafism. One such influential member, Abdelhadi Douidi, has become a model and influenced thirteen mosques in Marseille. Today, Salafism in France is no longer restricted to large cities but has instead spread, regardless of the geographical isolation of some French departments: five Salafi mosques and three destabilised mosques can be found in Isère (38), three and two in Var (83), four and one in Vaucluse (84), and the infamous Lunel mosque (Hérault, 34). Salafism in France today can no longer be thought of as spread out, but rather, as a movement of intertwined network, wherein each node of a region communicates and acts in collaboration with other networks (Godard 2015a; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

Simultaneously to this development of physical network, Salafism is also represented by a virtual online network, wherein anonymous website administrators, usually in their thirties, accumulate and propagate the French translations of Saudi *ulemas'* work to create a huge virtual library. Example include sheik Rabee al-Madkhali and sheik al-Jaza'iri *Sounnah*<sup>6</sup>, *Le Musulman*<sup>7</sup> or *Dammaj*<sup>8</sup> based in Yemen. The mass of followers, usually aged between sixteen to thirty years old, have invaded forums, like *Aloloom*<sup>9</sup>, blog-posts, like *Salafi Actu*<sup>10</sup>, Q&A websites, like *Yahoo Answers*<sup>11</sup>, comments of news sites, like *Saphir News*<sup>12</sup> or *Oumma.com*<sup>13</sup>, and Facebook groups. There, Salafis propagate their self-

<sup>6</sup> [www.sounnah.free.fr/sommaire\\_news.htm](http://www.sounnah.free.fr/sommaire_news.htm)

<sup>7</sup> [www.le-musulman.fr](http://www.le-musulman.fr)

<sup>8</sup> [www.dammaj-fr.com](http://www.dammaj-fr.com)

<sup>9</sup> [www.aloloom-fr.com/forum.php](http://www.aloloom-fr.com/forum.php)

<sup>10</sup> [www.salafiactu.wordpress.com](http://www.salafiactu.wordpress.com)

<sup>11</sup> [www.answers.yahoo.com](http://www.answers.yahoo.com)

<sup>12</sup> [www.saphirnews.com](http://www.saphirnews.com)

<sup>13</sup> [www.oumma.com](http://www.oumma.com). Oumma is the French spelling of *umma*.

taught knowledge, usually via Saudi *ulemas'* partial lessons on YouTube, eager to demonstrate that they are good Muslims by expressing their strict obedience to the texts, without actually having read them and holding only a rudimentary understanding, all-the-while claiming *takfir* against any argument and action they disagree with (Azazen 2016; Soufiane 2016). This online community acts both as a school where individuals can rub elbows with 'great scholars' and a refuge from the physical life they are isolated from (Godard 2015a; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012). It is via this extensive network that Salafis utilise a range of actions to propagate their incentives and frames.

#### 5.2.4.6 *Repertoire of Action*

Salafis, like the Tabligh movement, are bringing to France an ideology that originates and is intellectualised from a foreign land. Therefore, Salafis need a way to align their world view with individuals in France. Unlike the Tabligh movement's social and religious outings, Salafism relies on an intellectual approach aimed at deepening their followers' knowledge of scriptural Islam via Saudi *ulemas'* writings, propagated via physical and virtual actions. This intellectual knowledge transcends the need for a local cultural adaptation as the group's culture emanates from the interpretation of texts.

The physical actions are made possible through the pan-Islamist movement, funded by the deep pockets of Gulf monarchies, acquired through the rise of oil prices after war of October 1973. During the 1990s, Abu Bakr al-Jaza'iri, an Algerian, was sent, from Saudi Arabia, on a tour of France to call upon Muslim followers to not join the Tabligh movement nor the Muslim Brotherhood, but rather Salafism. Saudi Arabia then sent other preachers, of Syrian and Jordanian origin, who were disciples of a Salafi sheik Nasr al-Din al-Albani. In 2001, Saudi Arabia sent Rabee al-Madkhali, who, in part via his online presence, rebutted the Tabligh movement and the Muslim Brotherhood in France. Sending Salafi preachers and intellectuals to France was not so easy because the French authorities were not easily issuing visas. Instead, Gulf monarchies, and other foreign governments, funded the construction of mosques and chose the imam, and what he could and could not preach. These imams are actually French, and eloquent in French and Arabic. Further, they are aware of the ambiguities regarding funding in the 1905 law for cultural NGOs, a status most mosques opt for. Hence, they opt for the minimalist law of 1901 on NGOs instead allowing more funding freedom. These charismatic individuals, who do not divulge their Salafism to the mosque's administrator, assist older mosque administrators in adapting to the French administrative system all-the-while setting up charters which do not require input from administrators for the imam's desired activities. Hence, these charismatic imams hire colluding collaborators, which administrators cannot background check, to, for example, invite foreign imams to preach a Salafi sermon. Others wait for the imam in place to undertake his pilgrimage to Mecca and preach in the interim, while others follow a patriarchal route by replacing their father. Whichever process is chosen, the end goal is to replace the current imam with a Salafi imam. (Godard 2015a; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012). A similar approach is used in sports clubs and gyms, a place where many non-practising youth cohorts spend their free time (Azazen 2015).

The virtual route is made possible by submerging the Francophone web with translated Saudi Salafi *ulemas'* text. From there, individuals acquire a pseudo-knowledge of Salafism, and can ask 'scholars' question directly online, and at times, are invited to ask the questions in Salafi controlled mosques. Through either route, individuals can satisfy their incentive of performing their *hijra*. Since Saudi authorities do not easily issues visas to visit Mecca or Medina, the Salafi networks offer opportunities in Egypt, Yemen, and the Maghreb - countries where the French passport is (fairly) welcomed (Godard 2015a; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

#### 5.2.4.7 *Lessons for Disengagement*

With growing numbers, Salafism represents the structural failures of the transmission of French values to immigrants, their descendants, and those living in the *banlieues*, and *l'école républicaine banlieusarde*, whose graduates are confronted with never-ending social and political misery. The failures push some to find in Salafism a welcoming community which proclaims, by its attitudes and doctrines, a rejection of French society and its values. Further, Salafis promote the superiority of their uncompromising Muslim values, which they are ready to put into practice by emigration to Muslim lands (Kepel 2012: 242-243). There exists little disengagement from Salafism, because France is not treating the root social and political causes which create engagement with Salafism. Further, many politicians on the left are not halting the spread of the pan-Islamist movement by hiding behind *laïcité* to justify inactions. Rather, the French government has stalled building mosques and has banned the burqa. Yet, women, who are mostly French converts rather than immigrants, are not wearing the burqa as a result not of disengagement but of submission to the law.

Nevertheless two lessons can be learned from Salafi-quietism's growth and salafi-jihadism's unfortunate arrival in France. Firstly, incentives need to focus on how the organisation is unfit to solve the problems at hand (push factors) and how individuals can help others and not only themselves (pull factors). That is, push and pull incentives must be about more than just the individual, but also about society as a whole, wherein an individual's actions improves his or her condition and that of his family, his friends, and others, all-the-while having his or her condition improved by others - this is the meaning of *Fraternité* in France's motto *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. This follows from the belonging and participating in the French Social Contract. Secondly, individuals must be able to hear a similar message across the entire actions of the State. That is, the French government's actions must consistently resonate and propagate these pull and push factors across all its networks and nodes (state institutions, laws, jurisprudence, political parties, townships, the police, etc.).

### 5.2.5 *The Third Generation*

The third generation of Islam in France, *l'islam des jeunes* (Islam of the youths), is carried by the immigrants' descendants, a generation born and raised in France that belongs to a mixed cultural universe which utilises its own vocabulary, *le verlan*, to designate itself as *reubeu*, *renoi*, *ketur*, or *céfran*<sup>14</sup>. These *jeunes*, who proudly and loudly claim their father's heritage, though few have been back to their 'home-country', want to restore their parent's dignity after years of unemployment and unfavourable state policies, and wish to keep the CFCM far from their Islam, as they see it as a remnant of *caïdat*<sup>15</sup> (Kepel 2012).

*Les jeunes* began their politicisation in the 1990s, after placing themselves against the *darons* and the *frères* and being highly involved in social life, especially in their *banlieues*, by entering politics via a bottom-up approach through self-created NGOs, like *l'Union des Jeunes Musulmans* (Union of Young Muslims), *Jeunes Arabes de Lyon et Banlieue* (Young Arabs from Lyon and its Banlieue), and some even made alliances with political parties from the extreme left, the first being *le Mouvement de l'Immigration et des Banlieues* (the Movement of Immigration and the Banlieues). Via these NGOs and political alliances, they broke away from the *darons'* nostalgia of *le bled*, surpassed the Arabisation pushed for by the *frères*, and opposed the rupture from society professed by the Tabligh and Salafi movements. Through Tariq Ramadan, grand-son of the founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, the *jeunes* found a charismatic leader, who holds, with ease, in books, speaking events, and television interviews, a rhetoric and discourse in line with the *jeunes* and equal to that of intellectuals and scholars. These *jeunes* fully assume their French and European citizenships all-the-while affirming their Muslim identity, which implies demanding the respect of their inalienable rights, such as the right to wear a hijab in *l'école républicaine*. This willingness to fully accept one's citizenship was translated into Muslims youth's massive electoral registration for the 1995 election, and subsequent Presidential votes, and political activism which acts as a break from the *darons* and *frères* policies (Godard 2015a; Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

Further than differing from their *darons* and *frères* about what *l'Islam de France* should be, they also difference on their repertoire of action in three ways. One group is omnipresent online and often overtakes discussions and debates that regard French society: from *laïcité*, to the burqa, to Islamophobia. A second group is engaged in a process of *laïcisation* of the religious for the integration of the Muslim identity within the plurality of French society. A third group fights against some French citizens that follow very strict *laïcité* and integration and has made halal their symbol, like *A votre service* which certified halal meat. During the past fifteen years, four essential events marked the *jeunes* mobilisation and evolved their relation with French society as they are now seen as a religious and political force to

<sup>14</sup>*Verlan* is when French words' syllables are pronounced backwards. For example, *verlan*, is *verlan* for *à l'enver* (backwards). *Reubeu* is *Arabe* (Arab), *renoi* is *noir* (black), *ketur* is *Turc* (Turk), and *céfran* is *français* (French).

<sup>15</sup>Utilised during the French colonial era, a *qa'id* (leader) was the delegation of authority to co-opted indigenous leaders to ensure local populations' obedience and taxation, without offering them citizenship.

be reckoned with. Their direct mobilisation in the street and online against the 15 March 2004 law and the demonstrations against the publication in France of caricatures by a Danish magazine depicting the prophet clearly demonstrate their religious position and imposed themselves as an autonomous force which had to be included when discussing Islam in France, all-the-while holding its distances from the CFCM, a forum created for the purpose of being a discussion forum. Their 2003 European Social Forum and the violent 2005 riots demonstrated their political agenda, though with a hint of Islam. Although the forum had an undeniable media success that allowed the *jeunes* to nationally voice their opinions, the aim of structuring the youth movement was eclipsed by a debate centred around the star speaker Tariq Ramadan. Similarly, the 2005 riots, that also had a media success, are remembered today for their violence rather than for their social and political causes (Azazen 2015; Kepel 2012). The *jeunes* proclaim an uninhibited Islam which deeply utilises France's democratic social and political process, starting with the freedoms of speech, expression, and assembly - freedoms which the *darons* and *frères* held and hold inhibitions against (Godard & Taussig 2007; Kepel 2012).

The *jeunes'* political presence in France is essential because they represent a solid percentage of about 8 to 10% of the population. Their mobilisation in the street is the French way of social and political engagement and, in a sense, represent a form of integration and move away from the *frères* Arabisation of protest. While their movement would benefit from a structure, they need to continue to learn how to adapt to French institutions. For example, after the Charlie Hebdo attacks of January 2015, some Muslim youth proclaimed that the killing of the caricaturist himself was justified and some went as far as not respecting the minute of silence offered to the victims and even booed *La Marseillaise*. Nevertheless, the French institutions, French government's policies, and French people need to adapt to the *jeunes* as well. If not, the *jeunes* will continue to live a *mal être* which will cause further rifts in French society or incentivise them to search for more welcoming groups that can help them in combating their struggle - groups which are not aligned with the French state and nation's values. However, most *jeunes* wish to fight for their place in France no matter what, following the French democratic ways (Azazen 2015).

Some youths do not partake in this social, political, economic, and cultural fight and prefer turning to Salafi-quietism, salafi-jihadism or the Tabligh movement for answers. Most (but not all) of these *jeunes* are *sans pères, ni repères* (without fathers, without benchmarks). That is, their parents cannot help them assimilate into French society, explain social norms, help them with school work, and much more, because they, the parents themselves, have not done so. Despite trying to adapt to French society, Islam is still living a *mal être* in France.

### 5.3 ISLAM'S MAL ÊTRE IN FRANCE

Islam's *mal être* in France is in part due to French society's difficult relationships with religion and immigration and Islam's troubled history. It is also due to France society's misconceptions of Islam and some member of the Muslim community's own-doing.

#### 5.3.1 *Misconceptions of Islam*

In France, Islam is both not understood by average French citizens, and knowledge of Islam is based on stereotypes and the wrongdoings of a few Muslims (Azazen 2015). These misunderstandings and stereotypes prevent Islam in France from settling in. This is aggravated by the Law of 1905 preventing the state from funding and maintaining places of worship, unless they are labelled as historical buildings<sup>16</sup>. However, because foreign consulates' funded the construction and maintaining of mosques, this implies for some, especially the *Front Nation* (FN), an extreme-right political party, a lack of transparency in the funds' source. These outside funds can also be a point of contention for local Muslims, especially younger ones, as they do not want to be preached to by foreign-supported imams. To remedy this lack of funding, numerous mosques have set up crowdfunding campaigns, which rely on followers' donations - followers that are often unemployed or have very little to give. Furthermore, for the FN, mosques are incompatible with France's landscape because of their minarets. These misconceptions and stereotypes toward Islam arose because there is no religious education in *l'école républicaine*, and as such, individuals base their knowledge, not on thorough research and reading as they are taught to do, but on the media and political parties' representation of Islam - a representation biased on behalf the FN and a double-entente from *Les Républicains* (LR), the centre-right/right party. Such misconceptions and stereotypes are easily propagated because *l'Islam de France* does not have one strong common voice to counter, explain or clarify these negative, and often false, premises regarding Islam. This perpetual lack of structure is detrimental to Islam's place in France and individuals' lack of knowledge about Islam serves as a vulnerability exploited by Islamist organisations, especially militant salafi-jihadi organisations.

#### 5.3.2 *The Muslim Community*

Islam's *mal être* is also, in part, perpetrated by some Muslims themselves. On one hand, and quite obviously, this includes those engaged with the Salafi-quietist, Tabligh or militant salafi-jihadi movements. Their continuous strict following of religious rules clash with the French Social Contract (such

<sup>16</sup>The Law of 1905 does not apply in three departments, Moselle (57), Bas-Rhin (67), and Haut-Rhin (68) as during the time of promulgation, they were part of Germany. Hence, the *Grande Mosquée de Strasbourg* received 10% of its funding from the Mayor's office.

as some men not wanting to shake women's hands or some Muslim forbidding anyone in their city or neighbourhood from eating during Ramadan) and/or their violent actions render integrating Islam in the French Social Contract more difficult. The problem here is the following: are some strict following of certain forms of Islam impossible in France implying that these should assimilate once and for all, or does French society need to be more accommodating regarding religious practices? This thesis is not capable of answering this question; however, it can uncover one important symptom from this clash: when individuals are unable to practice their religion as they see fit (whether because of legal or acceptable ways in a society), claims of victimisation will arise. These claims are the first common basis between engagement with the pan-Islamist and salafi-jihadi movements.

On the other hand, but also as important, this includes individuals that are not trying to integrate into the French Social Contract. As demonstrated above, assimilation is not perfect and clashes will occur as the policy is too rigid. The issue is not with the challenge of the policy, but with those demanding that the French Social Contract adapts to them even though they are not willing to adapt. That is, both groups, French society and some Muslims, do not want the door to swing both ways. Regarding French society, this has been demonstrated above. Regarding Muslims, this pertains to individuals from all three generations - whether they are older or young. Some demand actions such as forcing one's school or employer to offer halal food despite the Koran giving guidelines on how to eat if halal is not offered to forbidding others to eat in public during Ramadan (Azazen 2015); men forcing Islamic fashion on women and undertaking closed-door Islamic polygamous marriages (as the saying goes: 'these men only know Islam for the veil and polygamy'); Muslims schools' opaque curriculum (such schools' diplomas are not recognised by the French Ministry of Education); the UOIF blurry relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood: and many more activities. These behaviours are propagated by the idea of what the Muslim Identity ought to be - a potential precursor behaviour toward engagement (Boukhobza 2015); an identity that cannot adapt to the French Social Contract. These attitudes display a resentment, even a repudiation, of parts of the French Social Contract, except for the freedom of expression that some individuals use to hold on to their religious attitudes (freedoms forbidden in countries promoting such behaviours) and to call any critic an 'Islamophobe'.

### 5.3.3 *Islamophobia or Islamoclasm?*

To demonstrate Muslims' victimisation in France (and elsewhere), the term Islamophobia was invented. Phobia, from the ancient Greek φόβος, means fear. Islamophobia thus means the fear of Islam. Indeed, some individuals are afraid of Islam (and Muslims) and their acts are clearly anti-Muslim. To this end the *Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France* (Collective Against Islamophobia in France, CCIF) was established in 2003 to count all Islamophobic acts in France and aid victims with legal proceedings against Islamophobic individuals. However, the CCIF, and many in the Muslim community, have widened the

term's meaning. For example, consider the CCIF's slogan: *l'Islamophobie n'est pas une opinion, c'est un délit* (Islamophobia is not an opinion, it is a crime) (CCIF 2016). How can a fear be a crime? Through this slogan, the CCIF is implying that any individual that suffers Islamophobia is a victim. This widening now also means that any criticism of Islam is branded as Islamophobic implying that vital debates for democracy are no longer being undertaken. What the CCIF is actually challenging can be considered as Islamoclasm.

Iconoclasm is the destruction of icons and other images (or monuments) following political or religious motivations. Appearing during the Byzantine era of the eighth century, Leon III forbade using Christian icons (Christ, the Virgin Mary, and Saints) and ordered their destruction. Iconoclast, from the ancient Greek εἰκὼν *eikōn*, means to break or challenge an image or icon (Brubaker & Haldon 2015). Many acts toward Islam and Muslims today are acts of Islamoclasm as they are meant to rebut Islam's challenges. These acts criticise Islam as it is challenging some of the French Social Contract's basic principals. For example, drives against mosques being built with public funds are not Islamophobic drives but rather, Islamoclasm drives as they are pushing back against constructions that challenge the separation of *l'Etat et l'Eglise*.

Through this incorrect terminology and its new meaning, many do not risk criticising Islam, especially politicians, and the sense that Muslims are victims in France is on the rise. 'In reality, France is no more Islamophobic than its neighbours; it is simply more frontal in its management of Islam in the public sphere' because of its conceptualisation of religion (Khosrokhavar 2016).

#### 5.3.4 Politicians

Some politicians, especially on the left, such as the *préfet* N'Gahane, refuse to criticise such behaviour because of their uncompromisable belief in the mixing of cultures in France. A mixing that can occur only if there is integration by the incoming culture and a welcoming by French society. Unfortunately, since these politicians rely on Muslims' votes, they will not criticise these behaviours, despite some activities acting against the French Social Contract, whether its general or fundamental principles (e.g.: equality of men and women). As the French Minister of Finances, Michel Sapin, claimed after the 22 March 2016 Brussels attacks:

I do not know whether to say Belgium as such, but I think that there was a will or a lack of will on the part of some politicians, perhaps by desire to do well, perhaps for the feeling that, for a better integration, some communities must be left to grow, can also be a form of naivety. [...] faced with communitarianism, we must act (Sapin quoted in *Le Monde* 2016a).

Monsieur Sapin is indeed correct. Different cultures can exist in France, but their existence cannot create 'communitarianism' that erodes social relations, spirals individuals into oblivion, and creates

foreigners physically within the nation but that neither belong nor participate - worst, foreigners that destroy society and corrode the foundations of our democratic society (Le Clézio 2015).

### 5.3.5 Conclusion

Islam's *mal être* in France stems from, firstly, numerous and various misunderstandings and stereotypes on behalf of French society toward Islam as a religion, coupled with anti-Islam politicisation from the FN and some in the LR parties. Secondly, France's conservatism when it comes to change in general. Such conservatism creates, on behalf of some, discrimination, even racism, against immigrants or their descendants. Thirdly, some Muslims attitudes toward the French Social Contract in general. That is, no single group is at fault (whether solely French society or solely Muslims) yet no group can easily claim a lack of responsibility. It is thus essential for *l'Islam de France* to structure itself to give one strong voice of what is and what is not Islam; to educate French citizens about all religions, and to reduce the inequalities between France and its *banlieues*. Until then, knowledge gaps on Islam will be vulnerabilities exploited by MSJOs.

## 5.4 EFFECTS ON ENGAGEMENT

The three hurdles that Islam needs to overcome in France are relied upon by the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-jihadi movements to begin engaging individuals. That is, they feed discourses that fall into Boukhobza's (2016i: 172) five vectors of radicalisation (communitarianism, identity, anti-Semitism, conspiracy theory, and victimhood). Both the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-jihadi movements rely on individuals feeling victimised (amongst other incentives and frames, although victimhood is frequently used). From Boukhobza's (2016i: 172) step one to five, despite different incentives and frames being utilised (as presented in the following chapters), the movements proceed similarly. What sets them apart are the means utilised to right the wrongs. Some movements would argue for Islamist means. The CCIF argues for Ikhwanism, Salafi-quietists argue for Salafism, and militant salafi-jihadis argue for jihadism (and in the case of Daesh, they also argue for takfirism). Whatever the ideology, the last step is to act. Kepel incorporates these steps when he wrote why French youths from the *banlieues* join violent and non-violent Islamist movements:

Unable to join mainstream French society, some youth from the *banlieues*, especially Muslim ones, fall out. The desire to flee these neighbourhoods becomes necessary for them to dissociate themselves from France and to leave it altogether. This is why the trend of religious radicalisation is similar to the syncretic producing a sleek social imagination, marked by strict standards, particularly in terms of gender role, and to a distancing of the economic organisation of Western society. Political Islam thus no longer appears solely as a project to

control and takeover the unstructured lives in marginalized neighbourhoods, but mostly as an attempt to systematic control of all aspects of one's existence (Kepel 2015: 222).

Similarly, for Azazen, a youth and social worker from Marseille's *banlieue nord*, one of the city's roughest neighbourhood, would argue for democratic means to achieve change:

A man set himself on fire in October 2013, in front of the unemployment office because he was unemployed. This suicide ignited nothing in France. [...] In France, nothing is changing. We have politics for a show. Politicians are robots who make speeches for themselves and they speak to no one. They are cut off from the world. [...] If this continues, the youth will revolt [...] following democratic ways, of course (Azazen 2015).

By examining the incentives, frames, networks, and the repertoire of action offered by movements to individuals to right their wrongs, it is possible to determine why and how individuals took the action they did in step five. Now that the context in which the MSJM lives has been examined, it is possible to make sense of how the movement influences these four mechanisms to engage individuals by looking more closely at specific organisations.

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

*A moindre mesure*, Islam has always been present in France. Since the 1980s however, its presence has become more visible. While this does not necessarily mean that France has become more Muslim, it does mean that second and third generations of Islam, unlike first generation, have taken their religion out of the private sphere and become more active in their civic and political lives. The Tabligh and Salafi movements have grown through the international spread and growth of the pan-Islamist movement. However, Islam is living a perpetual *mal être* in France, stemming from a lack of organisation of *l'Islam de France*, the continuous propagation of misunderstandings and stereotypes on behalf of French society toward Islam, and France's conservatism when it faced change.

Since the Tabligh and Salafi movements have common grounds with militant salafi-jihadism, lessons learned from the disengagement from the Tabligh and Salafi movements. can aid in engendering and furthering disengagement from militant salafi-jihadism:

1. An alteration to the context in which a movement and its mechanisms occur is necessary;
2. Push and pull incentives must be about more than just the individual but also about society as a whole;
3. A competing frame of acceptance into French society needs to be created;
4. Incentives and frames need to be propagated at the grassroots level for individuals to feel a connection with the French government;

5. The French government's actions must consistently resonate and propagate these incentives and frames across all its networks and nodes.

For these disengagement lessons to effectively work as they did for the Tabligh and Salafi movements, they are not solely to be established as actions that disengage individuals from the movements, but rather, as actions that engage individuals and French society together. That is, creating belonging and participation into a more malleable French Social Contract.

The next three chapters detail how individuals are mobilised into the MSJM through the specific examples of three MSJOs: the Algerian Groupe Islamique Armé, al-Qaeda, and Daesh.

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## GROUPE ISLAMIQUE ARMÉ

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This chapter examines French individuals' engagement with the GIA and GIA inspired networks with the aim of identifying lessons for disengagement. To do so, it begins by detailing how a popular revolt in Algeria led to the establishment of the GIA. Then, it examines, through SMT, the GIA's evolution and why and how individuals engaged and why and how disengagement occurred or could have occurred. Hafez (2004) has analysed the GIA through SMT's political process movement; however, this thesis approaches the theory differently and focuses on the French characteristics, especially those of networks and the repertoire of action. Thirdly, France's counter-terrorism response to the GIA threat and attacks on French soil is detailed to demonstrate how French counter-terrorism evolved. Finally, the Algerian state and other militant movements' reaction to the GIA's downfall are detailed.

The importance of the GIA to this thesis is not simply why and how individuals engaged. It is also, firstly, about how and why the French government responded in a 'hard' fashion to the GIA. The GIA is the first turning point of French hard counter-terrorism in the late-1980s and early-1990s. The French approach did not adapt to al-Qaeda's inception. Rather, it adapted after GIA active (inspired) networks and attacks surfaced in France and across Europe. Secondly, the GIA members' lack of disengagement is also important. Such lack of disengagement led to their participation with other MSJOs, such as al-Qaeda for instance, and thus, a transfer of networks. That is, a transfer of bonds and nodes, know-how, and resources to name a few.

### 6.1 FROM THE PAN-ISLAMIST MOVEMENT TO THE GIA

Algeria in the late 1970s and early 1980s saw the rise of the pan-Islamist movement which was not engaged in political protests or oppositions, was rather fragmented, and hence, no one voice existed. Its main activities were preaching in mosques and proselytism on university campuses. The *Mouvement Islamique Armé* (Armed Islamic Movement, MIA) was the sole 'radical' movement at the time, though it was shunned by the broader Islamist movement and received little support. After riots in October 1988 against the only legal political party, the *Front de Libération National* (National Liberation Front, FLN), a tangible political reform process began. In 1989, the Algerian government announced a shift toward

a more pluralistic political system. The announcement proclaimed a series of constitutional reforms including: freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association; restrictions on the army's role; and the rights of unionisation and strikes (Burgat & Dowell 1993; Mortimer 1991). 'During spring of 1990, marches, demonstrations, and rallies became virtual daily occurrences' (Mortimer 1991: 583). From this context, the pan-Islamist movement furthered its politicisation.

The pan-Islamist movement took advantage of these reforms to further its political agenda under inclusive organisations. Through this process, the pan-Islamist movement was mostly organised under the dominance of the *Front Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Front, FIS). However, other groups emerged, like the *Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix* (Movement for the Society of Peace)<sup>1</sup>, the *Mouvement de la Renaissance Islamique* (Islamic Renaissance Movement), and several smaller organisation with more radical views (Labat 1995, Martinez 2000).

The FIS' dominance emanated from its position as the vanguard of the movement in terms of its proactive approach to resolving problems, initiating demonstrations, rallies, and even local elections, that created further mobilisation, and increased its attractiveness. Whereas, other pan-Islamist organisations generated little support because they were reactive (al-Tawil 1998: 23-24 quoted in Hafez 2004: 45). Further, the pan-Islamist movement's structure allowed non-activist members to mobilise wider social forces for support, which enabled individuals to join and claim support without having to actively participate in the movement other than by voting in elections. Activists, however, had to follow strict commands from the leadership (Labat 1995: 187). The FIS' dominance was further demonstrated in June 1990 when it won many *communes* and *départements* in local elections via its broad mobilisation of social support, without excluding any Islamic tendencies. Furthermore, it explicitly expressed its ambition of participating in the 1991 national elections (Willis 1996).

The FIS' impending victory led the military to oust the government via a bloodless coup on 11 January 1992 and to begin political repression of militants. The military annulled the electoral process, re-established special courts (which had been banned under the 1989 constitution) to prosecute 'terrorists', and created anti-FIS measures. Such measures included the closure of all cultural and charitable organisations and the destruction of unofficial mosques linked to FIS, and in March 1992, the FIS' ban altogether. Several thousand FIS supporters were prosecuted and imprisoned, and from 1992 to 1993, 166 were sentenced to death. From 1992 to 1993, daily killings of Islamists took place, either through manhunts or clashes during searches. Many human rights organisations condemned the military regime's use of torture, 'disappearances', and the extra-judicial killing of suspected Islamists (Labat 1995, Martinez 2000, Willis 1996).

This constant indiscriminate repression of FIS members led many FIS activists toward other Islamist organisations, even though these organisations rejected democracy, the electoral process, and the Algerian ruling regime altogether (Martinez 2000). By the end of 1992, many FIS activists had re-joined one of three militant organisations: the MIA, led by Mustafa Bouyali, the *Mouvement pour l'Etat Islamique*

<sup>1</sup> In Arabic, the MSP's name is *Harakat al-Mujtama al-Islami*, or HAMAS; not to be confused with the Palestinian Hamas.

(Movement for the Islamic State) or a conglomeration of small armed groups. On 1 September 1992, in Tamesguida, Northern Algeria, these organisations met to unite their ranks through one organisation. The Algerian security forces attacked the meeting via a bloody assault. Instead of dissuading the organisations, the assault led them to form a new organisation: the *Groupe Islamique Armé* (Armed Islamic Group, GIA) (Willis 1996). By 1993, the GIA became the most prominent armed organisation through its size and daring attacks against the security forces. The GIA attracted more former FIS activists and leaders (Labat 1995: 308-309). FIS members who did not join the GIA developed an armed wing called the *Armée Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Army, AIS) in 1994.

## 6.2 GIA'S INCEPTION AND EVOLUTION

In early 1992, Mansour Meliani, a former aid to Mustafa Bouyali, along with many Afghan mujahedeen and other activists, left the MIA and founded their own MSJO, the GIA, whose aim was to fight the Algerian government. Meliani was arrested in July 1992 and executed in August 1993. Mohammed Allal (also known as Moh Leveilley) replaced Meliani until his death at Tamesguida in 1992. The Tamesguida attack rallied numerous activists and organisations to the GIA's ranks. The GIA was to lead the offensive against the Algerian government in what became the Algerian jihad.

The GIA focused on total war against the Algerian government. Its initial structure was a conglomerate of armed militia cells, from 20 to 300 militants, under the overall command of an emir. While some cells organised in urban areas, all took refuge in the mountains where camps were constructed in caves and underground for shelter and supply caches. This structure pushed the GIA to become an exclusive organisation. New recruits had to undergo the following process: pledge allegiance to the Salafi creed and abandon any *bid'a* (religious innovation); obey their emir; and repent if he had belonged to any other tendency, like the FIS, AIS or *jazairas* (politico salafis, literally 'Algerianist'). In May 1994, several FIS leaders united with the GIA, and, alongside ex-members of non-Islamist groups, had to renounce all ties with their past organisations and provide intelligence on them as well. Any imam wishing to join has to issue a *fatwa* inciting jihad and supporting the GIA. If any members wished to leave the GIA, not only were they considered apostates, their punishment was death (Hafez 2004).

From January 1993 to 1996, the GIA was headed by five different *emirs* (commanders). Each altered the GIA's means (through an increasingly violent repertoire of action) and ends (from fighting the Algerian government, to fighting other militant organisation, to fighting the entire Algerian society) (Kepel 2002). This increased the organisation's isolation from the population and led to the demise of the organisation and the Algerian jihad.

Beginning in January 1993, Abdelhak Layada, became the GIA's first *emir*. He affirmed the organisation's independence from the FIS and MIA. However, he was arrested in Morocco in May 1993 then jailed (Kepel 2002: 263).

In August 1993, Seif Allah Djafar, (aka Mourad Si Ahmed or Djafar al-Afghani), a primary school educated 30-year-old black-marketeer, became the GIA's second *emir*. Under al-Afghani, the GIA's support base outside Algeria grew. In London, the *al-Ansar* (the Partisans) magazine, in support of the GIA, was being produced and published. In Algeria, the GIA reaffirmed that it was not the FIS' armed wing and escalated violence. Its attacks now included civilians, who refused to live under GIA prohibitions, foreigners, and journalists and intellectuals because 'journalists who fight against Islamism through the pen will perish by the sword' (Šukys 2007: 19). By 1993's end, 26 foreigners had been killed and Sheik Mohamed Bouslimani, a prominent Movement for the Society of Peace (also known as HAMAS) party figure, was kidnapped and executed after 'refusing to issue a fatwa endorsing the GIA's tactics' (Kepel 2002: 263-264). Al-Afghani was killed in combat on 26 February 1994.

On 10 March 1994, Cherif Gousmi (aka Abu Abdallah Ahmed) became the GIA's third *emir*. Under Gousmi, the GIA saw its apogee as its tactics combined violence and precise political objectives. The GIA attacked new targets, such as schools that allowed mixed classes or girls who did not wear their hijab. Gousmi was killed in combat on 26 September 1994 (Kepel 2002: 264-266).

On 27 October 1994, Djamel Zitouni, a 30-year-old with very limited religious education, became the GIA's fourth *emir*. Under Zitouni, the GIA followed similar tactics and targets in Algeria but also targeted France. The first attack was the hijacking of Air France flight 8969, from Algiers to Paris, on 24 December 1994. After a two day kidnapping, all GIA members aboard the flight were killed by a police raid. The second was a series of bombings in the summer of 1995, killing eight and injuring over 250. In February 1995, the GIA issued a communiqué ordering that 'for every pure Muslim woman arrested by the government, an apostate's wife would be executed' (Kepel 2002: 269). Meanwhile, clashes between the GIA and AIS increased. Because of disagreements on means and ends, dissension amongst GIA members began. On 31 May 1996, *al-Ansar* suspended its publication, and the following week, *al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya* and a Libyan armed group withdrew their support. During his twenty-two month as *emir*, Zitouni brought the Algerian jihad to its knees (Kepel 2002: 266-271).

Antar Zouabri, the GIA's fifth *emir*, from 1996 to 2002, killed-off the Algerian jihad altogether and claimed *takfir* against the entire Algerian society (Kepel 2002: 271). While before Zouabri the GIA had already claimed *takfir*, it was solely against the 'impious' Algerian state. In GIA controlled regions, a re-Islamisation of society was imposed, alongside punishments for women refusing to wear a hijab, for example. Zitouni went further as, after the November 1995 presidential election, he claimed that the entire Algerian society 'had left Islam' and ought to be considered as apostate (ICG 2004: 13). In fact, the GIA rejected unity and dialogue with the FIS and any other groups wishing to participate in an electoral strategy. By the end 1995, Zitouni published *The Way of God: Elucidation of Salafist Principles and the Obligations of Jihad Fighters*, a 62-page tract, which reiterated the GIA's aims and answered its detractors' comments (Kepel 2002: 269). Convinced by Zouabri's salafi orthodoxy, *al-Ansar* restarted publication. Attacks on the population continued throughout 1997 where hundreds of men, women,

and children were killed. By then, the jihad no longer existed and was replaced by banditry and criminality (Kepel 2002: 272-274). During this time, the GIA also lost its al-Qaeda support (Burke 2007: 217; Sageman 2004: 64 & 151).

The GIA's means and ends were thus altered at every *emir's* arrival until the organisation was no longer a MSJO but a criminal one. In September 1997, *al-Ansar* ceased publishing and the GIA disappeared in a 'more confusing and mysterious' way than it came to be (Kepel 2002: 273). The bloodbath of September 1997 led to the GIA's disappearance, and in 1998, the AIS began a ceasefire process. From 1992 to 1997, the GIA was nevertheless able to mobilise individuals in Algeria and France by personalising the Algerian jihad's incentives and frames and by relying on dense and strong Algerian and European networks and by undertaking resonating attacks in France.

### 6.2.1 *Incentives*

Initially, Layada, incentivised engagement with the GIA by comparing the fight in Algeria to the Afghan jihad: 'the GIA has assembled the necessary justifications according to sharia' (Layada quoted in Kepel 2002: 261). He went on to claim:

those who issued fatwas to proclaim that the jihad was an obligation [*fard ayn*] for everyone in Afghanistan have not done likewise in Algeria and the other Muslim countries, whereas the basic principles that ought to guide them are exactly the same (Layada quoted in Kepel 2002: 261, sic).

Layada did not want the dissension that occurred amongst Afghan mujahedeen to occur amongst Algerians. He divided the Algerian pan-Islamist movement into two categories. On one hand, the

godless government ... and we shall be innocent of their blood, because Allah's judgement on them is made clear when he announces that 'he among you who pays allegiance to them, is one of their number' [Koran 5: 51]. As to those who are not allied to the government, we say to them, 'why do you wait to join the caravan of the jihad?' (Layada quoted in Kepel 2002: 261, Koran verse reference added).

The 'caravan' is clearly a reference to Abdullah Azzam's (1991) *Join the Caravan*. Since the FIS/AIS was also undertaking a jihad, Layada demonstrated that Algerian imams and the FIS/AIS were incapable of fighting the Algerian government. While the 'the martyr Bouyali' was aware of jihad, he and other preachers 'lived in a world of dreams, mirages, and intellectual and operational naivety' (Layada quoted in Kepel 2002: 261), the FIS had laudable end but its means would be vanquished by the 'impious' Algerian government. Thus, Algerians ought to join the GIA's jihad and no other. Layada thus incentivised engagement by reiterating the Afghan jihad incentives.

The GIA also incentivised engagement by incentivising belonging and participation in the creation of a true Islamic community. It was not sufficient to belong once the community was created, one had to participate in its expansion and sustainability. Such action would be justly rewarded in the after-life.

Early on, the GIA's focus shifted from the 'near enemy', Algeria, to the 'near and far' enemy - Algeria and France. The GIA incentivised the 'far enemy', because France, the 'mother of all sinners', as a colonial power had stolen, for over a century, Algeria's riches, and continued its financial and logistical support of the Algerian government. Through this support, France had close relations to the Algerian security services and, perhaps, was endeavouring to facilitate a diplomatic solution between the Algerian government and the FIS/AIS. This also implied, to the GIA, that France's meddling in Algerian affairs meant returning Algerian Muslims to a condition of slavery and turning them away from religion (Shapiro 2007: 142; Shapiro & Suzan 2003: 79-80). Attacks toward France began when Zitouni became *emir* as he was an advocate of killing French citizens (Kepel 2002: 267). Incentivising the fight against France incentivised those in France to turn away from a country that causes griefs to their homeland. That is, France was depicted as causing victimhood and this wrong had to be righted.

The GIA also incentivised engagement by claiming *takfir* against the Algerian government, which was then claimed against the entire Algerian society under Zitouni and Zouabri. Tacit approval of any organisation other than the GIA was a sufficient reason to be targeted. In a communiqué, Zitouni (1995: 27 quoted in Hafez 2004: 49) claimed that it 'considers the institutions of the [Algerian] state, from its agencies and ministers, to its courts and legislative and parliamentary assemblies, to its army gendarme, and police to be apostate institutions'. However, this backfired, disincentivised engagement, and initiated the organisation's downfall and eventual demise.

These incentives were framed through anti-system frames where the GIA had the sole social and political solution to the Algeria's (and the world's) problems.

### 6.2.2 Frames

The GIA framed its jihad as an anti-system one. According to Layada, the caliphate's 1924 end was the most catastrophic event for Muslims worldwide. While the Muslim Brotherhood and the Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami efforts to restore the caliphate were praiseworthy, their results over the past seventy years were insufficient. During this period, the 'ungodly' came to power the world-over. The GIA's fight was against the un-Islamic government systems, infidelism, and apostasy in Algeria and around the Muslim world. The Algerian government was seen as a compliant partner in this un-Islamic world system, and, hence, any of its members, supporters, and constituencies were considered infidels and legitimate targets. This further escalated to conclude that any individual, whether Algerian or not, was a legitimate target if they were not with the GIA (Kepel 2002: 260).

