THE TWIN MYTHS OF THE WESTERN "JIHADIST THREAT" AND "ISLAMIC RADICALISATION"

Dr Alain Gabon

The Cordoba Foundation

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PAPERS

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The Cordoba Foundation is an independent strategic think tank that works to promote intercultural dialogue and positive coexistence, through a range of activities including research and publications, training and capacity building, policy briefings and dialogues. The Foundation takes its name from the city of Cordoba. The European metropolis was once a symbol of human excellence and intellectual ingenuity, where cultures, civilisations and ideas thrived. Embodying this spirit, TCF today facilitates the meeting of minds, to advance understanding and respect for one another.

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DR ABDULLAH FALIQ

WELCOME

I
N this edition of the *Cordoba Papers*, French professor Dr Alain Gabon presents a thought-provoking and powerful critique of the prevailing myths concerning the Western "Jihadist threat" and "Islamic radicalism".

In the post 9/11 era, we have witnessed a growing paranoia and fascination with "Islamic extremism", so much so, that Muslims are increasingly viewed through the security prism and with suspicion – casting them as an undifferentiated mass, the inherent 'Other', and a fifth column. With the recent terrorist attacks on European soil in Paris, minority Muslim communities are coming under increasing pressure to respond and condemn the extremists in their midst. Politicians, commentators, religious figures and some sections of the media now question the very essence of Islam and attribute blame to it for the growth in extremism and terrorism. Islam, one of the Abrahamic faiths, steeped in rich cultures, dialogue, peace, indeed one of the great contributors to global civilisation, is now in the dock: governments across Europe have started to confiscate and ban Islamic literature; religious observations and conservative Islamic practices are conflated with extremism; mosques, madrasas and even youth centres are being monitored (with powers of closure); and leaders of the community as well as mainstream Islamic organisations are being targeted and tarred with the brush of extremism.

The net effect of the above, among other things, is the creation of a climate of fear and distrust, Islamophobic attacks on Muslims and their places of worship, and the rise of racist and anti-Muslim groups. All of this, as Dr Gabon explains, is born of an exaggerated Jihadist and Islamist threat. In reality, those Muslims who join or subscribe to radical groups in the West represent a very small fringe who relish notoriety and being badged with monikers such as 'radical' or 'extreme'. They use slogans that are (for want of a better word) 'anti-authority'. This rebellious culture is, however, not specific to Islam – such tendencies can be found in almost all communities.

In his brilliantly-crafted paper, Dr Gabon debunks the twin myths of the Western "Jihadist threat" and "Islamic radicalism" – a must read for anyone concerned or interested in the subject.

Thank you

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FOREWORD

WHEN suicide bombers blew themselves up on the London transport system in July 2005, the response was an overwhelming show of unity in facing the scourge of terrorism, inextricably linked with an absolute rejection of any attack on London's Muslims.

The statement by the then Mayor of London Ken Livingstone was exemplary on every level and rightly reverberated around the world, demonstrating the steadfastness of London and its citizens in seeing terrorism in the very same light along with fascism and racism. Muslims, along with their fellow Londoners, came out together denouncing the terrorists as evil criminals who had no place in a civil multi-cultural and richly diverse society.

Just over a decade on, and that message which had London stand out from among the capital cities of the world, seems to have been well and truly lost. Figures confirm that record levels of Islamophobic attacks have been registered throughout London and the entire country. The narrative pursued by mainstream politicians via the vehicle of a media in a state of frenzy, has been problematic to say the least.

The government seems hell bent on pushing through a discredited and failed Prevent strategy which has attracted much criticism for stigmatising the entire community, rather than single out those who reject plurality, freedom and human rights. Boys and girls of early teenage years and even younger are regularly hauled before security agents to answer for pro-Palestinian symbols which they might have on display, their views on Shari'a Law, the Caliphate and Daesh (ISIS), in what invokes the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition and the gross injustices inflicted by McCarthyism mid 20th century.

Reports indicate that dozens, possibly several hundred children have been taken into care, after social services have decided that their own parents are no longer fit to look after them, employing the loose and conveniently ill-defined pretext of 'radicalisation'. In response, and rather than conduct an open and public debate, critical voices are accused of siding with terrorists and extremists and are threatened
accordingly.

The fact that the Muslim community has come out repeatedly condemning acts of terrorism on every front should have been seen as an opportunity to re-build a united societal front to root out and marginalise such tendencies at home. But, the continued denial, criminalisation almost, of any suggestion that British Foreign Policy

and military interventions might have had anything to do with the rise of global terrorism, as confessed of former Prime Minister Tony Blair, is unhelpful and divisive.

For these and other reasons, this paper by Dr Alain Gabon is not only timely, but much needed. What is contended is that the very premise upon which the current state of panic within political, media and security sectors is exaggerated at the very least, and probably even unwarranted. Britain and her people have seen through worse attacks and threats without having to compromise on the principles of freedom, human and civil rights and equality. From the terms that have become part of the daily lexicon, to clichés, to images, to ill-perceived notions which are paraded as facts, this paper argues that the model of British and European societies most would aspire to, is actually threatened by the public discourse which is leading towards a dangerous societal attitude towards not only Islam and Muslims, but immigrants, refugees and nationalistic notions of identity.

In its continued pursuit of a public dialogue and an investigation into the causes of tension, conflict and violence, The Cordoba Foundation is pleased to present this valuable piece of work by a highly respected academic who is perfectly located in the epicentre of recent events.

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THE TWIN MYTHS OF THE WESTERN "JIHADIST THREAT" AND "ISLAMIC RADICALISATION"

*Dr Alain Gabon

Across the Western world, from the U.S. and Canada to France and Russia, several myths and false ideas, all interconnected, have developed about Islam, Muslims, and terrorism. The most widespread of these myths include the following : a) most terrorists are "Islamist" or "Jihadist" Muslims, b) terrorism in general and its "Jihadist" variety in particular constitute a major and mounting threat to human life in those societies, and c) there is an alarming "radicalisation" at work among significant segments of the Western Muslim populations.