Like the Afghan jihad, the GIA aligned its jihad frame through religion as a mobilisation tool, by claiming Islamic obligation imposed by god. However, since the FIS/AIS also undertook a jihad, the GIA differentiated itself through its conception of Islam. The AIS aimed to restore the 1989 Algerian Constitution while the GIA aimed at establishing a caliphate. However, the GIA was an exclusive organisation as not all Muslims were welcomed into the GIA and it imposed its version of Sharia which, through forbidding music, radio, newspaper, etc., altered civilians' lifestyles in its controlled regions.

As the insurgency went on, the GIA's frame evolved to include Islam's historic enemies: Jews, Christians, and the West, including France. In a 1993 communiqué the GIA declared: 'Our struggle is with infidelism and its supporters beginning with France and ending with the leader of international terrorism, "The United States of America", its ally Israel, and among them the apostate ruling regime in our land' (Hafez 2004: 50). The GIA's struggle was thus one against the world order where Muslims were ruled and persecuted by un-Islamic regimes. The problem, being systemic to the world, needed a systemic answer found in jihad.

### 6.2.3 Network

Initially, the GIA relied on strong popular support from the Algerian middle class, until its brutal repression and call of *takfirism* against the entire population. Starting in August 1993, Djafar al-Afghani expanded the GIA's base of support outside Algeria amongst North African immigrants in Europe, especially France. This created dense and strong bonds outside Algeria, allowing the GIA to elicit support, whether financial or logistical, offering it freedom of speech and movement, and allowing it to undertake attacks against the 'far enemy' directly on its territory.

In London, Abu Mousab and Abu Qatada edited the *al-Ansar* magazine, whose ideologues were Abu Messab and Abu Hamza al-Masri (aka Mustafa Kamel of the Finsbury Park mosque) (Zahab & Roy 2004: 17). This placed the GIA in the middle of *Londonistan* and offered wide options for support (both physical and financial) and freedom of expression.

The GIA also had network connections with al-Qaeda, yet their numbers, strength, and functions are unclear. Little evidence exists to support claims of bin Laden's meaningful involvement in GIA activities other than through shared ideology (Gregory 2003: 132); however, during al-Qaeda's Sudanese exile, the GIA had an office in Khartoum which was in contact with bin Laden and his network. Former GIA members claim that, in 1994, GIA leaders solicited bin Laden's financial assistance; however, the leadership was displeased with the required levels of operational and ideological involvement required by bin Laden as counterpart. A militant (quoted in Burke 2007: 205-206) present in Khartoum claims that a representative was dispatched by bin Laden to discuss a GIA-al-Qaeda alliance. The representative was faced with very hostile responses by some GIA members and barely escaped with his life.

Nevertheless, it is surely plausible that some GIA members made such an alliance (Burke 2007). Furthermore, magazines, videos, and tracts published by the GIA echo very similar ideas and language to al-Qaeda's (Burke 2007: 205-206). This link with al-Qaeda offered know-how, training, and resources to Algerian jihad.

In France, the GIA had links with at least four small decentralised supporting networks:

- The *Vénissieux Network* had numerous links with the GIA through members, like Merouane Benhamed, Menad Benchellali, and an ex-Algerian military captain, Said Arif.
- The *Fraternité Algérienne en France* (Algerian Brotherhood in France, FAF), representing the first relays of the dissolved FIS, was established by immigrated youths, from Meudon (Hauts-de-Seine, 92) or Sartrouville (Yvelines, 78), and young Algerian students. It organised meetings where future jihadis may have met and published a magazine, *Le Critère* (the Criteria), whose tone hardened as the civil war progressed - its publication was forbidden in 1993. Solidarity for fighters was organised nationwide: in Paris' rue Jean-Pierre-Timbaud, in the 11<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, and rue Myrha, in the 18<sup>th</sup> arrondissements; in a mosque where sheik Abdelbaki Sahraoui, a founder of the FIS, officiated; the Porte d'Aix neighbourhood in Marseille; and in Lyon's *banlieues*.
- The *Chalabi Network* was headed by Mohamed Chalabi, an ex-gang member from Paris' southern *banlieue*, who went to Algeria to find his roots and 'revitalise' himself. Based in Choisy-le-Roi, Orly, and Champigny (Val-de-Marne, 94), he became a modest part of a wider network linked to Algerian militants.
- Other cells in Paris, Lille, and Lyon, 'headquartered' in Chasse-sur-Rhône, south-eastern Lyon, not only supported the GIA by interacting with young French recruits and acting as a link between them and the GIA's leadership, but also perpetrated attacks in France (Kepel 2002: 311). Key members include: Boualem Bensaïd (who also had ties in Belgium and the Netherlands); Ali Touchent; Rachid Ramba (who trained in the Khalden camp in Pakistan for six months, the camp where Zacarias Moussaoui trained in 1998, assisted in the production of the *al-Ansar* magazine, and financed attacks); Smaïn Aït Ali Belkacem (involved in the summer of 1995 Paris bombings); Khaled Kelkal (from Vaulx-en-Velin, played a major role in the summer of 1995 Paris bombings); and Safé Bourada. Bourada, an ex-FAF member, escaped the 9th November 1983 *Opération Chrysanthème* (aimed at dismantling Islamist and GIA network in France) and travelled to Belgium, with Touami M'Rad, a GIA member, through whom he met Ali Touchent. Bourada and Touchent translated *al-Ansar* into simple French. Bourada served as liaison with Rachid Ramda and was a recruiter for France (excluding Paris and the Nord region). In Vaulx-en-Velin, in eastern Lyon, he met Khaled Kelkal. He also helped Smaïn Aït Ali Belkacem travel from Italy to France. Safé Bourada participated in the GIA bombing wave in the summer of 1995 and was arrested in London on 5 November 1995 and deported to France. He was sentenced to ten years

imprisonment but was released in February 2003. He then founded the *Ansar al-Fath* (Partisans of Victory) group in 2003, also based in Chasse-sur-Rhône, whose aim was to prepare and aid mujahedeen to rejoin the jihad, and potentially perpetrate attacks in France. In 2005, the network was dismantled and Safé Bourada was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment).

Further, Fateh Kamel appears to have been linked to GIA members in Algeria. Through his links to the *Gang de Roubaix* (see [subsection 7.1.2](#)), Kamel produced falsified documents required to facilitate militants' movement to France and transiting in France for training in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Burke 2007: 205-206).

These are not given as a laundry list but to demonstrate the strong and dense networks existing to undertake attacks abroad. This prevents information from leaking, aids in mobilising trusted individuals, logistics, and resources, and isolates individuals from external networks (that may turn them away) reinforcing group cohesion and groupthink. Further, these names will re-surface in the al-Qaeda chapter when detailing French individuals' networks. This GIA's links to this dense, strong, and varied small decentralised networks all over France offered it the ability to attack France directly.

#### 6.2.4 *Repertoire of Action*

From July 1993 to September 1997 the *al-Ansar* magazine supplied doctrinal justification for the GIA's actions, sustained a base of pro-GIA publicity outside Algeria, and maintained contacts between local and international jihad networks (Kepel 2002: 263). The word *ansar* refers to the first followers of the prophet, after his arrival to Medina in 622. The magazine presents itself as 'the voice of the jihad in Algeria and throughout the world' (Kepel 2002: 409). Only 16-pages, it was distributed after the Friday prayer outside various mosques, through photocopiers, and even email. Whereas writers like Azzam addressed the readers' straightforwardly, *al-Ansar* was purposefully obscure and designed to inspire the fanatical and unquestioning engagement of the targeted young urban poor (Kepel 2002: 409). Safé Bourada and Ali Touchent translated *al-Ansar* into simple French. Also in France, the magazine, *Le Critère*, was published, though for a limited period before being forbidden.

The GIA's repertoire of violence began as clashes with Algerian security forces and military, assassinations of gendarmes and policemen, and then moved to targeting government officials. As its framing of the struggle was systemic, the targets then became systemic: representatives of opposition groups, journalists, intellectuals, ordinary citizens, and foreigners. No one was seen as neutral as individuals were either with the GIA or against it, since there existed no middle-ground. Thus, targeting became deliberate and indiscriminate via bombs, executions, and massacres. This lack of middle-ground and mode of operation, resulting from the organisation's exclusive mobilisation structure, politicised all targets, even those uninterested in taking sides. The 'far enemy', France, was hit in Algeria, like the 27 March 1996 kidnapping and subsequent beheading of seven French Trappist monks by Zitouni.

France was also hit on its territory. The first was the hijacking of Air France flight 8969 on 24 December 1994, and the second was a series of eight attacks in France from July to October 1995, perpetrated by the Chasse-sur-Rhône network, whose most notable perpetrator was Khaled Kelkal. These attacks, orchestrated from Algeria, were undertaken by a fully operational and dependent network in France as reprisal for the network arrest of other GIA militants across Europe. The network had a similar structure to the al-Qaeda ones in France in the 2000s: individual attacks are part of a larger dense network which is self-supported logistically and financially but receives ideological support from abroad.

This brutal and horrendous repertoire of action against its local support base led to the inevitable outcome of a loss of popular support and organisational demise. The attacks against France did not push France to completely forgo support for the Algerian government, but instead, led it to a crack-down on Islamist networks in France and renewed support for the Algerian government. The GIA repertoire of action, over time, backfired and caused the organisation's failure.

Whilst the GIA's brutal repertoire of action and exclusive internal dynamics alienated its local support base, many individuals in France were not disengaging because they belonged to dense and strong network that furthered groupthink and prevented other networks from breaking bonds. As a response, the French government cracked down on small decentralised GIA networks in France.

### 6.3 FRANCE'S RESPONSE

The GIA and its small decentralised networks' actions in France (and Europe) were the first major test of French counter-terrorism based on the law of 9 September 1986. The French apparatus responded and adapted in two ways. Firstly, the apparatus cracked down on networks, both preventatively and following attacks. In 1993 *Opération Chrysanthème* dismantled the FAF network. Of the 88 arrested, only three were incarcerated (Godard & Taussig 2007: 227). The Chalabi network was dismantled on 8 November 1993 and, Europe-wide, over six hundred individuals arrested, 138 brought to justice, weapon caches were found, false document making networks uncovered, and linked networks across Europe. On 25 June 1995, 400 police officers dismantled a vast network of support for the GIA (and other Algeria militant organisations), arresting 131 individuals in Marseille, Orléans (Loiret, 45), Paris, Perpignan (Pyrénées-Orientales, 66), and Tourcoing (Nord, 59). Finally, on 26 May 1998, 53 individuals were arrested preventatively, but 40 were released after 48 hours. This allowed the government to foil attacks, cease network activities, and weaken GIA support in France and across Europe. This tough stance demonstrated to all militant organisations that the French government was taking such activities seriously.

Secondly, the magistrates increased their role in Islamist-based activities for two reasons. Firstly, the anti-terrorist arm of the Judicial Police was facing an increase in Basque and Corsican separatist

activities. Thus, it handed all information it received about Islamist-based activities to the magistrate. Secondly, the *Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire* (Directorate of Territorial Surveillance, DST), which focuses on foreign activities within the French territories, increased its relationship with the magistrate, reinforcing the link between the judiciary and intelligence services. This link allowed the magistrates to act more rapidly and effectively via a 'combination of expertise, effective relationships with the intelligence services and the judicial powers already mentioned eventually created a formidable body for combating terrorism' (Shapiro & Suzan 2003: 83).

With increasing threats arising in the early 1990s, two new measures appeared. Firstly, the vigilance against threats changed. Dating back to 1978 and extended in 1981, vigilance was enacted when threats occurred or were possible and mobilised the central government. The measure coordinates and decides actions to undertake in preventing further threats. In 1995, the *Vigipirate* plan defined the allocations of responsibilities between the central government and *collectivités territoriales*. Responsibilities adapt to the threat: whether general threats (*Vigipirate Simple* and *Vigipirate Renforcé* - reinforced Vigipirate) or specific threats (threats against airports, sea-ports or train stations, nuclear facilities or biological or chemical attacks for instance). Increased vigilance often implies armed soldiers and police officers patrolling streets and guarding public buildings and tourists site, like the Eiffel Tower. Secondly, the law of 22 July 1996 added terrorism to the Penal Code's criminal conspiracy, giving birth to *l'association de malfaiteur en vue de commettre une entreprise terroriste* (criminal conspiracy to commit a terrorist enterprise). This allowed magistrates to open investigations and offer preventive tools, rather than simply prosecution tools.

For Shapiro, the apparatus worked properly:

Important personal links had been created between the judicial and intelligence services that allowed firm actions before a threat was even manifested; planned emergency responses to threats mobilised both the security forces and the wider public and undoubtedly prevented many attacks; and fairly rapid post-attack investigations rounded up those responsible for the attacks in about four months (2007: 145).

In fact, the only criticism lies in the 'preventative round-ups and the associated indiscriminate detention of suspects, and the broad powers given to magistrates to conduct these sweeps and detentions with very little oversight' (Shapiro & Suzan 2003: 84).

However, the apparatus was not a fully efficient 'hard' apparatus. Were it effective, France would have eliminated Corsican terrorism (Cettina 2001). Further, attacks are not the sole metrics. The GIA established multiple small and dense networks in Europe where many individuals aided in some form or another. When the GIA ended, these individuals still supported the MSJM. Thus, when another MSJO came around, whether al-Qaeda or Daesh, many individuals aided or did not report these organisations. That is, the French apparatus, by the 1990s, was still missing a soft component that prevents engagement and incentivises disengagement. Consider Safé Bourada's profile where French prison

seems to have had no influence on his disengagement. This is because, as will be demonstrated in [section 7.5](#), French prisons are not equipped with a soft component to engender or aid disengagement.

The failure of the 1980s sanctuary doctrine coupled with an October 1995 poll showing that 91% of the French population supported the government's counter-terrorism approach and 61% wanted the French government policy toward Algeria to remain the same, an amnesty programme was not pushed forward. This would have been a disaster for domestic politics and, anyway, the magistrates saw repression as the sole effective counter-terrorism approach (Shapiro 2007: 148). Amnesty was, however, offered in Algeria to all members of the FIA/AIS, GIA, and other militants organisations.

#### 6.4 DISENGAGEMENT AND GSPC/AQIM

According to Ashour (2009: 113-134), the FIS/AIS had three failed attempts at deradicalisation in 1993, 1994, and 1995. However, the AIS, along with smaller organisations and factions, deradicalised and reintegrated into Algerian civil society between 1997 and 2000. The GIA, between 1992 and 2000, had mixed results. While some militants followed the AIS-led process, the greatest majority did not. Despite the GIA completely ending in 2005, many militants had joined other groups. In particular, the *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat GSPC) established by Hassan Hattab in 1998. The GSPC condemned the attacks on the population, and announced that the group would target security forces exclusively. Individuals switching from the GIA to the GSPC gave the GSPC access to the GIA's European network. For example, Farid Benyettou, the brother-in-law of GSPC member Youssef Zemmouri established the Buttes-Chaumont network (see [subsubsection 7.3.1.1](#)), which had links to the GIA.

After Abdelaziz Bouteflika's first election in 1999, Bouteflika submitted the *Concorde Civile*, or Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which gave amnesty to those who participated in violence and/or networks during the civil war. For example, Layada was released from prison on 12 March 2006 and now lives in his previous home in Baraki, south of Algiers. Through the *Concorde Civile*, about 5,000 AIS militants surrendered, while GSPC militants, ranging from 500 to 1,500, refused (Burke 2007: 217).

Some early GSPC militants seem to have established links with al-Qaeda (Gregory 2003: 132). The GSPC could have received support to restore the Algerian jihad's image and/or for al-Qaeda to inherit the GIA's European network (Burke 2007: 217-218). In fact, for the latter, as is demonstrated in the following chapter, all French militants engaged with al-Qaeda had direct links to the GIA and/or GSPC and/or links with individuals who had links to the GIA/GSPC: Djamel Beghal, Menad Benchellali, Merouane Benhamed, Christophe Caze, Fabien Clain, Lionel Dumont, and Zacarias Moussaoui. Individuals' switch to another MSJO clearly demonstrates that the French approach did not dismantle the bonds amongst network nodes within the MSJM nor did it incentivise disengagement from the overall

movement either. On 25 January 2007, the GSPC changed its name to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), effectively allowing al-Qaeda to inherit the GSPC's European and North African networks.

The FIS/AIS' and GIA's engagement and disengagement processes give insights into lessons for disengagement.

## 6.5 LESSONS FOR DISENGAGEMENT

From the GIA's engagement process, three lessons for disengagement are learned. Firstly, it is not solely the organisation which needs to be the target, but rather, its direct and small decentralised networks. As demonstrated by the GIA's five different *emirs* from 1993 to 1996, killing or imprisoning the organisation's leader(s) does not necessarily break or weaken the organisation's networks, especially if it is decentralised. In fact, according to Jordan (2009 & 2014), an organisation's age, size, and type are critical in assessing whether leadership targeting will cause the organisation to cease its activities. If the organisation grows in size and age, has popular support, and is ideologically organised, it is far more likely to be resilient if a leader is targeted than a small and young, organisation lacking popular support (Jordan 2009). Nevertheless, if leadership targeting does occur, the organisation will temporarily be weakened and reorganising its leadership, affecting its operation capacity. Thus, counter-terrorism actions must prevent the organisations from regrouping and re-starting its actions (Jordan 2014: 38). Hence, the networks themselves need to be targeted. Dismantling a network and sending its members to prison is not sufficient either - consider Saïf Bourada's profile. Rather, what is needed are incentives to disengage, whether before or during incarceration, to prevent networks from reforming. Further, it is not because the organisation has ended that all members disengage. Some will support the wider movement until another organisation comes about, others will join different networks, and others will re-establish the organisation under a different name and learn from past failures and mistakes. Hence, again, the organisation's networks, whether direct or inspired, must be focused upon.

Secondly, if an organisation is violent against its own popular supporters, it can lose popular support and members may leave because of disillusionment with the means and/or ends. However, this will only occur if popular supporters and members have another organisation or state to support. Hence, a counter-organisation needs to be present to welcome disillusioned members. Such organisation can be the state, an outside network, a rival militant organisation or an intra-movement rival. The best suited organisation is one that offers belonging and participation into society's advancement. That is, such organisations offer push and pull factors by welcoming individuals wanting to act differently toward the cause.

Finally, amnesty toward past jihadis seems insufficient. The Algerian amnesty programme was effective toward AIS members as they were fighting for more democracy through jihad - an incentive offered by amnesty. The GIA however was fighting for an Islamic state through jihad, and thus had

no interest in democracy. Hence, if amnesty is part of a disengagement programme, it needs to be intertwined with other incentives.

From France's 1986 counter-terrorism reaction, while the apparatus must be able to stop attacks, dismantle networks, and prosecute individuals, it must also prevent plotting and engender and/or aid disengagement. That is, a soft component needs to be included - a missing component in the ever increasingly repressive French counter-terrorism strategy.

From the FIS/AIS' and GIA's disengagement processes, two lessons for disengagement are learnt. Firstly, an amnesty programme is not sufficient. This does not contradict the argument for a soft approach. What this implies is that a *laissez faire* approach cannot be undertaken. Rather, disengagement is about reinserting individuals into belonging to and participating in society. The state and society cannot be passive actors in this endeavour. Secondly, while individuals disengaging from a MSJO is an encouraging sign, it is not sufficient. They need to disengage from the movement entirely. In Algeria, individuals disengaged from the GIA and either engaged with the AIS-led disengagement movement or continued their engagement with the MSJM until another suitable organisation arrived: the GSPC.

## 6.6 CONCLUSION

In Algeria, during the mid-1990s, strong state repression and strong middle class support for militant groups ended the campaign of the moderate FIS. The middle class instead rallied for the only organisation left: the GIA. Led by five different *emirs* over three years and recruiting the poorest and most brutalised citizens, the GIA's tactics, despite being appallingly brutal, surpassed the FIS/AIS in efficacy, violence, and notoriety, until its violence against the population led to its downfall and inevitable demise. During this time, the GIA was successful in creating a strong and dense network in Europe and recruited numerous French individuals. In turn, these individuals attacked France - a country considered as the 'far enemy' by the GIA. After its disappearance, this legacy became a part of the GSPC, which is now AQIM. The GIA's legacy also includes France's adaptation of its counter-terrorism approach to the Algerian threat via the repressive law of 9 September 1986. Its two pillars of counter-terrorism evolved to be the offence of 'criminal conspiracy to commit a terrorist enterprise' and the strengthened duality of the judiciary-intelligence services.

An examination of the GIA depicts that networks are key, and the lessons learned for disengagement are that the networks themselves, whether direct or inspired, need to be targeted, all-the-while offering individuals (arrested or not) incentives to disengage. Secondly, a counter-organisation needs to be ready to offer belonging to and participation in society. That is, disengaging from a MSJO but still supporting the MSJM and not belonging to and participating in society is not disengagement. Thirdly, if amnesty is offered, it needs to be coupled with other incentives for disengagement to be more in-

clusive. Finally, hard counter-terrorism by itself is not sufficient. It needs to be coupled with a soft approach - one that prevents engagement and incentivises disengagement.

In sum, disengagement's effectiveness is improved if networks are the focus and if disengaged members belong to and participate in society rather than pushing for a simple move-away from the militant organisation. This thesis now examines how al-Qaeda evolution over time affected and was affected by French individuals' engagement and France's counter-terrorism approach.



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## AL-QAEDA

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By 1992, al-Qaeda had become a formal MSJO and the (loosely) head of the MSJM (recall [chapter 4](#)). This chapter analyses al-Qaeda with four objectives. Firstly, it makes sense of how and why French individuals engaged with al-Qaeda. To do so, al-Qaeda's history is split into four phases, where in each phase, SMT is utilised to make sense of engagement. Secondly, throughout this examination, lessons for disengagement are uncovered. Thirdly, and also throughout, France's evolving counter-terrorism strategy is detailed. Finally, this chapter holds a discussion on the role of prison as a pathway-to engagement. Through its use of SMT, this chapter will demonstrate that incentives, frames, networks, and repertoire of action, propagated by al-Qaeda, continuously engaged individuals all-the-while the organisation adapted these mechanisms to its ever changing context leaving clues for disengagement.

### 7.1 SUDANESE EXILE

After arriving in Sudan in 1992, Osama bin Laden headed al-Qaeda, that itself loosely headed the MSJM. At this point, al-Qaeda held discussion about switching targets from the 'near enemy' to the 'far enemy'. Mamdouh Mahmud Salim argued that the US and its advances in Saudi Arabia and East Africa were slowing down the establishment of a Muslim state. For this achievement to be completed, the 'head of the snake' had to be cut-off. The argumentation also included France as, at the time, it was seen as supporting the Algerian elite against whom the GIA was fighting with al-Qaeda's support. While the Egyptian Islamic Group (EIG), following Faraj's argument, rejected the new target, bin Laden and al-Zawahiri opted for this new target (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 44). Two attacks in Saudi Arabia, on 13 November 1995 against the National Guard training centre in Riyadh and on 25 June 1996 on the Khobar Towers in Dhahran, echoed this target switching and attested to al-Qaeda's global salafi-jihad (Burke 2007: 154-155; Sageman 2004: 44-45).

These two attacks were only minor violent actions within al-Qaeda's repertoire of action as it still primarily focused on the 'near enemy' by supporting and coordinating local movements. However, while local movements were given seed money, they were to raise further funds themselves (Sageman 2004: 43). In Algeria and Egypt, it supported opposition against secular Muslim governments' repres-

sion of Muslims. In Kashmir and the Philippines, it supported opposition to liberate former Muslim lands from non-Muslim occupiers. Because Abu Sayyaf mutated from a salafi-jihadi organisation to a criminal group, it lost al-Qaeda's support. Instead, al-Qaeda supported the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and its ally the Jemaah Islamiyah. In Bosnia and Chechnya, it supported opposition to aggression made against Muslims (Burke 2007: 146-147; Sageman 2004: 40 & 44).

#### 7.1.1 *Bosnian Jihad*

The Bosnian war attracted numerous Muslim volunteers to oppose Serbian aggression. The incentives, frames, and repertoire of action utilised to engage individuals for the Bosnian jihad were similar to the ones utilised for the Afghan jihad, while the networks somewhat differed.

The incentives were about protecting the *umma* by aiding fellow brothers' fight against unbelievers and protecting mothers and sisters, all-the-while offering the heavenly reward of martyrdom for those who died in combat. The frame followed the notion of the 'near enemy' and protecting Muslim land, while the frame alignment occurred by, firstly, reminding Muslims that they are part of the *umma* which is under attack, and secondly, by citing religious duty. The networks were a combination of Islamic charities, like al-Kifah, and individuals (Kohlmann 2004). The most significant network was elaborated by Fateh Kamel (recall Kamel's potential links to the GIA), based in Montreal with a logistical support cell in Milan, under Sheikh Anwar Shaban who had been sending young individuals to train in Afghanistan before the Bosnian jihad's inception. Kamel facilitated the engagement of individuals in Germany, France, and Italy and had close ties to the Montreal based network and the French *Gang de Roubaix* (see below) (Sageman 2004: 43). The repertoire of action includes magazines, like al-Kifah's *al-Hussam* (the Sword), online promotion, like the ones through azzam.com, and proselytism (Kohlmann 2004; Sageman 2004). A testament to these four mechanisms in play is a 1993 pamphlet by the al-Kifah Refugee Centre promoting jihad in Bosnia (see [Figure 2](#)). The incentives regard saving the *umma* as Muslims are suffering atrocities in Bosnia through 'Muslim helping Muslims since we are one'. The frame is the destructiveness and suffering created by the war and the frame alignment is both the belonging to the *umma* and the religious duty. The network is the charity al-Kifah based in Bosnia and abroad, such as in Boston, Massachusetts. Finally, the repertoire of action called for is participation in the jihad and/or paying the *sadaka* (voluntary charity).

What is of interest about the Bosnian jihad is not solely the engagement but the French *Gang de Roubaix* network.

## A Call For Jihad in

# Bosnia

**ICNA Reports:**

- **More than a hundred thousand killed**
- **3 Million Homeless**
- **Thousands of Muslim girls and women have been kidnapped and kept in Yugoslav army camps for sex. Old men and children are kept in Nazi style concentration camps**
- **Tens of Thousands of Missing and Wounded**
- **\$150 Billion in Property Damage**

**Ask yourself what you are doing for these Muslims.  
Ask Muslim governments what they are doing for these Muslims and  
their freedom.**

**If you Desire to provide Emerging Jihad Movement in Bosnia  
with more than Food and Shelter, Please send your Sadaka to:**

**Bosnia Fund  
c/o Alkifah Refugee Center  
1085 Commonwealth Avenue  
Suite 124  
Boston, MA 02215**

Muslim helping Muslims  
since we are one

Figure 2: Al-Kifah Refugee Centre Pamphlet Promoting Jihad in Bosnia (Kohlmann 2004: 40)

## 7.1.2 *Le Gang de Roubaix*

Christophe Caze, a convert, was a French medical student when he went to Bosnia in late-1992 to offer his medical services. He worked in a local hospital in Zenica, northwest of Sarajevo, yet still received military training in advanced guerrilla warfare. There, he met Fateh Kamel who was recuperating from a battle-wound. Caze also met two salafi-jihadi al-Qaeda ideologues: Abu el-Maali (aka Abdelkader Mokhtari) and Sheikh Abu Hamza al-Masri (aka Mustafa Kamel) - the *al-Ansar* magazine editor and imam of the Finsbury Park mosque in London (Godard & Taussig 2007: 231; Kohlmann 2004: 189). Lionel Dumont enlisted in the French *service militaire*, through which he became a UN peacekeeper in Somalia. There, he witnessed the collapse of humanitarian assistance which traumatised him. Back in France, he converted to Islam. He was approached by Abdelkader Mokhtari at the al-Dawah Mosque in Roubaix (Nord, 59). By late-1993, he volunteered in the Bosnian jihad as an aid convoy driver for the al-Kifah Refugee Centre in Zagreb and met Christophe Caze (Godard & Taussig 2007: 231; Kohlmann 2004: 188-189).

The signing of the Dayton Agreement in December 1995 marked the end of the Bosnian jihad. While the engagement for the Bosnian jihad was similar to the Afghan jihad, the outcome was not. After the war, Caze and Dumont, the two Frenchmen engaged in Bosnia, returned to France. With the help of

Fateh Kamel, they established *le Gang de Roubaix* whose aims was to logistically and financially support the global jihad, including the GIA.

From January to March 1996, the gang undertook robberies with heavy weapons that only brought in a meagre \$10,000 francs (£6,600) *vis-à-vis* the risks incurred. On 28 March, they booby-trapped a car to explode during the G7 summit. The next day, the police identified the gang as the perpetrators and swarmed their hide-out. Caze escaped until he was caught and killed in Belgium, while Dumont fled until his capture in December 2005. Most other gang member were shot or captured, and Fateh Kamel was arrested in 1999 in Jordan (Godard & Taussig 2007: 231; Kohlmann 2004: 191-194; Sageman 2004: 139).

*Le Gang de Roubaix* demonstrates, firstly, that networks facilitate more than engagement, as they can also facilitate the spread of financing, logistics, and information. Secondly, it demonstrates that networks need not be dense and have strong bonds to achieve their aims. This creates unity amongst members, reduces the chances for outside ideologies to enter, and keeps the network focused.

### 7.1.3 France's Counter-Terrorism Response

Faced with *le Gang de Roubaix*, France's counter-terrorism magistrates, headed by Jean-Louis Bruguière, began to view the MSJM (its organisations, its structure, and its targets) as a global threat. In fact, Caze's address book contained the names of individuals suspected of terrorism in Algeria, Belgium, Canada, the UK, and the US, that made this fact even more apparent. With this information, and following the enactment of the law of 22 July 1996 allowing magistrates to open investigations, Bruguière opened an investigation that led him to find Fateh Kamel and his Montreal network (Shapiro & Suzan 2003: 87). The French apparatus thus evolved by adapting its view to the reality of the threat and thus allowed magistrate to open investigation before the threat materialises.

While the Bosnian jihad failed to expel non-Muslim from Bosnia, al-Qaeda also had to deal with finding a new location. Sudan, after having ordered al-Zawahiri to leave for attempting to kill Egyptian President Mubarak in Addis Ababa in 1995, put pressure on bin Laden to leave. Sudan did so because it was trying to rehabilitate itself on the international scene and being home to the global jihad was not in its favour. In May 1996, along with about 150 followers, bin Laden returned to Afghanistan. At that point, many disengaged because they did not agree with al-Qaeda's fight against the 'far enemy' with whom they had no quarrel nor a legitimate *fatwa* to follow (Burke 2007: 155-157; Sageman 2004: 45). These movements out-of and back-into Afghanistan 'radicalised the organisation through a self-selecting mechanism of keeping the most militant members' (Sageman 2004: 45).

#### 7.1.4 *Lessons for Disengagement*

From the Bosnian jihad, two disengagement lessons arise. Firstly, since engagement in the Afghan and Bosnian jihads relied upon frames of Muslims' suffering, Western states should not follow foreign policies that create conditions that militant organisation try to resolve themselves. Secondly, disengagement needs to be framed as a complete move away from violence. That is, disengagement is not only about the individual moving away from violence itself, but also about moving away from violent organisation and its wider movement. Once individuals are disengaged from violence, it is acceptable for them to wish to keep fighting for Muslims well-being. However, they should only support non-violent movements and refrain from supporting any violent movements, even if their support is not violent, such as logistics, finances or virtual aid.

A third lesson arises from al-Qaeda's move to Sudan and move back to Afghanistan. Such movement came with a change of strategy that some individuals did not agree with. This lack of strategic agreement, a push factor, led some to disengagement. The disengagement lesson here is that altering the organisation's context can force it to alter its means and/or ends which can entice individuals to leave as they disagree with the new means and/or ends.

## 7.2 RETURNING TO AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan, under Mullah Mohammed Omar and the Taliban, whom bin Laden publicly supported, offered al-Qaeda and its leaders freedom to operate in ways far superior to that of the Sudanese exile. On 23 August 1996, bin Laden issued a long *fatwa* declaring war against the 'far enemy': *Declaration of Jihad Against Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Mosques* (bin Laden 1996). This *fatwa* materialised the fight against the 'far enemy' and gave individuals a *fatwa* to frame their fight (Burke 2007: 183; Sageman 2004: 51).

### 7.2.1 *Incentives*

Bin Laden's *fatwa* offered the same incentives than previous *fatwas* and speeches as it still relied upon fighting against Muslims' oppression, fighting for the *umma*, and gaining martyrdom. This *fatwa* also incentivised engagement by reminding how Afghanistan was the base which won against the Soviet 'near enemy':

[A] safe base is now available in the high Hindukush mountains in Khurasan; where - by the Grace of Allah - the largest infidel military force of the world was destroyed. And the myth of the super power was withered in front of the Mujahideen cries of Allahu Akbar (God is greater). Today we work from the same mountains to lift the iniquity that had

been imposed on the *umma* by the Zionist-Crusader alliance, particularly after they have occupied the blessed land around Jerusalem, route of the journey of the Prophet [...] and the land of the two Holy Places (bin Laden 1996).

Thus, the fight against the 'far enemy', the 'Zionist-Crusaders', can also be won by being based in Afghanistan. This incentive not only formalised the fight against the 'far enemy', but also formalised the base from which the repertoire of action is directed. These incentives were framing in similar ways and terms as in past *fatwas*, speeches, and pamphlets.

### 7.2.2 *Frames*

Bin Laden's *fatwa*, similarly to Azzam's, framed its fighting within the writings of past scholars, 'like Ibn Taimiya and Ali's Ibn Abds-Salaam' (bin Laden 1996). The fight against the 'far enemy' is framed as responding to an aggression toward the *umma*:

The latest and the greatest of these aggressions [...] is the occupation of the land of the two Holy Places [...] by the armies of the American Crusaders and their allies. [...] The people of Islam awakened and realised that they are the main target for the aggression of the Zionist-Crusaders alliance. All false claims and propaganda about 'Human Rights' were hammered down and exposed by the massacres that took place against the Muslims in every part of the world (bin Laden 1996).

Although focused on the 'far enemy', the *fatwa* also framed its fight against the 'near enemy': '[f]rom here, today we begin the work, talking and discussing the ways of correcting what had happened to the Islamic world in general, and the Land of the two Holy Places in particular' (bin Laden 1996). The Saudi Kingdom is framed as '[i]gnoring the divine Shari'ah law; depriving people of their legitimate rights; allowing the American to occupy the land of the two Holy Places; imprisonment, unjustly, of the sincere scholars' (bin Laden 1996).

This dual-frame against the 'near' and 'far' enemies is aligned, firstly, by claiming that fighting the 'far enemy' is the sole solution: 'Therefore everyone agreed that the situation cannot be rectified [...] unless the root of the problem is tackled. Hence it is essential to hit the main enemy who divided the *umma* into small and little countries and pushed it, for the last two decades, into a state of confusion' (bin Laden 1996). Secondly, it is aligned by claiming that every Muslim is affected and can help:

[A] group of scholars [...] supported by hundreds of retired officials, merchants, prominent and educated people wrote to the [Saudi] King asking for implementation of the corrective measures. [...] The king humiliated those people and choose to ignore the content of their letter. People, however, tried again and sent more letters and petitions. Its content was

rejected and those who signed it and their sympathisers were ridiculed, prevented from travel, punished and even jailed.

These frame were put in practice via a three year global wave of plots and attacks and non-violent political actions in Saudi Arabia.

### 7.2.3 *Repertoire of Action*

With its new focus on the 'far enemy', al-Qaeda centrally planned and succeeded in its first attack on the new target: the 7 August 1998 twin bombing of the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The East African targets launched a global wave of successful and unsuccessful plots against the 'far enemy' (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 48). Over the next three years, plots were local initiatives, through decentralised autonomy. Al-Qaeda's role consisted of providing logistical and seed funding to local cells, and training potential participants in Afghanistan. Chronologically, the major global plots until al-Qaeda lost its safe-heaven in Afghanistan are (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 48):

- ✦ December 1999 millennial plots in Amman, Jordan, and the Los Angeles, US, airport;
- ✦ Bombing of two US naval ships in Aden, Yemen - *USS The Sullivan* in January 2000 and the *USS Cole* in October 2000;
- ✦ 2000 Christmas Eve bombings against churches throughout Indonesia;
- ✦ December 2000 bombings in Manila, The Philippines;
- ✦ Failed December 2000 Strasbourg, France, Christmas market plot;
- ✦ 9/11
- ✦ Failed Paris US embassy plot in the fall of 2001;
- ✦ Failed December 2001 'shoe bombing' attempt; and
- ✦ Failed December 2001 Singapore bombing plots against the American, Australian, and British embassies.

The fight on the 'near enemy', meanwhile, occurred through non-violent actions: letters, petitions, and an economic boycott of US products: '[w]e expect the women of the land of the two Holy Places and other countries to carry out their role in boycotting the American goods' (bin Laden 1996). This three-year period constitutes the apogee of the global salafi-jihad in terms of its actions, but also its sizeable network.

#### 7.2.4 *Network*

The 1996-2001 period also marked the period during which bin Laden consolidated his hold of the global salafi-jihad by incorporation many independent organisations under al-Qaeda from Saudi Arabia and Yemen in the Middle-East; Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines in Southeast Asia; and London in Europe. In June 2001, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) became a part of al-Qaeda, while, in the mean time, the EIG dissolved into a peaceful and apologist movement (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 45-46).

Although bin Laden's al-Qaeda followed Abdullah Azzam's MAK in incentives and frames, it diverged regarding recruitment. The MAK was active in top-down recruitment, while al-Qaeda relied on a bottom-up approach, though some audiotapes, books, magazines, and videotapes could be found in selected Salafi mosques (recall the common grounds between Salafi-quietism and salafi-jihadism). Since many young Muslim men wished to join, al-Qaeda acted as an evaluator and selector rather than a marketer. While an individual's network, whether a relative, friend and/or fellow worshipper, functioned as voucher, this was not selective enough. Hence, training camps, based in Pakistan or Afghanistan, became a secondary evaluation and selection through an observation and test process. Only worthy candidates would be offered the chance to join (Sageman 2004: 122-123).

Thus, individuals needed a network to access the training camps. The French individuals that were connected to the plots against the Strasbourg Christmas market, the Paris US embassy, and the shoe-bombing all knew each other from London. Djamel Beghal, the Paris US embassy plot field commander, met Kamel Daoudi, his deputy in the plot, in the Adda'wa mosque in a Parisian suburb but also connected in London's Finsbury Park mosque. While in London they met: Yacine Akhnouche, the leader of the Strasbourg Christmas market plot; Zacarias Moussaoui; Nizar Trabelsi, the suspected leader of the Paris US embassy plot in the autumn of 2001; the brothers David and Jérôme Courtailler, two participants in the Paris US embassy plot; and Richard Reid, the shoe bomber (this is only a part of the network of French individuals.) (Sageman 2004: 49-50). These men passed through the Finsbury Park mosque as a way to be re-Islamised in the West, often through contact with veteran Afghani-mujahedeen, before heading to training (Zahab & Roy 2004: 50). A network is thus necessary to access an al-Qaeda training camp. However, there exist different ways of establishing such network. Consider the pathways of Zacarias Moussaoui and Mourad Benchellali.

##### 7.2.4.1 *Zacarias Moussaoui*

Zacarias Moussaoui is the only individual charged in the US in connection with 9/11 and has been nicknamed the 20<sup>th</sup> hijacker. After continuous racist events throughout his teens, Moussaoui escaped to London's Maghreb community in 1992 to find employment and further his higher education, like many others. There, he graduated with a master's degree and sought employment. He attended several

moderate mosques, including the Brixton Mosque, where he may have met Richard Reid. He was also proselytised by the *al-Muhajiroun* (the Emigrants) group and, despite being of Moroccan descent, became involved with GIA and GSPC supporters in London. It is possible that he had connected with members of the Finsbury Park Mosque, where Mustafa Kamel taught. At one point, he asked the Brixton Mosque imam to tell him where the next jihad would be (Burke: 252-253; Donahue 2008: 18; Moussaoui & Bouquillat 2004).

In 1998, Moussaoui trained in the Khalden camp in Afghanistan. In September 2000, he travelled to Kuala Lumpur and stayed in a flat, where two of the 9/11 hijackers lived in January 2000. The flat was owned by Yazid Sufaat, a member of Jemaah Islamiyah. Sufaat signed paperwork identifying Moussaoui as a consultant of his company to aid him in travelling. Moussaoui took flying lessons in Malaysia. However, because the centre did not provide Boeing 747 training, Moussaoui went to the US. There, he trained in Minnesota but was arrested in Oklahoma for suspiciously using the flight simulator (Burke: 229 & 252-253).