Propagated and constantly reinforced by the dominant political, media, and academic discourses, in particular the heavy emphasis on violent geopolitical events and developments involving Muslims in MENA and the West, from the Iranian Islamic Revolution to 9/11, the Palestinian Intifadas, the Iraq occupation, the rise of Daesh and the recent Charlie Hebdo and November 13 Paris attacks, those myths are now so entrenched that they constitute a veritable groupthink in the Orwellian sense of the term, one that is hardly ever challenged in public debates.

This ossified doxa is proving to be immensely toxic and harmful to all Muslims, including the most peaceful, harmless, and well-integrated ones, since it essentialises Islam as a violent religion and a threat to peace while creating and cultivating an atmosphere of stigmatisation of and fear towards Muslims. This, in turn, leads to what scholars such as Jocelyne Cesari call the "securitisation of Islam" (a governmental and societal approach to Islam and Muslims mostly if not exclusively through the angle of a national security threat),[1] and eventually, to discriminatory laws and exclusionary policies, such as France's bans on Islamic headscarves and full-face coverings in the public space, profiling, or the surveillance of mosques. Ultimately, by presenting Islam and Muslims as first and foremost a menace or, at a minimum, a "challenge" to Western societies and their democratic institutions and values, those stereotypes, prejudices, and the policies that increasingly derive from them breed Islamophobia or Islamo-paranoia.[2]

IN THE WEST, ONLY A TINY PERCENTAGE OF TERRORIST ATTACKS ARE COMMITTED BY MUSLIMS

In sharp opposition to the three popular myths aforementioned, independent investigative journalism, academic scholarship, and official statistics from agencies like the FBI and Europol consistently prove that in Western societies, only a minuscule portion of terrorists attacks are carried out by Muslims in the name of their religion.[33]

Between 1980 and 2005, a mere 6% of terrorist attacks on U.S. soil were perpetuated by Islamists while 94% were carried out by other groups including Latinos, Christians and Jews, the far left, ecological activists, white supremacists, anti-government, anti-abortion, sovereignist, and secessionist groups, and more. Yet, the fact hardly anyone in the U.S. has even heard of the Popular Liberation Army, the Pedro Albizu Campos Revolutionary Forces, Aryan Nations and countless others, shows how biased and skewed (against Muslims) the reporting and public discourses on terrorism can be: it is hardly surprising everyone believes – wrongly – that most acts of terror come from Muslims acting in the name of Islam, since they are essentially the only ones to receive substantial press coverage and political attention, while all the others, namely the majority, are either minimally covered, not covered at all, or not designated as "terrorist".

FBI and Europol consistently prove that in Western societies, only a minuscule portion of terrorists attacks are carried out by Muslims in the name of their religion.

These cold hard facts and figures, probably counter-intuitive and surprising if one relies on mainstream news for information, are corroborated by solid and recent academic studies such as the annual reports from University of Chapel Hill sociologist Charles Kurzman, one of the best scholars on Islamic terrorism and the author of the noted book *The Missing Martyrs: Why There Are So Few Muslim Terrorists.*[44] Kurzman's 2014 report[55] also shows that since 9-11, Muslim-American domestic terrorism has killed only a very small number of people, between 0 and 2 for most years, with a maximum of 13 in 2009 (corresponding to the Fort Hood shooting in Texas). It should not diminish the tragedy or trivialise the pain suffered by the victims and their entourage to recognise that in a nation of 320 million, these numbers are statistically negligible, especially when compared to the other mortality causes, as we will see later.

Despite all the hype and collective hysteria around ISIS, Jihadism, and the refugee crisis (which became part of the debate when politicians like Donald Trump defined as terrorist threats asylum seekers who were actually *fleeing* terrorism), in the U.S., it is actually right-wing terrorism that kills the most people, though the number, again, remains small: according to a tally by the New America Foundation, a New

York-based nonprofit outfit, the number of people killed by homegrown domestic Jihadist and Right Wing attacks since 9/11 are respectively 45 and 48[66] including the latest December 2, 2015 San Bernardino shooting. Moreover, law enforcement agencies themselves rank the latter type of terrorism as a much higher menace than the Jihadist variety.[7]

In Europe, the situation is quite similar. As the annual Europol reports show, all religiously-motivated terrorist attacks in the European Union represent on average 2% of the total. Jihadist attacks represent even less (see data in endnote 3).

For example, the 2013 report states that the total number of religiously motivated attacks on E.U. soil in 2012 was 6. In 2011, none. Most of the attacks were committed by separatist groups and ethno-nationalists. The majority of that violence is therefore not of "Islamist" nature: *"In 2013 seven people were killed in terrorist attacks in the European Union (EU): one British army soldier in London (UK), one elderly Muslim male in the West Midlands (UK), two members of a right-wing extremist party in Athens (Greece) and three high-ranking Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK, Kurdistan Workers' Party) members in Paris (France). A total of 152 terrorist attacks occurred in five EU Member States. The majority took place in France (63), Spain (33) and the UK (35). After an increase in 2012, the number of terrorist attacks in 2013 fell below the number recorded in 2011. As in previous years, the majority of attacks can be attributed to separatist terrorism. The number of attacks related to left-wing and anarchist terrorism rose in 2013, thereby ending the downward trend observed in previous years."* Similarly, the 2015 data, the latest available covering the year 2014, mentions that despite the fact the phenomena of foreign fighters traveling to Syria was already well under way, *"the largest proportion of terrorist attacks in the EU was related to separatist groups, although the number significantly decreased in 2013 compared to previous years. Most separatist incidents, however, were small-scale."*

All of this would certainly come as a big surprise to most Europeans.

The 2015 January 7 Charlie Hebdo and November 13 attacks in France, the worst and deadliest since the end of World War 2, will probably modify the proportions of fatalities between various types of terrorism. We must, however, keep in mind that at 130 dead, November 13, just like 9/11 with its 3,000 victims, does not represent a norm or even a frequent occurrence, but rather, a catastrophic, unusual, atypical and even unique exception. As a matter of fact, and in blatant contrast to the collective hysteria around terrorism, the number of religiously-motivated attacks and fatalities in the E.U. is usually surprisingly small: for example, in 2014, *"EU Member States reported two completed terrorist attacks specifically classified as religiously inspired terrorism for the period", and the total number of victims of religious terrorism was 4. Furthermore, both attacks were carried out by "lone wolves".*

WHY SUCH A COGNITIVE DISSONANCE?

How can we explain the gap between the (minimal) reality of Jihadist terrorism in Western societies and the public perception of it, hysterical and quasi apocalyptic in the rhetoric and emotions these attacks generate, no matter how rare they are and how few they kill? (In France, there had been, literally, no such attacks for a period of 15 years between 1996 and 2012).

The construction of this public perception at odds with the realities of religiously-inspired terrorism is overdetermined by a multiplicity of factors. Let us mention six major ones:

The *first* factor relates to the enormous traumatic shock of 9/11, and more recently, of the two 2015 Paris attacks. Coupled with a lack of rational distance and perspective (historical, statistical, etc.), these events have led emotionally overwhelmed public opinions to confuse these exceptions for the new norm. In other words, because of this magnifying and distorting effect, "terrorism" today, in the minds of most people, means first of all 9-11 and Charlie Hebdo/November 13 types of attacks. In order to avoid overreactions and excessive dramatisation, there is a need, currently lacking, to realise that those are exceptional and completely atypical events: there was nothing even remotely close to 9-11 before that tragic day and there has been nothing remotely close to it after, anywhere in the Western world.

Though far less lethal, the same is true for the November 13 series of coordinated attacks in Paris that killed 130: before that, the second worse attack on French soil since WW2 was the Vitry-le-François train bombing, which killed 28. And it took place in 1961, over half a century ago, as part of the Algerian War of Independence. (Furthermore it was not carried out by Muslims but by the OAS, the French paramilitary organisation opposed to the Algerian independence.) Just like 9-11, it is also unlikely that anything similar to November 13 will happen again anytime soon, in part due to the dramatically intensified and expanded security measures and the colossal additional resources in money, staff, and technology now being invested in the already excellent French national security, intelligence and spying apparatus.

The *second* factor relates to the role and responsibility of the media and politicians (namely the two most influential and pervasive type of discourses), which relentlessly cultivate and nurture the memory of 9-11 (and now, in France, of Charlie Hebdo and November 13). These discourses in turn create and perpetuate through this "commemorationism" a distorted perception of terrorism among the general public and these media and political circles themselves, in a sort of self-intoxication. *Third*, the violent geopolitical developments in countries like Iraq, Syria, Yemen and a few others (before that, the Islamic Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq war, etc.). Given that Western media and the political class have for decades focused obsessively,

furthermore through exclusively negative reporting, on those Muslim-majority nations, it is hardly a surprise that the false stereotype of Islam as an inherently violent and threatening religion has coalesced. In addition, what are in essence political conflicts such as the Syrian civil war are usually fallaciously presented as religious problems (the dominant theme of the "shiite-sunni sectarian divide" etc), as if Islam was the root cause of all those tragedies, as opposed to, say, the 2003 U.S. invasion and decade-long occupation that destroyed Iraq or the brutal repression of dissent by the Assad regime – two of the main explanations for the emergence and rise of Daesh.

The *fourth* factor for the moral panic associated with Islamist terrorism in the West concerns the vested interest and calculations, including electoral calculations, of governments, who have many domestic, international, geopolitical and strategic motivations for keeping their populations focused obsessively on the "Jihadist threat" through a politics of fear and anxiety in the best Orwellian tradition: it allows despotic regimes like Assad's or al-Sisi's in Egypt, whose own brand of state terror is even worse than that of Daesh, to present themselves as bulwarks against terrorism and divert the attention from their own horrific crimes against humanity. It justifies military interventions aimed at maintaining an increasingly unsustainable and unbearable neocolonial order inherited from Sykes-Picot.

Domestically, it enables governments to suppress dissent, for example through state of emergency – thus, even France has used its post-November 13 state of emergency to ban environmentalists' demonstrations and crack down on ecological activists and organisations during the recent Paris Climate Summit though none of those organisations were posing any national security threat. It locks societies in a false "either/or" binary alternative between terrorism or a police state – a form of blackmail to ensure civil obedience and docility. It makes it easy to ignore failures on the economic and social fronts by focusing instead on national security and cultural issues of "national identities". It provides opportunities for failed politicians whose popularity and approval rate has collapsed to redeem themselves as "war Presidents" and posture as "tough on terror" – thus, before November 13, French President François Hollande was the most unpopular President since WW2, with an approval rate below 30%. But following his militarist, bellicose response to the attacks (deployment of soldiers all over France, increased police prerogatives, stepped-up bombardments of Daesh, mediatised visit on board a battleship on its way to Syria two days before a crucial regional election, and of course, tough talk throughout), his popularity surged literally overnight by an unprecedented 20%, miraculously bringing him back into the race for the 2017 Presidential election though no one would have bet a cent on him before.