Despite his Western master's degree, French passport, and knowledge of the West, Moussaoui had difficulties joining the jihad because he did not have a network and had to build it from the ground-up. After painstakingly establishing the right relations, he was able to train and be tested in a camp, join the jihad, and almost partook in an attack.

#### 7.2.4.2 *Mourad Benchellali and the Vénissieux Network*

Mourad Benchellali is infamous for being an ex-Guantanamo Bay detainee for two and a half years. His 2001 trip to Afghanistan was, he claims, a trick by his brother, Menad, who, like his father, Chellali, were implicated in the Bosnian jihad. Mourad Benchellali had gone to Afghanistan for a linguistics trip alongside a friend, Nizar Sassi (Benchellali 2006). Menad Benchellali framed the vacation as urgent, 'it is now or never. Soon, the way will close' (Benchellali 2006: 42) and exciting, 'an idyllic description, with spring water sources and mountains, and fields and horses ... I listen without speaking. This is how it all starts' (Benchellali 2006: 41)', to push Mourad Benchellali to leave.

Mourad Benchellali stayed in the Finsbury Mosque before heading to Pakistan. Benchellali realised his mistake once in Pakistan. He trained but was not offered a place amongst al-Qaeda. Shortly after the training's end, he made his way to the Pakistani border to return home. By then, however, 9/11 occurred and he was trapped as the border was closed. His prolonged stay with al-Qaeda brought him to Tora Bora. After the fight, he crossed the Pakistani border via an unguarded mountain pass but was captured by Pakistani authorities, then handed-over to American authorities. Afterwards, he was transferred to Guantanamo Bay for 30 months. Once released, he was retried in French court and incarcerated in Fleury-Mérogis prison from July 2004 to January 2006 (Benchellali 2006, 2008 & 2015).

Mourad Benchellali's connection to the Vénissieux Network, a suburb of Lyon (Rhône, 69), allowed him to easily join a training camp as his network was already established. The Vénissieux Network was established in response to Russia's second invasion of Chechnya and inspired by al-Qaeda and

the GIA. It included the following members: Chellali Benchellali; Merouane Benhamed; Rabah Kadri (an ex-GSPC member who attempted a poison attack on the London Underground in May 2002); and Said Arif (an Algeria Army ex-captain who deserted his position to train in al-Qaeda's training camp in Afghanistan. There, he met the members of the Frankfurt group: Salim Boukari, Fouhad Sabour, Aeroubi Beandalis and Lamine Maroni).

In March 2002, most of the senior members of the Vénissieux Network were under surveillance after their return to France. In November 2005, French intelligence services arrested three French-born men of Algerian descent (Khaled Ouazane, his brother Maamar, and Hassen Habbar) suspected of plotting to blow up the Eiffel Tower. The investigation revealed that the three men, led by Maamar Ouazane, were an extension of the Vénissieux Network and had a minor role in the cell. In December 2006, Nouredine Merabet, the cell's financier, was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

Mourad Benchellali, whether his claim of not actively wishing to partake in the jihad is true or not, easily accessed an Afghan training camp via Vénissieux network headed by his father. Mourad Benchellali was not invited to join the jihad after his training because he had not passed the selection process. Despite being present, he was not even asked to fight at Tora Bora (Benchellali 2006: 96-97).

These two profiles are quite different, yet demonstrate that networks are key in joining and participating in a MSJO and regaining training camps. Further, networks are also key for plotting attacks, facilitating logistics, securing funds, finding trustworthy individuals, and selecting the modus-operandi. The stronger and more numerous the bonds between nodes, the stronger a network becomes. As Sageman (2004) indeed claimed, al-Qaeda did not recruit either Moussaoui or Benchellali, but rather evaluated them as potential newcomers via bottom-up approach.

French counter-terrorism did not evolve much during the 1996-2001 period. The magistrate kept close relations with the intelligence services (and vice versa) and they continued to open investigations and prosecute those it deemed terrorists. By mid-2001, the French approach still did not contain a preventative component nor a disengagement component.

#### 7.2.5 *Lessons for Disengagement*

The first lesson is that, since networks are key to militant movements, they need to be dismantled or surveilled. While networks of two individuals are difficult to identify and dismantle, larger ones' membership growth and spread of funds, logistics, and information need to be halted. However, as will be demonstrated in the next section, dismantling a network may not always work. Therefore, individuals must be hampered in their efforts to join a network. To do so, the competing networks to the militant networks must have stronger bonds with the individual. This network is generally the family and friend network. A conundrum forms: the most common network utilised to rejoining a

salafi-jihadi organisation is through the family and friend network, especially between brothers. This is where lies the second lesson: strong family and friend network bonds need to be reinforced, and if these do not exist, other strong out-of network bonds must be created to hold individuals back, give their lives meaning and purpose, and help them belong to and participate in society. These other bonds lie in other family members and friends, network of worship, discipleship, kinship, and society in general.

A third disengagement lesson arises from the above individuals' incentives to engagement. While reasons for engagement are always complex and require in-depth biographical analysis, coupled with a frame and network analysis, an overview of French profiles is sufficient in uncovering a key characteristic. They were not on the fringe of society before engaging; rather, their engagement led them to the fringe and seclusion. Engaged individuals at one point were integrated or integrating into society until this process failed. The lessons here is that disengagement should not solely be about individuals on society's fringe, but rather about all individuals which are having difficulties integrating into society.

On 2 November 2015, Mourad Benchellali was arrested in Toronto on his way to a deradicalisation conference, even though he had the Royal Canadian Mounted Police assurance that he could freely enter Canada. Benchellali seems to have been arrested as he is on the US 'no-fly' list and his flight may have gone over US airspace. The fourth lesson is a question regarding magnanimity: how much freedom are individuals undergoing, or who had undergone, disengagement (or deradicalisation) given? One would expect that all rights and dues are reinstated or should this not be the case?

### 7.3 POST 9/11 AND DECENTRALISATION

Al-Qaeda did not anticipate the US's retaliation as a response to 9/11. In the past, after attacks on US targets, there was a lack of response. However, because 9/11 was a domestic attack of tremendous magnitude, the US hit back, and hard: they initiated the War on Terror with US and international ground forces in Afghanistan, then Iraq, and included drones strikes in Pakistan and Yemen. The Afghan intervention eliminated al-Qaeda's safe heaven and crippled its operations: the leadership scattered, assets were frozen, training camps were torn down, and communications flatlined. As a response to, once again, a changing environment, al-Qaeda adapted by decentralising. With a new structure, al-Qaeda in Afghanistan/Pakistan became al-Qaeda Central (AQC), while al-Qaeda's network in other countries began acting as even more autonomous cells by making command and operational decisions, propagating and sharing information, training individuals, and adapting their attacks to their knowledge base (Burke 2007; Sageman 2004: 51-54). The rise of the mobile telephone and the Internet facilitated communications amongst and between cells and members, though face-to-face communications were still essential (Godard & Taussig 2007: 233-234). From 2001 to 2011, Al-Qaeda's network consisted of:

↔ **Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).** *Iraq (2004-2006)*

AQI began as Ansar al-Islam, then joined al-Qaeda in 2004. Its primary aim was to expel US forces out of Iraq and then take control of the country. Because of differences between members and leaders on the Iraqi constitution, members created the Mujahedeen Shura Council. This council then established the Islamic State of Iraq, which then became Daesh<sup>1</sup>.

✦ **Al-Shabaab.** *Somalia (2006 - present)*

Al-Shabaab, or 'the Youth', is fighting for the creation of an Islamic state in Somalia. Al-Shabaab once held control over Mogadishu and major areas of Somalia's countryside, until an African Union counter-offensive (African Union Mission to Somalia) weakened the organisation considerably. Nevertheless, al-Shabaab remains the major threat in war-torn and politically unstable Somalia. Al-Shabaab's activities focus on civilian and military targets in Somalia, Uganda, and Kenya. Attacks including the 23 September 2013, Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, Kenya and 2 April 2015, Garissa University College attack, in Kenya. Al-Shabaab recruits foreigners, mainly from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan Swahili Coast, and Yemen, though American Somalis and UK residents have been trained as well (Masters & Sergie 2015; Mulligan 2009).

✦ **Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).** *Mali and Libya (2007 - present)*

In 2007, the GSPC joined al-Qaeda and renamed itself AQIM. Many members have been recruited worldwide, especially Libyans after Muammar al-Gaddafi's fall. Their major acts include numerous kidnapping and bombings across the Maghreb, the assault on a French factory in Niger on 16 September 2010, the control of Azawad, a Northern Mali region (until the French *Opération Serval* drove them out), and holding its ground in Libya since Gaddafi's fall (Laub & Masters 2015).

✦ **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).** *Yemen (2009 - present)*

AQAP was established in 2009 via the regrouping of al-Qaeda's Yemeni and Saudi branches. Yemen has been, since the late 1980s, a melting-pot for the thousands of Afghanistan mujahedeen-veterans, as President Ali Abdullah Saleh harboured them in North Yemen to fight the Soviet-backed South Yemeni government. This civil war saw Yemen's unification in 1990 and the crushing of Southern secessionists. AQAP has taken full advantage of Yemen's state. Its objectives consist of removing democracy in Yemen, targeting Western interest and nationals, in the region and abroad, and targeting the Saudi royal family. AQAP is classified as al-Qaeda's most lethal branch. It has performed numerous attacks abroad, such as the U.S.S. Cole bombing and the training of the *Charlie Hebdo* perpetrators, and is sustaining an insurgency in Yemen. Although its propaganda leader, Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen, was killed by a drone strike on 30 September 2011, AQAP is still recruiting and resilient. In February 2012, popular protests ousted President Saleh. President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, his successor, has confronted AQAP and

<sup>1</sup> More details are provided in [subsection 8.2.1 p. 139](#).

Houthi (Shi'ite) militias. In September 2014, Houthi militias took control of Sana'a, the capital, which forced President Hadi to flee to Aden in February 2015. This sectarian conflict, fuelled by a proxy war of Saudi Arabia and Iran, has furthered the country's instability and spread Sunni-Shi'ite divides across the region. This situation created a dilemma: AQAP is Yemen's most dangerous group, yet is an ally of convenience to fight Houthi Militias (Hill & Kasinof 2015; McElroy, Blomfield & Arrabyee 2011; Sergie 2015).

On 1 July 2010, AQAP released online its first propaganda magazine entitled *Inspire*. Its English language is meant to translate bin Laden's messages to UK and US audiences, and was most likely edited by Anwar al-Awlaki. The PDF file, however, was corrupted as only 3 of the 67 pages were not garbled computer code, and it seemed to be carrying a trojan virus (Hegghammer 2010a). Further, the magazine is not new in its concept but it is 'a slick Web-based publication, heavy on photographs and graphics that, unusually for a jihadist organ, is written in colloquial English' (Bergen 2011). For Hegghammer (2010b) 'there is nothing particularly new or uniquely worrying about the magazine's content'. Nevertheless, it signalled al-Qaeda's adaptation to new technologies and continuous recruitment strategy.

All these networks individually offer opportunities for engagement either via physical participation or online propaganda. Though some small differences exist, they spread fairly similar incentives, frames, and utilised repertoires of actions. This makes al-Qaeda's structure a global organisation with international reach, resources, logistics, and support, though with little to no control over specific activities. Further, attacks have been perpetrated by individuals inspired by al-Qaeda, though not directly sanctioned by al-Qaeda or its networks. These include: the 11 March 2004 Madrid train bombings; the 7 July 2005 London bombings; Mehdi Nemmouche's attack of the Jewish museum in Brussels on 24 May 2014; and, in France, Mohamed Merah's killing spree in March 2012 in Toulouse and Montauban; the 7 January 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* shooting and hostage taking in Paris; the 13 November 2015 Paris attacks; and the 22 March 2016 Brussels attacks.

### 7.3.1 *Smaller Decentralised Networks in France*

The Buttes-Chaumont, Merah, and Forsane Alizza networks are detailed to demonstrate the role of networks in French individuals' engagement and uncover any lessons for disengagement.

#### 7.3.1.1 *Buttes-Chaumont*

The Buttes-Chaumont network was created as a reaction to the American invasion of Iraq and wished to avenge the humiliation of Iraqis by sending French citizens amongst AQI's ranks. The network was headed by Farid Benyettou. Initially, the network met in the Isqra mosque in Levallois-Perret, a north-western Parisian suburb. The French authorities closed the mosque after men linked to the network

were detained or killed in Iraq. The members simply reconvened and restarted recruitment. Following Salafi-quietists ways, they, unbeknownst to the mosque's leadership, took home in the Adda'wa mosque on 39 rue de Tanger in Paris' 19<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, but also in the nearby park, *parc des Buttes-Chaumont*. It is unclear how many members left for Iraq, but three members have died fighting. The network was dismantled in 2005, the Adda'wa mosque demolished in 2006, and the members were tried in 2008. Some the Buttes-Chaumont network members include: Farid Benyettou (preacher of the network)<sup>2</sup>; Smaïn Aït Ali Belkacem (ex-GIA member); Thamer Bouchnak (partook in Smaïn Aït Ali Belkacem's prison break-out); Chérif Kouachi (partook in Belkacem's prison break-out and frequented Djamel Beghal in prison) and his brother Saïd Kouachi (travelled to Yemen and met Anwar al-Awlaki); Amedy Coulibaly (jailed at Fleury-Mérogis and partook in Belkacem's prison break-out ); Mohamed and Mehdi Sabry Belhoucine; Salim Benghalem (jailed at Fresnes prison, named during the Belkacem's prison break-out investigation, and travelled to Syria in 2014); and Boubaker El-Hakim (murdered two Tunisian politicians under Daesh's banner).

The Kouachi brothers and Amedy Coulibaly perpetrated the following attacks in France:

- 7 January 2015 Chérif and Saïd Kouachi attacked the offices of the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine, in Paris, for their caricatures of the prophet Mohammed, killing twelve, including a police officer, and injuring four;
- 8 January 2015 Amedy Coulibaly shot dead a municipal police officer and injured a municipal worker in Montrouge (Hauts-de-Seine, 92);
- 9 January 2015 While the Kouachi brothers were retrenched in a printing press in Dammartin-en-Goële (Seine-et-Marne, 77), Amedy Coulibaly took hostages in a kosher hypermarket at Porte de Vincennes (Paris) killing five. After trying to forcefully exit the printing press, the Kouachi brothers were killed and Coulibaly was shot dead moments later after the police assault on the hypermarket.

In total, twenty died, including the three attackers, and twenty-two were injured. The attacks by the Kouachi brothers were claimed by AQAP, although it is clear by the video montage that AQAP was unaware of the attack beforehand. While Amedy Coulibaly pledged allegiance to Daesh, the organisation never claimed responsibility for the attacks. This is because Amedy Coulibaly had supposedly trained with al-Qaeda then switched sides, like many others, though still retained close relations with the Kouachi brothers.

The Buttes-Chaumont network created strong and numerous bonds amongst members. This density prevented members from being isolated and cut-off bonds with other outside networks. Further, each network node had the same objectives. Thus, members were constantly engaged and had little chance for disengagement. The Buttes-Chaumont network overcame their first dismantlement by regrouping

<sup>2</sup> In October 2016, Farid Benyettou, after six years imprisonment, declared himself de-radicalised and now works with Dounia Bouzar's new de-radicalisation structure - see [chapter 8](#)

in another location and their second through their strong and lasting bonds that withstood their prison sentencing. Their numerous strong bonds implied that the network could function in a decentralised manner. Despite these strong bonds, some members joined Daesh because of its status as the new major global MSJO. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily imply that the bonds have been severed since both al-Qaeda and Daesh view France as a 'far enemy', but rather, that networks of the MSJM can overlap MSJOs.

#### 7.3.1.2 *The Merah's*

In March 2012, Mohamed Merah performed the first attacks on French soil since the 1995 GIA bombings:

- ✦ 11 March 2012 Assassination of French paratrooper, Imad Ibn Ziaten, of Moroccan decent, near Toulouse, after yelling: 'you kill my brothers, I kill you';
- ✦ 15 March 2012 Assassination of two French soldiers, Abel Chennouf and Mohamed Legouad, both of Algerian decent, in Montauban, Tarn-et-Garonne (82). A third, Loïc Liber, survived a shot to the head;
- ✦ 19 March 2012 Improvised attack of the Jewish Ozar Hatorah School in Toulouse; four dead, of which three were schoolchildren.

Mohamed Merah acted alone but was part of a wide and dense network (Merah & Sifaoui 2012; Jordanov 2015). Some of the members and associated-networks include:

Fabien Clain and his brother Jean-Michel headed a small militant Salafi organisation composed of youths from their neighbourhood and converts, in Toulouse, with links to the GIA. Their presence in the Mirail, one of Toulouse's neighbourhoods, was not unnoticed and they came up on the French intelligence services' radar in 2001. In 2003, the Clain brothers moved to Belgium and became close to the Belgian-Tunisian network which sent Muriel Degauque to Iraq<sup>3</sup> and met Hakim Benladghem (an ex-paratrooper for the French Foreign legion who fell into drug trafficking and organised crime over the Franco-Belgium border, as had Mohamed Merah). Sabri Essid's father married Fabien Clain's mother (Sabri Essid is infamous for appearing in a February 2007 Daesh video in which a prisoner is executed). Fabian Clain's voice is heard claiming responsibility for the 13 November 2015 Paris attacks. In fact, in 2009, he had already called for an attack of the concert venue because of its Jewish ownership. The Clain and Merah brothers established links with the Artigat network, which took the commune's name where it was based (Ariège, 09).

The Artigat network was headed by Olivier Corel, also known as Abdulilah Qorel. He, and his wife, established an Islamic community that attracted dozens of families, which, for the most part, were recent converts, and lived in solitary ways. Here, the Merah brothers, the Clain brothers and Sabri Essid

<sup>3</sup> She is the first European woman to have committed a suicide bombing on 9 November 2005 in Baghdad, Iraq.

met. In fact, Olivier Corel officiated at Sabri Essid's father's second wedding to Mohamed Merah's mother. Olivier Corel and his wife were suspected of belonging to a Toulouse network that aimed at sending young jihadis to Iraq, whose leader was Imad Djebali - a friend from Mohamed Merah's childhood. This network also included Abdelouahed Baghdali, Mohamed Merah's sister's husband, In December 2011, Olivier Corel officiated at Mohamed Merah's religious wedding. In September 2014, Imad Djebali, Abdelouahed Baghdali, and Gaël Maurize (a close friend of Thomas Barnouin, himself friends with Sabri Essid) returned to France and surrendered to the French authorities after six to eight months in Syria. Corel's name appeared in the Sid Ahmed Ghlam affaire: a 24 year old Algerian student, who, on 18 August 2015 shot and killed Aurélie Châtelain, in Villejuif (Val-de-Marne, 94), in a fruitless attempt at stealing her car. On 19 August 2015, he was incidentally arrested after shooting himself in the hip before initiating an attack against the Villejuif church. It is suspected that Fabien Clain engaged Sid Ahmed Ghlam. Oliver Corel's name has also surfaced during the investigation of the 13 November 2015 Paris attacks.

### 7.3.1.3 *Forsane Alizza*

The Forsane Alizza network, or Knights of Pride, created in August 2010 in Nantes (Loire-Atlantique, 44), by Mohamed Achamlane, claimed the will to establish a caliphate and sharia in France. An infamous member was Omar Diaby (aka Omar Omsen), now deceased, who was a member of Jabhat al-Nusra, who authored the video entitled *19HH*. The network had links with many other Islamist networks, including *al-Muhajiroun*, the organisation that proselytised Zacarias Moussaoui in London. Forsane Alizza was dissolved on 1 March 2012, by request of the Minister of the Interior, Claude Guéant, as some members were readying themselves for direct violent actions.

The Forsane Alizza network had weak bonds and was not dense. Thus, after its dismantling, its members, other than Omar Diaby, seem to have had no other militant activities compared to the post-dismantling activities of the Buttes-Chaumont members. The Merah network, like the Buttes-Chaumont and Vénissieux networks, was very dense and had strong bonds between members - bonds which included marriage. The Merah network's strong bond and dense nodes allowed it to, indirectly, undertake attacks in France as it had enough members, knowledge, and resources to re-strike quickly. Fabien Clain switched his support to Daesh, not for ideological reasons, but for the safe-heaven provided by Daesh, and maybe even logistical and/or financial support. This again depicts small decentralised networks' fluidity across MSJOs via the MSJM, and in the case of Fabien Clain, the use of the pan-Islamist movement to provide, in part, a support base.

Although the Buttes-Chaumont, Merah, Vénissieux, and others networks were inspired by al-Qaeda, they did not seem to have direct contact with AQC or any other al-Qaeda cells. Nevertheless, their dense nodes linked by numerous and strong bonds created constant engagement and gave members few opportunities for disengagement. Further, these networks rarely diverged from their repertoire of

action: the Vénissieux network plotted chemical attacks following Menad Benchellali's training, and the Buttes-Chaumont and Merah networks plotted hit and run attacks following both members' past delinquencies and al-Qaeda's tactics. This implies that if a network performs one attack and is not dismantled, the next attack will most likely be of similar kind (cf. Tarrow 1995: 90 regarding movement rarely diverging from their repertoire of action).

### 7.3.2 *From Status Quo to Soft Approach*

After 9/11, French counter-terrorism underwent limited changes. In fact, France's counter-terrorism strategy was seen as a world-leader. The changes were mostly brought by laws that altered current laws in minor ways. These include verifying IDs, searching cars, CCTV operations, data collection, strengthening criminal law provisions and reducing judicial checks on law enforcement powers, extending the time between an individual's arrest and her/his access to a lawyer to seventy-two hours, inscribed manufacturing explosives or biological weapons in the Penal Code, and increasing domestic and international intelligence collaboration. In early-2003, the government began fighting 'radical Islam' by closing mosques and deporting a dozen imams that were preaching discourses counter to French laws (Gregory 2003: 139-143; Hellmuth 2015: 985; Schmitt 2010: 42-45). In 2000, 2002, 2003, and 2006, the *Vigipirate* plan was updated, providing clearer and wider responses, and it is enacted more frequently. In fact, it has been on-going since 3 December 1996 after the GIA summer bombings in Paris. After the 2004 Madrid and 2005 London attacks, most European countries began initiating soft approaches, while France followed its continuous hard approach.

The 2012 Merah attacks came as a shock. Most thought that the French strategy and apparatus was effective, while in fact, it was merely lucky - consider Mohamed Merah who had been able to leave the country and re-enter it twice despite having a *Fiche S*. In fact, all the following individuals who undertook or attempted to undertake an attack in France had a *Fiche S*: Samy Amimour; Amedy Coulibaly; Sid Ahmed Ghlam; Ayoub El-Khazzani; Chérif and Saïd Kouachi; Foued Mohamed-Aggad; Ismaël Omar Mostefaï; Mehdi Nemmouche; and Yassin Salhi.

Despite numerous arrests and 'dismantled' networks, the dismantling of the small decentralised networks was never fully undertaken. Individuals were sentenced to jail, but they were never incentivised to disengage (see [section 7.5](#) below). Thus, they kept their bonds with other nodes or created new links with other individuals in prison and/or outside prison. Further, individuals that were not arrested but had low level of engagement ceased supporting and aiding MSJOs, yet they did not cease supporting or aiding the MSJM and the pan-Islamist movement as they were not incentivised to do so. Therefore, when a new MSJO arrived, they supported it. These networks became the basis of support for al-Qaeda from the late 2000s/early 2010 until today, some of which shifted their support for Daesh or other MSJOs.

Beginning in 2013, then Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault launched discussion regarding a soft approach via the ‘prevention of radicalisation’. The 2013 influx of French foreign fighters to the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone buried this issue (Hellmuth 2015: 988). The soft approach is detailed and critically assessed in [chapter 8](#) while the current hard approach is detailed and critically assessed in [chapter 9](#).

### 7.3.3 *Lessons for Disengagement*

From al-Qaeda’s decentralisation phase, three lessons for disengagement are uncovered. The first lesson regards dismantling networks. Closing down the meeting’s location, like the Buttes-Chaumont network’s initial Isqra mosque or al-Qaeda’s training camps, does not imply dismantling the network as members will meet elsewhere. Rather, what matters is the action taken toward the members and the bonds they have with other members. The simple imprisonment of members may not break the bonds between them. Similarly, separating individuals in prisons to cut bonds may not work either as individuals will create new bonds with new members and recreate the network elsewhere. While the role of prisons in disengagement is examined in detail later, (see [subsection 9.1.3](#)) the lesson here is that there needs to be a support framework for individuals who are taken out of a network (see [section 9.2](#)).

After the Merah attacks, President Nicolas Sarkozy, then running for re-election, pushed for the arrests of militants. The arrests’ date, time, and location were communicated to the media to ensure a camera presence. While nineteen individuals were arrested, two days later, all were released without any charges. Unfortunately, their names have not been cleared and some even lost their employment. This electoral media stunt is relied upon heavily in Omar Diaby *19HH* video as proof of Muslims’ mistreatment in France. The second lesson is that networks need to be dismantled quietly and be jointly undertaken with both mediation, to begin disengaging arrested members and their supporting members, and development actions, to offer arrested members solutions to get back into society.

Thirdly, as previously mentioned, outside networks are important in disengaging individuals. Mohamed Merah’s case further supports this lesson. While his brother (Abdelkader Merah) and friends (the Clain brothers, Olivier Corel, Imad Djebali or Sabri Essid, for example) were highly involved in his pathway-to engagement, he had no outside networks to offer counter bonds and counter/alternative narratives.

## 7.4 AL-QAEDA SINCE 2011

Al-Qaeda’s most recent historical phase follows Arab Spring. While al-Qaeda was not initially present in these uprisings, it now has footholds in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. This was achieved through the organisation’s decentralised structure. Since these conflicts require detailed contextual analysis, al-Qaeda’s network in Syria, Jabhat al-Nusra (until its split in 2016), is examined [chapter 9](#).

On 2 May 2011, a CIA operation, Operation Neptune Spear, undertaken by a team of United States Navy SEALs, killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan. His death was more symbolic for the US population than a strategic defeat for al-Qaeda. Because of its decentralised structure, al-Qaeda's cells continued to operate similarly as before. Ayman al-Zawahiri became first in command. While al-Qaeda was weakened in Afghanistan, until the gradual pulling back of US troops, its network expansion, continuous attacks, and resilient ideology confirm the organisation's durability. In fact, al-Qaeda has continued spreading its network.

On 3 September 2014, Ayman al-Zawahiri announced the establishment of a new al-Qaeda branch, al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, and Pakistan alongside the Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP). Since then, multiple jihadi factions have pledged support (Barry 2014). This expansion serves to counter Daesh's expansion and unite jihadis together to strengthen as '[d]iscord is a curse and torment, and disgrace for the believers and glory for the disbelievers' (al-Zawahiri quoted in Barry 2014). However, Indian Muslims and have little sympathy for salafi-jihadism and Wahhabism which creates an ideological disconnect between AQIS and the region's Muslim population. Nevertheless, the first attack was the bombing of a naval dockyard in Karachi, followed by the assassination of Bangladeshi bloggers (Barry 2015). Despite their alliance, AQIS has condemned TTP's 16 December 2014 attack on the Peshawar school, potentially because of its desire to gain popular support in the region.

## 7.5 PRISON

Throughout these chapters, it is clear that French counter-terrorism has sent many militants to prison. This chapter examines why and how prison creates pathways-to engagement.

For some authors, prison has a role in engagement. For Khosrokhavar (2004), because Islam is also living a *mal être* in prison, this frustration can lead to adherence to fundamental Islam. Frustration occurs because Islam is seen as treated in an inferior matter vis-à-vis Christianity and Judaism. One French inmate interviewed by Khosrokhavar claimed: 'It is rehashed that with *la laïcité*, all religions are treated equally. Give me a break! Find one person that says that Muslims are treated like Christians or Jews. It is false' (Khosrokhavar 2015: 313). Religious based frustrations include, for example:

- ❖ Forbidding Friday prayer but allowing Sabbath on Saturday and Sunday mass;
- ❖ The difficulty of owning a prayer mat because it is considered an 'ostensible religious symbol' in a public space or because of the prayer mat's dangerousness if fitted with a compass indicating Mecca's direction;
- ❖ The lack of extra rations when fasting for Ramadan, especially compared to Christmas' superior treatment;

- The difficulty of obtaining halal meat and ingredients, and the difficulty of verifying the certification if available;
- The lack of permanent imams, the lack of proper imams, and the restraints on what imams can say or not (e.g.: discussing jihad is taboo);
- The prohibition of wearing a djellaba or qami because it is an 'ostensible religious' symbol<sup>4</sup>; and
- Some staff's down racism toward Muslims and denigration of Islam.

Further, some inmates claim they are in prison for acts they have committed and some they have not committed, or because they are Muslim. Another inmate interviewed by Khosrokhavar claimed:

I was sentenced for things that are true and things that are false. I will list them for you: on six condemnations, there are three that were not done by me, but I admit to three others. I said it to the judge, but he did not want to believe me. [...] The idea of vengeance is running across my mind. Also, as soon as it regards Islam, we are tagged with the word Islamist, as if being Muslim implies being a terrorist (inmate quoted in Khosrokhavar 2015: 310-311).

Khosrokhavar (2004 & 2015) has numerous other interviews describing similar treatment. These facts are worsened by the sheer number of Muslims in prison: while Muslims represent about 8% of the French population, they represent 70% to 80% of the inmate population (Khosrokhavar 2004 & 2015). Alongside these religious-based frustrations are added frustration because of overpopulation, lack of funding, and lack of equipment. Hence, these frustrations can push inmates to follow stricter forms of Islam because they feel anger and want vengeance, both which can be relieved by fundamental Islam (Khosrokhavar 2004). In prisons, Salafism represents about 12% of the population while the Tabligh movement makes up most of the remaining 88% (Godard & Taussig 2007: 233).

For other authors (Khosrokhavar 2004; Loueslati 2015), adherence to fundamental Islam in prison is over-estimated. Many inmates, especially first timers, turn to religion, and in some cases radical views of religion, for moral comfort and support, to fit in, earn protection, or to not be disturbed by proselytising inmates. Many shed their religiosity when leaving prison rather than use it a stepping stone to violence. Further, some radical inmates actually hide their religiosity to prevent disturbances from penitential staff and do not proselytise others (Khosrokhavar 2004; Loueslati 2015). In sum, adherence to fundamental Islam does occur in prison, but, does this adherence lead to engagement with the MSJM?

For Dalil Boubakeur, president of the CFCM:

The prison phase is fundamental. Prison are now, according to the best studies and following commonplace findings, the 'nursery' of jihadism. In the words of one observer, a youth

<sup>4</sup> French inmates do not wear a uniform but bring their clothes from the outside, except shoes which are purchased from the prison for security reasons

enters in trainers and cap, and comes out with a beard, the djellaba or a prayer rosary and a Koran in his hand. This physical change is accompanied by a change in behaviour and mentality, marked by the acquisition of certain daily reflexes in terms of food, individuals frequented, language, as many requirements induced by group life and almost monastic. [Such behaviours push individuals to seek like minded individuals], firstly Salafi imams, then toward Salafi websites, and via this intermediary, jihadis (Boubakeur cited in Ciotti & Mennucci 2015: 42).

Boubakeur is mistaken as it was demonstrated in [chapter 5](#) that the jump from Salafi-quietism or the Tabligh movement to salafi-jihadism is rare. For Khosrokhavar:

One does not go directly from frustration to jihadi-radicalisation. There exist in fact no direct linear causal relationship between both. Nevertheless, the accumulation of frustrations, especially those related to religious domains, can affect some individuals who do not have, at the beginning, a true knowledge of Islam. [...] Often, it is after radicalisation that we assist, for some individuals, to the willingness to deepen knowledge on Islam, in its radical version. This phenomenon is also true outside prisons (2015: 309).

Thus, adherence toward fundamental Islam does exist in prison, can persist once an inmate leaves, and can turn into salafi-jihadism. This is, however, the same scenario as outside prison: only a handful of individuals are concerned by engagement from pan-Islamism to the MSJM. However, as pan-Islamism and the MSJM share common grounds, it is not uncommon for engagement to be affected by both.

[Appendix E](#) lists known French individuals that undertook or tried to undertake an attack with the GIA, al-Qaeda or Daesh. Of the 22 French individuals listed, 12 of them had been incarcerated beforehand; 7 of them had not been incarcerated but had travelled abroad; only 1 had no prior conviction, a delinquent past, or travelled (however, Hakim Marnissi had links to the Toulon network); yet 12 had a *Fiche S*. The overall lessons for disengagement here is that prison needs to incorporate a soft component to prevent engagement with the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-jihadi movements, and to break the bonds between militant network members (either new networks or the re-formation of networks that existed in Syria) and prevent such bonds from reforming during and after incarceration.

## 7.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter detailed why and how French individuals engaged via al-Qaeda, with specific focus on French small decentralised networks. These networks are responsible for attacks in France, sending individuals abroad for training in militant-jihadi camps and/or participating in jihad, and serve as platforms to share propaganda, resources, incentives, and frames. This chapter then detailed the role

of prison in engagement with the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-jihadi movements. In sum, while prison does play a role, it seems to be more about reinforcing links between militant members than the attraction of new members to a network. However, this claim is not definitive as some information is clearly missing and no fieldwork was undertaken in prison due to a lack of access. Nevertheless, the relationship between past incarceration and undertaking (or trying to undertake) an attack is high.

All in all, seven lessons for disengagement were uncovered:

1. Since engagement relies on simple messages of solidarity and altruism, disengagement's frame should focus mainly on anti-West populist propaganda and governments need to actively prevent conflict and alleviate the suffering of others to prevent the formation of such messages;
2. Contextual changes can negatively affect organisations and positively affect disengagement; however, these changes must not create conflicts that attract foreign fighters;
3. Disengagement should be framed as a move away from violence, a MSJO, and the broader MSJM, but not a move away from campaigning for Muslims. In other words, such frames act as pull factors;
4. Competing networks to the militant networks must have stronger bonds with the individual while breaking the individual-militant organisation bonds. Strong family and friend network bonds need to be reinforced, and if these do not exist, other strong outside network bonds can be created. These bonds give individuals' lives meaning and offer rehabilitation into society by developing society & individual bonds.
5. Disengagement should not solely be about individuals on society's fringe but about all individuals that are having difficulties integrating into society, including those with a delinquent past.
6. For disengagement to succeed, there exists a proper level of magnanimity toward disengaged individuals volunteering in programmes and those that have completed such programme; and
7. A soft component needs to be added to both prison and counter-terrorism as repression alone is insufficient.

From 1992 to 2012, France did not fundamentally change its counter-terrorism strategy. In fact, it was considered world leading until the Merah attacks revealed its lacunae. Since 2013, the French government has kept its two pillars yet is slowly beginning to discuss a potential third pillar - a soft approach. Such discussion had been held in other countries, like the UK, since 2005. French counter-terrorism is now falling behind.

In late-2011/early-2012, the threat from the MSJM evolved through the Syrian jihad and the subsequent spectacular increase of foreign fighters, especially French ones. In 2014, France added a soft component to its counter-terrorism approach. The next chapter critically analyses the approach while examining engagement and uncovering lessons for disengagement.

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## DAESH

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The MSJM evolved after the beginning of the Syrian jihad through the establishment of Daesh and the increase presence of foreign fighters, with estimates ranging from 27,000 to 31,000 from at least 86 countries by December 2015, of which about about 1,500 are French (Soufan 2015). The French government has altered its approach to the phenomenon by altering its hard approach (see [chapter 9](#)) and including a soft approach in its counter-terrorism strategy. The soft approach relies on the mental manipulation theory to explain the phenomenon's why and how. This chapter details this mental manipulation theory. Then, SMT is utilised to demonstrate its superiority in making sense of the evolving phenomenon and offer lessons for disengagement. While the current Syrian jihad is composed of numerous factions and MSJOs, this chapter solely focuses on Daesh for comparison as the French approach solely focuses on Daesh.

### 8.1 FRANCE'S NEW RESPONSE

In April 2014, faced with hundreds of French foreign fighters joining the Syrian jihad and dozens of calls from parents for assistance, the *Centre de Prévention contre les Dérives Sectaires liées à l'Islam* (Centre for the Prevention of Sectarian Drifts Linked to Islam, CPDSI), led by the anthropologist Dounia Bouzar and the psychologist Serge Hefez, was established. In 2014 the *Comité Interministériel de la Prévention de la Délinquance* (Inter-ministerial Committee for the Prevention of Delinquency, CIPD) commissioned a report from the CPDSI to explain this phenomenon (see Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014). The CPDSI utilised the mental manipulation theory, also known as the sectarian drift, to explain radicalisation and offer a deradicalisation strategy. By April 2015, the CIPD launched a bid for tender for the creation of a national family support and deradicalisation centre. The CPDSI, the only respondent, was awarded a one year mission.

#### 8.1.1 *Theoretical Background*

The CPDSI's theory rests upon mental manipulation and exit counselling.

### 8.1.1.1 *Mental Manipulation*

Dorey (1981: 117-118), the first to clinically study mental manipulation, defined three key actions undertaken by an individual (called a domineering) mentally manipulating another:

1. Triggering operations aimed at annihilating the psychic autonomy of a victim;
2. Exercising dominance causing the victim to feel overwhelmed, controlled and manipulated; and
3. Including an indelible mark on the victim of this destructive relationship.

Through these three actions, a domineering can mentally manipulate any individual. In fact:

The influence thus reflects a very fundamental tendency to neutralize the desire of others, that is to say, to reduce all otherness of any difference in the abolition of any specificity: the aim being to reduce the other to the function and status of an object (Dorey 1992: 1427)

In sum, mental manipulation occurs when an individual loses her/his freewill. For Chanussot (2015: 17):

We talk about mental manipulation when an individual or group exercises, one way or another, though often mentally, an attempt to control others causing a destabilization of their decision making, ability to judge, and power of self-criticism. In other words, mental manipulation is the attempt to get someone else to do or think something, but without them really noticing, without them being able to decode that their thinking is out of service.

That is, the intelligence of the follower 'follows' (Zagury quoted in FECRIS 2015), that is, it is inactive. Whilst the study of mental manipulation was clinically studied, leaving mental manipulation rests upon the methods of 'exit counselling'.

### 8.1.1.2 *Exit Counselling*

Exit counselling is based on the experience of its creator, Steven Hassan, who himself was 'deprogrammed' from the Unification Church, a sect, via the Cult Awareness Network in the United States (Hassan 1988). Deprogramming rests upon coercive actions to force an individual to change belief and abandon allegiance to an ideology (Hassan 1988). For Hassan, deprogramming should be last resort as it is best to attempt to transform the individual back to her/his original self (Hassan 1988; Hassan quoted in Lumet 2012: 54). That is, exit counselling rests on a more 'soft' approach of strategic intervention therapy, akin to finding the right key for the lock (Hassan 1988).

Exit counselling was brought to France in the mid-1990s by Maître Daniel Picotin, a lawyer who specialises, in part, on defending victims of sects. In fact, in France, a sect and its guru can be sued for abusing the weakness of a victim (Picotin 2015 & 2016). Dounia Bouzar, the head of the CPDSI, was

introduced to and taught exit counselling by Picotin (Picotin 2016).

The CPDSI defines radicalisation as “a discourse that utilises religious precepts, presented like Islam, to **bring a youth to self-exclusion and to exclude ‘all those that are not like him’**” (Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014: 6, quotes and bold in original). This definition is akin to a mental manipulation as defined by Dorey (1981: 117-118). Via interviews with 1,046 families (325 in 2014 and 721 in 2015 (Bouzar 2016: 13)), the CPDSI explains radicalisation in two phases: indoctrination then radicalisation (Bouzar 2016).

### 8.1.2 *Indoctrination*

Indoctrination is composed of two stages. The first is the individual's isolation from her/his social environment. Isolation is not detected through visible religious change, but through quantifiable rupture between the individual and her/his environment. This begins when individuals watch online conspiracy theory videos. These continuous viewings place individuals in a paranoid state wherein she/he can trust no one. Individuals are pushed to reject their surrounding world and run away from it. The given solution to this problem is a final confrontation that will regenerate the world. Isolation is furthered by making individuals feel the persecution discussed in videos as the reason for their *malaise*. To resolve persecution, individuals are pushed to rupture all links with those at fault: old friends, school, hobbies, and parents. Eventually, individuals break-away from their environment (Bouzar 2016: 18-20; Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014: 18-22).