> *Despotic regimes like Assad's or al-Sisi's in Egypt, whose own brand of state terror is even worse than that of Daesh, ...present themselves as bulwarks against terrorism and divert the attention from their own horrific crimes.*

The list of benefits goes on and on, and they are all substantial. At the end of the day, Daesh is proving to emphasizes be extremely useful to all in so many ways. *Fifth*, from a more historical perspective, the exclusive obsession with "Islamic" terrorism while the other, far more lethal forms of violence from domestic abuse to gun violence or right-wing terrorism remain largely unaddressed, fits within old and deep racist and Islamophobic anti-Arab and anti-Muslim stereotypes. Those are themselves part of an even longer history of conflicts and tensions between the West and the Muslim world, from the Crusades to the colonial era. Given that background, stigmatising Muslims and blaming Islam for the acts of a few therefore comes, so to speak, naturally and spontaneously. These types of prejudices have been furthermore powerfully reactivated and reinforced by the *Clash of Civilisations* discourse, which both the Jihadists and the Islamophobes propagate, the two groups being in that respect, behind their surface antagonism, objective allies.

Sixth, the last but not least, the political and media treatment of terrorism systematically emphasise terrorism by Muslims while ignoring or at best minimising the other forms of terror, especially when committed by white, Christian, right-wing groups or individuals. The American journalist Juan Cole has even listed, often humorously, the set of double standards that structure the treatment of terrorism in the West and distort public perceptions and public policies, creating what can be called the "exceptionalism of Islam".[8]

The spectacular contrast between the reactions elicited by the January 2015 Charlie Hebdo attacks versus the quasi absence of reactions, even national, after the terrorist murder, by 19-year old White Southern Supremacist Dylann Roof, of 9 African-Americans in their church in Charleston a mere few months after Charlie Hebdo, offered a telling illustration of such double standards and flexible definition of terrorism: not only were there no international reactions or responses in the latter case, in flagrant contrast to Charlie Hebdo which instantly became a global event, but even the U.S. state authorities themselves, Obama included, declined to characterise Dylann Roof as a terrorist, even though the young man had admitted having committed the attack in order to "provoke a racial war" – a clearly political motivation and an act that fits any existing definition of terrorism. Yet, unthinkably, the FBI Director in person, James Comey, claimed the killings were "not terrorism", in complete contradiction with the definition of his own agency![9]

The equation here is simple, and it includes very heavy racist and Islamophobic dimensions: brown-skin and/or Muslim attackers who kill people (especially white people) for political or religious reasons are clearly terrorists, immediately labeled as such by all. But white murderers like Dylann Roof who commit the exact same are not, especially when they are Christians and their victims are not white, since the double standards are applied to both perpetrators and victims.

Even in the Middle East, the region most affected by Jihadism, the notion that most terrorism is "Islamist" in origin and motivation is equally false: if we define terrorism as the use or threat of use of force and violence against civilians for political, religious, etc. reasons, then, the worst, most lethal terrorists are not Islamists like al-Qaeda and Daesh, but often secular state authorities.

Today, the biggest terrorist in all of MENA is by no means Daesh or al-Qaeda contrary to the lie propagated by media and governments, but Syrian President Assad himself, whose casualties (low estimate:150,000, mostly civilians) far exceed those of ISIS. Before Assad, that title was firmly owned by Saddam Hussein, who exterminated an estimated 200,000 political opponents or suspected opponents. Neither of those two leaders were "Islamists" acting in the name of Islam. On the contrary, both were (are, for Assad) secular Baathist rulers.

Another example: in Egypt, on August 14, 2013, the regime of then General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi massacred nearly 1,000 defenseless civilians, pro-Morsi supporters who were staging a sit-in in Cairo to protest the July 3 military coup and demand the reinstatement of the democratically-elected President Morsi (who himself had been deposed at gun point, kidnapped, and taken to an unknown location by Sisi's forces). This mass slaughter, which was carefully organised and planned by Sisi's military forces as documented by all human rights organisations including Human Rights Watch, who called it "the worst mass unlawful killings in Egypt's modern history",[10] was only one of several political mass murders of pro-Morsi supporters by the new regime. Without even counting the others, this one massacre already exceeds all the killings committed in the same period by non-state terrorist groups operating mostly in the Sinai (and targeting soldiers, for the most part, as opposed to the civilian victims of Sisi.)

The counter-factual fallacy that most of MENA's terrorism is committed by Islamists and Jihadists is entirely the result of a lexical stunt that is as simple and misleading as it is pervasive and effective: in political and media discourse but also in much of academic research, "terrorism" is being defined as non-state terrorism, thus producing a completely skewed and inaccurate representation and perception of that phenomena since it omits and excludes from the picture state terrorists, namely the worst and most lethal ones.

The case of the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database /START,[11] one of the largest and most influential sources on terrorism worldwide, widely cited and used by media, politicians and governments, is representative of this extreme distortion: although START claims on its presentation and mission pages to exhaustively report and include "each terrorist incident occurring in the world", digging deeper inside their methodology pages reveals they actually only consider non-state terrorism and exclude state terrorism from their definition, as is customary

It is state terrorism which by far kills the most [but] centres like START end up deliberately excluding [this fact] from their "research".

in media and political discourse and in much of the academic research itself. It is difficult to overstate how false, manipulative, dishonest, and fraudulent such "methodological definitions" can be: given that it is state terrorism which by far kills the most (as the examples of Assad, Hussein, and Sisi above illustrate and as the more serious researchers on terrorism such as Richard Jackson have well demonstrated), centers like START end up deliberately excluding from their "research" and data most of the world's terrorism, and of course its victims. We are here not far from Negationist Revisionism. Thus, for the year 2013, the number of terrorist fatalities in Egypt is shown to be 243. But the 1,100 or so killed by the regime of General Sisi that same year, especially the nearly 1,000 Egyptians slaughtered and the additional 4,000 wounded on that horrific day of August 14, 2013 during the Cairo sit-in protest against Sisi's military coup, simply do not appear in START's statistics. Those fatalities of the police and military state forces clearly constituted the majority of terrorism's victims for that year, yet they are totally evacuated from START's picture as if they never existed.

Behind the dubious and unconvincing justification of "methodological norm" (as if norms could not and in this case should not change), one can easily hypothesize that those definitions and operational concepts are ideally chosen and tailored to fit the interests of the national security and military agencies that fund places like START (essentially a U.S. Homeland Security project as its Partners and Funders pages clearly show). Is it pure coincidence that they deliberately exclude from their "rigorous" scrutiny the terrorism practiced by their own state partners and funders (here, the U.S. government) as well as by their allies (such as Egypt's new fascistic regime), while focusing on those non-state terror groups like Daesh and al-Qaeda, namely the adversaries of those governments? In other words, the "research" and data produced by places like START is not just compromised at its very core, in its epistemological concepts and definitions, but somehow, it is always magically congruent with the interests and foreign policy goals of the states who fund them and for which they work. Such "research centers" therefore appear to serve essentially as data-churning organs of national security apparatuses like Homeland Security. Far from being the "rigorous" and neutral "scientific" institutions they claim to be in their marketing and self-serving declarations, they are just another part of the growing military-industrial-academic complex scholars like Henri Giroux are describing so well.[12]

IN THE WEST, TERRORISM IS NO MAJOR THREAT

The notion that terrorism is a major threat to human life in Western societies is another huge fallacy and the direct result of the hype from self-interested, self-serving media and governments, with their vested interests in creating collective

hysteria and fear around the "Jihadist threat", which has now replaced the Cold War era's Red Scare. The well-documented and easily verifiable reality is that whatever Western country we consider, terrorism in general, and even more so the specifically "Jihadist" type, ranks *as the smallest and least cause of mortality, violent or non-violent, of all.*[13] Anything we can think of from car accidents to cancer, homicides, domestic abuse, domestic accidents and all the other causes of death violent or not, kills more – a *lot* more – than terrorism. 9-11, the one and only conspicuous exception that confirms the rule as opposed to the rule itself, happened already 14 years ago. And as noted above there has been nothing even remotely close to it before or after in any Western country.

The truth is that in those societies, Jihadist terrorism hardly ever kills, and the number of victims is usually so minuscule it does not even appear in the national mortality statistics as such. Take France as a typical example: that country is one of those hit the hardest by Islamic terrorism (the Charlie Hebdo attacks killed 17, November 13, 130), and the paranoid hysteria (carefully nurtured by the Hollande government) around "Jihadism" is probably the highest of all. Yet, since 2001, 9-11 and the tragic 2015 year included, Jihadist terror attacks have killed 232 French persons total in 14 years, including the victims located outside France (embassy staff, tourists etc).[14] This represents an annual average of 16 fatalities for a nation of 65 million – to be compared to the 682 victims of homicide or the 732 children and 121 women (plus 24 men) beaten to death by their own parents, spouses or companions for that one year of 2013. None of which, incidentally, elicits even one speech, one special policy, one national debate, and certainly not the kind of governmental and media hysteria we see in action at each "Jihadist attack", even when there are no victims.

The even larger causes of mortality totally dwarf terrorism: compared to the annual average of 16 French victims of "Jihadism", 500 French people drown each year, 3,300 die on the road and 40,000 are injured – a veritable national hecatomb, car accidents being the number one cause of death among the French youth aged 18-25 – while a staggering 20,000 perish in domestic accidents every single year without eliciting the slightest interest from government and media, as those tragedies are less conducive to dramatisation, posturing, and political manipulation for purposes of societal control through Patriot Act-type of legislation.

France may be transfixed by its own unjustified Jihadist scare, but the reality is that even television sets, pools and lawnmowers kill more French people than terrorists, all types included not limited to Muslims.

As for the even deadlier causes of death such as cancer (which can be a lot longer and more painful agony than sudden death or homicide), the French have 250,000 *more* chances to die of cancer than in a terrorist attack. In Western societies, those

are the *real* risks to human life.

The exact same demonstration could be easily repeated for every other country of the Western world, without any exception, including the E.U., Canada, and the U.S.

In Australia, a country often considered part of "Western" civilisation despite its geographical location, the government, following France, the U.S. and others, has also succumbed to collective paranoid hysteria about "radical Islam" and is now spending (wasting?) hundreds of millions in "counter-Jihadist" plans and surveillance laws. Yet, a quick look at the figures (including those from…START) show that over the past 15-20 years, the average annual Australian victims of Jihadist terrorism has been…0. (2 the worst years!)

Sharks, jellyfish, and even those cute but fierce kangaroos kill more people there than "Jihadists" (5 per year on average for sharks).

With rare exceptions, those facts and figures, known to anyone who has bothered to take some critical distance and do a little fact-checking, are carefully covered up by Western media and governments. They are systematically "omitted" in debates and discourses on terrorism, since they may reassure the populations, diminish the public fear, and make it harder to rally those nations behind that slew of Patriot Acts these governments have been wanting to implement for a long time anyway and are finally able to pass by capitalising on the terrorism scare they themselves amplify and hype. Thus, several surveillance laws which various French governments had concocted but shelved years ago because they knew the population would never accept them, were easily passed after Charlie Hebdo and November 13. But if the facts, data, and perspectives presented here were widely advertised (as they should be), they would undercut the Jihadist Scare politicians and their allied media disseminate in their societies. That kind of knowledge and sense of perspective would therefore undermine popular support for the surveillance, spying, and repressive policies our governments are now determined to pass in the name of the "war on terror", using the recent attacks as a formidable window of opportunity for projects they had been nurturing for years.

Several surveillance laws which various French governments had concocted but shelved years ago because they knew the population would never accept them, were easily passed after Charlie Hebdo and November 13.

The largely untold truth is that in the Western world and in countries like Australia, New Zealand, Japan or South Korea (those often included in what we call "Western civilization"), the Jihadist threat, though relentlessly sensationalised and absurdly exaggerated to the point of collective paranoia, is actually *the smallest, most minuscule, last cause of death of all.* That reality is consistently documented and easily verifiable for all Western nations, though it remains obscured by the exception of 9-11 and the

huge, durable trauma it created worldwide.