Other indicators exist like refusing to listen to music or to watch television and films, changing ways of dressing, believing in the world's imminent end, refusing alcoholic products at home, such as perfumes, or binning food-items containing pork-jelly (Bouzar 2016: 20; Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014: 20-21). Multiple signs need to be accumulated and put into the family's context to suspect indoctrination as one indicator cannot diagnose the problem (Bouzar 2016: 20). These rupture indicators led to the creation of a French government poster educating French citizens about the signs of radicalisation (see [Appendix B](#)) - an approach that fits well with France's counter-terrorism (see [subsection 8.1.5](#)).

The second stage is the individual's destruction for the group's benefit by accentuating the similarities between the individual and the group. Individuality can then be 'annihilated' by destroying identity contours (e.g.: clothing) and past markers (e.g.: memories), and choosing a new name (starting with 'Abu' for men and 'Umm' for women). With individuality 'annihilated', reason is replaced by repetition and mimicry of the radical Islamic jihadi-discourse. That is, the mental faculties are suppressed to ease the group's exaltation (Bouzar 2016: 21-22; Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014: 22-32).

'To get youths to reject society and run away [...], **the radical Islam discourse places the youth in a paranoiac vision of the world where he can trust no one**' (Bouzar 2016: 18-19, bold in original). The first phase can be conceptualised as relational indoctrination, while the second phase, radicalisation, is cognitive/ideological indoctrination through the adherence to the jihadi ideology (third stage) then the dual dehumanisation of the individual and future victims (fourth stage).

### 8.1.3 Radicalisation

The second phase's first step is adherence to the jihadi ideology. Adherence implies the belief of being chosen and belonging to the group holding the truth and nominated to regenerate the world. The group is pure and prime, and because the individual belongs to the group, so is she/he. For adherence to take hold, the ideology is tailored cognitively and emotionally (Bouzar 2016: 23-24). Five non-mutually exclusive myths are conveyed as ways of participating (Bouzar, Caupenne and Valsan 2014: 82-86):

1. *Lancelot*. This myth conveys sacrifice for history in a noble way.
2. *Mother Theresa*. This myth conveys, generally to minor girls, the humanitarian ideal (e.g.: nurse or social assistant).
3. *The Water Carrier*. This myth conveys being and existing amongst something bigger than oneself.
4. *Call of Duty*. This myth conveys fighting at the front for the weak to regain their dignity.
5. *Zeus*. This myth conveys thrill seeking in a limitless environment.

Overtime, individualisation has evolved to offer three others way of participating alongside the *Mother Theresa*, *Zeus*, and combined *Lancelot* and *Call of Duty* myths (Bouzar 2016: 24-27):

1. *Daeshland*. This 'Daeshland' myth allows individuals to perform their real *hijra*, get away from religious persecution, and live in the true Islamic community.
2. *Beauty and the Bearded Man*. This myth allows to save one-self from the repressive anti-women world of the West and offers a hero as a husband.
3. *Zeus*. This myth allows one to die to save his impure non-Muslim family.

Since individuals adhere to the ideology, they also transform their way of thinking, acting, and speaking following the ideology. This is a transformation of the cognitive frame. In the cognitive/ideological indoctrination stage, recruiters adapt their discourse to the cognitive and emotional aspirations of each youth. This is the 'mutation of the jihadi discourse': there exists a true individualisation of indoctrination (Bouzar 2016: 23-24).

The final stage, regardless of the chosen myth(s), is the dehumanisation of the indoctrinated and his future victims. Firstly, utopian access to totalitarian power by accepting human sacrifice is given. Then, cruelty and death become banality. A field of conviction encompassing the entirety of psyche and emotions is created - we love death more than you love life. Finally, the dehumanisation of victims occurs: the others, the ones that do not belong to the group, are not considered as similar (Bouzar 2016: 27; Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014: 87-91).

These two phases explain how the jihadi discourse takes authority over individuals and pushes them to rejoin the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone.

#### 8.1.4 *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*

The strength of the CPDSI's approach lies in the large number of interviews. It is undeniable that the CPDSI's 1,046 interviews is a very substantial and respectable number.

The bad firstly lies in the usage of terminology only defined in religious terms. For the CPDSI, radicalisation is only seen as a religious phenomenon that pushes individuals to self-exclusion where ruptures are symptoms of radicalisation (Bouzar 2014: 25). In fact, an individual's radicalisation is akin to a 'mutation' resembling a sectarian drift, conveyed through conspiracy theories (Bouzar, Caupenne and Valsan 2014: 5). If auto-exclusion of society is radical, then so is the support or participation in acts of brutal violence against unarmed civilians. Yet, this does not fit within the CPDSI's definition. While conspiracy theories are used by Daesh to frame engagement, they are not the sole mean to convey meaning. In fact, as individuals further their engagement, their reliance on conspiracy theories decreases. This is especially true for conspiracy theories claiming that Daesh is an Israel/US creation as engaged individuals take pride in their creation and sustainability of the caliphate (Boukhobza 2016). Furthermore, this sole religious focus misses the non-religious arguments (e.g.: unity amongst Muslims) and Daesh's use of violent and non-violent tactics.

Secondly, the CPDSI's approach is reductionist of the phenomenon to a radical jihadi-discourse rather than a wider movement (i.e.: the MSJM and the pan-Islamist movement). In fact, no where does the CPDSI detail how these discourses appeared and grew internationally or in France. Its sole discussion of the discourses' evolution regards jihad's redefinition to justify violence through an analysis of the misused Koranic surahs and verses. The discourses' contexts are not examined since the CPDSI sees this as a micro-level problem. Therefore, the theory is robbed of any contextual analysis which can shed light on how the movements and jihad have been shaped by their contexts and vice versa, in turn affecting engagement (or in the CPDSI's case, radicalisation) and disengagement.

The ugly, firstly lies in the CPDSI's use of mental manipulation to explain radicalisation. According to Amoyel (2015 & 2016) and Boukhobza (2015 & 2016ii) (both psychologists dealing with individuals that are either engaged but still in France, engaged and in the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone or disengaging),

there is no mental manipulation in the current or past form of the phenomenon. In fact, according to Boukhobza (2016i: 25, original formatting):

Our field experiences [...] and our theorising of Jihadism more generally shows that, in the entire range of conviction processes we analysed, we find no:

- ▶ 'Mental manipulation',
- ▶ thought control,
- ▶ psychic rape,
- ▶ destruction of the person,
- ▶ psychological destabilisation,
- ▶ nor allegiance, except to Allah himself.

As for the 'reduction of the critical spirit and the rupture with the references commonly accepted', they are often already there in many Orthodox home environments and not specially jihadi ones.

Further, Marik Fetouh (2016), the director of the *Centre d'Action et de Prévention contre la Radicalisation des Individus* (Action and Prevention Centre against Individual's Radicalisation, CAPRI) in Bordeaux, has seen no cases of mental manipulation (as of the summer 2016). Furthermore, Maître Picotin (who introduced and taught exit counselling to Dounia Bouzar) said at the launch of the CAPRI that 'all individuals considered as radicalised or candidates to jihad are not necessarily under mental manipulation' (Picotin 2015) and reiterated this fact during an interview for this thesis 'I have yet to link mental manipulation and jihadism' (Picotin 2016).

Secondly, this very narrow conceptualisation of radicalisation and its effects on individuals forces the CPDSI to only analyse micro-level factors, forgoing any and all analysis of macro and meso level factors, and the interaction between these levels. For instance, in none of the CPDSI's report (Bouzar 2016; Bouzar, Caupenne and Valsan 2014) and Bouzar's books (2014 & 2015) is Daesh's inception analysed nor how this affected and was affected by engagement. Further, this analysis is not applied to any other MSJO. That is, there is no historical applicability. There is therefore no analysis of the meso-level factors effects on macro and micro level factors and vice-versa. The same can be said for the macro-level analysis. For instance, France's and the international scene's structural effects on engagement and engagement's effects on France and the international scene are not analysed. There is therefore no analysis of the macro factors effects on meso and micro level factors and vice-versa.

#### 8.1.5 Conclusion

The CPDSI's conceptualisation of the phenomenon and offered solutions are appealing to the French government as individuals are seen as non-rational victims of a radical discourse rather than rational

actors reacting to their context. This allows the French government to relinquish all responsibility for the phenomenon. The CPDSI's approach was thus championed by the French government. For instance, following the CPDSI's recommendations on the 'signs' of radicalisation, the French government created a flyer (see [Appendix B](#)) to spread knowledge on how to recognise these 'signs' and what to do if confronted with a radicalised individual. The flyer was heavily shared on its [stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr](http://stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr) website, [@stop-djihadisme](#) Twitter account, and through the [#stopdjihadisme](#). In February 2016, the CPDSI did not renew its bid to the CIPD citing differences with the government, the last straw being the possible law depriving jihad candidates of their nationality.

The current French soft approach is thus based on a theory that does not fully explain the phenomenon. This thesis' synthesised SMT framework is now used to analysis French citizens' engagement with Daesh to make sense of the phenomenon, demonstrate SMT's superiority as a theory over mental manipulation, and uncover lessons for disengagement.

## 8.2 A SYNTHESISED SMT ANALYSIS

### 8.2.1 *Contextual Analysis*

Through the examination of Iraq's and Syria's political destabilisations and the arrival of the MSJM and its MSJOs, Daesh's founding ideology, interest, relations with the state and local tribes, structure, and internal dynamics are uncovered. That is, the macro's influences on the meso and vice versa are examined, and somewhat the effect on and of micro-level factors (the micro-level is examined in more details in the following section).

#### 8.2.1.1 *Iraq*

The effects of the 2003 US-led invasion and its lack of post-war political plan fractured Iraq's fragile religious mosaic. Some provinces no longer accepted governmental law and order, and some underwent civil society's destruction altogether. After the removal of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist party from power in 2003, the Shi'ite majority took power but excluded the Sunni minority. In early 2004, US forces, Iraqi army, and Shi'ites militias were confronted by opposing Sunni groups, composed of both national and foreign militants (Nohra 2013).

The side-lined groups' resentment was fuelled by Jalal Talabani's April 2006 Presidential election who chose Nouri al-Maliki, a Shi'ite, as Prime Minister, and Saddam Hussein's sloppy trial and execution (Nohra 2013). This fuel ignited, in September 2006, when thirty Anbar Province tribes (Western Iraq, home of Fallujah and Ramadi) pledged allegiance to AQI (Rose 2009). Iran, a Shi'ite power, added more fuel by relying on post-war chaos and porous border to increase its influence by supporting Shi'ite militias with training, weapons, and funds. These events further destabilised Iraq and disrupted

US forces. Despite General Petraeus' 2007 troop surge and a rallying of Sunni tribes in central Iraq, the country's implosion kept nearing. In 2010, after al-Maliki's re-election and US forces' departure, violence from Iraq's mosaic division and multiple insurgent group continued (Lister 2015; Weiss & Hassan 2015).

These divisions pushed Sunnis to religious extremism and gave them the interest of fighting for superiority over others, especially Shi'ites, by rallying militia groups. It is from these groups that Daesh's presence in Iraq descends and from which its popular support initiated. The divisions continued the rise of anti-US and anti-West propaganda, one of Daesh's often used propaganda subject, and continued the break down of relations between Sunnis and the Iraq state because of its Shi'ite leaders.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi laid Daesh's ideological foundations in destabilised Iraq, and as will be detailed below, became a model jihadi. Although he arrived at the Afghan-Jihad's end, he stayed in Peshawar until 1993. He engaged with Abu Mohammed al-Maqdisi, a salafi, who had established his own MSJO, *Bayt al-Imam* (the House of the Imam) in Jordan. Both were jailed in 1994 and al-Zarqawi freed in 1999. During that time, al-Zarqawi had taken-in al-Maqdisi's rigid conceptions of jihad. In 2000, al-Zarqawi established a training camp, *Tawhid wal-Jihad* (Monotheism and Jihad), in Herat, near the Afghan-Iran border, as part of bin Laden's network. In 2004, because of al-Zarqawi's subjugation to al-Qaeda, *Tawhid wal-Jihad* became *Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn* (al-Qaeda in the country of the two rivers) or AQI. Other than the fighting's ideology, al-Zarqawi had also undertaken the task of rallying popular support, in turn increasing recruitment and available resources, and led a Sunni insurrection in Iraq. In fact, when US marines arrived in Fallujah, they quickly realised that AQI had strong community support (Lister 2015; Weiss & Hassan 2015).

Because AQI was seen as a group of foreign jihadis, in January 2006, AQI and six other MSJO (five of which were Iraqi) created the Mujahedeen Shura Council to alter their internal dynamics by nationalising their recruitment. Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, an Iraqi, became the council's leader. Starting in mid-2006, AQI was being pushed out of Anbar province by tribal leaders through an open war. On 7 June 2006, al-Zarqawi was killed by an American drone strike, and Abu Ayyub al-Masri became the council's leader. On 15 October 2006, al-Masri announced the disbandment of the Mujahedeen Shura Council and the creation of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), with al-Baghdadi as its emir. From 2006 to 2010, AQI/ISI undertook continuous attacks against the Iraqi forces, Shi'ites, Americans, and Kurds. On 18 April 2010, al-Masri and al-Baghdadi were reported killed, and, on 16 May 2010, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became ISI's emir (Lister 2015; Weiss & Hassan 2015).

This rallying of Sunni tribes and popular support was to be a founding structural principal and coming-together of interests in Daesh's Islamic theocracy project. The MSJM's and AQI's dynamics of recruitment and resource mobilisation were to be staples of internal dynamics. The broader *kufar* definition, the focused fight on 'near enemies', and theological justifications were to be the founding

ideology of this project. After al-Zarqawi's death, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi continued this project.

From February to December 2004, Al-Baghdadi was jailed at Camp Bucca after establishing *Jaysh Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* (the Army of the People of the Sunni Community). Camp Bucca, a US military detention centre near Umm Qasr in southern Iraq, was the opportunity for Islamists and ex-Ba'athists to meet face-to-face and coordinate attacks and organisations (Chulov 2014). In fact, 'seventeen of the twenty-five most important Islamic State leaders now running the war in Iraq and Syria spent time in US prisons between 2004 and 2011' (al-Hashimi quoted in Chulov 2014). This also explains, alongside the US' involvement in Iraqi politics, the roots of Daesh's (and other MSJOs) ideology of anti-US sentiment.

Al-Baghdadi continued al-Zarqawi's project yet added a few personal touches. Its ideology and interest remained very similar, with the fight on the 'near enemy' and a Sunni theology only. However, al-Baghdadi also insisted on *fitna* amongst Sunnis. Regarding internal dynamics, however, al-Baghdadi did not want a consortium of Sunni groups, rather, he was returning to pre-Sunni insurrection dynamics. Finally, regarding structure, there were visibly more Ba'athists toward the hierarchy's top, possibly because of al-Baghdadi's connections with the movement.

Through Iraq's political destabilisation, al-Zarqawi, followed by al-Baghdadi, were able to lay the founding ideology, interest, relations with the state and local tribes, structure, and internal dynamics for Daesh and its caliphate. In fact, ISI can almost be seen as a test drive. Many lessons learned from ISI were implemented in Daesh, like the reliance on local Syrian Sunni tribes. Syria's political destabilisation gave al-Baghdadi more room to operate in areas devoid of law, order, and civil society.

#### 8.2.1.2 Syria

In March 2011, a peaceful Syrian uprising began against Bashar al-Assad's Alawite regime (a Shi'ite minority in Syria). This was not a continuity of other Arab Springs, but rather, the result of years of sectarian tensions (Achcar 2013; Filiu 2013). Three days later, three demonstrators died from military repression. Starting in July 2011, the regime secretly released thousands of jailed jihadis to justify its violence as fighting terrorism (Hénin 2015: 41-43). Some of these prisoners rejoined Iraq's insurgency. The increased forceful repression led to the Free Syrian Army's (FSA) formation in July 2011.

In August 2011, eight men crossed from Iraq to Syria. Amongst them, Abu Mohammed al-Jolani: an ISI member and ex-Camp Bucca detainee. During the next six months, al-Jolani quietly and discretely established a new Syrian jihadi network while hiding his ties with ISI and al-Qaeda. On 23 January 2012, al-Jolani declared Jabhat al-Nusra's (JN) formation. JN was to be al-Qaeda's path to improving the franchise's image through pro-local actions and followed the older 'near enemy' fight against the al-Assad regime (Abouzeid 2014; Weiss & Hassan 2015: 210-211). Following ISI's lessons learned, JN did not declare *takfir* on any Syrian minority, and in turn, received support from locals, including from

non-Islamists, and al-Zawahiri (Weiss & Hassan 2015: 2010-211). In early 2012, al-Zawahiri called for a Syrian jihad against the 'near enemy' using similar past narratives:

the splendour of the *umma's* youth in its prisons, torturing and killing them. It has protected the Israeli borders [for] about forty years, participated with America in the war against Islam in the name of terrorism, shed the blood of Muslims in horrible massacres in Hama, Homs, Jisr al-Shughur and Daraa, for consecutive decades, and includes a group of thieving robbers, who are looting the wealth and resources of Syria using iron and fire (al-Zawahiri quoted in Weiss & Hassan 2015: 211).

Al-Zawahiri followed al-Qaeda's old ways of mobilising support to continue the organisation's global jihad. However, internal ideological perspectives altered the Syrian jihad's development.

On 8 August 2013, al-Baghdadi announced JN and ISI's unification as the cross-border Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, aka Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, ISIS). Al-Jolani thanked al-Baghdadi for ISI's financial assistance, but refused the merger and re-pledged allegiance to al-Zawahiri. In late-May/early-June, al-Zawahiri publicly dissolved ISIL and ordered ISI to stay in Iraq and JN in Syria (Lister 2015; Weiss & Hassan 2015: 251-254). Al-Baghdadi defied the order claiming that al-Zawahiri was following the Western imposed Sykes-Picot borders.

Within Syria, many JN fighters joined Daesh; while within Iraq, al-Baghdadi continued the incorporation of Ba'athists into ISIL's top ranks. ISIL became an international MSJO with Ba'athists at the top and JN members at middle and lower echelons, and strong popular support. By cutting ties with al-Qaeda, ISIL returned to an early ISI incarnation (Lister 2015; Weiss & Hassan 2015: 254-256). On 2 February 2014, AQC formally ended its ties with ISIL. On 29 June 2014, al-Baghdadi issued a *fatwa* proclaiming a caliphate, with himself as caliph, and ISIL became *ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fil-Iraq wash Sham* (Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham or Daesh).

This *fatwa* had two other consequences. Firstly, as a possible lesson learned from the GIA, al-Baghdadi declared *takfirism* on others after declaring a sanctuary (the caliphate) to which all should make their *hijra* to, whilst the GIA had declared *takfirism* then tried to create a sanctuary. That is, al-Baghdadi offered a safe heaven away from infields (while the GIA had not) incentivising physical engagement. Secondly, and possible learning from al-Qaeda's return to Afghanistan in 1996, al-Baghdadi's *fatwa* served as a justification for why members of the MSJM and other MSJOs should join his organisation. This prevented the creation of a push factor (recall that when bin Laden changed al-Qaeda strategy from the 'near enemy' to the 'far enemy', many members did not follow him as they did not have a *fatwa* to follow) and justified his organisation's means and objectives.

Daesh's appearance in the Syrian jihad has altered the conflict by creating an immigration pole, intra-movement rivalry, increasing the number of foreign fighters, and grabbing local popular support.

### 8.2.1.3 *Daesh*

There exists multiple interests within Daesh. Top leaders serve God and/or personally profit (whether power or wealth). Iraqi Ba'athists regained power and dignity after the de-Ba'athisation law. Foreign fighters serve God and enjoy paradise on Earth. Sunni tribes 'loyal' to Daesh gain protection and economic perks. Individuals living in Daesh control territory enjoy efficient governance, despite brutal repression and a lack of governance alternatives dissuading up-rising (Weiss & Hassan 2015: 310). Although these interests may clash, as of today they all aim for the same idea – the caliphate's expansion and defence. This caliphate follows a Sunni Islam ideology, mixed with *takfirism*, under a strict reading of Sharia and *fiqh*. This serves to spread its ideology, eradicate all forms of governance not directed by God, and submit all those who do not follow its Sunni Islam. If submission does not occur, unbelievers are to be annihilated.

Daesh's *takfirism* version of militant salafi-jihadi is a main distinction from JN, as JN follows a more 'traditional' militant salafi-jihadism. This distinction affects engagement and disengagement. Consider individuals engaged for reasons based on waging jihad. Engagement is affected as individuals wishing to fight against the 'near enemy' (the al-Assad regime) and fight for Syria's Muslim populations are more likely to engage with JN. If an individual wishes to fight all unbelievers, near and far, engagement is more likely to be with Daesh. As for disengagement, an individual engaged with JN may be disengaged if the Syrian jihad succeeds or by offering alternative means to promote Syria's Muslim population's well-being and ridding them of the al-Assad regime. However, an individual engaged with Daesh is unlikely to disengage as there exists no other means or possibility of success of ridding the world of unbelievers.

Daesh aims to firmly control territory and its political, religious, and economic dimensions. It has a commander-cadre structure with capitals in Raqqa, Syria, and Mosul, Iraq (at city in which, as of December 2016, it is losing ground). It seeks expansion to restore the last true caliphate's 1258 borders throughout the Mediterranean basin. Several MSJOs outside the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone have pledged support and affiliation to Daesh. It has several internal dynamics as state characteristics. Politically, at the top is the caliph, al-Baghdadi, then deputy leaders in Syria and Iraq, and then council leaders ranging from finance, leadership, military, and legal matters. Although al-Baghdadi is caliph, al-Zarqawi, a model jihadi, is utilised by about two-third of profile pictures on social media (Jean-René 2016). This implies that al-Baghdadi is not the sole attractive leader, al-Zarqawi's martyrdom is showed to be achievable by others as well, and there exists a clear continuity between al-Zarqawi's project and al-Baghdadi's.

Six to eight million people are estimated to live in Daesh controlled territory. Daesh's assets are estimated at £1.35B and its income stems from taxes, trade, oil revenues, racketeering, and conquered cities' looting. Direct state financing is not yet fully proven. It provides religious education, medical services, multi-language propaganda, and salaries (though exact figures are unknown). Its military is

20,000 to 50,000 strong, composed of seasoned ex-Iraqi Ba’ath generals, ex-prisoners freed from the al-Assad regime, al-Qaeda transfers, and foreign fighters. Via victories and looting, it disposes of modern military material (e.g.: tanks, humvees, missiles). Finally, it executes its own form of Islamic justice, decides on judgements, and regulates commerce and taxes (Cockburn 2014; Hanne & Flichy de La Neuville 2014; Hénin 2015; Lister 2015; McCoy 2014; Napoleoni 2014; Weiss & Hassan 2015; Wood 2015). This is one of the most dominant part of Daesh’s force of attraction. Rather than going through the Western process of becoming a state by gaining recognition through the international community, Daesh simply declared itself a state without regards of the international community. A challenge to the establishment which it considers full of infields.

Daesh’s territorial dynamic profoundly alters the Syrian jihad. With the caliphate’s proclamation, Daesh territory spills-over the existing 1916 Sykes-Picot borders (see Figure 3). In June 2014, Daesh territory was estimated at 136,242km<sup>2</sup>, rose to 250,133km<sup>2</sup> in December 2014, and neared 234,893km<sup>2</sup> in January 2015 (Le Monde 2016c). However, most of it is empty dessert. Thus, by taking its January 2016 area and using low (6 million) and high (8 million) population range, population density ranges from 26 to 34 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. Since the summer of 2016 however, Daesh has been losing territory to, for instance, Kurdish fighters who retook Manbij (Syria), to Syrian rebels who retook Aleppo, and to Iraqi forces who retook Fallujah, all in June 2016. Daesh is not a state *per se*, but, as the *Financial Times* calls it, ISIS, inc. - a corporation of some sort bent on violence (Napoleoni 2014).

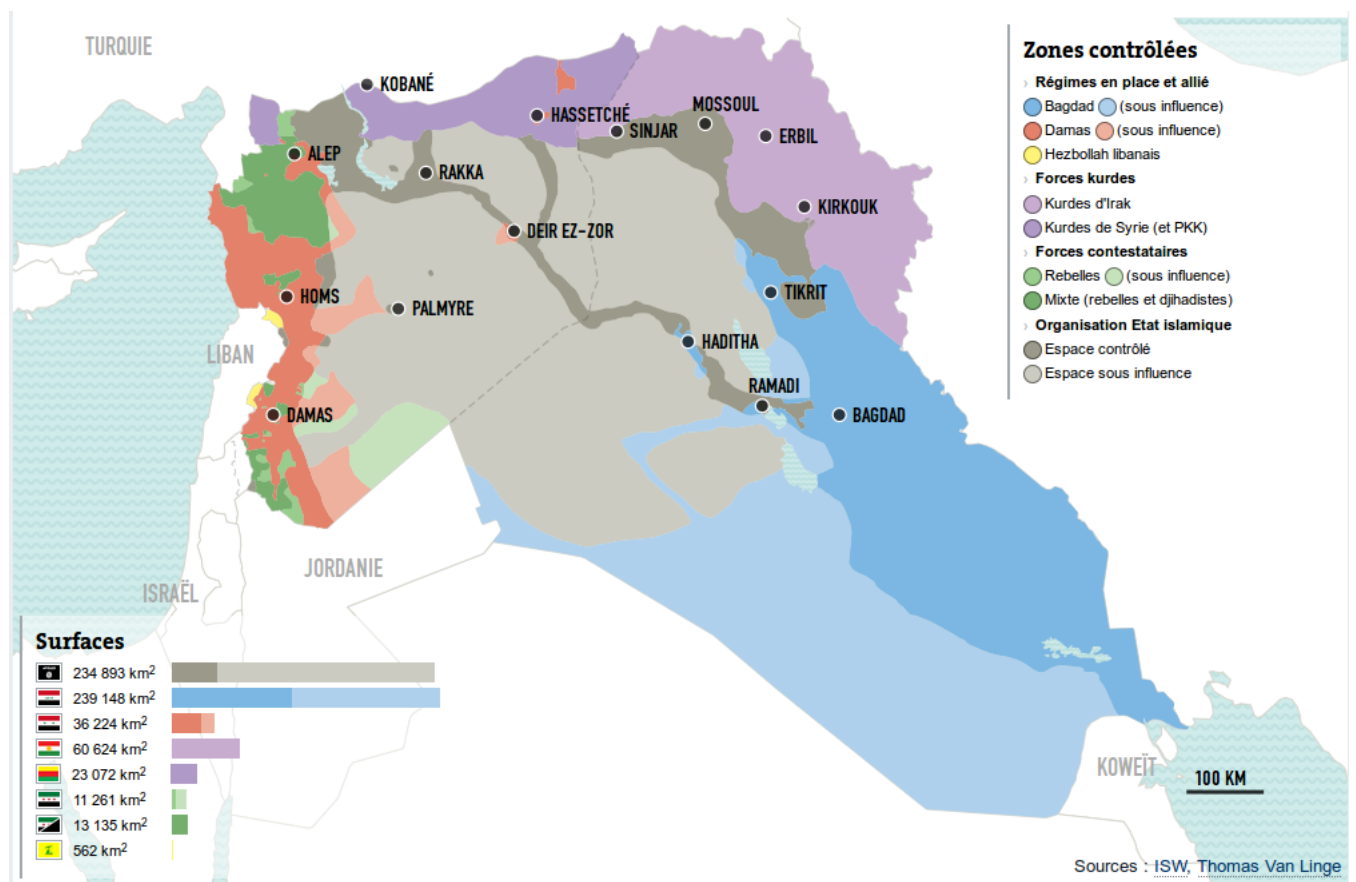


Figure 3: Territory Controlled by Daesh as of June 2015 (Le Monde 2016c)

While Daesh has attracted anywhere from 27,000 to 31,000 foreign fighters from 86 countries (Sofan 2015) to Syria and Iraq, as of early September 2016, an estimated 4.8 millions have fled the war – another effect felt across the world (UNHCR 2016).

Daesh’s ideology, interest, and internal dynamics continue to attract thousands the world over (see details below) and has become an immigration pole, thanks to, in part, its caliphate, proposed utopian life, challenge of world order, military strength, and propaganda (see below). Such dynamics have altered the Syrian jihad’s dynamics.

8.2.1.4 The Syrian Jihad

Despite Daesh’s claim of fighting the ‘near enemy’, it has rarely fought against the al-Assad regime. Face-to-face combat occurred during the siege of Menagh air base near Aleppo, and the battle for Raqqah and its neighbouring airport. Medium sized battles were in Qalamun (near Aleppo), Latakia (coastal city; battle won by the Syrian army), and in Qamishli (north-western Syria) (Hénin 2015: 45-46). This short list reveals that Daesh and the Syrian regime are fighting numerous factions: FAS, JN, Kurds, etc. Figure 4 depicts some of these factions (the colours have no meaning and controlled cities are in parenthesis)<sup>1</sup> during the summer of 2015. This representation is obviously outdated, yet it serves as a visualisation of the multiple factions within the Syrian Jihad. In fact, on 28 July 2016, JN announced that it had split from al-Qaeda in an effort to move away from al-Qaeda’s terrorist image. JN renamed itself *Jabhat Fateh al-Sham* (Front for the Conquest of the Levant). Other small factions rallied Jabhat Fateh al-Sham but this regrouping did not tip the balance of power in Syria.

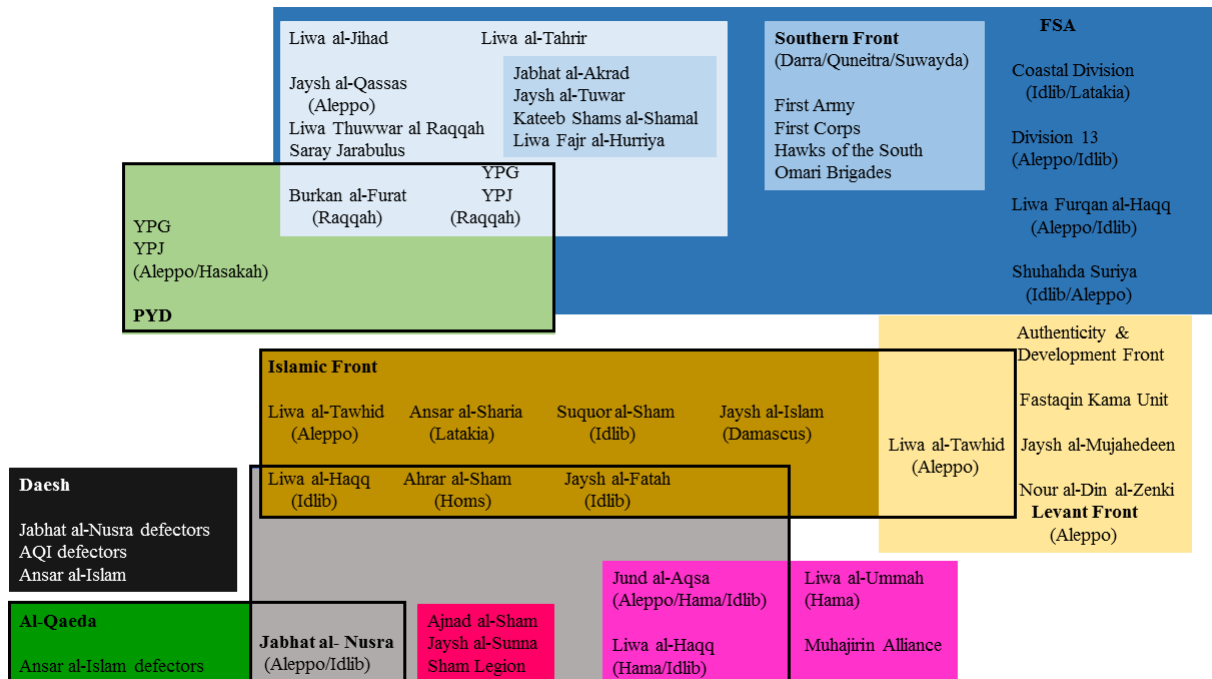


Figure 4: Factions in the Syrian Civil War as of 17 July 2015 (Fummy 2015)

<sup>1</sup> See Bulbajer’s *Guide to the Factions of the Syrian Civil War* for more details: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aI3yAmNGW1vLpJCOriVLqpUUIX9PG1RNsCqJGGfhxI/edit?pref=2&pli=1>.

The conflict has seen foreign fighters inflate militant organisations' ranks, not just MSJO, increasing the situation's complexity. By June 2014, approximately 12,000 individuals from 81 countries had rejoined the Syrian jihad. By December 2015, the figures rose to about 27,000 to 31,000, from at least 86 countries (see Figure 5). France is the leading European contributor of foreign fighters with an estimated 1,500 individuals. From June 2014 to December 2015, the number of militants from Western Europe doubled while those from Central Asia and Russia increased by 300% (Soufan 2015):

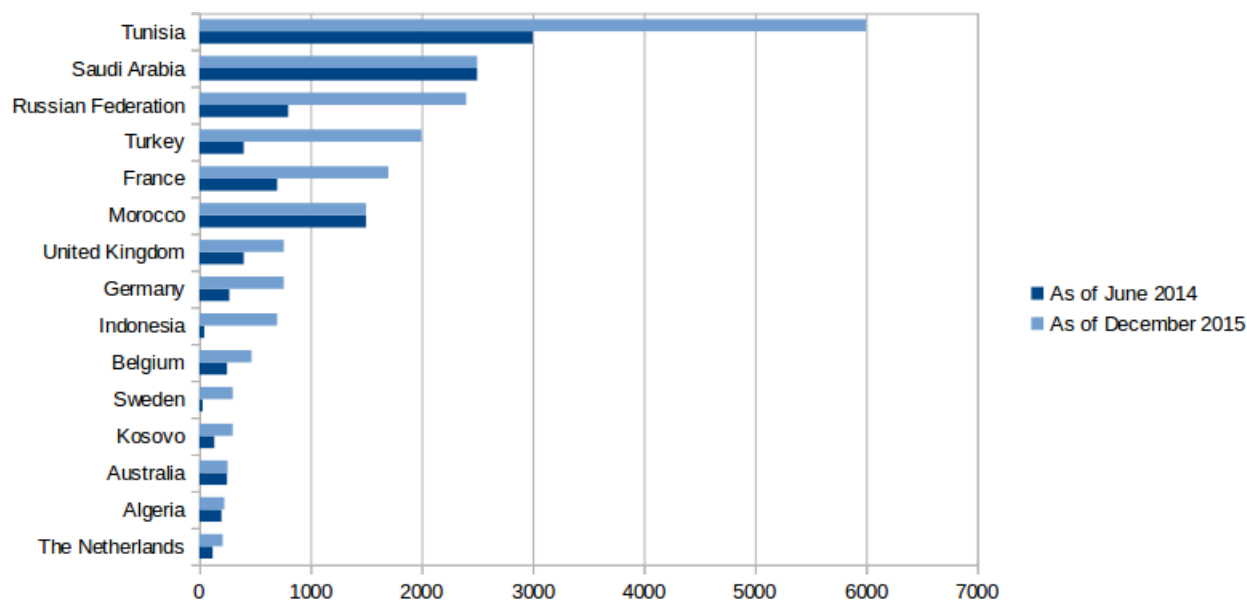


Figure 5: Partial Data of Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq as of December 2015 (Soufan 2015)

These figures are only representative as the exact numbers are unknown. As detailed below, the motivations are numerous, yet occur primarily because of Daesh. Put in perspective, estimates are unprecedented. From 1945 to 2010, 18 conflicts in the Muslim world recorded foreign fighters' presence: 10 had less than 100 foreign fighters, 6 had between 100 and 2,000, and two had over 2,000 (the Afghan jihad had 5,000 to 20,000 foreign fighters, while 4,000 to 5,000 travelled to Iraq) (Hegghammer 2010a: 61). In the past, yearly French foreign fighters engagement with the MSJM ranged from twenty to thirty, except during the Afghan jihad where forty have been identified. Between 29 April 2014 and 19 November 2015, 3,939 have been reported as radicalised by the CNAPR<sup>2</sup> and about 400 have departed (although above estimates range from 1,200 to 1,500). As detailed by Figure 6, MSJO's attacks on French soil seem to have a positive influence towards individuals' radicalisation. This demonstrates that an organisation propaganda is not sufficient to attract individuals, it also needs to act to establish its liveliness and confirm that its objectives are achievable.

<sup>2</sup> See subsection 9.1.2.1

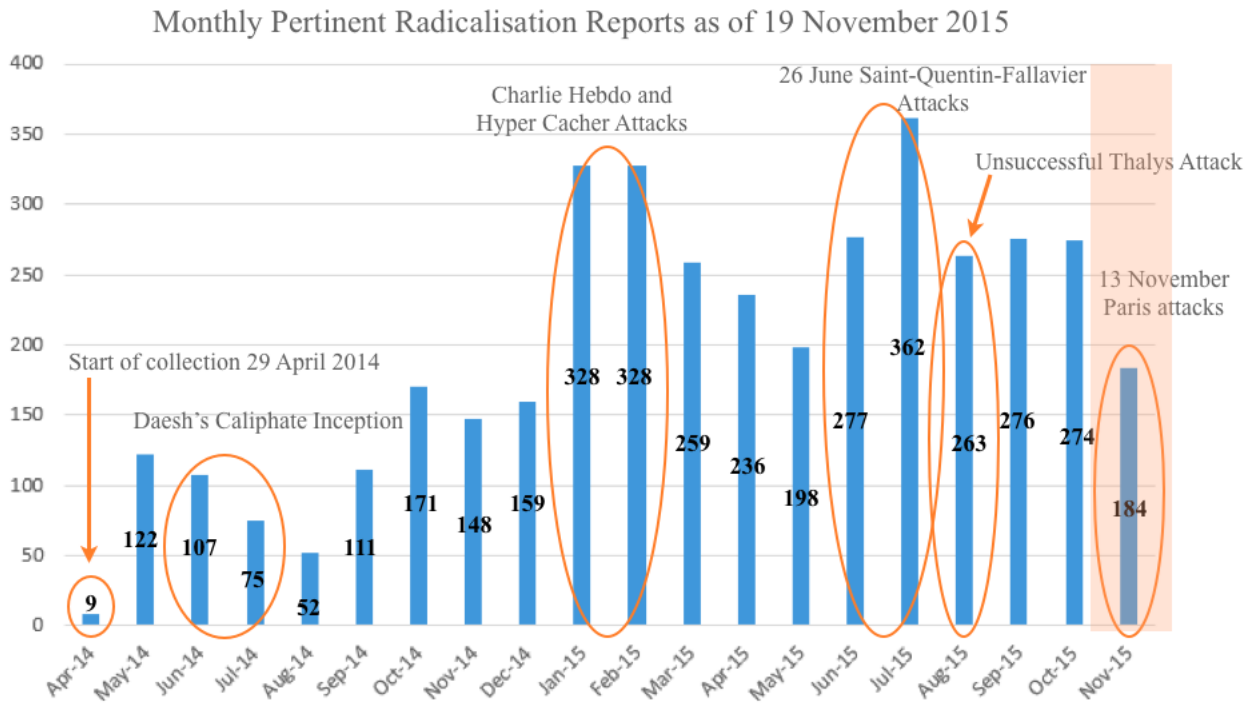


Figure 6: Monthly Reported Indoctrinated Individuals in France from 29 April 2014 to 19 November 2015 (Durand 2015)

Although no socio-economic profile exists (Thomson 2014a & 2014b, 2016; Vignolle & Ahmed-Chaouch 2014), engaged individuals come from all over France. Three data sets display where individuals come from. The first, (Figure 7), as of early-January 2015, is from Guidère’s (quoted in Chericui et al. 2015: 43) collection of anonymous keyword data on web search engines (e.g.: jihad, Syria, Raqqa, or Jabhat al-Nusra), anonymous geolocalised tweets with similar key words, and figures from the Ministry of the Interior. The second is from the CNAPR platform (Seelow 2015) (see Figure 8) from 29 April 2014 to 12 March 2015. The third is a collection of data points from French Ministry of the Interior and the *Parquet de Paris* (JDD 2016) (see Figure 9).