Equally false is the permanently repeated claim that the "terrorist threat is increasing". Quite the opposite: since the 1970s, terrorist attacks and attempted attacks have dramatically *decreased* in both the U.S. and European countries like France or Germany – a trend that continued after 9-11.

In other words, the realities of terrorism in general and its "Jihadist" variety in particular are the exact opposite of our public discourse and perceptions.

Since the 1970s, terrorist attacks and attempted attacks have dramatically decreased in both the U.S. and European countries like France or Germany – a trend that continued after 9-11.

What happened after the Paris November 13 attacks offers us one final confirmation: thanks to a 3-month long state of emergency, the French government and police have been able to conduct all the house searches and house arrests they want, outside the usual judicial restrictions and control. Yet, the 3,000 house searches and the hundreds of detentions have resulted in … one single indictment (not even a condemnation, just an indictment) linked to terrorism.[15] Not a single new terrorist cell was discovered. And it is certainly not because the government, the administrative authorities, and the police did not try hard or were restricted in the methods they could use. The outcome and effectiveness of the state of emergency regarding terrorism was so nil that Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve was forced to justify it by claiming that "a lot of drugs and weapons" had been found, as if it had been the reason for putting in place that state of emergency and for perpetuating it for another three month, as France is getting ready to do this February.

THE MYTH OF "ISLAMIC RADICALISATION"

The almost complete lack of results of the French state of emergency not only proves how exaggerated the "Jihadist threat" can be, since by the French Interior Minister's own admission, the relentless searches have revealed no new cells, not even a few small ones here and there, but it also suggests that the fear of "Islamist-radicalisation-leading-to-terrorism", another notion that inescapably permeates those societies, is itself largely if not entirely a myth. And one that has also powerfully contributed to the moral panic about (against) Islam and Muslims in the West, creating in the process enormous, ongoing harm to those populations, which is not the least of the myriad problems associated with radicalisation discourse.

The idea that Muslims, especially young males, have steadily "radicalised" in alarming numbers has also coalesced in governments and public opinions to the point it is now just taken for granted and constitutes another prominent theme of

the dominant groupthink. The problems with that notion are even worse than with the affiliated myth of the "Jihadist threat", of which it seems to be a prelude (since the assumed "radicalisation" supposedly leads to actual "Jihadist" violence).

There are several reasons why this pervasive theme of a sweeping wave of Islamic radicalisation currently happening is probably hopelessly and irreversibly flawed.

First, the very word "radical" and therefore the notion of "radicalisation" is so fuzzy, vague, flexible, relative in both time and space, infinitely extensible, arbitrary and subjective that it can mean anything. Even one of its most prominent advocates and practitioners, Professor of Security Studies and Director of the famed International Center for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) at King's College London Peter R. Neumann, admits in a series of charming euphemisms, the "lack of clarity", "ambiguity", and "conceptual fault-lines" in the many notions of "radicalisation". Indeed. For example, the difference (itself radical!) between "cognitive radicalisation" (supposedly "extremist" – yet another lame and vague term – ideas, beliefs, ideologies, values, principles, etc) and "behavioural radicalisation" (violent behaviour and actions, a more objective and firmer criteria).[16] Debates therefore invariably, loosely and casually fluctuate between talk about the supposed "radicalisation" of Muslims' theological beliefs, values, religious practices, political ideas, takes on geopolitical situations (Iraq, Palestine, etc), expressions of support for political or other forms of violence (towards women, apostates, gays for example), and concrete violent actions such as abuse of women or acts of terrorism. Namely, things that are completely and essentially different, yet usually considered (explicitly or implicitly) as a logical continuum, as if beliefs, values, principles deemed "radical" by some (mostly, let us notice that too, non-Muslim Westerners) were the same as suicide attacks in the name of Allah, or at least as if they were creating the cultural, psychological etc terrain for actual political and religious violence.

Hence, in France today, if you wear a long beard, insist on eating *halal*, or decline shaking hands with women, you are already considered to be Jihadist material, ripe for recruiting by Daesh. Without even mentioning that loaded question of the relation between the two types of "radicalism" mentioned by Neumann (does the former lead to the latter, etc), the fact that after nearly two decades of research, even the top scholars specialising in that field cannot even manage to offer a clear and proper definition of the word itself is already a sign that the whole enterprise is dubious and the concept vitiated at inception. What kind of "researchers" work for decades on an alleged problem they cannot even manage to define properly???

Second, and far more alarmingly, because of the arbitrariness and lack of a clear definition and boundaries of its core concepts, radicalisation discourse, like "terrorism", is ideally suited for political uses and manipulations since governments or other political forces can include in this stigmatising term pretty much anything and

anyone, any individual, any group they want. Thus, on February 9, 2015, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls, already known for his crusades against Islamic headscarves, declared that the French Republic must combat not just Jihadist terrorism, but "[Islamic] conservatism and fundamentalism", singling out as top targets the Muslim Brothers and Salafists, all guilty, according to him, of "radicalism".[17] In a series of terrifying shortcuts and confusions, perfectly peaceful and non-violent French Muslim individuals and organisations find themselves demonised and lumped together with actual terrorists under the common scare category of "radicals". On February 16 of that same year, during a major address to the National Assembly in the aftermath of Charlie Hebdo, emulating the coded rhetoric of the Islamophobic far right, Prime Minister Valls declared war on "Islamo-fascism" (a loaded word he used for the first time), adding that France needed to "combat the enemy outside but also the enemy within" – which referred not just to actual terrorists like the Kouachi brothers but also to Salafists, the Muslim Brotherhood, and within a French context, the UOIF in particular (Union of the Islamic Organisations of France), the largest Muslim umbrella body in France and one of Valls' *bêtes noires*. Despite the fact all those perfectly legitimate organisations have relentlessly, publicly, and unambiguously condemned those attacks and Jihadist terrorism in general, they now increasingly find themselves openly scapegoated by the state's top officials, targeted for elimination under the alibi of the fight against radicalisation, itself presented as part of the larger "war-on-terror", and as such, a national security imperative.