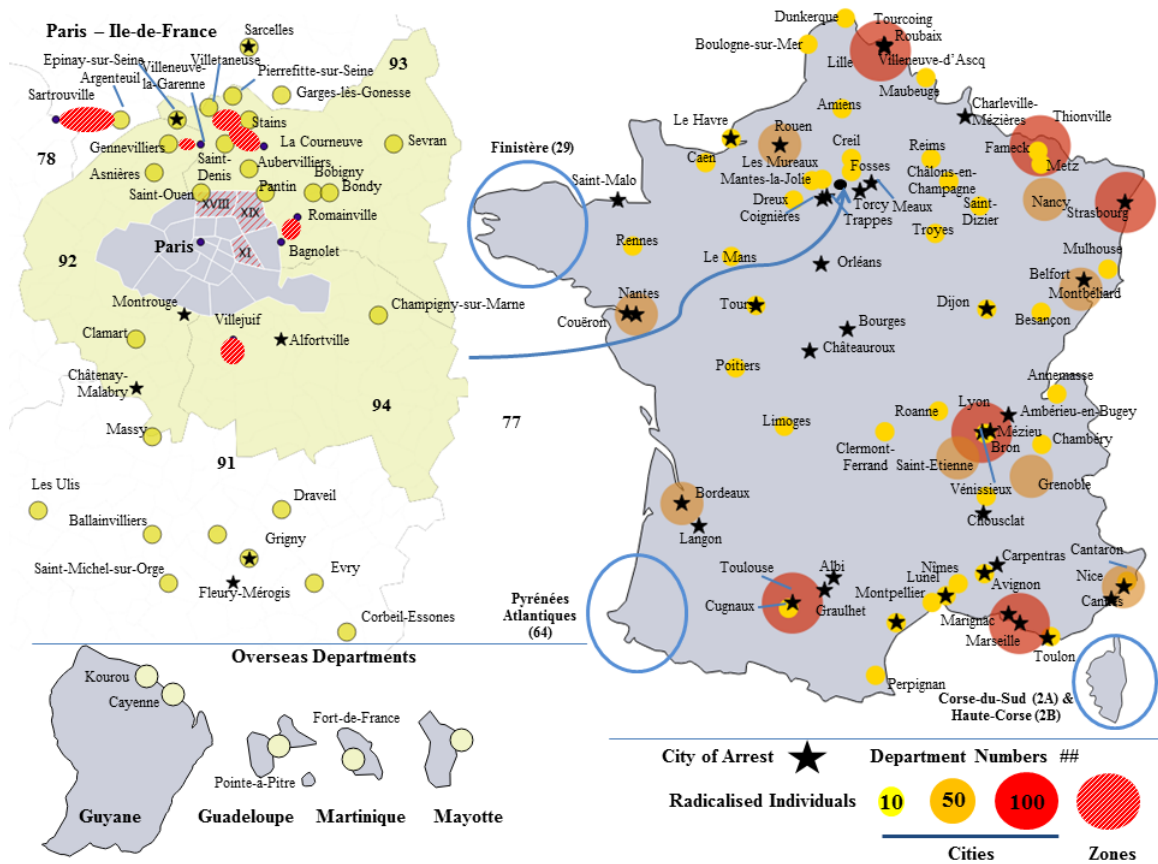


Figure 7: Radicalisation and Arrests in France as of early-January 2015 (Guidère quoted in Chericui et al. 2015: 43)



Two major observations can be made. Firstly, the phenomenon spread from large cities to smaller ones. In Guidère's map, Finistère (29), Pyrénées Atlantiques and Corse-du-Sud (2A), Haute-Corse (2B), and La Réunion (974) have no reported cases of indoctrination. By March 2015, radicalisation is present across France; except for Creuse (23). This does not mean that no 'radicalised' individuals resided in these *départements*, but that none had been reported or identified. By October 2016, all *départements* are concerned by the phenomenon. Secondly, the phenomenon keeps growing in some places, like Bordeaux, Paris and Nice, and plateaued in others, like overseas *départements* except la Réunion. In no *départements* did it reverse. These trends indicate that Daesh tailored its incentives and frames toward French individuals and that its incentives and frames were propagated and resonated across France through networks (both physical and virtual) and through its repertoire of action (more details given in the following four section).

All datasets given by the French government must be utilised cautiously. Under-reporting is in its favour and there are no methods of exhaustively double-checking these figures. In fact, Amoyel (2015) noted that Nice's 117 data-point in [Figure 8](#) is an under-reported figure. Nevertheless, these figures aid in visualising and appreciating the phenomenon's extent.

This contextual analysis uncovered how Daesh's inception affected and was affected by engagement (and disengagement) by analysing its violence's evolution, organisational interest, ideology, structure, and internal dynamics, states' role, and macro, meso, and micro-level linkage. The following four sections deepen this analysis by examining micro-level factors regarding French citizens and their effects on meso and macro-level factors and vice versa.

### 8.2.2 *Incentives*

While relying on similar incentives to other MSJOs, Daesh relies heavily on its caliphate to incentive engagement and incentivises both men and women differently.

#### 8.2.2.1 *Men*

Similarly to al-Qaeda and the GIA, Daesh incentivises helping the *umma* which is under attack, firstly, through violent fighting against the 'near' and 'far' enemies. Because western governments have halted individuals from leaving to join Daesh and attacked Daesh, Daesh has adapted by incentivising performing jihad in Europe against the 'far enemy'. Dying a martyr is put forward, as this implies direct entry to paradise and all its glory. Secondly, establishing a caliphate strengthens the *umma*. The caliphate offers the opportunity to belong to the *umma* and to its establishment and expansion. It also offers a life in full accordance to god's law and true utopian freedom for Muslims (Barrett 2014: 18-19; Boukhobza 2015). Since the caliphate acts as a state, it needs individuals skilled in was that assist es-

tablishing and consolidating a state. Thus, in *Dabiq's* first issue (Daesh's magazine named after the city in Syria where Daesh believes the apocalypse will occur), doctors and engineers were incentivised to engage to maintain and be part of inner-state operations. 'If al-Baghdadi's men are ready to die for the caliphate, their dream, however, is positive and contemporary: they want to experience the caliphate here, and not only in the afterlife' (Napoleoni 2014: 67). Abu Rumaysah al-Britani, a British Daesh militant, published a PDF online, *A Brief Guide to the Islamic State*, wherein he describes the caliphate's everyday utopian life:

If you thought you would be living on stale bread and septic water then erase that culinary fib from your mind. Below are some of the most popular dishes served on the streets of the Caliphate, and some familiar snacks [...] **Shawarma** [...] **Sheesh Kebab** [...] **Ice Cream** [...] **Chocolates** Snickers, Kit Kat, Bounty, Twix, Kinder Surprise, Cadburys - yes, yes we have it all [...] **Weather in the Caliphate** This really depends on where you are, but as it stands the Caliphate offers an exquisite Mediterranean climate that has all the makings of a plush holiday resort. Whether it is the sandy ruggedness of Barakah or the green hilly plains of Halab, wherever you are, I guarantee you will find the scenery truly breath-taking (al-Britani 2015: 13-18, bold as in original).

In fact, many militants have depicted their idyllic lifestyle, with swimming pools, lavish apartments, and all kinds of goods, on social media. Such a lifestyle highly resembles the disliked 'western society of consumerism'. The difference is that when one enjoys life in France, he is not helping Muslims in need. However, when one goes to Syria and fights the enemy for those in need, then he can enjoy life (Zoubeir quoted in Thomson 2016: 123). This justification of enjoying life is attractive, especially toward youths.

This life style highly resembles that of young westerners. In fact, it is. The difference being where it is lived. If it is lived in the West, it is bad because individuals must help suffering Muslims. If it is done in Syria, it is acceptable because the individual is helping Muslims in need.

The caliphate emits a strong message to youths' grievances, whether real or imagined, in societies in which they are portrayed as un-welcomed and not integrated. Daesh has been able to integrate the frustrations of Middle-Eastern politics, such as grievances against Israel/Palestine and the US led invasion of Iraq, and western immigrants' frustrations (Napoleoni 2014: 19), such as Islam's *mal être* in France, in its propaganda to incentivise engagement by presenting itself as an escape from their western lives in the form of an adventure (Barrett 2014: 18-21; Boukhobza 2015).

These incentives are present in engaged French men interviewed by Amélie Boukhobza (2015)<sup>3</sup>. Quentin, 23 years old, and his older-brother, Didier, 26 years old, converts from Menton (Alpes-Maritimes, 06), were both stopped at the border as they were trying to leave. Quentin's incentives were

<sup>3</sup> Amélie Boukhobza, a psychologist with Entr'autres, an NGO in Nice which deals with (de)radicalisation, has generously asked questions on my behalf to radicalised individuals in France with whom she is in contact through her position with the French government. Although these individuals did not want to speak to me directly, they did not mind answering my questions.

to fight unbelievers and apply *Sharia* because he views salafi-jihadism as a new identity. Didier simply wished to apply *Sharia* because he views salafi-jihadism as the proper way of living ones' religion.

#### 8.2.2.2 Women

Contrary to other MSJOs, Daesh incentivises women to engage because it needs them to expand socially (Napoleoni 2015: 85). Incentives offered to women are similar to the ones offered to men, albeit in different ways. Women, referred as *muhajirat*, are incentivised to engage to fight for the *umma* by building, spreading, sustaining and belonging to a caliphate that follows *Sharia* (Cottee 2016). Therefore, the caliphate in and of itself is a major incentive. By rejoining the caliphate, women serve and get closer to god, and can thus hope to enter heaven (Amoyel 2015; Boukhobza 2015; Cottee 2016). The caliphate also offers the opportunity of finding a noble and brave husband and to support him through jihad. In fact, marriage is considered the transition from childhood into adulthood. Thus, women who wish to join are married ahead of time or come with their husband, even entire family (Erelle 2015; Jacqueline 2015). The caliphate can also offer belonging to an Islamic sisterhood, with strong and durable bonds rather than the surface-level relationships of the west. The caliphate thus offers incentives of belonging, meaning, and identity (Hoyle, Bradford & Frenett 2015).

Until recently, women were not incentivised to partake in attacks. However, on 3 September 2016, three French women attempted to explode a car filled with gas cylinders. A police investigation uncovered directives given by Daesh members in Syria. Women undertaking attacks is a form of feminism within salafi-jihadism, wherein women are encouraged to take their own initiatives (Amoyel 2016; Boukhobza 2016ii).

These incentives are also present in engaged French women interviewed by Boukhobza (2015). Julie, a 15 year old convert from Antibes (Alpes-Maritimes), has not attempted departure but wishes to. Her incentive is the life under rules offered by the caliphate. Neila is a 20 year-old convert living in Nice (Alpes-Maritimes). Her significant-other was shot dead in Nice and thus considered a martyr. Although she never intended to join the caliphate herself, she supports others' departure, martyrdom, and *Sharia*. She holds such position because of submission to a man (Boukhobza 2015).

Engagement is facilitated by Syria's ease of access. Accessing Turkey is cheap, £87 round-trip airfare, and visa-free for most Westerners<sup>4</sup>. Turkey's border with Syria is very porous and under-surveilled (Hénin 2015: 172-173). This gives the Syrian jihad precedence via ease of access over other potential sites of jihad (Thomson 2014a: 29). Simultaneously to offering incentives to engagement, Daesh offers incentives that sustain engagement, primarily through the caliphate itself. Such internal dynamics include paying salaries (Napoleoni 2014: 66), health care, education, housing, and fuel subsidies for winter heating (al-Britani 2015: 19). Further, individuals stay during Western bombings because western attacks are framed as the apocalypse, prophesied 1,400 years ago, which will occur in Dabiq. This

<sup>4</sup> Since mid-2014, entry to Turkey is only allowed if a return ticket has been bought.

incentivises staying to witness, even participate, in the final battle (Hénin 2015: 176-177).

Since the end of summer 2016, official Daesh propaganda (i.e.: *Dabiq* and AMAQ infographics and communiqués) is calling Muslims worldwide to undertake their *hijra* but to other places than Syria, such as Libya, because of Daesh's lose of territory. Foreign fighters in Syria, however, have called, through online videos and Telegram channels, for individuals not to undertake their *hijra* but to perform jihad in their home in any way, even small, like throwing rocks, ramming people with cars or even knife attacks. Despite which propaganda individuals hear or read, the engagement of thousands is still strong and sustained.

Daesh's incentives lie primarily in the caliphate's physical materialisation, although it still relies on past MSJO incentives. Thus, waging jihad and serving god are also a strong incentives. Incentives are framed as a fight against the 'near' and 'far' enemies and as living amongst a 'true' Islamic community.

### 8.2.3 Frames

Daesh utilises multiple frames to engage individuals. In these frames, six themes recur: utopia, military, mercy, victimhood, brutality, and belonging (Quilliam 2015). While war seem to be the most present because of hypes surrounding violent videos, utopia, through the 'true' Islamic community, is the most present theme. The 'rejoining the caliphate frame' is aligned by demonstrating how it allows individuals to serve god and the *umma*, to become better than others (us versus them), by spreading images and videos of (supposed) injured, mutilated or dead Muslim children and women to push them to act (Hoyle, Bradford & Frenett 2015: 11), and specifically for women, by demonstrating how they can help themselves by supporting the caliphate and help mujahedeen fight by becoming their wives and supporting them directly.

Daesh's "fight against the 'near enemy'" frame is rooted in al-Zarqawi's past strategy to initiate civil war in Iraq by:

attacking [Shi'ites] in their religious, political and military depth [to] provoke them to show the Sunnis their rabies and bare the teeth of the hidden rancour working in their breasts. If we succeed in dragging them into the arena of sectarian war, it will become possible to awaken the inattentive Sunnis as they feel imminent danger and annihilating death at the hands of these Sabeans (al-Zarqawi quoted in Weiss & Hassan 2015: 65).

Al-Zarqawi aligned this frame by, firstly, characterising Shi'ites as deceitful collaborators ever since the Middle-East's Mongol invasion, which, in 1258, resulted, in Baghdad's destruction. Since 2003, the Americans (and Israel) are considered as the Mongols. Secondly, al-Zarqawi quoted Ibn Taymiyya: 'beware of the Shi'ites, fight them they lie'. Al-Zarqawi's frame alignment claiming to be upholding

a seven hundred year old Islamic resistance tradition is rooted in *tawhid*. Because Shi'ite and Sufi practices and beliefs, like the veneration of idols, did not follow *tawhid's* criteria (worshipping god, worshipping only god, and having the right creed), Ibn Taymiyya and al-Zarqawi excommunicated them (Napoleoni 2015: 135; Weiss & Hassan 2015: 72-73). Daesh has framed its campaign in Syria and Iraq following al-Zarqawi's sectarian frame by targeting Shi'ites, Sufis, and Yezidis, rather than the Syrian government. This would elicit a counter-action, even an over-reaction, from Shi'ites against Sunnis, which in turn, would drive Sunnis under Daesh's protection (Weiss & Hassan 2015: 65). Daesh has aligned this frame by reusing al-Zarqawi's conspiracy.

In the past, jihad was framed in one of three ways: counter-crusader, anti-colonialism or revolutionary. Daesh has incorporated all three to create a new notion: nation building (Napoleoni 2015: 166). Daesh took the '*umma* under attack' frame further: any individual not in the *umma* is not with Daesh. It follows a black and white approach: either you are with us or you are against us. Hence, individuals must physically join the movement. This goes beyond the religious justification for *hijra*.

A third frame is the 'Muslim eschatological prophesy' frame, in which the Messiah, the Anti-Christ and Jesus will return to Earth in Damascus and the apocalypse while occur in Dabiq, a city in the countryside near Aleppo. Some believe in *Malahim* (the end of the world) where Muslims are prophesied as winning the last and final victory against the 'Romans' (i.e.: the West). *Dabiq* is also the name of one of Daesh's most popular magazine. In fact, every issue opens with this quote from al-Zarqawi: 'The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify by Allah's permission - until it burns the crusader armies in Dabiq'. It is also in Dabiq where videos filled with the worst of atrocities have been filmed. One of them is *N'en déplaie aux mécréants*, where, in the final scene, the American hostage Peter Kassig's severed head can be seen resting next to his executioner's feet. Because of Dabiq's importance, Daesh has a strong and expanding military presence in the city (Hénin 2015: 175; Weiss & Hassan 2015: 73-74 & 240-242). This frame is aligned by demonstrating how it has been prophesied, that individuals need to be on the right side during the apocalypse, and the engaged individuals can experience, even partake, in the final battle.

A fourth frame is the 'jihad cool' (Thomson 2014a: 86). This frame reflects the caliphate's utopian lifestyle described above. According to Boukhobza (2015) some individuals convert to Islam for its 'identity' factor. They are attracted by the 'communitarianism' (recall [subsection 5.1.2.1 p.65](#)), thinking of oneself as Muslim, victimhood, and conspiracy theories. This frame is aligned by depicting the caliphate as the one true place for Muslims. Therefore, the *hijra* is not only about being on the right side, but also about being the Muslim thing to do. Again, this goes beyond the religious justification for *hijra* as it includes righting the wrong of one's victimhood in the West.

As detailed above, Daesh's lose of territory means that the 'jihad cool' frame is no longer utilised (Thomson 2016). Instead, Daesh's members are encouraged to travel to Libya (although only very few do) or to perform their jihad back home. This creates a frame of doing god's will and is aligned by demonstrating that there is no higher purpose than jihad.

These frames are quoted by individuals interviewed by Boukhobza (2015): Didier framed his engagement as the right way of being Muslim; Julie's incentive was her need for rules and Daesh frames living in the caliphate in that manner; Neila's engagement is framed as the submission to a man; and Quentin framed his engagement as a new [salafi-jihadi] identity. The incentives and frames are aligned at the personal level through both intra-personal and virtual networks.

Daesh frames' rely mainly on the fight against unbelievers (i.e.: us versus them) and living in a 'true' Islamic community. These frames are aligned by demonstrating to individual how they can participate in this Islamic community through state-building efforts or fighting.

#### 8.2.4 Networks

Daesh's network is a collection of a variety of smaller intra-personal and virtual networks, which are easy to access, overlapping, dense, and composed of strong bonds. By being extremely present online, Daesh's networks are accessible by anyone anywhere, and thus lose their clandestine-nature. This open ideology thus become easy to access and attractive. There exists four varieties of networks that utilise intra-personal and virtual tools: small decentralised networks; recruiters; groups of two or three friends; and *incognito*. Since Daesh is a breakaway movement from JN, and both are part of the MSJM, they share intertwined intra-personal and virtual networks. Therefore, even-though Daesh and JN are intra-movement rivals, pro-Daesh propaganda can influence individuals' engagement (and disengagement) with JN, and vice versa. Further, in this subsection, JN networks are also examined since once in the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone, individuals have or could switch sides.

##### 8.2.4.1 Small Decentralised Networks

Small decentralised networks, like those present in al-Qaeda and the GIA, exist in France. Although these are mostly intra-personal networks, they still utilise virtual tools. These more *traditional* decentralised networks are now a minority as other varieties are easier to set-up and spread; nevertheless, small decentralised networks have sent numerous individual to the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone through their density and rigidity of bonds. The three most prominent are the Cannes-Torcy (Alpes-Maritimes, 06, and Seine-et-Marne, 97), Lunel (Hérault, 34), and Trappes (Yvelines, 78) networks.

##### 8.2.4.2 Recruiters

Individual recruiters (although they wish to be called preachers) personally facilitate an individual's journey to the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone. Recruiters personalise incentives and frame, create strong bonds with recruits, and can be seen as friendly (Erelle 2015). They are no different than those from al-Qaeda or the GIA. The main difference stems from their virtual relations and lack of secrecy (Erelle 2015; Kristanadjaja 2014; Thomson 2014a & 2016; Vignolle & Ahmed-Chaouch 2014). There exist nu-

merous recruiters, the three most famous being Omar Omsen (aka Omar Diaby), Mourad Fares (aka Abu Al Hassan, Abu Rachid or Mourad al-Faransi) - both were interviewed by journalists and open about their activities and goals - and Rachid Kassim.

Omar Omsen, of JN, began making pro-Islamist videos in 2005 as they are more adapted to his target audience: individuals failing in schools which who read sacred texts (Toscer 2015). He authored the *19HH* video which depicts a worldwide conspiracy against Muslims. It is widely viewed by individuals, whether they engage with Daesh or JN. The fact that the propaganda made by a JN member is positively affecting engagement for Daesh implies that the organisations share common overlapping ideas and ideologies - that is, the MSJM. Omsen was killed in August 2015. According to Amoyel (2015), because Omsen was from Nice, he had strong influence on individuals in Nice and its surroundings; though since his death, engagement in Nice has diminished.

Mourad Fares originally engaged with Daesh then switched to JN, though never explained why. In an interview, he boasted:

All the jihadis that are talked about in the media went through me: the ten youths from Strasbourg, the two youths from Toulouse, the 16 year old female, and many others ... With a brother, we have specialised in video communication - it has a great impact. My last video 'al-Mahdi and the second Caliph'. It is available on Youtube - it is 48 minutes long (Prod'homme 2014).

Recruiters undertake one-on-one recruitment and author videos. These videos incite individuals to seek more information, that is often misguided and biased, and can become initial points of discussion. Recruiters, however, are not accessed via a signalled Facebook page or Twitter account. They are usually access through *incognito* users.

#### 8.2.4.3 *Groups of 2 or 3 Friends*

Most often, individuals tend to travel to the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone in groups of two or three friends. An individual who begins to engage may talk about it with current close friends or with new friends made online. Since their engagement does not rest upon deeply held religious beliefs but rather any number of incentives, individuals can easily find other individuals with similar incentives. Such groups tend to have been in contact with a recruiter. The recruiters' messages, friends' relationship, group-think, and online activity further engagement as they create dense and strong bonds, biased thought processes, and reduces defections (Thomson 2014a & 2016; Vignolle & Ahmed-Chaouch 2014).

#### 8.2.4.4 *Incognito*

*Incognito* refers to the very large network of individuals whose online presence anonymously support the MSJM and/or MSJO. In *incognito* network, many are supportive of the MSJM and not necessarily an MSJO member - an important distinction because it differentiates actions taken and those not. These

individuals, whose degree of engagement range from a little bit to a lot, and whose identity is unknown other than their IP addresses (whether their real one, a VPN one or a TOR node), either spread and/or create propaganda, real-time updates, how-to's, personal experiences, talk with one another, etc. Many activities are mimicry as individuals follow what is considered the norm amongst the MSJM and any deviation or critique of this norm is apostasy. The individuals in this network need not be in the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone nor fighting - they can be share propaganda on social media or be simple supporters. This network is thus very dense and individuals in the network have both strong bonds (such as friends and individuals in direct one-on-one communication) and weak bonds (such as simply following a Twitter account or blog without communicating) with numerous users. This network is composed of numerous online tools and it is through this network that individuals engage with recruiters online via *incognito* users (Erelle 2015; Kristanadjaja 2014). While not all individuals begin their engagement online, this network contains all the necessary biased information to lead individuals down their engagement pathway.

This wide virtual network has been seen by many academics and policy-makers as a tool for 'online radicalisation' (Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014). For instance, Bernard Cazeneuve, the French Minister of the Interior, referred heavily to Bouzar, Caupenne and Valsan's 2014 report claiming that 91% of radicalised individuals were 'indoctrinated online' (Bouzar, Caupenne & Valsan 2014: 14). While individuals can engage through their online activities, it is not solely because they have viewed videos or read blog posts. Rather, it is because of the one-on-one communications they have had. Nowadays, a text message conversation with instant replies is as real as a face-to-face communication. The internet is like any other network - it simply is not tangible. This virtuality need not be seen as out of the ordinary. Rather, it is a boundary-less and real-time update of the physical world. Although intangible, constant immersion feels tangible and personalised.

This mix of intra-personal and virtual networks was quoted by individuals interviewed by Boukhobza (2015): Didier and Quentin's network was a mix of family and friends and online videos; Julie's network was initially her significant-other (now deceased) and online videos and preachings by imams; and Neila's network was her friendship. To this list, we can add Karim, 17 and a half, and his brother Rachid, 22, who wished to engage with JN, whose networks were each other and online videos.

The networks are now both intra-personal and virtual. The virtual bonds are very strong and dense as numerous means to communicate are utilised, sometimes more than one at a time and all-day-long without any downtime. This isolates the proselytised individual from his/her surroundings and enables the recruiter to have a constant hold on the individual. Further, individuals must give accounts of their day to their recruiter to ensure the following of Islamic law (Erelle 2015).

8.2.5 *Repertoire of Action*

Daesh's repertoire of action follows a dual strategy: on one hand, it displays its military capacities, and on the other, it demonstrates its status as a state. This dual-strategy aims at branding Daesh as a serious player in world affairs to elicit support, sustain engagement, and instil fear in its enemies. Its immense propaganda simultaneously displays how the organisation is fighting to expand and stabilise its caliphate awhile depicting the idyllic, even utopian, life in the caliphate. Since its inception, Daesh has had a long list of action to this effect: from countless execution videos, to hours and hours of fighting footage, to pictures of the 'perfect life' in the caliphate. Six themes recur in its propaganda: brutality, mercy, victimhood, war, belonging, and utopianism (Quilliam 2015). Each of these themes resonate incentives and frames discussed above. Daesh's all-encompassing media strategy is very apt in propagating this branding (see Figure 10) (Lister 2015). 'The slick nature of ISIS media releases has undoubtedly allowed it to become somewhat the 'celebrity' actor within the international jihadist community' (Lister 2015). Daesh no longer simply relies on western media to spread its propaganda as users worldwide do it. All Daesh needs to do is point the camera, shoot, and upload an edited version.

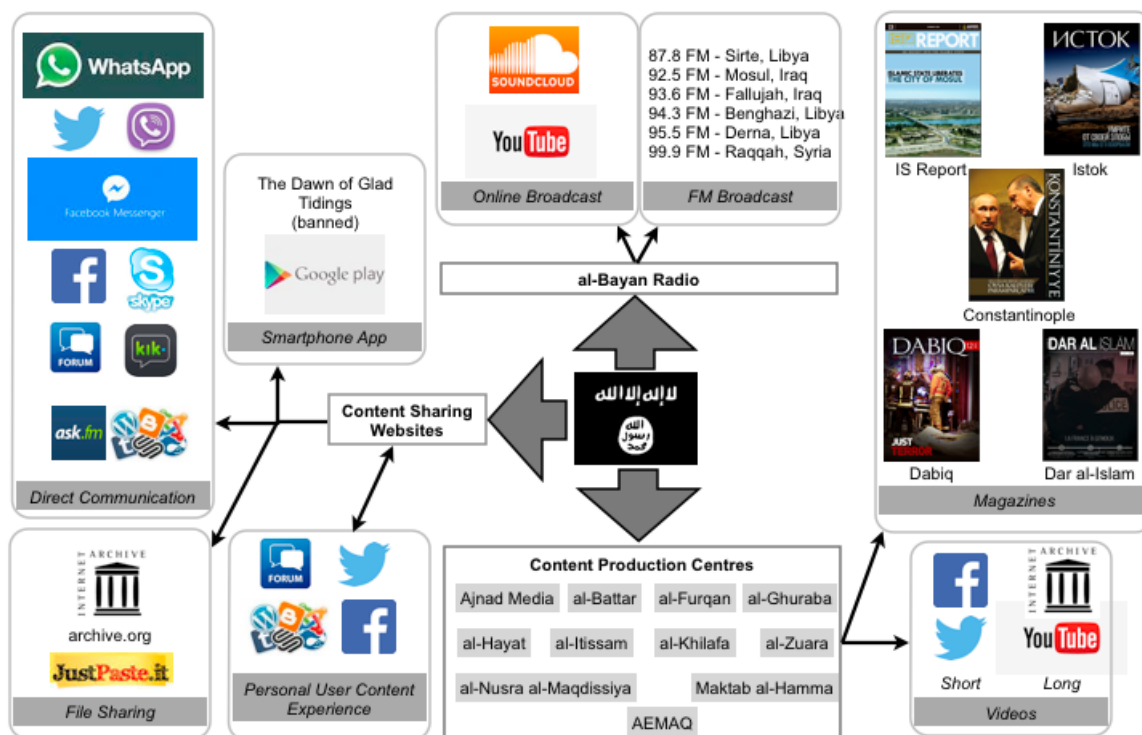


Figure 10: Daesh's Propaganda Network (based on Courier International 2015: 44)

Daesh's propaganda networks relies heavily on virtual tools. These websites and apps are overlapping, even redundant, to offer continuous access to information, even if deleted on one social media. These tools permit the instantaneous sharing of propaganda, like the magazines *Dabiq* (English), *Dar al-Islam* (French), and *Constantinople* (Russian), while communicating with one-another, through What-

sApp, Telegram or Skype. These tools serve as dense bonds between individuals, and their strength helps govern the users' affinity.

A key component of these tools are their algorithms which are aimed at displaying similar content to users. That is, 'liking' a Facebook group or post or following a Twitter account which is pro-MSJM/MSJO, will result in 'groups you may like' that are also pro-MSJM/MSJO. This becomes a reinforcing circle where any group, individual or post not related to jihad will not be presented by the algorithm. This becomes 'extreme endogamy' (Kristanadjaja 2014).

Daesh's repertoire of action simultaneously entices individuals to join its caliphate while enticing others to undertake attacks. In some attacks, however, Daesh leaders' level of involvement is unclear. For example, it seems as though the November 2015 Paris attacks were not ordered by Daesh leaders but by Fabien Clain. In fact, Daesh's claim to the attacks contained factual errors and were poorly written compared to past claims.

In any case, Daesh's repertoire of action, coupled with dense, wide, and strong networks propagating numerous and various incentives and frames, have elicited the participation of many in both its military and state-building aims because it offers a long-term, life-long project that is depicted as superior to projects offered by Western societies (Atran 2016). That is, engagement is depicted, despite its risks, as full of rewards, now and in the after-life.

#### 8.2.6 *Analytical Superiority and Limits*

Compared to an analysis of the phenomenon through the mental manipulation theory, SMT is superior as it offers an analysis at the macro, meso, and micro-level, and how these levels affect and are affected by one-another.

SMT demonstrated how Iraq and Syria's destabilisations led the way to the MSJM's and its MSJOs' arrival, and in turn Daesh's inception. It demonstrated how Daesh adapted to its initial and changing environments by examining Daesh's historicity and context of violence, competing MSJOs and factions, founding ideology, interest, relations with the state and local tribes, structure, and internal dynamics. These analytical tools uncovered how Daesh affected and was affected by engagement (and disengagement) of French citizens.

Daesh's engagement still rests upon consistent incentives from past MSJOs, such as waging jihad against the 'near' and 'far' enemies and serving god. Yet, incentives rely mainly on the caliphate's physical materialisation of utopia. Daesh's frames rely principally on its utopian 'true' Islamic community and its fight against unbelievers through an 'us versus them' ideology. Daesh's incentives and frames are highly tailored to the French context to offer tailored engagement to French individuals. Daesh's networks are both intra-personal and virtual. They isolate proselytised individuals from their surrounding by creating very strong and dense bonds. Finally, Daesh's repertoire of action simultane-

ously entices individuals to undertake attacks while enticing other to join its caliphate. In sum, Daesh's repertoire of action, coupled with dense, wide, and strong networks propagating numerous and various incentives and frames, have elicited the participation of many in both its military and state-building aims.

Such an analysis has demonstrated that the French government and French context are not passive actors and share part of the blame. Further, this analysis has offered lessons for disengagement at the macro, meso, and micro-levels in the aims of disengaging individuals.

SMT does have one limitation compared to the mental manipulation approach. Since it is tri-level focused, it is not aimed at precisely explaining why one specific individual engaged or disengaged. Nevertheless, a strictly micro-level approach is an insufficient response vis-à-vis the current phenomenon.

### 8.3 LESSONS FOR DISENGAGEMENT

From Daesh's history, five lessons for disengagement are learned. Firstly, the hard counter-terrorism approach has prevented individuals from joining the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone (see Boukhobza's examples above). From there, a soft approach is utilised to initiate disengagement. However, this is effective only if the individual is identified before leaving and a request to prevent departure from France is made. Such a request can easily be received for minors but is more difficult for adults. The lessons here is that preventing departures can begin a pathway out-of engagement as the individual may be enrolled into a soft approach.

Secondly, and again, it is clear that engagement is not based on complex theology but on anti-West arguments. To counter/offer alternatives to these incentives and frames, staying in France to help Muslims in France and view hurdles in France as beatable must be incentivised. These incentives act as pull factors). Thirdly, many more women and individuals of a younger age engage compared to previous jihads. Therefore, disengagement needs to be sex and age adaptive. One does not disengage a twenty-six year old similarly as an eighteen year old, and vice versa.

Fourthly, although networks are highly virtual, human interaction is still key - whether via instant messaging or video chat. Therefore, similarly to intra-personal networks, deleting virtual accounts does not work. Rather, what is needed is the education of users on these tools' usage and on rational criticism of online information. That is, how to deconstruct someone's discourse and think through their thought process.

Finally, because Daesh and JN have fairly similar means and ends, they convey fairly similar incentives and frames, presented through similar actions, across overlapping networks despite being intra-movement rivals. This complicates the task when fighting only one organisation online since the non-organisation specific messages are continuously relayed (consider the *19HH* video). Therefore, the focus should be on the overall networks rather than on an organisation's specific networks. Further,

these overlaps imply that counter/alternative incentives and frames are aimed at the MSJM rather than a particular organisation.

Overall, Daesh's caliphate attracts numerous individuals, including those that may not join it, but just the MSJM. Therefore, two counter/alternative-discourse arguments arise. Firstly, if individuals wish to fight for the *umma*, there are others ways. Secondly, if individual truly wish to live in an Islamic society, their are others where the *hijra* can be undertaken (Azazen 2015).

#### 8.4 CONCLUSION

Iraq's and Syria's political destabilisation have created condition that allowed the MSJM to enter these conflicts. Initially led by JN, the movement created the Syrian jihad. However, intra-movement rivalry on ideology created Daesh. Daesh's attraction stems from its ability to surpass previous MSJO's rhetoric and fiction. Its physical creation of a caliphate, associated with local Sunni tribes, allows it to offer incentives which attract a wider population. Its frames, despite their utopian nature, seem plausible, especially once in the caliphate. It then utilises wide, dense, and strong inter-personal and virtual networks to spread these incentives and frames, and relies on a repertoire of action aimed at demonstrating its military capabilities and statehood. The number of French citizens involved with Daesh, either by physically being in the caliphate or through offering support, demonstrates how Daesh's message has resonates in France.

Regarding lessons learned, examining Daesh does not reveal much that is new when compared to al-Qaeda or the GIA. Rather, it has a lot of reiterations. Its claim to newness is its establishment of a caliphate, the increases in engaged foreign individuals, and its especially efficient media campaign. Therefore, the lessons learned for disengagement themselves are not much new as they still aim in the same direction: counter/alternative narratives are not solely based on complex theology but rather on offering incentives to make France a better place; fight the networks themselves rather than single users; and focus on the movement rather than single organisations.

Examining Daesh through SMT has revealed faults in France's soft approach. The new mental manipulation approach considers radicalisation of non-rational victims of a radical jihadi-discourse through micro-level factors. This is reductionist of the whole phenomenon as it forgoes macro and meso level explanations. Since the CPDSI sees radicalisation as micro-level only, it sees deradicalisation similarly. This thesis now examines France's response to the phenomenon and critically analyses it through SMT in the hopes of establishing a disengagement framework.



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## DISENGAGEMENT

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This chapter begins by detailing the French government's hard and soft response to the global jihad's evolution since 2014. This response is then critically assessed through SMT to demonstrate its strengths and weaknesses. Since the French government and this thesis conceptualise pathways-to engagement differently, they have differing conceptualisation of pathways out-of engagement. This chapter constructs a disengagement framework based on SMT, strengths and weaknesses of the French approach, and the *lessons learned for disengagement* from previous chapters. This framework is not a disengagement programme, but rather an overall response to the evolving global jihad, wherein a disengagement programme is a strategic element. Therefore, and thirdly, lessons learned from other disengagement (and deradicalisation) programmes are detailed to aid in establishing a disengagement programme. This chapter aims to offer a policy recommendation to construct an adaptive response to the ever-evolving militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon.

### 9.1 FRANCE'S CURRENT COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

The Syrian jihad's evolution prompted the French government to rethink its hard and soft approaches. Regarding the former, it increased measures to prosecute terrorism, and/or terrorists, reduced radicalised individuals' freedoms of movement, and increased state powers. Regarding the latter approach, it created an apparatus to prevent radicalisation and deradicalise radicalised individuals.

#### 9.1.1 *Hard Approach*

Before increasing bombings in Syria after the November 2015 Paris attacks, the French government passed the law of 13 November 2014. It created more repressive measures to prosecute those who commit acts of terrorism:

- *Blocking Websites and Web-Searches.* The French government has authority to demand of websites and forums to remove content that supports terrorist acts or vindicate terrorism. If the content is not taken down within twenty-four hours, the French government can demand of internet service

providers to block the URL address. The French government can also demand web search engines (e.g.: Google or Bing) to block certain URL addresses from being displayed in their search results.

- ✦ *Apologia for Terrorism.* The law of 1881 on the freedom of the press carried a five year sentence and a €45,000 (£35,000) fine for direct provocation of terrorist acts. More recently, the law of 13 November 2014 transferred and adapted these measures to the penal code in the chapter on acts of terrorism.
- ✦ *Individual Acts of Terrorism.* The *association de malfaiteur en vue de commettre une entreprise terroriste* requires two or more individuals. Because the threat has evolved wherein a sole individual can undertake an attack, the law has been adapted to include *le délit d'entreprise terroriste individuelle* (the individual conspiracy to commit a terrorist offence).

The law of 13 November 2014 also limits radicalised individuals' freedom of movement:

- ✦ *Prohibiting Leaving the Territory.* This allows preventing any French citizen from leaving the territory if she/he aims to participate in terrorist activities or joins a combat zone where terrorist organisations are present if this creates a public security risk on her/his return. The prohibition allows the French government to confiscate a citizen's passport and/or national identity card.
- ✦ *Prohibiting Access to the Territory.* This measure is aimed at foreigners. Even if an individual does not reside in France, her/his presence can be deemed to represent an important risk to public order and security. This measure can even be taken if the individual is not currently on the territory.
- ✦ *Greater Control of House-Arrest.* The measure now forbids individuals from having relations with certain individuals. Previously, administrations could not prevent individuals under house-arrest from meeting individuals under investigation.

The government has also increased its surveillance power. The law of 24 July 2015, a massive surveillance bill, allows the government to survey digital traffic for suspicious activities in the hopes of preventing attacks. After the November 2015 Paris attacks, the government established a three month state of emergency, then extended it for another three months in February 2016, and then another six months after the July 2016 Nice attack. As of December 2016, President Hollande is considering an extension until the May 2017 presidential election. This is intended to continue using special means to prevent further threats from developing. This allows for home-searches based on suspicion but not tangible proofs, posting more armed soldiers near sensitive sites (e.g.: governmental offices, mosques, tourist sites, train stations and airports), more police officers and gendarmes on-call, security guards inspecting bags at any building's entrances (e.g.: malls), and restricting parking near public building like schools or city councils. Between 14 November 2015 and 7 January 2016, 3,021 home searches have been undertaken, most occurring at night. However, most have nothing to do with terrorism as 464 led

to infractions, 25 of which link to terrorism, of which, 4 led to anti-terrorist procedures. In total, over 350 individuals are under house arrest. Further, radical mosques and prayer rooms have been closed (Assemblée Nationale 2016).

The government wished to further its powers by attempting to amend the constitution to inscribe removing dual citizens' French citizenship after conviction for terrorism (the law already exist for those naturalised French citizens). However, the law was overturned by the Constitutional Council. Furthermore, it is also pushing for the Passenger Name Record use to share airline passengers' information amongst airlines.

Other more extreme ideas have been proposed to further state power including removing social benefits to parents whose children do not respect the minute of silence in honour of victims after an attack, reforming Schengen, sending the military to enforce the Republican order in difficult areas, re-opening the Cayenne prison in French Guyana to act like a Guantanamo Bay to house returning jihadis or preventing all jihadis from returning altogether.

Despite these tough measures, until August 2016, there was a lot of leniency toward engaged women. Since they were seen as victims, since they did not partake in fighting abroad, and since they were not incentivised to undertake attacks, they were not seen as a security risk and thus not prosecuted (Thomson 2016: 160-161). However, after the changing propaganda calling for all to undertake attacks in France<sup>1</sup> and the failed September 2016 car bombing near Notre-Dame in Paris, the French government has toughened its stance against women.

This legal apparatus by itself cannot prevent engagement from beginning, plots from forming, and disengagement from occurring. In fact, improperly used, it can further engagement of those whose civil rights are violated, dis-incentivise returning home if this means loosing one's citizenship, and push seeking information elsewhere than online, such as in Islamist bookshops where no anti-Salafi literature exists<sup>2</sup>.