The vilification and political targeting of peaceful and harmless Muslims in the name of "counter-radicalisation" as a subset of the "war-on-terror" goes even further. Thus, in the aftermath of the January 7 Charlie Hebdo and Hypercasher Paris attacks, the French government unveiled a new 4-part "counter-Jihadism" plan that seeks to mobilise everyone – parents, friends, educators, schoolteachers, state and non-state institutions, associations, etc, the whole civil society and state – in a collective and permanent collaborative effort to fight what is presented as a terrible "new threat".

The interactive website opens with a rather sinister (or laughable if we want to put a more positive spin on this) two-minute video aiming to dissuade those Muslims "at risk of radicalisation" from joining the Islamic State. The clip is clearly supposed to offer a counter-discourse and antidote to ISIS's own recruiting propaganda videos. It then leads to a simplified presentation of the various parts of the governmental plan, including a hotline anyone can call to "prevent a violent radicalisation" if one suspects that a relative, a friend, neighbor, colleague etc. may be in a process of "Jihadist indoctrination".[18]

The stigmatisation of perfectly normal religious customs and traditions, the suspicion cast on mainstream Islamic habits fully within that religion's orthodoxy, the half-truths, counter-truths, amalgamations, lame stereotyping and sloppy approximations are here taken to a new extreme. Put together by pseudo-experts

like the inevitable Dounia Bouzar (a media personality and government favorite, herself the founder with her daughter Lydia Bouzar of a counter-radicalisation center now lavishly funded by the government), the site's material includes a childish and paternalistic graphic showing the various behaviors and practices that supposedly constitute "signs of Jihadist radicalisation" and should thus raise a red flag among families, friends, teachers and colleagues. Geared toward "detecting individuals susceptible to turn toward radical violence and prevent them, if possible, from taking action" that grotesque poster is designed to help people detect those Muslim individuals who may be falling prey to "Jihadist propaganda".

Rooted in those flawed, fuzzy, fallacious, and here absurd notions of "radical Islamism"–itself crudely presented as an automatic prelude to actual Jihadist violence –, the infography[19] includes the following as "signs of Jihadist radicalisation" that should cause alarm and stir one into taking action (i.e. reporting the person to the police, calling the governmental hotline, filling a form downloadable on the web site that will go straight to the Interior Ministry where it may be used for further action such as surveillance, etc): "changes in dietary habits" (comically illustrated by a banned baguette!); "suspicion towards former friends (now considered as impure)" or "rejection of certain family members" (a common phenomenon with rebellious or simply alienated youths, some would say it is even part of growing up and finding one's identity); changes in leisure activities such as "no longer watching TV or going to the movies so as not to see religiously forbidden images"; a refusal to participate in mixed, male-female co-ed sports activities; "frequent visits to radical and extremist web sites"; "changes in clothing style especially from girls if they start wearing ample outfits to conceal their shapes" (better show some skin!), etc. All of those are presented as possible "early signs of Jihadist radicalisation".

"Signs of Jihadist radicalisation" [according to the French government include] changes in dietary habits (comically illustrated by a banned baguette!)

A paragraph at the bottom adds to those "alarming symptoms" other attitudes such as: "asocial discourses" (whatever that means, no definition is given, and besides, one can wonder how "asocial discourses" are "signs of Jihadist radicalisation"?); "the rejection of authority or communal life"; and "withdrawing onto oneself". Rebellious, counter-cultural, meditative or introspective types, better beware. Browsing through such grotesque "counter-radicalisation" material and the outrageous prejudices that subtend it, one can easily think of some devout and pious, yet perfectly harmless, Muslim friends and relatives who show such "signs of Jihadist radicalisation".

Such caricatural and Islamophobic notions of what constitutes the "first signs of a Jihadist threat" would only deserve mockery if those plans were not dead serious, perfectly official, and furthermore disseminated nationwide to public administrations, schools and educators, as well as to neighbors and families alike

with the express invitation to monitor and report–directly to the Interior Minister – anyone, including a son, daughter, father, mother, neighbor etc showing even just one or a few of those behaviors. (The poster mentions that "the more signs the individual displays, the greater and more severe the Jihadist radicalisation may be".) In another peak of paranoid hysteria, the top levels of the State itself are here officially defining as dangerous Jihadist propaganda, brainwashing and radicalisation, Islamic traditions, practices and life choices that actually are and always have been perfectly normal and mainstream for devout, pious, conservative Muslims: dietary restrictions (no alcohol), traditional Islamic outfits (wearing the *hijab* and avoiding revealing outfits), certain spectacles (films, etc) one can deem immoral, harmful and undesirable according to one's religious values, etc.

The problem is obvious and flagrant, yet somehow invisible to those who concoct such plans, which are now proliferating all over Western countries: in themselves, even as clusters of behaviors forming a consistent pattern as opposed to just one or two "signs", none of those Islamic practices or for that matter all of them together can be labeled, stigmatised and essentialised as "signs of radicalisation" and even less as a "Jihadist" terrorist threat. Yet, that is nonetheless the case.

It is not the least of the problems of radicalisation discourse that it is now enabling and legitimising the criminalisation of normal, non-violent and harmless beliefs, practices, and behaviors. Following the November 13 attacks, powerful voices in France including that of Prime Minister Manuel Valls are openly demanding that all of the 90 "Salafist" mosques be closed, though not a single terrorist has been linked to any of them and none has committed a single crime. Yet, the concept of "ideological radicalisation" and the assumption it leads to actual Jihadist violence are enough to justify such a flagrant attack on freedom of religion. The French government has already closed three of those mosques, outside any public debate and without sharing any of the evidence justifying such grave actions.