Declaring an eight day state of emergency after the November 2015 Paris attacks was a reasonable course of action as there existed an 'imminent peril' since the perpetrators were running loose. However, the two three-months extension follow a different logic and impacts differ (Trévidic quoted in Flandrin & de Lagarde 2016: 48). The same can be said for the six months extension following the July 2016 Nice attack. Without further extension, this would total a one year state of emergency. Since the MSJM and MSJO are an 'imminent peril' by nature, will France ever leave its state of emergency until the movement disappears? The problem thus lies in leaving the state of emergency and actually combating the threat (Trévidic quoted in Flandrin & de Lagarde 2016: 48). The government is claiming the state of emergency's usefulness; however, it failed to detect, in September 2016, a car, without registration plates, filled with gas jerricans parked near the Notre de Dame Cathedral (a local pub owner called the

<sup>1</sup> Daesh's third *Inspire Guide* calls on women to not undertake attacks but other pieces of propaganda do call on them.

<sup>2</sup> Bacha (2015), a mediator, made this claim during a UNISMED meeting. After the meeting, I randomly selected 10 Islamist bookshops in Marseille and I was unable to find anti-Salafi literature.

police) and its abysmal results demonstrate otherwise and the lack of attacks is only temporary - they will resume once the state of emergency is lifted.

Home-searches are not traditional methods. We undertook searches in individuals' homes for whom we had no proof. Or else, we would have searched them judicially. Similarly, we house-arrest individuals known to intelligence services, but for whom we have no evidence. Or else, they would be in front of a judge. We could do nothing for judicial searches. We go in hoping we will find something. This can work over three or four days. After five days, the good Salafi that still keeps his [Kalashnikov] under his bed, he truly is a moron. I doubt we will find more. In fact, the search effect diminishes rapidly (Trévidic quoted in Flandrin & de Lagarde 2016: 46-48).

Such home-searches and house-arrests can stigmatise, similarly to the post-Merah attacks (recall [subsection 7.3.3](#)), individuals' whose house searches come-up empty (coupled with the lack of reimbursement for their doors being forced-in) and may push undecided individuals to leave.

While the legal apparatus has been changed to prevent signalled individuals' movement and punish, little has changed concerning returnees. When an individual returns from the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone, two options exist. The first is prison. But, as shown in [subsection 9.1.3](#), French prison is not yet adapted to the phenomenon. The second is the classical judicial control where an eye is kept on the individual. However, this presupposes sufficient means. With over 10,000 *Fiches S*, means are stretched thin (recall that 12 of the 22 French individuals who undertook an attack in France had a *Fiche S*). For Trévidic (quoted in Flandrin & de Lagarde 2016: 48) a more structured third option would help individuals get out of their environment. They should be sentenced to four years in prison, three of which are spent in a deradicalisation centre. However, four is the current legal limit but it should be increased as disengagement can take longer.

In sum, none of these measures have changed the two pillars of French counter-terrorism: the offence of 'criminal conspiracy to commit a terrorist enterprise' and the duality of judiciary-intelligence within the same service. What has changed is an added third, albeit small, pillar: a soft approach.

### 9.1.2 *Soft Approach*

On 23 April 2014, the French government established a plan to 'counter violent radicalisation and terrorist networks'. This plan aims at dismantling networks, preventing travel generating threats, co-operating more efficiently internationally, and includes a preventive and supportive arm for families. The 29 November 2014 circular calls for the prevention of radicalisation. The CIPD and its *préfet* Pierre N'Gahane are in charge of this preventive arm (see [Figure 11](#)). Given the inter-ministerial and partnership nature of the preferred approaches, the Minister of the Interior's 29 April 2014 circular insists on

the *préfet's* (head of *département*) major role in the prevention apparatus (N'Gahane 2015),

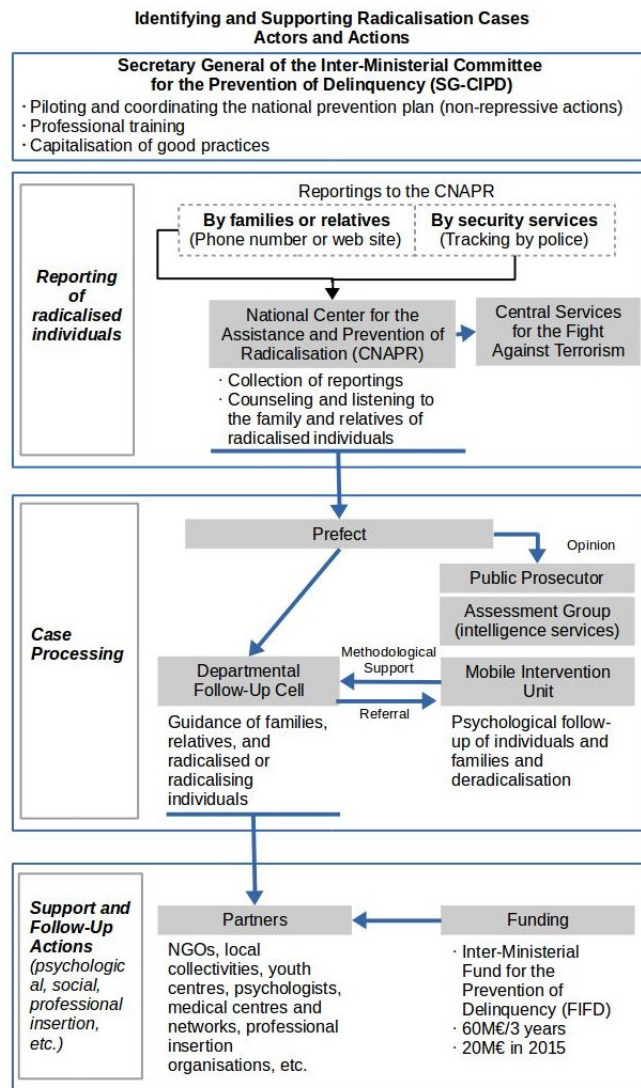


Figure 11: Public Response through the CIPD (N'Gahane 2015)

The CIPD defines radicalisation following Khosrokhavar's (2014) definition:

the process through which an individual or group adheres to a violent form of action directly linked to an extremist ideology with political, social or religious content that contests establish order on the political, social and cultural levels.

The CIPD conceptualises the radicalisation process beginning when an individual's troubled past creates a downfall. The downfall's conceptualisation is heavily influenced by the CPDSI's mental manipulation approach and the *Mission Interministérielle de Vigilance et de Lutte Contre les Dérives Sectaires'* (Intra-Ministerial Mission for the Surveillance and Fight against Sectarian Drifts, MIVILUDES) sectarian drift approach. Once downward-spiralling, multiple answers appear: petty crime, serious crime, organised crime, drugs, suicide or Islamism. Today, Islamism is the most common opted-for and talked

about solution because it offers the most apt answers. However, it leads to radicalisation, extremism, and then, sometimes, terrorism (N’Gahane 2015).

The CIPD aims to aid radicalised individuals to resurface and find a more ‘linear life’. After studying many European countries’ approaches, the CIPD established an approach *à la française* as it relies on *les valeurs de la République* (unity, indivisibility, and laïcité), the state’s central role, and concepts based in the virtues of education and citizenship. That is, the approach aims to bring back individuals to a ‘linear life’ that adheres to the French Republic’s values (N’Gahane 2015).

#### 9.1.2.1 Reporting of Radicalised Individuals

To assist families (and collect data), on 29 April 2014, the French government created a hotline for assistance and referral. Operating Mondays through Fridays from 09:00 to 18:00, phones are manned by 8 rotating reservist police officers and 2 active police officers (although two to three are active per day). It operates within the *Centre National d’Assistance et de Prévention de la Radicalisation* (National Centre for the Assistance and Prevention of Radicalisation, CNAPR), itself within the UCLAT. The hotline allows families and friends to report a worrying situation that seems to threaten a family member or friend, obtain information on how to act, and to be listened to and advised on steps to take. A website, [stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr](http://stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr), provides information, and, outside the hotline’s hours of operations, offers an online form to initiate a reporting and receive information and advice. In either case, the hotline and online form offer anonymity to the caller.

Each call is assessed via ‘radicalisation indicators’ to determine the case’s validity and severity (see [Appendix C](#) for details). From April 2014 to July 2015, about 10,000 calls had been received. However, only 2,600 were considered cases of radicalisation. Many calls concern families who wish to ‘de-Islamise’ a relative. For example, calls are received because one’s daughter is dating a Muslim boy (N’Gahane 2015).

#### 9.1.2.2 Case Processing

Depending on the collected elements and the analysis undertaken by the UCLAT, cases are transmitted to the *préfecture* where the reported individual resides, the *Direction Générale de la Sécurité Intérieure* (General Directorate for Internal Security, DGSI) and *Service Central du Renseignement Territorial* (Central Services for Territorial Intelligence, SCRT), and the public prosecutor forms an opinion on whether charges are to be brought or not and, for minors, the implementation of educational assistance measures. This *préfecture* takes charge of the case and contacts the reporter, unless she/he does not wish to be contacted or if no address is given. *Préfets* receive collected and filtered information by the CNAPR to organise a support-cell for the family and reported individual.

### 9.1.2.3 Support Cell

The *préfet's* role is essential in establishing a prevention apparatus. Made mandatory since the 25 February 2015 circular, a support cell in each *département* must allow the processing of reported cases. The *préfet*, in connection with the public prosecutor, activates a dedicated support cell by mobilising state services and concerned actors (police, gendarmerie, national education, legal protection of youth, employment centre, and local mission), local authorities (the concerned mayor and the *département* council's social services), and a NGOs networks (particularly NGOs working with families and youth).

The support cell supports families and relatives through a listening network, support, and accompaniment by NGOs and/or the *Caisse d'Allocations Familiales* (Social Security for Families). It supports the individual with:

- an individualised rehabilitation path with a referent's appointment;
- educational camps and job training;
- citizens courses;
- the social and professional integration through enrolment in the *Etablissement Public d'Insertion de la Défense* (Public Establishment for Insertion and Defence, EPIDE), an insertion institution run by the French armed forces; and
- any mechanisms to reintegrate the individual.

In sum, *préfets* are asked to favour localised operations to tailor individualised support to individuals and their family and relatives.

### 9.1.2.4 CIPD's Actions

The CIPD has established five profiles of radicalised individuals and the appropriate responses to each ([Appendix D](#) details each profile):

- Psychological support of a female minor in a reporting case;
- Support of a minor experiencing failure and fragility in a reporting case;
- Support an adult following a delinquent path;
- Support for a family whose child has joined a combat zone; and
- Preventative actions toward a family trying to join a combat zone.

The profiles offer a first response and must be updated as information and experiences evolve. At the national level, a mobile intervention team is set-up to assist prefects with the most sensitive cases. The CIPD offers a two-day seminar to train members of *préfectures*, national police, education,

justice, territorial collectivities, and NGOs. The seminar details approaches to radicalisation (Islam's key concept, global jihad's history, the sectarian phenomenon), radicalisation indicators (what they are and the metamorphosis youths undergo), the judicial arsenal to respond, and the public response (the UCLAT apparatus, protection of children, pedo-psychiatric support, and the CIPD apparatus). During and after, all actors are encouraged to share best practice through the CIPD for collection and sharing across the entire network in France and in Europe (CIPD 2015a).

Funding occurs through the *Fonds Interministériel de la Prévention de la Délinquance* (Inter-Ministerial Funds for the Prevention of Delinquency, FIPD) (N'Gahane 2015). The FIPD disposes of €60M (£46.5M) over three years, of which €20M (£15.5M) were made available for 2015. It aims at reinforcing the counter-terrorism apparatus oriented toward preventing radicalisation, reinforcing CCTV coverage of sensitive locations, securing (excluding CCTV) sensitive locations, and equipment for local police (e.g.: bullet-proof vests and portable radio terminals).

#### 9.1.2.5 Support Cell Examples

There exist two different *préfecture* support cell models. On one hand, most *préfectures* rely on local NGOs and state services, yet contact the CPDSI in sensitive cases - thirty-one have done so (Bouzar 2016: 10). The CPDSI created its own approach based on exit counselling used to combat sectarian drifts following the MIVILUDES. The first stage seeks to find old points of reference and recall past memories to provoke an emotion change (this is the *madeleine de Proust* stage<sup>3</sup>). The second stage is a reality check on jihadi techniques. It provokes a dissociation between reality and promises offered by jihadi organisations. This usually occurs by meeting 'deradicalised' individuals. The final stage is after de-regimentation. It implies rebuilding oneself even though points of reference are blurry. The CPDSI is there to clarify points of reference (Bouzar 2016).

On the other hand, some *préfectures* established their own centres. In Bordeaux (Gironde, 33), the *Fédération des Musulmans de la Gironde* (Federation of Muslims in Gironde) associated with Maître Daniel Picotin, ex-president of InfoSectes Aquitaine and president of the *Société Française de Recherche et d'Analyse sur l'Empirisme Mentale* (French Society for the Study and Analysis of Mental Manipulation, SFRAEM), and Marik Fetouh, Deputy Mayor of Bordeaux for Equality and Citizenship, established the *Centre d'Action et de Prévention contre la Radicalisation des Individus* (Action and Prevention Centre against Individual's Radicalisation, CAPRI). The CAPRI has three aims. Firstly, it prevents radicalisation by educating the general public. It deconstructs radical arguments and understands religion's evolution by keeping a presence on social media to observe and defuse conspiracy theories. Secondly, it advises and supports families of victims and youth players by setting up its own physical and hotline presence and by disseminating warning indicators relative to the indoctrination process. Finally, it dis-indoctrinates victims by offering support by experts on the sectarian drift, notably psychologists from the SFRAEM,

<sup>3</sup> A *madeleine de Proust* is an element of everyday life, like an object or gesture, which always brings back a memory, as does the Madeleine to the narrator of Marcel Proust's novel *In search of lost time*

and by assuring a relay to the state and social services. It began handling four cases on 22 July 2015 and opened to the general public on 9 January 2016. It receives the Gironde *préfecture's* FIPD funding and its facilities were made available by the *Mairie de Bordeaux* (Abdelkrim 2016; Fetouh 2016; Picotin 2016).

In Lyon, the Rhône (69) *préfecture* also created its own centre. However, its contact information and address are kept secret for the centre's security. This implies that the centre contacts the family and not the other-way around, and is manned primarily by police officers rather than case workers (Fetouh 2016).

For support, families can also contact support-cell NGOs or prefectural centres directly. If they contact the CPDSI, the case stays in-house (Bouzar 2016), but other NGOs will refer families to the national hotline (Madeleine 2015), the CPDSI (Klein 2015) or their local centre (Frayssinet 2016; Nicolas 2016).

Alongside these support cells, in early 2016, the CIPD communicated the opening of 'an experimental institution (...) intended to accommodate, house, marginalised youth, or in a path of marginalisation, because of their radicalisation, with psychiatric, medical and social, educational support in an effort to reintegrate them socially' (CIPD quoted in Bindler 2016). The centre is not about deradicalisation but about reinsertion and citizenship. Located in Beaumont-en-Véron (Indre-et-Loire, 37), the centre will be opened for thirty volunteers for a ten month stay - although they may return home for the weekend. The programme has three parts: follow-up with psychologists, dialogue groups about societal themes (current affairs, geopolitics, religion ...), and 'distancing' (Binder 2016). The objective is to distance individuals from their engagement via personalised workshops on education and professional training courses that in turn reinsert them into society. Based on the EPIDE's methods, there will be little reinvention of the wheel. However, the military uniform and daily French flag saluting will continue.

#### 9.1.2.6 *Critical Analysis*

The CIPD's approach is too recent to have results to analyse; yet, the overall apparatus can be critically assessed. The CIPD's approach has multiple strengths. It is very consultative of other countries to establish its apparatus. Its network and structure involves the entire French government: from territorial authorities, to *départements*, to local collectivities. This creates a personalised support cell in each *département* that supports the individual and her/his family. Because many various actors are involved in this network, there exists a strong culture of sharing information that leads to continuous training and update of experiences. Further, this sharing extends to other European countries.

The approach, however, has multiple weaknesses. Firstly, this 'public response', despite consulting other countries, is playing catch-up as it wishes to be *à la française*. For example, the question as to whether religion ought to be present in the de-radicalisation programme or not is still unanswered. An approach *à la française* means that programme is void of religion, yet the phenomenon does require some religious discussion at one point or another.

Secondly, it improperly links the macro, meso, and micro-level as its message is not resonated by the French government's hard approach. In fact, this incoherence is paradoxical. On one hand, radicalised individuals are seen as victims of radical Islamism, while on the other, they are seen as threats to France. Further, this incoherence is contradictory: the CIPD established a centre focused on citizenship yet dual citizens sentenced for terrorism may soon lose their French citizenship. Thus, when an individual and/or his family approach the soft apparatus, the hard apparatus often completely takes over. This is not a juxtaposition of the apparatuses, but rather, a control of the soft by the hard. Therefore, the strong state and security services presence may put some families off from contacting the government for help out of distrust in the hard approach proceedings. This leaves families with no option that does not contact the government if the case is deemed serious - an understandable conundrum for field actors.

Thirdly, the strong CPDSI and MIVILUDES' influence on the CIPD creates shortfalls in its understanding of the phenomenon. Its conceptualisation of radicalisation is neither challenged nor discussed. During a 'prevention of radicalisation' meeting on 12 November 2015 in Paris, attended by French Government Ministers and NGOs, the CIPD never discussed what is and is not radicalisation until Marik Fetouh and Patrick Amoyel brought it up. Although a discussion followed, it was never referenced in the conclusion (Fetouh 2016). The same can be said when UNISMED established its *Centre Euro-Méditerranéen de Formation à la Prévention de la Radicalsiation* (Euro-Mediterranean Centre for the Training on Preventing Radicalisation) in Nice in December 2015 (Ruffion 2015). Further, using radicalisation also produces over-simplifying 'signs of radicalisation' and reductionist profiles of radicalised individuals. Profiles need to adapt to the individual, and not the other way around. Furthermore, using radicalisation implies that many still consider mental manipulation as the root-cause (Frayssinet 2016; Klein 2015; Pachoud 2015; Slougui 2015) - a fact the three previous chapters and Boukhobza (2016ii) firmly dispute. This leads to the CPDSI's de-radicalisation approach. It is solely micro-level focused implying that very few changes to the individual's environment are envisioned, thus not altering the context that originally led to engagement.

Fourthly, the approach is too French. The constant relying on *laïcité* implies that no imams or religious criticism occurs, including at the Beaumont-en-Véron centre. While individuals do not engage because of religious reasons only, such reasons are factors and need to be addressed. Religion is not addressed because for N'Gahane, religion is not to be present in any shape or form in the French institutions. Further, involving many French state actors creates a lot of commonly known and disliked red tape in French bureaucracy and makes understanding and navigating the support system difficult.

Fifthly, the support cell networks relies on many NGOs and volunteers. While these volunteers' work is highly praised, they only work a few hours a week and are not fully trained yet. Many NGOs visited during fieldwork only had their offices open one afternoon per week. Further, this support cell offers no incentive to adults to participate and minors are duped to join some CPDSI sessions (Bouzar 2016). Furthermore, the support cell, especially the Beaumont-en-Véron centre, has framed the problem

incorrectly. It relies on 'insertion and citizenship', yet individuals did not engage because they are on society's fringe or because they hate France. They engaged for many more various reasons. Thus, this centre is aimed at a very narrow field of individuals.

Finally, since a €100 million budget was allocated to 'fighting radicalisation' over three years, about eighty programmes have surfaced and are 'hunting public funds' (Monin, Guéguen & Dupouy Hennequin 2016). 'These programmes lack methodology, knowledge on the phenomenon, and tinker deradicalisation programmes' and some are 'run by self-identified radicalisation experts' (Monin, Guéguen & Dupouy Hennequin 2016). In fact, all visited programmes (ADFI, CAPRI GEMPPI, Info-Sectes, UNISMED, SOFI-ADFI, and Turquoise Freedom), except Entr'autres and, fall in all three of these pitfalls (Fetouh 2016; Frayssinet 2016; Madeleine 2016; Nicolas 2016; Pachoud 2016; Ruffion 2016). For example, UNISMED, in December 2015, was still thinking about the basics of deradicalisation and disengagement to create a mediation centre (Ajana 2016; Ruffion 2016). However, by September 2016, it was awarded a bid for tender to be a national mobile deradicalisation unit despite lacking knowledge on the phenomenon and still tinkering its deradicalisation programme. Similarly, the CAPRI, which began operation on 9 January 2016, had not, by 11 February 2016, drawn-up psychological profiles and their appropriate responses (Fetouh 2016).

A staggering example is the *Maison de prévention de la radicalisation* (company for the prevention of radicalisation). Established in April 2014 and headed by Sonia Imloul, a mediator, it had no specific premises until October 2014, and hired a student, Julien Revial, who had no expertise on the subject and a psychology intern inexperienced on the matter to establish radicalisation profiles. The 'centre' was closed in June 2015 as families were suffering as they spent more time in front of the media recollecting their stories rather than being helped. The rented apartment in Aulnay-sous-Bois (Seine-Saint-Denis, 93) that housed the NGO was kept secret to protect families, yet two bedrooms were sublet to students (Imloul is now under investigation for misuse of public funds) (Revial 2016).

Lena, a returnees interviewed by Thomson (2016: 183) claimed the following regarding her deradicalisation session with a programme from the Ministry of the Interior:

I only attended once. I did not go back [...]. In my entire life, I have never been an alcoholic. But [it was a bit like that. We enter a room, when the person is wearing a niqab or jilbeb, we are greeted with a 'salam alaykum'. They kind of talk to us like we are ex-alcoholics, with small eyes and a soft voice, and they say: 'What made you join Daesh?' It is funny, it is really like that. They talk to us like we are lost in life, like: 'Did your family not take care of you?' And after, they asked me: 'Please, can you tell your story to BFMTV<sup>4</sup> with us?'. I felt like a small lab rat. For me, deradicalisation, it is a neologism created from scratch. What does it mean?

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<sup>4</sup> A 24/7 French news media

Obviously, no programme will ever be perfect; however, it can reasonably be expected that a programme hires full-time trained staff, has critical knowledge of the phenomenon, collaborates with other programmes in France and/or in abroad, and works toward helping individuals and their families rather than hunt public funds.

Because the CIPD focuses on other types of delinquencies, it is, appropriately, not against individuals going to prison if they have to (N’Gahane 2015). However, French prisons are not adapted to the phenomenon.

### 9.1.3 *Prison*

While prison is not truly a jihad ‘nursery’ (recall [section 7.5](#)), it has a role in pathways-to engagement because of its lack of adaptation to the current phenomenon. For the French government, prison can have a role in pathways out-of engagement. It does so by regrouping and isolating returnees in a specific section. This reduces their proselytism with other inmates; however, this increases their cohesion amongst each other and thus planning after being released from prison (such as attacks), may lead to further engagement, and increases penitential staff risk as they are not trained to handle individuals with military training (Larrivé 2015: 35).

In a draft opinion regarding prisons, Senator Larrivé (2015: 35) proposes isolating returnees but only if there exists a special anti-radicalisation unit in prison. This unit would tailor responses to each individual. Attendance would be compulsory to receive a reduced sentencing. For Loueslati, a Muslim prison chaplain, this is not enough. While the French government has increased the number of Muslim chaplains, this needs to go further by establishing social measures and increasing links with the family. Social measures include, for example, re-humanising prisons, preparing individuals for reinsertion, and preventing recidivism (Loueslati 2015). The family creates a tangible link with the outside-world to prepare reinsertion and can ameliorate detention’s conditions (Loueslati 2015: 50). Chaplains can also partake in a counter/alternative discourse strategy (Loueslati 2015: 48). Since returnees or incarcerated jihadis still believe in their ideology, and because they base their ideology on interpretations of the Koran and Sunna rather than inventions or fake texts, trying to convince them that salafi-jihadism is not Islam, that Islam is a religion of love, and having them follow a *discours Républicain* is not a credible counter-discourse (Thomson 2016: 105-106). Counter-arguments to their salafi-jihadi discourse are needed to shed light on their ideology’s incoherences and factual errors, and to offer different contextual analyses of the Koran and Sunna to create doubt about their ideology. All this supposes trust amongst inmate and the penitential staff - something impossible today due to over-population and under-financing.

Without social measures, prison can become a positive experience for four reasons. Firstly, prison is a mark of prestige as many great jihadi figures had been incarcerated before: al-Baghdadi, al-Zawahiri, and al-Zarqawi to name only three. Secondly, if one is imprisoned for holding a view, than it must be the truth. That is, prison can reinforce the idea that an individual is right in her/his belief. Thirdly, prison is felt as a test by *kufar* which gives 'points' for paradise (Thomson 2016: 142). Fourthly, as discussed previously, networks with others jihadis or criminal organisations (for resources) can be forged.

Prisons do have a role in disengagement. However, when spending about €100/day/inmate (£77) is seen as expensive, even though four out of ten inmates are recidivists (Loueslati 2015: 45), it is clear that French prison is not yet adapted for the phenomenon. As Philippe Campagne, secretary-general of *SNP-FO pénitentiaire*, a prison union, put it, 'prison's radicalisation prevention units are empty shells' (Campagne quoted in FranceInfo 2016). Yet, solutions will have to mobilise intelligence, willingness, and financing as they did for a soft approach - unfortunately, time is running out.

#### 9.1.4 *Lessons for Disengagement*

From the French counter-terrorism strategy, five lessons for disengagement are learned. Firstly, disengagement needs to be incentivised. Relying on volunteers to enrol in programmes or duping them to join sessions at the CPDSI will result in very few enrolments, and may even push individuals to seek assistance elsewhere - places that may worsen their engagement. Secondly, the hard and soft approaches need to communicate the same frames. There cannot be incoherences between them that reduce, negate or diminish one another. Thirdly, there needs to be strong, dense, and various nodes and bonds forming a nationwide network that offers personalised assistance. However, it should not be state-centric but centralised on the required personalised assistance. This network also needs to collaborate with European networks (N'Gahane 2015), even worldwide networks (Picotin 2016). Fourthly, actions need to be various and adaptive as profiles are various. Profiling individuals with pre-set actions is too rigid and insufficiently personalises assistance. Finally, French prisons need to quickly adapt to the changing phenomenon by offering social measures that initiate insertion, furthers disengagement, and prevents recidivism, all-the-while re-linking individuals and their families. From these lessons learned, and all the previous ones, a disengagement framework can be constructed.

## 9.2 DISENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

A disengagement framework is used to prevent engagement, prevent the furthering of engagement, and aid in perpetuating or engendering disengagement. This framework considers individuals engaged with the pan-Islamist movement, the MSJM, and MSJOs. The pan-Islamist movement is considered as

it has similar roots and initiations of pathways-to engagement with the MSJM, and is a phenomenon affected by the French and international contexts. Therefore, all individuals are included, and not solely those on society's fringe.

The overarching idea of this framework is that society as a whole has a responsibility. While it does not conceptualise engaged individuals as victims, society is not blameless either. Continuous stigmatisation, incoherent discourses and racism reduce some individual's view of belonging to and participation in the French Social Contract. Similarly, the continuous growth and spread of Islamism's 'communitarianism' in France is responsible for spreading engagement based propaganda.

The aim of such framework is to assist individual in belonging and participating in French society. It does so by offering a different perspective of what French society is and what it can offer - tools to make one's life better (and the life of family and friends) and right the wrongs one may be suffering from. Since the pan-Islamist and salafi-jihadi movements offer their members long-term, life-long projects (Atran 2016), French society must offer competing, even better, long-term projects - projects that, unlike those stereotypically depicted in salafi-jihadi propaganda, are not rooted in consumerism but in other projects, such as self-development. That is, long-term projects that offer different views of what French society has to offer; projects that contain all the tools for an individual to find *l'épanouissement personnel*.

Such a framework is therefore not a disengagement programme, rather, it is a hard and soft strategy, within which a programme is included. A framework can be theorised through SMT, strengths and weaknesses of the French approach, and lessons learned throughout this thesis. While individuals disengaging from the MSJM or an MSJO are not rejoining another movement, SMT's dynamics can nevertheless be utilised to mobilise individuals.

Individuals disengage because of different pull and push factors. Consider returnees interviewed by Thomson (2016; Thomson & Les Jours 2016a, 2016b, 2016c & 2016d): Lena was disenchanted with Daesh's conception of Islam (push factor) while Safya left for fear of her unborn child's health (pull factor). Bilel disengaged because he was disenchanted with Daesh's attacks in France, especially the 13 November 2016 attacks (push factor); Kevin disagrees with the MSJOs vision of Islam (push factor); Quentin was disenchanted, after one month, with the lifestyle that did not match what the propaganda promised (push factor); Yassin was injured on the battlefield and his parents went to rescue him in Raqqa (push and pull factors); and Zoubeir was disenchanted with the lifestyles offered by both al-Qaeda and Daesh (push factor). Also, recall those that disengaged from al-Qaeda when it switched from the 'near enemy' to the 'far enemy'.

Further, individuals disengage in different ways, whether they have been to the combat zone or not: some need personalised (e.g.: age, sex, and personal reasons for disengagement) face-to-face actions, while others need generalised actions. This framework is thus applied differently to each individual. As such, the individualised actions cannot be dissociated from the global actions and vice versa. Further, since tailoring is a core principal, profiling individuals is not necessary. Furthermore, 'signs of radicalisation' are not utilised as they are an aberration as they stigmatise any individual wishing to

follow a certain conception of Islam. External signs are not signs of engagement, rather, individuals' discourses and action relevant to this discourse matter. That is, what they say and do (or not) is more relevant than what they look like as looks can be deceiving.

Regarding returnees from the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone (and other conflict zones), this framework can help those disenchanted and wishing to reintegrate society. However, some returnees are disenchanted with an organisation but not the MSJM or pan-Islamist movement, and thus do not wish to reintegrate society. This framework can try to assist them in adjusting to life in a Western society. However, it is clear that some individuals cannot be disengaged (even deradicalised) because the jihadi identity can be difficult to shed (Amoyel 2016; Boukhobza 2016ii; Thomson 2016). Nevertheless, assistance should be offered to create a support network for the individual (see subsection 9.2.3) to prevent the individual from adhering or creating pro-MSJM or pro-pan-Islamism networks. If the individual is incarcerated, solitary confinement is not the answer either (see subsection 9.1.3). That is, even if an individual does not demonstrate a willingness to reintegrate society but rather is physically present in France but not part of society, a minimum level of assistance should be offered (see subsection 9.2.5) to prevent isolationism and/or belonging to unfavourable networks.

### 9.2.1 Incentives

Incentivising disengagement is a mix of *donner goût* (make appealing) to no longer being engaged and countering and/or offering alternatives to engagement's incentives.

Some incentives rely on push and pull factors. Push factors include disillusionment with the organisation's means or end; personal trauma, whether physical or psychological; or stress and exhaustion of staying within the organisation's illicit lifestyle. Pull factors include a desire for a 'normal' lifestyle, such as finding a career or beginning a family; pressure from friends and family; or competing social relationships (Bjørge 2009: 36). These are difficult to engender. Therefore, it is key to continue constant contact with the engaged individuals, through different and various networks, to reduce isolation and constantly iterate the framework's frames (see below).

Others incentives, however, do rely on countering and/or offering an alternative to engagement's incentives. Firstly, some engaged individuals claim religious reasons for their engagement. They claim it is impossible to live as a Muslim in France. For example, Quentin and Didier claimed that they wanted to live under true *Sharia* although they had little knowledge of *Sharia* (Boukhobza 2015). Incentivising their disengagement lies in examining how and why they conceive Islam in this manner. Most often, they rehash what has been said to them rather than having knowledge of and engaging in critical thinking about Islam to explain why they are unable to fulfil their religious obligations (Azazen 2015; ben Khalifa 2015). Others claim they wish to perform their *hijra*. The alternative argument lies

in asking why the Islamic State rather than another Muslim country, as this sheds light on their faulty logic and reliance on rehashing others' arguments (Azazen 2015; ben Khalifa 2015).

Secondly, some claim fighting for Muslims' well-being by attacking the root causes of the problems (e.g.: the al-Assad regime) rather than the symptoms (e.g.: refugees). The counter-argument lies in asking why they do not fight for Muslims in France. It is key to discuss with them how MSJOs are helping and hurting Muslims, and how they can justify not helping their families, friends, neighbours, and themselves in France.

To these two alternative arguments, engaged individuals typically counter by claiming not the lesser worth of fighting for those in France versus joining the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone, but rather, because they feel that the French context is not conducive to change (Azazen 2015; Boukhobza 2015). Thus, disengagement is not solely about incentivising leaving the movement and/or creating doubt about engagement, it is also about incentivising making France a more welcoming and accommodating place for others.

Finally, many engaged individuals do not travel to the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone because 'it is scary' (Amoyel 2015). They rationalise staying in France as being able to perform their jihad in France (Amoyel 2015; Boukhobza 2015; N'Gahane 2015). Two disengagement incentives arise. First, for those 'afraid' of travelling, it is key to discuss with them what jihad truly implies and that it is not simply violence against infidels (Azazen 2015, Mekkaoui 2016). Second, if they have not yet made up their mind on travelling, having an ex-combatant detail the reality of jihad and training camps, without an agenda other than to talk about his own experience, will open their eyes to the reality they are faced with (Alde'Emeh 2015; Benchellali 2015).

Disengagement incentives need to focus on how the organisation is unfit to solve the problems at hand and how individuals can help others and not only themselves. That is, push and pull incentives must be about more than just the individual, but also about society as a whole, wherein an individual's actions improves her/his condition, her/his family's, her/his friends', and others, all-the-while having her/his condition improved by others.

### 9.2.2 *Frames*

The general frame to be used follows the notion that French society is not the enemy, but rather, an ally willing and able to improve young people's lives through acceptance and belonging in the French Social Contract. It is not sufficient to offer a frame which offers employment and housing, but rather, one that provokes acceptance and participation, whether social, political and/or cultural, in French society. The sense of belonging matters, and belonging implies being heard. Thus, the disengagement incentives and actions are personalised to resonate with this belonging.

Such a frame is aligned by demonstrating young Muslims' participation in social, political, and cultural life. France's young Muslim population is very active in social and political life. In the fight against the 5 March 2004 law banning religious symbols in schools, they were louder and more active than established older organisations like the CFCM, the Paris Grand Mosque, and the UOIF. Further, Muslim youths vote in large numbers (Kepel 2012). Thus, engagement must be framed as a disservice to the individual, her/his family, and the rest of the youth population in France. Furthermore, this frame is aligned through a personalisation of the message of acceptance and belonging, made credible by actions which create acceptance and punish defiance, which is propagated by a credible source for the individual. That is, not the state, but a family member, a friend, a close confidant, or a trusted member of society. The message's credibility of societal support is established via a network of support.

This is where disengagement is more appropriate than deradicalisation. Because it is explicitly framed that Muslims have grievances in France, it is hence not radical to want to eradicate these grievances. Since deradicalisation implies forgoing an ideology, can it work if part of the ideology is to be kept? Disengagement is thus more concrete, less pejorative, and more measurable (see below) than deradicalisation.

### 9.2.3 Networks

Incentives and frames need to be propagated and personalised at the grass-roots level for individuals to feel a connection with and support from French society and governmental institutions. The CIPD's network is a good model and can be followed with a few adjustments:

1. *Central Government*. This network level is country wide and serves as a platform to share information and training, communicate the overall strategy, and offer financing to all levels. Since its actions are not tailored to individuals' needs, though still offer support, the three other levels come into conjoint play.
2. *Département*. The *département* level creates a personalised plan to engender and/or help in disengagement and serves as a platform of communication between the two levels below and the central government.
3. *Local*. NGOs and the local communities offer personalised incentives, frames, and actions to engender an individual's disengagement. Since they communicate face-to-face with individuals, they can help the individual connect with society and vice versa, and the disengagement can be measured. Chosen NGOs must not be volunteer-based but full-time employees with proper training to offer constant and productive support. The local level needs to work in close co-operation with the family and friends level to co-ordinate action, all-the-while staying in constant commu-

nication with the *département* level to share information on lessons learned, which can then be disseminated nationally through the central government level. To be more local, this level can be mobile if needed.

4. *Family & Friends and outsiders.* The family and friends level is a key network in disengagement. Family and friends offer emotional support and competing social bonds to ones in the militant movement. All links to pan-Islamist, MSJM or MSJO must be severed. The family and friends and new outsiders can create new bonds which are linked to networks that aim for the same ends with different means. Outsiders include worship, discipleship, kinship, and society in general. Further, they offer the most tangible pull factors like the opportunity for a 'normal' lifestyle and creating a family. The families and friends themselves need help from this overall network to stay strong.

A key component to this network is the use of experts and training. Disengagement actions need to be undertaken by experts rather than volunteers. However, experts, volunteers, civil servants, teachers, law enforcement, doctors and nurses, social workers, and religious figures must be trained to offer productive support. Having un-trained individuals in the network can cause problems. Thus, there needs to be clear ways to communicate and efficiently refer individuals to other actors.

This overall network enables the personalisation and support of disengagement incentives through the desired frames. The repertoire of action increases the credibility and salience of these drivers.

#### 9.2.4 *Repertoire of action*

A dense network with strong links and various nodes creates a large repertoire of action at each network level to aide in preventing engagement or engendering, or furthering, disengagement. Actions are chosen on a case-by-case basis. Since programme combine multiple actions, some individuals do not necessarily need to enrol in a programme. Therefore, it is key to have a range of action available to all.

To establish this framework's repertoire of action, 30 disengagement and deradicalisation programmes from 15 countries (cf. Barrett & Bokhari 2009; Bjørge, von Donselaar & Grunenbergh 2009; Chernov-Hwang, Panggabean & Fauzi 2013; Rabasa et al. 2010), and two programmes being established in France, the *CAPRI* in Bordeaux (Fetouh 2016) and the *Centre Euro-Méditerranéen de Formation à la Prévention de la Radicalisation* in Nice (Ruffion 2015), were examined to uncover lessons learned and best practices when establishing a disengagement programme. [Appendix F](#) lists 30 components to discuss when establishing a programme.

Personalised actions include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ *Alternative Lifestyle.* Programmes that provide an alternative lifestyle aim to create new reference points and build hope for the future by providing education or job training, re-engaging with

family and friends, and providing basic support. Establishing a sustainable livelihood and both social and financial networks are key programme steps. Such networks prevent recidivism as new networks are built and links to past ones destroyed. Therefore, such programmes may also relocate a participant for security reasons or to remove her/him from negative influences.

- ✦ *Amnesty.* Through amnesty programmes, a certain kind of forgiveness is offered by society (or certain parts of society) by providing a new start and helping individuals reintegrate into society. In some cases, such programmes also offer protection against potential acts of vengeance from victims or non-disengaged group members. The issue of amnesty depends on the scale of the violence, the cultural context, and the legal traditions of the society concerned (Bacha 2015).
- ✦ *Hard component.* The framework needs to incorporate hard components. These measures need to communicate the same frames as the soft approach. If an individual is punished, it must be toward re-acceptance into society rather than for the sake of punishment, and the level of punishment must equate to the level of involvement.
- ✦ *Mentoring.* A mentor aids in resolving an individual's problems. It is important to underline the notion that the individuals has problems to solve and not that she/he is a problem. The mentor thus aids in resolving problems and being a peer to learn from, not a judge. It generally takes time for trust to build (Ajana 2015; Kilic 2015; Ruffion 2015).

  - *Availability and Relationship.* Mentors must be available 24/7/365. This gives individuals enrolled in a programme a constant line of communication with their new network. This is essential as feeling down or isolated occurs at any given time, and thus, the programme or mentor needs to be available when a crisis occurs, which is not always from 9 to 5 Monday through Friday. Availability can also include a personalised phone line to report cases which will not necessarily be reported to the government. This increases privacy and encourages those who distrust the government to come forward. While mentor and mentees are not meant to become friends, some do develop a friendship or a close relationship that continues once the programme is over (Kilic 2015).
- ✦ *Political Participation.* All French citizens have the right to political participation. Improving one's situation in France occurs through political actions whose means and ends are accepted by society. The idea here is to demonstrate to engaged individuals the tools offered by society to change and improve their condition in France in an acceptable manner. Political participation in France works and numerous example demonstrate which actions to take or not. The goal is not to create new social movements or strikes, but rather, to demonstrate to engaged individuals their political and legal rights to be heard in France and participate in political life (assuming of course they respect others rights to do so). The same goes for social and cultural participation.

- ✦ *Prison*. Most prison based programmes have also placed a special focus on the most radical and most militant elements. This may include isolation from other prisoners, a lack of privileges enjoyed by other inmates, especially those in the rehabilitation process, or other mechanisms that send a message that terrorism is not under any circumstance acceptable and will be punished. I do not agree with this role of prison. While prison is necessary in some cases, individuals should not be left to rot in prison but belong in a rehabilitation group, which includes talking to psychologists and chaplains, job training, even education, spaces for dialogue and exchanges, and constant links with the family to prevent individual's *replis sur soi-même* and further engagement. Chaplains need not simply know Islam, they must also understand the militant salafi-jihadi ideology to properly discuss it with inmates.

  - *Returnees*. Trévidic's (quoted in Flandrin & de Lagarde 2016: 48) option for returnees (four years or more in prison then three years in a deradicalisation centre) is correct. Part of the sentencing can either be in a disengagement unit within the prison or in an external centre. The question remains as to whether individuals can be forced to enrol in such programmes.
- ✦ *Psychological Assistance*. Psychological assistance offers a chance for individuals to discuss any and all psychological issues with experts. If issues are not psychological, they are referred to other experts in the network. All engaged individuals may not need psychological assistance, but this assistance must be offered to their families. Further, it should be required for returning individuals (Amoyel 2015; Boukhobza 2015; Jacqueline 2015; Juy-Erbibou 2015; N'Gahane 2015).
- ✦ *Re-education, Mediation, and Counter/Alternative Discourse*. Re-education and mediation are based on discourse that deconstructs violent and non-violent Islamist militant discourse (Pachoud 2015; Slougui 2015). It then re-educates individuals, not with a new absolute truth, but one relative to their environment. It is a 'war' of ideas against the militant discourse through multiple channels like the family, school, media, religious institutions, ex-militants, and individuals held in esteem by engaged individuals. The idea is to create or exploit an existing doubt in an individual's mind. Doubt can be created via a mentor, although that is not the aim of mentoring (Kilic 2015).
- ✦ *Rehabilitation*. Rehabilitation into society is not solely about finding stable employment and housing. Rather, it is about having individuals take conscious notice of their roles and duties toward society and society's roles and duties toward the individual. This is facilitated by the personalised help of a highly available social worker (Azazen 2015).
- ✦ *Reconciliation with Enemies and Victims*. Talking to those considered as enemies can often time re-humanise them, break stereotypes and prevent recidivism. Similarly, talking to, even being confronted by victims of terrorism can demonstrate the victims' suffering, re-humanise the targets, and include elements of restorative justice (Ibn Ziaten 2016).

- ✦ *Venting Frustration.* The creation of space and opportunity to vent frustration can occur through combat sports or simply talking face-to-face (Kherfi 2015; Mekkaoui 2016).

Global actions focus on the alterations to the structural causes of engagement:

- ✦ *Responding to Anti-West Propaganda.* Since anti-West propaganda is consistently used as engagement rhetoric, it needs to be responded to. Response comes in the forms of countering anti-West arguments and not feeding anti-West propaganda. This goes hand-in-hand with fighting discriminations and the treatment of communities in France (see below).
- ✦ *Conflict Resolution.* To stop engagement, the source of engagement must be neutralised. Thus, France needs to continue to push for a resolution to the Syrian, Iraqi, Libya, and Malian crises through diplomatic ways. If military force is required, local forces should be utilised to the fullest extent possible as sending Western troops would play into Daesh's will.
- ✦ *Counter-Discourse.* No government has yet to establish an effective counter-discourse as governments are not seen as credible sources of information by engaged individuals (consider France's *Stop-Djihadisme* campaign and the American *Think Again, Turn Away* campaign). A French NGO, ReParlonsJihad (2016) has achieved great results since September 2016. Their counter-discourse has two facets. On one hand, it offers a negative discourse that sheds lights on the MSJOs incoherences and factual errors, depicts the reality of events in Syria, and utilises some humour to mock jihadis in order to create doubt in engaged's individuals minds. Its use of theology is, unlike other counter-discourses, present yet not the focus to prevent engaging in never-ending debates and alienating parts of its audience. On the other hand, it utilises a positive-discourse to present French society, despite its limitations and flaws, as, firstly, a tool to achieve success in life, and secondly, as something more than consumerism. Further, on its public Facebook page<sup>5</sup>, its audience's public messages are quickly answered to create a connection and to prevent individuals from going to bed without reading a counter-argument to their idea. Such discourse serves as a prevention tool, counter-arguments to those engaged, and offers, to those being engaged, tools to use against recruiters' arguments.
- ✦ *Departures.* Preventing departures needs to continue, yet the prevented individual needs to be disengaged rather than simply stopped at the border.
- ✦ *Fighting Discrimination.* As shown in [chapter 5](#), Islam in France is living a *mal être* because of discrimination, racism, French society's lack of understanding and fear of change, and some Muslims' behaviour. While this is not a reason by itself for engagement, it is a significant factor. Fighting discrimination, breaking down ghettos, reducing 'communitarianism', improving community policing, and explaining what Islam is and is not can go a long way to challenge

<sup>5</sup> [www.facebook.com/reparlonsjihad](http://www.facebook.com/reparlonsjihad)

stereotypes and discrimination, and removes part of the 'victim' discourse amongst Muslim populations. Punishing those who discriminate and are racist is also fundamental in promoting a discourse of *vivre ensemble*.

- Foreign Policy. While France's foreign policy in the Middle-East and Africa is not the sole cause of engagement, it is an important factor. Thus, planning for actions like bombing Libya and Syria need to include consideration for the repercussion on the engagement of foreign fighters.
- International Cooperation. France is not alone in this endeavour. While its context has factors only present in France (e.g.: *laïcité*), many others are shared worldwide - whether with other Western countries or MENA countries. Thus, France must work hand-in-hand with other countries and share information. Working in isolation is counter-productive as the phenomenon is worldwide. Secondly, cooperation includes a shared understanding of the phenomenon. Hence, more studies must examine why and how individuals in other countries engage and disengage from the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-jihadi movements. From there, comparisons can be undertaken and common factors can be cooperatively combated.
- Networks. Direct and indirect networks of the pan-Islamist and MSJM need to be dismantled quietly and the individuals re-linked with other networks for support and re-insertion. As demonstrated throughout, simply breaking the networks and incarcerating members is insufficient.
- Treatment of Communities. While immigrant communities will still be expected to highly assimilate to French society in the near future, they must be offered help to assimilate by learning French and French culture for social integration to occur. Further, French society needs to be more willing to allow individuals to assimilate. That is, the door swings both ways and both parties need to make an effort.

What is important is that all these actions work together in the same direction. They must disengage individuals while prevent engagement and re-engagement. This repertoire of action, propagated at every level of the network, aims to engender disengagement through a frame of acceptance and belonging into French society.

#### 9.2.5 Magnanimity

This network and repertoire of action can seem, for some French citizens, quite generous. In fact, there exists a level where too much magnanimity is offered resulting in disengaging individuals gaming the system for personal economic gain rather than furthering their disengagement, and a level where not enough magnanimity is offered resulting in disengaging individuals not volunteering. The right balance can be found by establishing a *goldilocks zone* (recall [subsection 4.2.5 p.58](#)). While the previous discussion on magnanimity referred to magnanimity given to returnees in terms of punishment, this

discussion on magnanimity refers to the assistance given to individual to engender their disengagement or continue their disengagement.

It is firstly important to try and uncover whether the individual is truthful in her/his disengagement or if he/she is using *taqiyya* to dissimulate another goal, such as returning in France to undertake an attack (Amoyel 2015 & 2016; Boukhobza 2015 & 2016ii). This is done by having the individual talk with psychologists (Amoyel 2015 & 2016) as trust can be built rather than through police interrogation since individual have no reason to trust police officers (N'Gahane 2016).

Once mutual trust is built, it is possible to identify why the individual disengaged and what their next project is or should be (Amoyel 2015 & 2016; Boukhobza 2015 & 2016ii). Is the individual repenting, is the individual disenchanted with an MSJO but not the MSJM or something in-between? The reason does not imply a certain level of magnanimity. For instance, it is not because the individual is repenting that magnanimity must be high. If such an individual violated human rights whilst in the Syrian-Iraqi combat zone, punishment should still occur. What this implies is that the reason determines the focus of the magnanimity. That is, magnanimity should be high in terms of the actions (within the repertoire of action above) assisting in the success of disengagement and re-engagement with French society.

Throughout the disengagement process, magnanimity needs to be evaluated. If a step (e.g.: providing an alternative lifestyle) is made towards an individual and no reciprocal step is offered, it must first be understood why no step was reciprocated. If the step was not reciprocated because it was not a pertinent step (e.g.: the new lifestyle is in an unfriendly neighbourhood), another is to be made (e.g.: offer another location). If the individual simply did not reciprocate (e.g.: the individual did not attempt to integrate into her/his new lifestyle), the individual must make a step before another step is made toward them (e.g.: try to integrate the new lifestyle). Another step implies a magnanimous action. Therefore, if the individual does not reciprocate a step, support is still on-going, such as talking to a psychologists or social worker to make sense of why the step was not reciprocated (e.g.: try to make sense why the individual did not attempt to integrate the new lifestyle). At no point should the individual be left without assistance. This is why talking with engaged or disengaging individuals is a fundamental basis of this *goldilocks zone* and cannot be removed (Powell 2014). This is already a form of magnanimity acting as a pull factor; however, there cannot be no initial magnanimity as, firstly, this will hinder disengagement and re-engagement, and secondly, this can be a turn-off for potential future disengaging individuals. That is, why disengage if no help is offered? However, if the individual continually does not reciprocate steps, then magnanimity is reduced to its lowest level. That is, the opportunity is taken back and other means are employed, such as prison time. In [section 7.5](#), it was discussed that prison should have disengagement programme. If an individual's opportunity is taken back, she/he should still attend the prison's disengagement programme but magnanimity will be at its lowest. As mentioned above, some individuals may never be disengaged. If they are arrested, magnanimity should still be offered through its basic component of talking and responding to what ever is reciprocated.

This process follows the Theory of Moves from Game Theory (Brams 1999 & 2012), wherein one party makes a step at a time. Game Theory is not utilised here to create a game, but rather, to inform how the process can be conceptualised for both parties to benefit. Such process forgoes a zero-sum game and prevents Nash equilibria from forming (Myerson 1997). This conceptualisation allows for magnanimity and actions to be tailored to the individual and their pertinence checked. This is advantageous for the individual as, firstly, the disengagement process is beneficiary to their disengagement, and secondly, they cannot 'game' the system. Since each action is tailored to an individual, so is the level of magnanimity.

### 9.2.6 *Measuring Disengagement*

Disengagement is almost impossible to measure. Nevertheless, some metrics can be examined. Clearly, questions can also compare current activities with activities undertaken whilst engaged: which networks does the individual frequent? Do everyday activities coincide with everyday speech (e.g.: accepts democracy both in speech and in action)?

Since disengagement is about improving one's condition (and that of family and friends), then measures of disengagement imply measuring how an individual's conditions has changed. On one hand, this can imply measuring how well the individual partakes in the French Social Contract following the Assimilation-Solidarity Spectrum (recall [Table 2 p.66](#)). On the other hand, and not mutually exclusive, some qualitative questions exist to measure the individual's relationship toward victimhood discourses (e.g.: does she/he still challenge new ideas?) and these discourses' offered solutions to right wrongs: is the individual seeking self-construction or religious pleasure? Is the individual following reason or faith in God (as interpreted by others)? Is the individual following free will or choices made by God (as interpreted by others)? Is the individual following individuality or submission to others' choices? (Boukhobza 2016ii). How does she/he view other options? Does she/he completely disregards other options or does she/he give them some consideration?

In sum, disengagement can be measured in terms of disengagement from past ideologies and networks and (re)-engagement with society.

### 9.2.7 *Preventing Re-Engagement*

The disengagement process does not end when an individual is considered disengaged. Even though re-engagement tends to occur under higher conditions than the first engagement, it is not improbable (Bjørge, von Donselaar & Grunenbergs 2009). As such, actions must continue once disengagement is reached. That is, being disengaged from a movement but not belonging to society is not an acceptable state as the individual would be in a state of uncertainty, a sort of limbo, and would thus be more recep-

tive to joining other militant movements. Since the French society's lack of adaptability to immigrants is a factor in engagement, it will surely be a factor in re-engagement if disengaged individuals cannot reintegrate into society. Thus, there needs to be magnanimity for the probability of re-engagement to remain low. Since preventing engagement and preventing re-engagement follow the same principal, actions preventing engagement also prevent re-engagement.

In sum, disengagement is incentivised through push and pull factors and counter/alternative arguments. Frames rely on acceptance and belonging to French society with the aim of improving one's condition, her/his family's, her/his friends', and society's. The network encompasses the central government; *départements*; local NGOs; and family, friends and outsiders, which support one another and work together. Finally, actions are both global and individualised to offer tailored support to each individuals' needs.

### 9.3 CONCLUSION

With the MSJM evolving into the Syrian jihad and the inception of Daesh, the French government added a third pillar to its counter-terrorism strategy: a soft approach. This approach aims to prevent radicalisation and offer support to individuals and their families in de-radicalising. This approach has strengths and weaknesses, but its incoherent relation with the two other pillars create a confusing and paradoxical overall approach. The French government's broadening of its pillar 'criminal conspiracy to commit a terrorist enterprise' to 'individual conspiracy to commit a terrorist offence' creates no deterrent to engagement but the opposite: defiance of the system. Furthermore, its battle against virtual networks through shut-downs is only a temporary victory and requires an enormous amount of resources to stay ahead.

SMT permits the creation of a coherent overall approach to disengagement, by including:

1. Continuous contextual analysis for clues on engagement and disengagement;
2. Incentives aimed at mobilising individuals to improve the condition of themselves, their family's, friends', and society;
3. Frames presenting acceptance and belonging into the French Social Contract;
4. A nationwide networks with grassroots contact with individuals and their entourage; and
5. A range of global and personalised actions tailored to each individual's needs.

Overall this framework is about re-engaging individuals into French society. Because they already have access to all the rights (and duties) given by the French Social Contract, they need to use them. However, this door swings both ways as French society needs to be less discriminatory and racist against others and change. As Le Clézio (2015) aptly wrote:

I hear that this is a war. Without doubt, the evil spirit is everywhere, and just a little wind is enough to propagate it and for it to consume everything around him. But this is another type of war you see: a war against injustice, against the abandonment of some young people, against the tactical oblivion into which we hold part of the population (in France but also in the world), by not sharing with it the benefits of culture and the chances of social success. [...] It is this downward spiral that must be stopped, otherwise this collective march will be only for an instant, will not change anything. Nothing will or can be done without the participation of all. We must break the ghettos, open doors, give each inhabitant of this country a chance, hear his voice, learn from him as much as he learns from others. We must cease to allow the construction of a foreignness of the nation. We must overcome the misery of spirits to cure the disease that corrodes the foundations of our democratic society.

A disengagement framework must be global and individualised to prevent engagement, prevent engagement's continuity, and aid in engendering or furthering disengagement. Disengagement programmes are only one action out of many in a dense and strong network offering numerous and various global actions nationwide and personalised actions at the grassroots level. This network also propagates coherent frames across the hard and soft approaches for a common message. Such soft approach must become a bigger pillar in French counter-terrorism.

Part III

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS



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## CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

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This conclusion firstly aims at restating what this thesis tried to answer, how it positioned itself to do so, and its findings. Secondly, it details the challenges and limitations to this undertaking and its findings. Thirdly, it details what this thesis has contributed to the literature and the findings' implications for current and future research. Finally, it details policy recommendations regarding disengagement.

### 10.1 POSITIONING AND FINDINGS

This thesis had a two-fold purpose. Firstly, it explored French individuals' engagement with the militant salafi-jihadi movement (MSJM) and its organisations while exploring France's counter-terrorism strategy and apparatus and how it and the MSJM affected one another. Such exploration led the thesis to a finer understanding of disengagement's global and individual dynamics with the purpose of constructing a disengagement framework. To achieve the latter, it asked the following questions:

◆ Regarding engagement:

- *Why and how do French individuals engage (or not) with the pan-Islamist movement and the MSJM and its organisations?;*
- *How are these movements and organisations related?;*
- *How does this relationship affect and is affected by engagement and disengagement?.*

◆ Regarding the French counter-terrorism strategy and apparatus:

- *What is France's counter-terrorism strategy and apparatus, and how has it adapted to the phenomenon?*
- *How does this strategy affect engagement and disengagement?*

To achieve the former, it asked the following questions:

- ◆ *Why and how do some French individuals disengage (or not)?*
- ◆ *Can disengagement be engendered and/or furthered? If so, how and under what conditions?*

The engagement research questions fall into a small literature gap regarding the French specificities of the phenomenon, while the disengagement research questions fall into a wider literature gap - one where little on disengagement is yet to be written. For this reason, a single case study was utilised to offer greater empirical details.

The concepts and findings utilised to answer these questions are, to some extent, at odds with the literature. Most works (and field actors) use terms like terrorism, radicalisation, and deradicalisation. While some works rely on these terms without regards for any characterisation, others are more rigorous and debate these terms. Nevertheless, this thesis has moved away from such terminology. Terrorism is not utilised as it implies that these movements, organisations, and individuals (henceforth movements unless stated otherwise) are violent and what they do is wrong. However, these movements do much more than terrorism. They use other violent means, like guerrilla warfare, mutilation, and decapitation, and also use non-violent means, like Twitter campaigns, 'state-building', and proselytism, to achieve their aims and mobilise supporters.

Secondly, radicalisation is not utilised as it connotes one pathway, lack of rationality, and abnormality. This thesis views engagement, not as one pathway toward a certain end-point, but rather, as pathways as numerous as the number of engaged individuals and with as many end-points. Each individual has her/his reasons for engagement and pathway to engagement. Narrowing all individuals on the same pathway is reductionist and may influence researchers to forgo factors influencing engagement (or the lack of engagement). Some authors utilise radicalisation and move away from a one pathway approach; yet, they rely upon an irrational actor model. For this thesis, militant salafi-jihadi organisations (MSJO) and individuals are rational and sane (although some exception can exist). That is, their logic follows specific ideological precepts - bounded rationality. Their actions are driven by cost and benefit calculations and self-interested actions, informed by their ideology - salafi-jihadism. Further, many works emphasise the movement's rationality wherein members are self-sacrificing for 'the cause'. This thesis moves away from the wider literature's conceptualisation and emphasises the possibility that some members' self-sacrificing actions are purely self-interested (considered engaging with Daesh to live in paradise on earth for instance). Not being able to recognise someone as rational simply because the researcher fails to follow or disagrees with the logic is bad science. Some authors utilise radicalisation and move away from a one pathway approach and the irrational actor model. In that case, what the 'norm' is and is not must be characterised. However, the movements studied here follow means and ends that are both 'normal' and 'abnormal'. Therefore, utilising the term radical would be reductionist of their character. Also, why should engagement with a 'radical' group necessarily be different than engagement with a 'normal' group? Especially if the 'radical' group has 'normal' characteristics. This thesis rejects any 'normal' and 'abnormal' characterisation. In fact, the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-jihadi movements have, as shown, much common ground where, at the beginning of their pathways, individuals are fluid between either movements. Therefore, solely focusing on a movement's so called 'radicality' is reductionist.

Thirdly, disengagement and deradicalisation are seen as part of the same process. Individuals disengage (i.e.: cease violent actions) then they may deradicalise (i.e.: forgo or de-legitimise the ideology). However, deradicalisation also implies adopting a 'normal' ideology. Before this occurs, the individual is disengaged. Therefore, this thesis focuses on disengagement as it occurs before deradicalisation, is more concrete, less pejorative, more measurable, and a more modest and attainable objective.

Fourthly, this thesis' conceptualisation of movements is different than the account common to most existing literature. Rather than consider MSJOs as independent organisations, this thesis views MSJOs as part of the MSJM. In turn, this implies that individuals can be engaged with the MSJM but not a MSJO and that disengaging from a MSJO does not necessarily imply disengaging from the MSJM. Further, this thesis sees the MSJM as a violent sub-movement of the pan-Islamist movement. In turn, this implies that individuals can be engaged with the pan-Islamist movement but not the MSJM and that disengaging from the MSJM does not necessarily imply disengaging from the pan-Islamist movement. This conceptualisation implies fluidity between organisations and movements and the need for a broader view of the phenomenon rather than an organisation-centric view or a country-centric view (since the organisations and movements evolve in more than one country). The contextual analysis and state's role are thus affected for both engagement and disengagement.

With such terminology and conceptualisations, the disengagement findings are somewhat at odds with the existing literature as the phenomenon is viewed differently. The existing literature focuses mainly on micro-level factors - except, for example, Ashour (2009) who also includes meso and macro-level factors in his deradicalisation study or El-Said and Harrigan (2013) who solely focus on macro-level factors. This thesis uncovered that disengagement relies upon macro, meso, and micro-level factors. Findings point to the necessity for this triad to work hand-in-hand to prevent engagement's inception, engagement's furthering, engender disengagement and aid disengagement's furthering for both global and individual pathways. That is, this thesis' findings cover the need for the establishment of a disengagement framework rather than a model or programme.

Fifthly, the existing literature considers radicalisation/engagement with a movement and deradicalisation/disengagement from a movement. In this respect, this thesis is not in line with the existing literature. It considers engagement with movements as disengagement from society and disengagement from movements as (re)engagement with society - a conceptualisation rooted in the French Social Contract. The French Social Contract is the way French society operates. That is, how individuals belong to and participate in the French nation. Through such conceptualisation, this thesis incorporates the above triad for engagement and disengagement. That is, the individual, a movement, and the nation are required for engagement and disengagement to succeed. Hence, the establishment of a framework rather than simply a deradicalisation or disengagement model or programme.

## 10.2 RESEARCH CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Four limitations arose during data collection. Deliberately, no French individuals engaging or engaged with the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-jihadi movements and MSJOs were interviewed. This is because accessing them is time consuming (as trust needs to be built) and the effort put-in compared to the data received is not worth it. That is, the literature is sufficiently detailed in giving individuals' accounts for engagement's why and how. However, it was originally planned to interview disengaging and disengaged French individuals as their views are not in the literature - a research method for which ethical approval was received. This proved very difficult and this method was almost scrapped. Amélie Boukhobza, a psychologist with Entr'autres, a NGO in Nice who works with the French government, asked disengaging and disengaged French individuals, with whom she is in contact, if they would allow me to interview them. All refused. Yet, Amélie Boukhobza offered to ask my questions to them. Therefore, this thesis overcame this lack of direct access by relying on the proxy-interviews of disengaging and disengaged French individuals.

Despite its disengagement framework, this thesis was unable to find new or innovative ways to consistently and reliably measure disengagement - even with fieldwork. While works concerning deradicalisation exist, very few offer ways to measure deradicalisation, and none have indicators that do not really on pre-deradicalisation behaviours. That is, all indicators compare current behaviour to the engaged behaviour. Unfortunately, this may only measure if the individual is no longer mobilised but says nothing about if the individual is belonging to and participating in society. While this thesis argues for belonging to and participation in society for disengagement, what belonging and participation are is relative. Therefore, such relativity makes measuring disengagement very difficult. Nevertheless, some indicators have been found that give insights as to whether belonging and participation are occurring and on-going, but they are neither consistent nor do they tell a complete story.

For belonging and participation with society to work, a certain level of magnanimity post-engagement is required. But what is this level? This thesis has argued that too much magnanimity runs the risk of individuals gaming the system for personal gains instead of working toward belonging and participation, while too little magnanimity runs the risk of failing disengagement, even furthering engagement. However, the proper level has not been found. This does not weaken the overall argument, but implies that such disengagement framework needs to give magnanimity versus repression consideration.

The fourth limitation arose through the research design. Data was analysed and collected via-à-vis this thesis' SMT framework. Despite the framework adapting to the subject, certain theoretical tools may have improperly steered the analysis. For example, small decentralised networks and their structure have been shown to matter in engagement and disengagement. But what of their idea and interest? This thesis argues in its synthesis of SMT that interest, ideology, and structure matter. Yet when discussing small decentralised networks, it only examined their structure and set aside interest

and ideology because it assumed that since a small decentralised network was inspired by a large network, it had very similar interest and ideology. Is such an assumption correct? The limitation is thus that, despite adapting SMT to the subject, this thesis can only ascertain so much about the subject. Further, this can be worsened by the researcher's potential biases - negative effects this thesis has endeavoured to remove as much as possible. Nevertheless, they are, unfortunately, always present.

Therefore, this thesis' findings are limited in space-, time-, and perspective. That is, its findings try to make sense of French individuals' engagement and disengagement from the early 1970s to 2016 with the pan-Islamist and salafi-jihadi movements and the MSJOs utilising the concepts above. Therefore, its conclusions are not definitive facts that close debates. Rather, they are conclusions meant to initiate debates on engagement, radicalisation, disengagement, and deradicalisation. Further, they are meant to be compared to research with different perspectives (i.e.: different epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies, and methods), contexts and time-frames. Furthermore, they need to be updated as time goes. The movements will change and thus, these conclusions will no longer apply. Therefore, as movements evolve, research must adapt and re-draw its conclusion to continuously make sense of engagement and disengagement.

### 10.3 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION AND IMPLICATIONS

Firstly, this thesis has modestly contributed to the wider (counter) terrorism field by conceptualising leaving a militant movement as rejoining a society rather than a simple move away from violence or the de-legitimisation of an ideology. That is, this thesis suggests evidence that for sustained disengagement, individuals need to belong to and participate in society. This implies that society does its part as well. Further, this also implies moving beyond socio-political explanations such as job creation and reducing discrimination. Rather, it moves toward getting individuals involved in their society socially, politically, culturally, economically, and through identity. More broadly speaking, this implies the need for a 'soft' approach with a counter-terrorism strategy. The mix of 'hard' and 'soft' are to be determined on a case-by-case basis; nevertheless, a full 'hard' or full 'soft' approach is unlikely to succeed.

Secondly, this thesis has also modestly contributed to SMT by furthering research into engaging and disengaging from movements. Regarding engagement, this thesis has emphasised the role of small decentralised networks. Through their dense nodes and strong bonds, these networks facilitate micro-mobilisation and the undertaking of violent actions. Knowing their structure also implies that for disengagement, similarly strong and dense networks must rival engagement networks. However, network structures should not be the sole focus. The network's interest and idea must be examined to get a broader picture. As demonstrated, small decentralised networks can live-on after an organisation's end (consider the case of the GIA's European networks) and can change which organisation they support even if the organisation is still functioning (consider the switching of sides from Jabhat al-Nusra

to Daesh). Physical networks are not so different than virtual networks who lack physicality. Therefore, both need to be examined as simultaneously affecting engagement rather than separately. This thesis has also emphasised the differentiation between incentives and frames. If an individual views her/his context like the movement already, further participation is incentivised. If an individual is motivated to act but does not view her/his context like the organisation, frames are aligned. This enables making sense of individuals switching organisations within the MSJM and why some are not as engaged as others. In fact, this is where engagement is superior to radicalisation as an analytical perspective. Engagement can occur before frame alignment, whether with the wider movement or an organisation, as it takes many forms: from participation in an attack, to sharing information. Radicalisation implies taking in the ideology to be considered a member. However, it is clear that many individuals supporting the pan-Islamist movement, the MSJM or a MSJO are not necessarily adherent to the ideology. Regarding the repertoire of action, this thesis has emphasised non-violent actions even though violent movements and organisations are examined. This is because non-violent actions (like violent actions) affect and are affected by engagement and the lack of engagement.

This thesis has also modestly contributed to SMT's use for disengagement. It has done so by conceptualising leaving in a similar way to engaging: it involved factors at all three analytical levels. Through its disengagement framework, this thesis has theorised that these three levels can be acted upon to affect disengagement's (and engagement) engendering and/or furthering. Although disengagement does not imply negating engagement factors, both are highly linked as the conditions leading to engagement must be altered for disengagement to occur.

Thirdly, this thesis has modestly contributed to the understanding of why and how French individuals engage with the pan-Islamist and militant salafi jihadi movements and MSJOs. Such examination confirms many established facts of the literature: individuals are not on the fringe of society or socio-economically deprived; engagement is not due to mental manipulation or socio-psychopathological problems; the French context matters but it is not the sole context to consider; a tri-level analysis is required to fully grasp the phenomenon; France alone cannot resolve this problem. That is, *n'en déplaise aux français*, despite its French characteristics, the French case is not in a league of its own. Rather, it falls within the general understanding of engagement. Whether this is true or not for disengagement warrants more research. That is, are there generalities to disengagement akin to those of engagement? If so, what are they and can they be engendered by civil societies and/or states?

Fourthly, this thesis has modestly contributed to the Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) literature by offering means to, in the long-run, reintegrate ex-combatants in society and discussing magnanimity toward these integrating ex-combatants. Through its conceptualisation of leaving a violent militant movement as rejoining society, this thesis has uncovered means to assist individuals in belonging to and participating in society which can potentially be applied to DDR cases. In fact, this process requires step forwards by both ex-militants and society itself. This of course supposes that society is magnanimous toward ex-militants. To this end, this thesis has developed a conceptuali-

sation of magnanimity, through Game Theory and the Theory of Moves, that could also potentially be applied to DDR cases in preventing re-engagement.

Based upon this thesis' contributions and limitations, further research into the following should prove useful in furthering our understanding of disengagement. Without further research into measuring disengagement, it will not be possible to assess such disengagement framework, even less so for disengagement programmes.

Another avenue for further study would be research into the specific level of magnanimity offered in such framework (and programmes) as this driving factor positively and negatively affects results. It would also be relevant to apply this disengagement framework to other cases to countries worldwide to compare and contrast results. This would offer more data and would allow for lessons learned to be applied. Further, it would uncover common factors that can be combatted in cooperation.

A third avenue would be a stronger linkage between psychology and SMT's micro-level analysis. That is, this would entail demonstrating how the meso and macro-level factors affect individuals' psychology and their engagement and disengagement, and in turn, how individuals psychology affect the meso and macro-levels.

A fourth avenue regards the conditions to engagement wherein a comparison between engaged individuals and a control group is undertaken. That is, why did individuals in a similar environment did not engage and what can be learned to prevent others' engagement ?

A fifth avenue would be research into why and how French individuals engaged with smaller MSJOs to uncover whether different dynamics and factors are in play. This would also implying studying their disengagement (or lack there of).

#### 10.4 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Through this thesis, two main policy recommendation categories are uncovered. Firstly, through its disengagement framework, this thesis can recommend the following to prevent engagement, prevent the furthering of engagement, engender disengagement, and/or further disengagement.

- ◆ Individuals need not only to be incentivised into disengaging from a movement but also into belonging to and participating in society;
- ◆ Disengagement must be framed as a way to help their own conditions in France, and that of their families and friends, and whatever and whomever they were fighting for amongst the MSJM or a MSJO. Therefore, engagement must be framed as a disservice to themselves, their family and friends, and those they are fighting for.

- Networks mainly include family and friends, if they can be of help. If they do not have resources, assistance must be offered. If they cannot be of help (and even if they can) outside networks are then utilised. These networks need to be dense and various to rival pan-Islamist and salafi-jihadi movement networks.
- Actions are global and can be personalised toward each individual. If needed, programmes can be established to personalise more than one action at a time (although programmes are not sufficient on their own). The repertoire of action must follow France's strengths rather than mimic movements actions.

In sum, individuals must be brought to belong to and participate in society. This does not imply that the 'hard' approach ceases. Rather, it implies that a 'soft' approach becomes France's third pillar of counter-terrorism - a pillar that also acts as a check and balance of the two others.

In [chapter 8](#), this thesis argued against the use of the mental manipulation approach relied upon by the French government. However, this approach and this thesis' SMT framework have, generally speaking, the same end: cease (or greatly reduce) this phenomenon. Therefore, French policy-makers, should they follow a more SMT-like approach, would need to tread carefully as not to discredit the mental manipulation approach. A change of approach may be used by recruiters to demonstrate weakness and lack of coherence in France's actions.

Secondly, France is not ready for this phenomenon as it is. That is, France is behind (Fetouh 2016; Mekkaoui 2016; N'Gahane 2015; Nicolas 2016). Therefore, if it is not ready, it cannot adapt to the phenomenon's evolution. As Chris Hadfield, an awesome Canadian astronaut who spent over 5 months in space, including in the International Space Station, wrote:

A lot of people talk about expecting the best but preparing for the worst, but I think that's a seductively misleading concept. There's never just one 'worst'. Almost always there's a whole spectrum of bad possibilities. The only thing that would really qualify as *the* worst would be not having a plan for how to cope (Hadfield 2015: 69, quotes and italics in original).

This has unfortunately been France's historic counter-terrorism approach and its current path. Many questions arose with Daesh that France has not asked: what to do with children born to French men and women in the caliphate if they return to France? What to do with these online websites that will stay there forever? What to do with young children who have rubbed elbows with the salafi ideology and agree with it simply because their parents did? How to deal with the continuous misconception of *laïcité*? What to do about the pan-Islamist movement? What to do about certain incompatible forms of Islam in France that have become commonplace?

These and many other questions are not being asked by France. While no one can predict the phenomenon's future, the precedents and basis established by the pan-Islamist and militant salafi-

jihadi movements are here to stay - a reality French counter-terrorism has yet to adapt to as it has no strategy other than repression.

## 10.5 FINAL THOUGHTS

This thesis has sought to understand why and how French individuals engage (or not), and to theorise why and how disengagement can be engendered and/or furthered. Unfortunately, this thesis only exists because of French incompetence. The prime example is France's Prime Minister Manuel Valls who said, regarding salafi-jihadism, 'expliquer c'est excuser' (explaining means forgiving) or 'we are at war against terrorism'.

The French government's initial reaction in the 1980s and 1990s to the militant salafi-jihadi phenomenon was repression. It was thought to be the world leading approach until the Merah attacks in 2012. This time period without attacks was due to luck. Some in France's government have yet to realise this and continue hammering for a harder approach. Others have realised this mistake and pushed for a joint softer approach. However, to secure political votes, they have not addressed the root causes of the phenomenon. Instead, they have opted to label individuals as radicalised through mental manipulation, and hence following a deradicalisation agenda of exit counselling.

Luckily, though discreetly, the heads of France intelligence services publicly disagreed with Monsieur Valls. Patrick Carniel, head of the DGSI claimed: 'I am personally convinced that a security response is only part of the answer and will not resolve the phenomenon. [...] We are like EMTs: we treat emergencies but not the root causes' (quoted in Suc 2016). Bernard Bajolet, head of the *Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure* (General Directorate for External Security, DGSE), agrees; 'It is my turn to highlight the fact that a sole security response is insufficient. (...) We need a political response' (Bajolet quoted in Suc 2016).

In the effort to add sanity and efficiency to the French approach, this thesis offers its disengagement framework for discussion and debate.



Part IV

APPENDIX



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## MAPS OF FRANCE

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### MAIN AND VISITED FRENCH CITIES

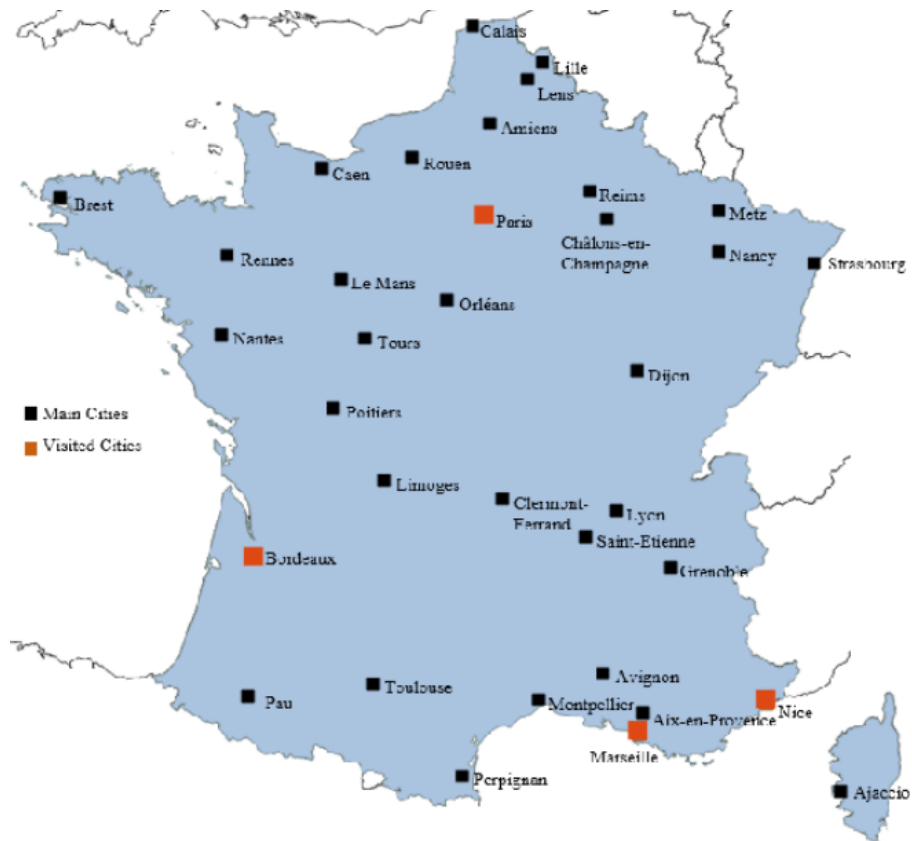


Figure 12: Major and Visited French Cities

FRENCH DEPARTMENTS

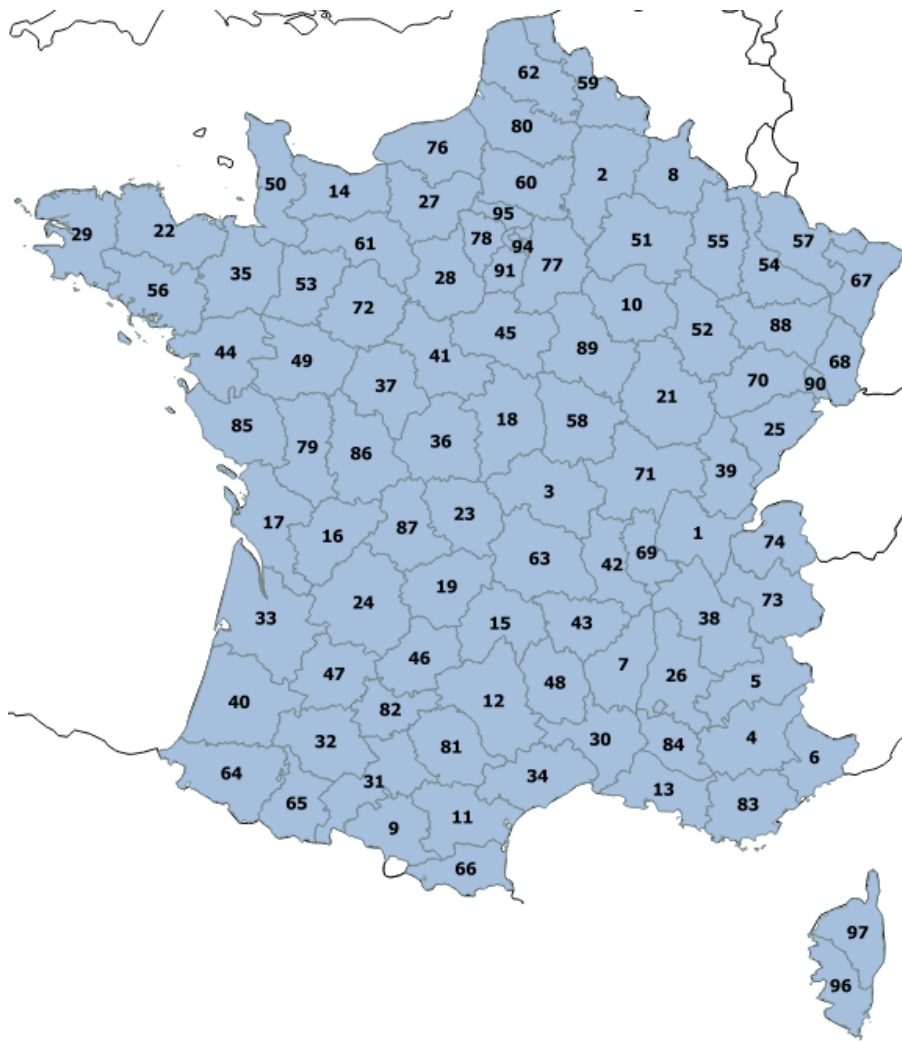



Figure 13: France's Departments

Number	Name	Number	Name	Number	Name
1	Ain	35	Ille-et-Vilaine	71	Saône-et-Loire
2	Aisne	36	Indre	72	Sarthe
3	Allier	37	Indre-et-Loire	73	Savoie
4	Alpes-de-Haute-Provence	38	Isère	74	Haute-Savoie
5	Hautes-Alpes	39	Jura	75	Paris
6	Alpes-Maritimes	40	Landes	76	Seine-Maritime
7	Ardèche	41	Loir-et-Cher	77	Seine-et-Marne
8	Ardennes	42	Loire	78	Yvelines
9	Ariège	43	Haute-Loire	79	Deux-Sèvres
10	Aube	44	Loire-Atlantique	80	Somme
11	Aude	45	Loiret	81	Tarn
12	Aveyron	46	Lot	82	Tarn-et-Garonne
13	Bouches-du-Rhône	47	Lot-et-Garonne	83	Var
14	Calvados	48	Lozère	84	Vaucluse
15	Cantal	49	Maine-et-Loire	85	Vendée
16	Charente	50	Manche	86	Vienne
17	Charente-Maritime	51	Marne	87	Haute-Vienne
18	Cher	52	Haute-Marne	88	Vosges
19	Corrèze	53	Mayenne	89	Yonne
2A	Corse-du-Sud	54	Meurthe-et-Moselle	90	Territoire de Belfort
2B	Haute-Corse	55	Meuse	91	Essonne
21	Côte-d'Or	56	Morbihan	92	Hauts-de-Seine
22	Côtes-d'Armor	57	Moselle	93	Seine-Saint-Denis
23	Creuse	58	Nièvre	94	Val-de-Marne
24	Dordogne	59	Nord	95	Val-d'Oise
25	Doubs	60	Oise		
26	Drôme	61	Orne		
27	Eure	62	Pas-de-Calais		
28	Eure-et-Loir	63	Puy-de-Dôme		
29	Finistère	64	Pyrénées-Atlantiques		
29	Finistère	65	Hautes-Pyrénées		
30	Gard	66	Pyrénées-Orientales		
31	Haute-Garonne	67	Bas-Rhin		
32	Gers	68	Haut-Rhin		
33	Gironde	69	Rhône		
34	Hérault	70	Haute-Saône		



## SIGNS OF RADICALISATION










Poster by the French government, through the CIPD, educating on the signs of radicalisation:

 **STOP-DJIHADISME**.gouv.fr  
Agir contre la menace terroriste

### Jihadi Radicalisation

#### The First Warning Signs

They more numerous and brutal they are the more alarming they are to the family and relatives

 <b>They are wary of old friends</b> they consider "impure"	<b>They reject family members</b> 	 <b>They abruptly change their food habits</b>
 <b>They drop-out of school or vocational training</b> because the education is part of a conspiracy	 <b>They stop listening to music</b> as it distracts from their "mission"	<b>They no longer watch television or films</b> because they see prohibited images 
<b>They stop sporting activities</b> because they are mixed gender 	<b>They change attire</b> , especially girls with clothes that hides their bodies 	 <b>They surf on websites and social media</b> with radical or extremist content

**But also** they fall back onto themselves, hold anti-social discourses, reject all forms of authority or communal life

These behaviours can be signs that a radicalisation is on-going. However, each case is specific, and the identification of one or more of these signs does not automatically imply a radicalisation

**IF YOU HAVE DOUBTS OR QUESTION:**


 **N°Vert 0 800 00 56 96**  
APPEL GRATUIT DEPUIS UN POSTE FIXE

Figure 14: French Government Poster: The First Signs of Radicalisation (Translated) (Stop-Djihadisme 2015)



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## RADICALISATION INDICATORS AND QUESTIONS ASKED BY CNAPR'S HOTLINE

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**Table 8** details the radicalisation indicators utilised by the CNAPR to determine a case's validity and severity (CIPD 2015c):

Add details from Fetouh.

Category	Indicators	Identifiable Clues
<b>Ruptures</b>	Behaviour of rupture with habitual environment	<b>Strong Signals</b> Brutal rejection of daily behaviours * rupture with family, increased, distance from relative, rejection of all forms of family conviviality * rupture with past friends, change of interests * prolonged and inexplicable absence from the home * exacerbated cleavage between men and women * sudden interests for weapons
		<b>Weak Signals</b> Rupture with school, sudden end of schooling * change of mood, exaltation, escape into fantasy and virtual, lose of affection * privations of conventional care, important lack of hygiene, extreme negligence for life and health conditions * exorbitant financial investment in exclusive domain, financing humanitarian activities solicited or realised for populations presented as victims of exactions * privation of sleep and rest * incentivising poor diet
	Change of appearance	<b>Strong Signals</b> Sudden and apparent modification seen as incoherent for the entourage (signs of strong religiosity: beard, full veil, djellabas or dissimulation)
		<b>Strong Signals</b> Participation to prayer groups and circles of radical reflection and/or religious conferences by Islamists * aggressive or hostile behaviour for religious reason
	Hyper-ritualised religious practice	<b>Weak Signals</b> Prohibiting food restriction to the entire family * changing the house's habitual décor (removing family photos) * cultural and religious mimicry * incident during parlors for religious motive (refusal to submit to control measures) * obsession for rituals

Table 8: CNAPR's Radicalisation Indicators (CIPD 2015c) (1/3)

Category	Indicators	Identifiable Clues
Individual's personal environment	Degraded, even faulty, paternal and/or parental image	<b>Weak Signals</b>
		Absence or rejection of the father * placement in child protection centres or foster family * identity seeking
	Weakened family environment	<b>Strong Signals</b>
		Immersion in a radicalised family
		<b>Weak Signals</b>
	Social environment	Personal trauma to the or witnessed by the individual * violence, incests * psychiatric care undertaken by one parent * withdrawal * sexual assaults
		<b>Weak Signals</b>
	Personality traits	Social weakness * difficulties in integrating
		<b>Strong Signals</b>
		Dependence (on an individual, a group, or websites)
		<b>Weak Signals</b>
	Relational Networks	Immaturity, instability, narcissistic weaknesses, intolerance to frustration, lack or absence of affects, hyper-sensibility * dogmatism, refusal to compromise * personal quest for reparation and recognition with a particular sensibility for humanitarian (especially girls) or to warfare or chivalrous aspirations (for boys, allowing them to express their aggressive impulses) * psychiatric antecedents and behavioural issues that lead to psycho-social help or hospitalisation * seeking affection * seeking recognition, appreciation * emotional anaesthesia and insensitivity * imperiousness to criticism or any other viewpoints * demand to be seen, noticed, provocation
<b>Strong Signals</b>		
Theories and discourses	Conspiracy theories	Contact with networks known for their radicalism
		<b>Strong Signals</b>
	Change in identity behaviour	Allusion to the end of the world, the apocalypse * development of a paranoid view of the world (binary and Manichaeic discourse) * double discourse, admiration, veneration of terrorists
		<b>Weak Signals</b>
	Change in identity behaviour	Allusion to a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy * changed of used vocabulary and semantics
		<b>Strong Signals</b>
Threats towards the French state * support to jihadis * hostility to the West * anti-Semitic discourse * vehement denunciation of those who do not share their faith (other Muslims, individuals of other or without faiths) * totalitarianism * absence of self expression, autonomy, auto-mimicry, instrumentalist discourse * distinction between the good and the bad Muslims (non-pure, takfir...		
Change in identity behaviour	<b>Weak Signals</b>	
	Anti-social remarks * rejection or questioning of authority * rejection of collective life * contestation of the democratic system * criticism of the French state * discriminatory behaviour toward women * changing semantics, stereotyping discourse	

Table 8: CNAPR's Radicalisation Indicators (CIPD 2015c) (2/3)

Category	Indicators	Identifiable Clues
Theories and discourses	Proselytism	<b>Strong Signals</b> Proselytism activities to radicalise entourage or recruit * encouragement of rejoining Syria (hijra) or violent actions * for minors, secret conversion toward parents
		<b>Weak Signals</b> Proselytism at school * sudden conversion
Techniques	Using virtual or human networks	<b>Strong Signals</b> Regular change of SIM card * frequenting social networks or websites with radical or extremist character * frequenting religious centres or other locations negatively known for their radical tendencies whether expressed or underlying, or frequenting negatively known individuals links to a radical, criminal or terrorist path
		<b>Weak Signals</b> Facebook accounts opened under new identities (double Facebook) * compulsive texting, email, tweets * intense use of mobile phone and internet (day and night)

Table 8: CNAPR's Radicalisation Indicators (CIPD 2015c) (3/3)

The following are questions asked by the CNAPR to callers:

1. Age of the concerned individual? Sex?
2. In which city does the concerned individual reside?
3. What is the behaviour of the concerned individual? Since when?
4. Has the concerned individual isolated her/himself from her/his family, work and/or friends? Since when?
5. Have the individuals she/he frequents changed? Since when?
6. Have you notices new behaviours in any of the following:
  - ↔ Dietary?
  - ↔ Clothing?
  - ↔ Linguistic (learning a new foreign language)?
  - ↔ Financial?
  - ↔ Other (comments about violence, projects about committing an attack, ...)?
7. Has the concerned individual travelled to Syria? In what terms? How often? For how long?
8. Has the concerned individual discussed travelling? In what country? With whom? To what end?



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 CIPD PROFILES AND RESPONSES
 

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The following are profiles identified by the CIPD of individuals following a path of radicalisation and the course of action to undertake to prevent radicalisation or de-radicalise the individual (CIPD 2015b).

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF A FEMALE MINOR IN A REPORTING CASE

*Situation, context, concerned individuals*

Regarding young girls involved in a process of jihadi radicalisation, and without seeking to define a standard profile, several characteristics, considering past experiences, are noteworthy: it is, in many cases, young girls living in families without apparent difficulties and overall good grades. They have mostly a yearning for humanitarian aid and solidarity.

They are receptive to extremist groups' speeches on social networks through Facebook groups, private messages and Twitter accounts, that encourage them to travel to Syria.

In this situation, the radicalisation process is strongly akin to that of a sectarian drift. Indeed, the notion of mental manipulation is very visible in this process insofar as it exerts intellectual or moral ascendancy over the young girl and a perversion of freedom of thought, opinion or religion.

To allow this young girl to escape this grip and return to her original state before this process began, it is essential that a reactivity occurs. This can occur as a result of a specific therapeutic session relayed thereafter by counselling and psychological support.

The national hotline has been informed by a relative of the young girl's intention to travel to Syria.

Administratively, an opposition to leave the territory may be requested only by the holders of parental authority and decided by the prefect to protect the minor, preventing her from joining conflict zones, especially under the influence of armed radical movements. This procedure is based on the exercise of parental authority and the prohibition for the child to leave the family home without the parental consent (Article 371-3 of the Civil Code).

*Management of the modes and nature of implemented actions*

Such profiles should be handled locally within the support cell managed by the departmental prefects (circular of 29 April 2014). This cell, consisting of field workers (social workers, police or gendarmes, educators, psychologists, NGOs, national education, justice, etc.) examines the young girl's situation.

After contacting the public prosecutor to examine, in order to evaluate the situation, particularly in view of the urgency, if this case does not warrant judicial intervention, the support cell collects information for the General Council for possible support of the child in danger through children welfare services. This support will need to be complemented by specific support from the family.

During all of the process's phases, one of the main goals is for the young girl or her parents (or whomever holds parental guardianship) to adhere to the process, thus it is necessary for the support cell to designate a process referent (psychologist, specialised educator, etc.). In most cases, a psychologist appears to be the most appropriate referent. In order to avoid multiple interventions, the referent can be a professional social aide within the children services, if the president of the general council establishes such administrative measures. In this case, it is necessary to make sure that the support takes the prevention of radicalisation into account.

Parents must be fully involved in all the process's phases and must also benefit from specific psychological support. It can be useful to also include regular psychological sessions with the young girl and her parents.

The support of young girls is conceptualised through several phases:

1. First of, it is possible to mobilise an intervention team to organise a dis-indoctrination session.

This implies a true therapeutic session whose goal is to get the young girl to realise the differences between radical groups' discourses and the reality of the atrocities in Syria, mainly the violence and crimes committed.

2. Afterwards, an accompaniment by a psychologist trained in this field must be able to support after the first session: psychological accompaniment, child-psychologist. The aim is for the young girl to identify her own sufferings, to evaluate them, and to enter a process of deconstruction/reconstruction. In emergency situations, an emergency cell of medical-psychologists can be mobilised to quickly support a young girl.
3. Finally, multiple support actors must be engaged with the young girl as quickly as possible depending on her needs:
  - Integrating the young girl in a medical structure: therapeutic centre, centre for teens.
  - Humanitarian building project (*chantier humanitaire*): this is an international solidarity project that regroups youths from different backgrounds who wish to exchange and live together. The project aims to achieve a project that leads to concrete social, educative, cultural and/or environmental results. It allows the circulation of solidarity values, sharing, and discovery of the other through one's differences and culture.
  - In the end, the aim is to (re-)enrol the young girl in education or plan her durable (re-)insertion into social and professional life, which can support participation with charitable work.

#### *Participating partners, mobilised human means*

CPDSI (Centre de prévention des dérives sectaires liées à l'Islam), psychologists, psychiatrists, NGO specialised with sectarian drifts, specialised prevention educators, NGOs or humanitarian associations, child social services, ADFI (Association de défense des familles et de l'individu : lutte contre les dérives sectaires. Association for the defence of families and individuals: fight against sectarian drifts).

#### *Cost/financing sources*

- FIPD
- Territorial collectivities

#### *Evaluation methods/indicators*

The evaluation of this support programme will be both:

- Quantitative:
  - number of dis-indoctrination sessions
  - number of dis-indoctrinated young girls
  - number of psychological support and accompaniment sessions
  - number of young minors enrolled in an education programme
  - number of young minors participating in a humanitarian building project
- and qualitative:
  - young minor's critical awakening
  - participation in a project with strong educational and citizenship values
  - reintegration into society

#### *Potential difficulties*

Other than the young girl's and her parents' (or those holding parental guardianship) adherence to the programme, the primary stake resides in the success of the psychological support that aims to dis-indoctrinate the young girl.

## SUPPORT OF A MINOR EXPERIENCING FAILURE AND FRAGILITY IN A REPORTING CASE

*Situation, context, concerned individuals*

This profile regards youths presenting a fragile psychology resulting from a loss of reference points or the loss of an identity. These youths have dealt with a tragic incident (loss of family member), delicate family situation or inner-family violence, which pushes them to find a 'new family'. They may also be failing their studies or are having a troubled social life which they feel is an injustice and thus need to be given a place and role in society that aims to 'save the world'.

The national hotline has been informed by a relative of the youth's intention to travel to Syria.

Administratively, an opposition to leave the territory may be requested only by the holders of parental authority and decided by the prefect to protect the minor child, preventing her/him from joining conflict zones, especially under the influence of armed radical movements. This procedure is based on the exercise of parental authority and the prohibition for the child to leave the family home without parental consent (Article 371-3 of the Civil Code).

*Management of the modes and nature of implemented actions*

After contacting the public prosecutor to examine, in order to evaluate the situation, particularly in view of the urgency, if this case does not warrant judicial intervention, the support cell collects information for the General Council for possible support of the child in danger through children welfare services. This support will need to be complemented by specific support from the family.

Such profiles should be handled locally within the support cell managed by the departmental prefects (circular of 29 April 2014). This cell, consisting of field workers (social workers, police or gendarmes, educators, psychologists, NGOs, national education, justice, etc.) that examine the youth's situation.

During all of the process's phases, one of the main goals is for the youth or his parents (or whomever holds parental guardianship) to adhere to the process, thus, it is necessary for the support cell to designate a process referent (psychologist, specialised educator, etc.). In most cases, a psychologist appears to be the most appropriate referent. In order to avoid multiple interventions, the referent can be a professional social aide within children services, if the president of the general council establishes administrative measures. In this case, it is necessary to make sure that the support takes the prevention of radicalisation into account.

Parents must be fully involved in all the process's phases and must also benefit from specific psychological support. It can be useful to also include regular psychological sessions with the young girl and her parents.

Multiple and different types of actions exist and they must all to remobilise the youth.

*Before any action, a psychological support must be offered*

In relation with the process referent and in order for the youth or his parents (or whomever holds parental guardianship) to adhere to the proposed actions, psychological support, even therapeutic support, of the youth by a professional trained on the phenomenon of radicalisation is necessary. Indeed, an individual accompaniment and working toward the youth speaking out is necessary through the use of, for example, medical child-psychological centres that welcome teens presenting psychological troubles and requiring punctual or constant accompaniment, or centres for teens that places emphasis on free access, information, prevention, medical support and support as well as centres researching the difficulties faced during adolescence. In emergency situations, an emergency cell of medical-psychologists can be mobilised to quickly support a youth.

*Civil service in the humanitarian field*

This is voluntary engagement with a service of general interest for those aged between 16 and 25. This allows youths to contribute to useful actions, responding to the population's needs, to discover, to meet another culture, another society, and finish enriched by this experience, to develop new skills but also to put an emphasis on values of sharing, solidarity, support, and help towards oppressed populations.

Within this civil service, youths also benefit from civil and citizenship training and from an individualised mentoring that allows them to construct and become actors of their own future project.

*Enrolment in a social and professional track*

In the end, in relation with the process referent, the aim is to enrol the youth in a social or professional track that supposes engaging reflexivity upon one's radicalisation and upon the means one wishes to give his life. The aim is to reinsert them into a professional training or help them find employment.

*Participating partners, mobilised human means*

Psychologists, NGOs or humanitarian associations, specialised prevention educators, and child social services.

*Cost/financing sources*

- FIPD
- Civil service agency
- Territorial collectivities

*Evaluation methods/indicators*

The evaluation of this support programme will be both:

- Quantitative:
  - number of cases helped
  - number of psychological support and accompaniment sessions
  - number of speaking-out meetings
  - number of youths enrolled in civil service
- and qualitative:
  - exits from a radicalisation process
  - a youth's critical awakening
  - participation in a project with strong educational and citizenship value
  - reintegration into society

*Potential difficulties*

Other than the youth's and his parents' (or those holding parental guardianship) adherence to the programme, this type of support necessitates the mobilisation of psychological professionals and a reinforced accompaniment from a referent aiding in the process's success.

## SUPPORT OF AN ADULT FOLLOWING A DELINQUENT PATH

*Situation, context, concerned individuals*

This profile regards young males aged from 18 to 30 years old, that, without being placed under judicial assistance, have committed one or more delinquencies (from small delinquency during adolescence to organised crime as an adult), and that are subject to one or more condemnations, and in that case, were imprisoned in one or more prison. They often encountered a difficult family situation and a chaotic education.

youths presenting a fragile psychology resulting from a lose of reference points or the lose of an identity. These youths have dealt with a tragic incident (lose of family member), delicate family situation or inner-family violence, which pushes them to find a 'new family'. They may also be failing their studies or are having a troubled social life which they feel is an injustice and thus need to be given a place and role in society that aims to 'save the world'.

During their imprisonment, they may have come in contact with radical Islamist groups that have brought them on a radicalisation process.

The national hotline has been informed by a relative of the adult's intention to travel to Syria.

*Management of the modes and nature of implemented actions*

It is necessary to firstly verify if this case implicates an opposition to leave the territory, as allowed by the 13 November 2014 law

Such profiles should be handled locally within the support cell managed by the departmental prefects (circular of 29 April 2014). This cell, consisting of field workers (social workers, police or gendarmes, educators,

psychologists, associations, national education, justice, etc.) while relying upon the skills of local security and delinquency prevention councils, examines the youth's situation.

During all of the process's phases, one of the main goals is for the youth or his parents (or whomever holds parental guardianship) to adhere to the process, thus in necessity for the support cell to designate a process referent (psychologist, specialised educator, etc.).

In relation with the process referent and in order for the youth to adhere to the proposed actions, work on understanding and respecting laws and prohibitions involved in this project is necessary.

Multiple actions exist and must be used within a frame of reintegration process.

1. First of all, psychological support must be envisaged.
2. In the short run, participation in supervised activities with high educational value that allow the young adult to be removed from her/his influential environment:
  - Enrollment in a *EPIDE*: accompaniment of a young adult in the success of their social and professional project, with appropriate and individualised courses lasting, on average, 10 months. This institution is akin to a boarding school with discipline and strict rules as well as a mandatory uniform. Relations with the law and its framework are therefore at the heart of this social and professional project.
  - educational stay: supervised break-away from one's habitual environment to relearn, through educators, collective life following rules, values, to enter in a phase of questioning, to regain self-confidence and to rise a young adult's awareness that they have a future and that they are the main actors of that future
  - educational project: activity (maintenance of green spaces, painting staircases, etc.) performed by youth mentored by educators with the objective of changing their behaviours, and reducing the risk of their exclusion or marginalisation. It is a stepping stone to professional integration (training, apprenticeship, employment). It allows youths to channel their energy into positive experiences, give them a positive self-image, and teaching them to respect authority.
3. In the long run, a delinquency exit route of withdrawal is proposed by the integration professional and the construction or reconstruction of an entourage likely to place the young adult in a more comfortable situation.

Indeed, as a result of these actions which are intended to re-engage the youth, it is important to offer a professional integration program based on their likes and predispositions. In connection with the process referent and mobilising actors in the public employment service, the young adult should be enrolled in a skills training programme or be helped in finding employment.

#### *Participating partners, mobilised human means*

Social workers, specialised prevention educators, NGO or firms specialised in professional integration, local missions, psychologists.

#### *Cost/financing sources*

- FIPD
- Territorial collectivities

#### *Evaluation methods/indicators*

The evaluation of this support programme will be both:

- Quantitative:
  - number of situations handled
  - number of proposed actions (*EPIDE*, educational stay, educational project, etc.)
  - number and types of found solutions (number of youths in training, in apprenticeships, employed, etc.)
- and qualitative:
  - exit from the radicalisation process

- the success of the youth's process
- the youth's social and citizenship reintegration into society

#### *Potential difficulties*

This type of support requires both the young adult to adhere to a re-socialisation process and to enrol in a individualised process, and also to adhere to a collaboration and strong partnership with a group of local actors that must mobilise and share amongst themselves changes about the young adult's situation to bring about pertinent solutions.

#### SUPPORT FOR A FAMILY WHOSE CHILD HAS REJOINED A COMBAT ZONE

##### *Situation, context, concerned individuals*

Confronted with the radicalisation phenomenon of their child, families have often not perceived the first signs and have been unable to prevent their child's departure. In distress and faced with these situations and the means to be put in place to recover their child, families often feel helpless and powerless.

The national hotline has been informed by a relative of the youth's intention to travel to Syria.

##### *Management of the modes and nature of implemented actions*

As soon as the national hotline informs a prefecture of a family in need, a dedicated support cell is established and a professional is designated to meet the family and evaluate the most appropriate responses regarding their child's situation.

This cell, created through the 20 April 2014 circular, is composed of field actors (social workers, policemen, gendarmes, educators, psychologists, NGOs, the national education system, the justice system, etc.).

To achieve this, it is up to the prefect of the support cell to request the Listening, Support and Guidance Network for Parents. It allows the networking of actions to reinforce, through support and respectful dialogue and exchange, parenting skills and the enhancement of their capacities. It is, moreover, a framework of partnership between the different institutions and associations active in the field of parenting, which is essential for the development of synergies and sharing of practices and knowledge.

In this context, the proposed actions may include the following:

##### *Psychological support offered to parents*

Support can be undertaken by a professional specialised on the radicalisation phenomenon. The psychologist offers support and care for families over time. He/she assesses the level of developments and adapts the solutions accordingly. This assistance and support are made on the basis of the family adherence to the process.

This accompaniment can usefully be pursued by working toward enhancing communication within the family in order to notably improve dialogue between parents and children about their existential questions and possible difficulties.

##### *Participation in discussion groups between parents with a child in a conflict zone or in difficulty*

This action is an extension of psychological accompaniment. Indeed, speaking out also involves the exchange and dialogue with families in the same situation. These discussion groups allow participants to share their experiences, their stories, their emotions but also their difficulties.

##### *Other activities in support of parents can be considered:*

These actions include the following :

- participatory meetings, led by qualified professionals, offering parents the opportunity to exchange on issues related to adolescence (the understanding of youth today, the management of risky behaviours, violence, etc.),
- family therapy actions that will restart a family's reconstruction process.

*Participating partners, mobilised human means*

- Psychologist
- Professionals trained to be hospitable and to listen
- Social workers
- Social worker trained to deal with the police and gendarmerie
- Lawyer
- City where the family lives
- ADFI

*Cost/financing sources*

- FIPD
- Listening, Support and Guidance Network for Parents
- Territorial collectivities

*Evaluation methods/indicators*

The evaluation of this support programme will be both:

- Quantitative:
  - number of families meet
  - number of families followed
  - number and type of offered support
  - number of improved family situations
- and qualitative:
  - Restoration of family confidence
  - Strengthening of family capacity and strength
  - Strengthening the links between the family and the child

*Potential difficulties*

This type of support requires a durable support and accompaniment of families to improve the current situation and the restoration of the family's equilibrium.

**PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS TOWARD A FAMILY TRYING TO REJOIN A COMBAT ZONE***Situation, context, concerned individuals*

This profile regards families in which the father and/or the mother demonstrates signs of radicalisation of where the entire family intend to join a conflict zone with their child.

The national hotline has been informed. The challenge is firstly to prevent the family, and especially the child, to leave the country by taking all necessary measures, and secondly, to offer support to the family.

*Management of the modes and nature of implemented actions*

This type of profile gives rise to different responses:

*A judicial response through criminal law*

As this profile regards parents, the prefect, referred by the national hotline will firstly consult the public prosecutor. The prosecutor is thus enabled to assess whether a criminal investigation should be initiated against the family.

*An administrative or judicial response through the protection of the child*

In this type of situation, the response will most often be judicial.

The public prosecutor can either request additional information from the General Council or, if the danger to which a minor is exposed to appears justified, the public prosecutor directly contacts the juvenile judge within an educational assistance procedure.

In an emergency situation, the public prosecutor can also take immediate action to temporarily place the minor child in child protection custody, given the dangerous situation, if he contacts the juvenile judge within eight days.

Once contacted, the juvenile judge shall hold a hearing with the parents and the minor capable of discernment, and may decide the following:

- an investigation;
- if she/he considers the danger as established, and seeking to obtain the support of parents, he can order an accompaniment by the General Council, a specialised NGO or the child protection services as part of a measure of educational assistance in an open environment; or
- she/he can decide to place the minor or extend such a measure with another family member, a trustworthy third party or an educational institution..

While being adaptable and renewable at any moment, these measures cannot exceed two years, and in any event, age of majority.

Under social assistance benefits rules, the president of the General Council in turn can propose the establishment of administrative support in the form of home assistance provided for in Article L.222- 2 of the code of Social Action and Families. However, this intervention implies the application, or at least the agreement of at least one of the two parents.

*Psychological assistance of children*

It can be undertaken by a professional specialised on the radicalisation phenomenon. The psychologist offers durable accompaniment and support of children. She/he evaluates the situation's change and adapts solutions accordingly.

*An accompaniment of the family in terms of parental responsibility*

Will be offered to the parenting support actions within the Listening, Support and Guidance Network for Parents but also, as part of the Advice of Rights and Duties of Families when they exist.

*Participating partners, mobilised human means*

- Public prosecutor
- The General Council's cell that collects disturbing information
- The General Council's social assistance to children services
- City where the family lives

*Cost/financing sources*

- FIPD
- Listening, Support and Guidance Network for Parents
- Territorial collectivities

*Evaluation methods/indicators*

The evaluation of this support programme will be both:

- Quantitative:
  - number of families meet

- number of families followed
  - number and type of offered support
- and qualitative:
- Rise in the family's awareness of the seriousness of their actions

*Potential difficulties*

This type of profile requires monitoring and long-term support of families to allow them to become aware of the seriousness of their actions.



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 PROFILES OF FRENCH INDIVIDUALS WHO UNDERTOOK OR TRIED TO UNDERTAKE AN ATTACK
 

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Known French individuals who have undertaken or tried to undertake an attack with the GIA, al-Qaeda, and Daesh as of 5 March 2016. Whilst Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, the perpetrator of the 14 July 2016 attack in Nice, was a Tunisian national, he held, since 2005, French residency. Individuals with their name in bold had a *Fiche S* before undertaking an attack :

Name	Performed an Attack	Age	Network	Delinquent Past	Trip Abroad	Prison	Status
<b>Larossi Abballa</b>	Yes	25	Yvelines (78)	Yes	No	Yes	Deceased
<b>Salah Abdeslam</b>	Yes	25-29	Molenbeek	Yes	Suspected	Yes	Awaiting judgement
Brahim Abdeslam	Yes	30+	Molenbeek	Yes	None	Yes	Deceased
Samy Amimour	Yes	25-29	Daesh	Yes	Syria	No	Deceased
Salim Benghalem	In Syria	30+	Buttes-Chaumont	Yes	Algeria (2001) & Syria (2012)	Yes	In Syria with Daesh
<b>Amedy Coulibaly</b>	Yes	30+	Buttes-Chaumont	Yes	None	Yes	Deceased
<b>Sid Ahmed Ghlam</b>	Arrested mid-way	20-24	Daesh	No	Suspected	No	Imprisoned
Boubaker El-Hakim	Yes (Tunisia)	31	Buttes-Chaumont	N/A	Yes	No	With Daesh
Khaled Kelkal	Yes (France 1995)	24	GIA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Deceased
<b>Adel Kermiche</b>	Yes	19	Daesh	Yes	Yes	Yes	Deceased
<b>Ayoub El-Khazzani</b>	Yes	25-29	Merah	Yes	Suspected	Yes	Imprisoned
Chérif Kouachi	Yes	30+	Buttes-Chaumont	Yes	Suspected	Yes	Deceased
Saïd Kouachi	Yes	30+	Buttes-Chaumont	Unknown to Police	Yemen	No	Deceased
Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel	Yes	31	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes (suspended sentence)	Deceased
<b>Abdel Malik Petitjean</b>	Yes	19	Daesh	No	Yes	No	Deceased
<b>Hakim Marnissi</b>	Yes	25-29	Toulon network	No	None	No	Imprisoned
<b>Mohamed Merah</b>	Yes	20-24	Merah	Yes	Afghanistan & Pakistan	Yes	Deceased

Table 9: Do Delinquent Pasts Lead to Attacks? (1/2)

Name	Performed an Attack	Age	Network	Delinquent Past	Trip Abroad	Prison	Status
Mustapha Mokeddem	Yes	20-24	N/A	Yes	Syria	Yes	On the run
<b>Ismaël Omar Mostefäï</b>	Yes	25-29	Tabligh then Daesh	Yes	Syria	No	Deceased
Zacarias Moussaoui	Arrested before	30+	Londonistan	No	Afghanistan & Indonesia	No	Imprisoned
<b>Mehdi Nemmouche</b>	Yes	30	Prison	Yes	Yes	Yes	On-going trial
<b>Yassin Salhi</b>	Yes	30+	Forsane Al-izza	Yes	Yes	No	Imprisoned

Table 9: Do Delinquent Pasts Lead to Attacks? (2/2)

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COMPONENTS TO DISCUSS WHEN ESTABLISHING A DISENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

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Table 10 details components to discuss when establishing a disengagement (or deradicalisation) programme:

Components	Instances of Questions to Ask
What	What does the programme do? What does it not do?
Objectives/Expectations	What are the objectives and expectations of the programme?
Target	Who is the programme's target group(s)? Solely salafi-jihadis or others as well?
Terminology	Which terminology is utilised in the programme and what biases or underlying assumptions does it point to? Is this disengagement, deradicalisation, both or something else?
Incentives	What do individuals gain from participating in the programme?
Metrics	How is the disengagement progress measures? Is it continuously or periodically? How is attainment of objectives/expectations measured?
Overseer	Who is in charge? Is it the government, an NGO or a joint effort?
Programme Finances	How is the programme financed?
Support	Is support individualised, in group or a mix?
Outreach	Do individuals come to the programme or does the programme "recruit"? Must individuals be living in a certain department or region or is this a national programme? Must individuals be french citizens or can European citizens join?
Media Outreach	What is the media outreach? How is it framed? What is the target audience(s)?
Enrolment	Is enrolment into the programme automatic or after an interview? Do individuals inform of their acceptance into the programme publicly, partially publicly, or covertly?
Isolation	As soon as individuals return, are they isolated? Is there a special terrorist or radicalisation section in prison?
Punishment/Amnesty	Is the focus of the programme on penalising? If not, is their amnesty?
Reintegration/Rehabilitation	Does the programme focus on reintegration and/or rehabilitation?
Family	Is the family involved? If so, directly or indirectly? Do they receive support?
(Religious) Community	Is the (religious) community involved? If so, how? Does it receive support?
Dialogue	Is dialogue important in order to construct a counter/alternative narrative for individuals? Who is in charge of this dialogue?
Therapy	Is education an important factor in changing the ideological learnings of individuals? Who is in charge of this therapy?
Security	How are participants' security protected? What about their families' security?
Participants' Finances	Is there a possibility of financial support for participants and their family? Will their financial assets be frozen/unfrozen?
Exclusion	What actions/behaviours exclude a participant from the programme? Can excluded participants be re-admitted?

Table 10: Programme Components to Discuss (1/2)

Components	Instances of Questions to Ask
Surveillance	Do participants undergo surveillance? If so, how? And if so, during the programme, after finishing it or both?
Criminal Record	How does enrolment affect the criminal record? Is it interim or lifelong? If interim, for how many years?
End	How is disengagement said to have occurred? Once achieved, is disengagement made public, partially public or covertly?
After Care	Is there help after leaving the programme? If so, what is it and what is it not?
Employees	Are programme employees expert, volunteers or a mix?
Physical structure	Does the programme have a physical building with housing? If not, can it offer temporary housing if needed?
Lessons Learned	How are the lessons learned spread? Is any research conducted? If yes, can individuals not partake in the studies? if information is shared, in which language(s)?
Integrity	How is the programme's integrity measured?

Table 10 : Programme Components to Discuss (1/2)

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## GLOSSARY

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### ARABIC

**Alim:** Religious scholar who specialises in Islamic jurisprudence.

**Ansar:** Victor.

**Bid'a:** A designation for all human inventions unknown to the prophet and absent from both the Koran and the Sunna, and thus illicit.

**Da'wa:** The spreading of faith.

**Fatwa:** Juridical advice or response given by an *alim* regarding human behaviour.

**Al-Firqa al-Najiya:** The saved sect which the Salafis believe they belong to.

**Emir:** Commander.

**Fitna:** Sedition.

**Fiqh:** Islamic jurisprudence.

**Hadith:** Tradition or saying of the Prophet. The *hadith* make up the *sunna*.

**Hijra:** Migration to the Muslim land.

**Irja:** Separation of belief and action.

**Jabhat:** Front.

**Jaysh:** Army.

**Jihad:** Struggle or religious war. Term divided into greater and lesser *jihad*. The former refers to self-improvement or *jihad al-nafs*, while the latter refers to defensive or offensive war against the *kufar*.

**Jund:** Soldiers. Also used to signify entry enlisted ranks.

**Kafir:** Unbeliever (Pl. *kufar*).

**Liwa:** Brigade.

**Malahim:** The end of the world.

**Markaz:** Centre.

**Murtadd:** Apostate.

**Mushrikin:** Polytheists.

**Salaf:** Predecessor or ancestor. Followers of the prophet.

**Shahada:** Pronunciation of the words: 'There is no god other than god, and Muhammad is his Prophet'. This is the basis of *tawhid*.

**Sharia:** Islamic law.

**Shura:** Counsel.

**Sunna:** The exemplary and perfect behaviours and ways of the Prophet, transmitted from him via the *hadith*.

**Takfir:** Declaring an individual an apostate, *kafir*, or non-Muslim.

**Taqiyya:** Dissimulation of practices.

**Tawhid:** Doctrine which does not allow any associates to god. Oneness of god.

**Ulema:** Islamic scholar.

**Umma:** Islamic community.

### FRENCH

**Arrêté Municipal:** Bylaw.

**Association de malfaiteur en vue de commettre une entreprise terroriste:** Criminal conspiracy to commit a terrorist enterprise.

**Banlieue:** The inner/intermediate/outer suburbs of French cities. This term is utilised to connote a ghetto-like suburb.

**Collectivité Locale:** Territorial authority.

**Délit d'entreprise terroriste individuelle:** Individual conspiracy to commit a terrorist offence.

**Département:** Administrative divisions of France. There are 96 in metropolitan France and 5 overseas. It is the third level of government out of four: national level ('collectivité locale'), regions (there are 18), department, and commune.

**Laïcité:** the guarantee of freedom of religious expression.

**Préfecture:** Capital city of a *département*. A *préfecture de région* is the capital city of a region.

**Préfet:** Head of the *préfecture*.

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#### INTERVIEWS

- Abdelkrim, Yazid (2016) Imam of Bègles (near Bordeaux 33) and member of the *Fédération des musulmans de la Gironde*. Bordeaux, 11 February 2016.
- Ajana, Rabia (2015) Mediator with *UNISMED*, Nice. Marseille, 10 September 2015, and Nice, 21 November 2015.
- Amoyel, Patrick (2015) Psychologist with *Entr'autres*. Nice, 30 June 2015; Paris, 9 July 2015; Juan-les-Pins, France, 9 September 2015; and Golfe-Juan, France, 22 November 2015.
- Amoyel, Patrick (2016) Psychologist with *Entr'autres*. Paris, 19 January 2016; Nice 2 May 2016; Paris 6 July 2016; Paris 5 August 2016; Paris 16 August 2016; Paris 8 September 2016.
- Azazen, Oualid (2015) Social worker in Marseille. Marseille, 11 September 2015.
- Bacha, Sami (2015) Mediator for *UNISMED* in Tunisia. Nice, 21 November 2015.
- Benchellali, Mourad (2015) Social worker and disengaged member of al-Qaeda. Marseille, 10 September 2015.
- Boukhobza, Amélie (2015) Psychologist with *Entr'autres* and Doctorate studies from Université de Nice Sophia Antipolis. Nice, 30 June 2015; Paris, 9 July 2015; Antibes, France, 9 September 2015; and Golfe-Juan, France, 22 November 2015.
- Boukhobza, Amélie (2016ii) Psychologist with *Entr'autres* and Doctorate studies from Université de Nice Sophia Antipolis. Paris, 19 January 2016; Nice, 2 May 2016; Paris 6 July 2016; Paris 5 August 2016; Paris 16 August 2016; Paris 9 September 2016.
- Godard, Bernard (2015b). Academic with a focus on religions. Paris, 9 July 2015.

- Fetouh, Marik (2016) Deputy Mayor of Bordeaux for Equality and Citizenship, director of the *CAPRI* (Centre d'Action et de Prévention contre le Radicalisation des Individus). Bordeaux, 8 and 11 February 2016.
- Frayssinet, Lydia (2016) Executive Director *InfoSectes Aquitaine*. Bordeaux, 11 February 2016.
- Juy-Erbibou, Brigitte (2015) Psychologist with *Entr'autres*. Nice, 30 June 2015, and Antibes, 9 September 2015.
- ben Khalifa, Mohammed (2015) Imam in Sousse, Tunisia, and Nice, France. Nice, 23 November 2015.
- Kherfi, Yazid (2015) Consultant in urban violence prevention. Marseille, 11 September 2015.
- Kilic, Erhan (2015) Lawyer and part-time mentor with *Dialog Forum* in Aarhus, Denmark. Nice, 21 November 2015.
- Klein, Gilbert (2015) President *Cercle Laïque*. Paris, 26 June 2015.
- Lyon, S. M. (2016) *Criticism toward social movement theory*. Email to: Lyon, S. M. 22 January 2016.
- Mekkaoui, Abderrahman (2016) Political Expert regarding Military and Strategy. Paris, 19 February 2016.
- N'Gahane, Pierre (2015) *CIPD* Prefect. Paris, 8 July 2015.
- Nicolas, Martine (2016) President *ADFI Bordeaux*. Bordeaux, 11 February 2016.
- Pachoud, Didier (2015) *GEMPPI* President. Marseille, 29 June 2015, and 11 September 2015.
- Picotin, Daniel (2016) Lawyer, president of the *Société française de recherche et d'analyse sur l'empirisme mentale*, and ex-president of *InfoSectes Aquitaine*. Bordeaux, 8 February 2016.
- Ruffion, Alain (2015) President *UNISMED*. Paris, 9 July 2015; Marseille, 10 September 2015; and Nice, 21 November 2015.
- Slougui, Khaled (2015) *Turquoise Freedom* President. Marseille, 29 June 2015.

#### ANONYMISED INTERVIEWS

- Jacqueline (2015) Mother whose daughter has left for Syria. Name changed.
- Jean-René (2016) Member of the French Government's online counter-terrorism unit. Name changed.
- Madeleine (2015) Volunteer for SODI-ADFI 94. Name changed.
- Soufiane (2016) Ex-takfiri member. Name changed.