> *[the] radicalisation discourse... is now enabling and legitimising the criminalisation of normal, non-violent and harmless [Islamic] beliefs, practices, and behaviors.*

The collusion, the conflation between (largely paranoid when not obviously Islamophobic) state powers and a dubious notion and field of research, obvious in the incestuous relations between "experts" like Dounia Bouzar and the government, provides an intellectual justification - an alibi - for the deployment and implementation of dangerous, nefarious and harmful policies. By subtending and legitimising those policies, radicalisation discourse, with its vitiated premises, false assumptions, and politicised, if not racist, biases (e.g. a quasi-exclusive emphasis on the supposed radicalisation of Muslims as opposed to, say, right-wing white Christian supremacists[20]), functions not so much as credible and reliable science, but more as a powerful ideological alibi for the increasingly harmful, nefarious and counter-productive "war-on-terror" as it is currently implemented.

Finally, another severe problem plagues this whole discourse: the data itself offered as evidence of "Jihadist" or "Islamist radicalisation" simply does not corroborate its conclusions. Rather, it invalidates them. The assumptions and the claims (e.g. that there is an alarming radicalisation problem in large segments of the Muslim populations such as those "alienated" male youths living in the projects) are in no way supported by the hard figures, even those coming from the research centers, media, and governments who have a vested interests in maximising the supposed "threat" and always go out of their way to amplify and stir the fear of "violent Jihadist extremism".

Common sense can sometimes go a long way towards debunking falsehoods. For example, if this twin "radicalisation/Jihadism threat" were as big as what we are being summoned to believe, it is not two or three "Jihadist" attacks and 200 fatalities over 15 years countries like France and the US, with their millions of Muslims, would suffer, but hundreds, thousands per month. (See also the example of the 3,000 state of emergency house searches and the hundreds of detentions above which did not even find one new terrorist cell in France.) If Muslims were "radicalising" to a significant extent, we would have civil wars all over Europe and the U.S. But far from being the case, what we continue to see are mostly Muslim individuals and populations as peaceful as any other group (Christians, Jews, atheists etc). The condemnations of Daesh and of attacks like Charlie Hebdo have also been immediate, sustained, forceful and unambiguous on the part of all Muslims including Islamic states, organisations, theological authorities and simple citizens, with hardly any exceptions. None of that speaks of "radicalisation". And that is yet another problem with radicalization theory and discourse: it completely ignores the counter-evidence, here massive.

In addition to the empirical realities anyone can observe (when was last time one of your Muslim friends or relatives turned Jihadist?), much of the more reliable research directly contradicts the notion of a radicalisation surge among Western Muslims.[21] Finally, despite the catastrophic, quasi apocalyptic rhetoric and "end-of-civilization-as-we-know-it" hysteria that characterise these public debates, the figures show that *even at its current peak*, violent Jihadist extremism is at most a tiny, minuscule fringe phenomena.

For example, over the past few years, according to the September 2015 U.S. bi-partisan Congressional report, 250 Americans have gone to Syria and Iraq join extremist groups such as ISIS, out of millions of American Muslims and a total population of 323 million. According to the December 2015 "ISIS in America" report from the Program on Extremism at Georges Washington University, 71 Americans have been charged (charged, not found guilty) with "ISIS-related activities". Which does not even mean they are all actual ISIS sympathisers or militants since the figure includes, for example, those who provide papers, guns etc., without being in any way

"Jihadists" themselves but your average criminals who will work with anyone willing to pay them. And among those "radicals", 73% are "not involved in plotting a terrorist attack".

That is hardly a tidal wave.

CONCLUSION

Despite the wall-to-wall, round-the-clock hype about the "appeal of ISIS", by far the most successful Jihadist organisation ever and one replete with its own "Caliphate" proto-state, no country has sent more than 3,000 fighters there (Tunisia). France counts 700 of those on a Muslim population of 4 million, and among those 700, it is estimated a full third changed their minds, came back and bitterly regretted having joined once they experienced first-hand the reality of the Islamic State. The official government figures and those of the Pew Research Center show that even the top 5 countries with the *highest* numbers and greatest percentages of Muslims who have gone to fight range between 0.07% and 0.03%. For the U.S., the percentage is 0.005%.[22] Even in their worst years, none is reaching the 0.1%, not even close. And that would be the sign of a massive and scary "radicalisation trend" allegedly underway among Muslims?

On the whole European continent from France to Russia, an estimated 3,000-5,000 have joined ISIS. That is 5,000 from a continent of 740 million.

On the whole European continent from France to Russia, an estimated 3,000-5,000 have joined ISIS. That is 5,000 from a continent of 740 million and over a period of at least several years. While the total number of ISIS fighters could not even fill one football stadium, a recent and exhaustive report from the U.N. Security Council estimates at 20,000 the total number of foreign fighters who have gone to Iraq and Syria from all over the world, all countries included, since 2011.[23]

That is 0.001% of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims. Not so "appealing" after all.

No matter how hard media, governments, "research" centres and their Homeland Security academics are working to convince (and often scare) populations, 20,000 out of a total Muslim population of 1.6 billion (Pew figure) is certainly more than enough to create considerable damage and mayhem, but it does not in any way constitute a trend, even less so the catastrophic one we keep hearing about. It actually disproves the notion of a sweeping, or even just of a significant "Islamic radicalisation" under way.

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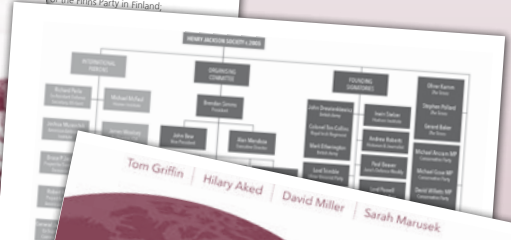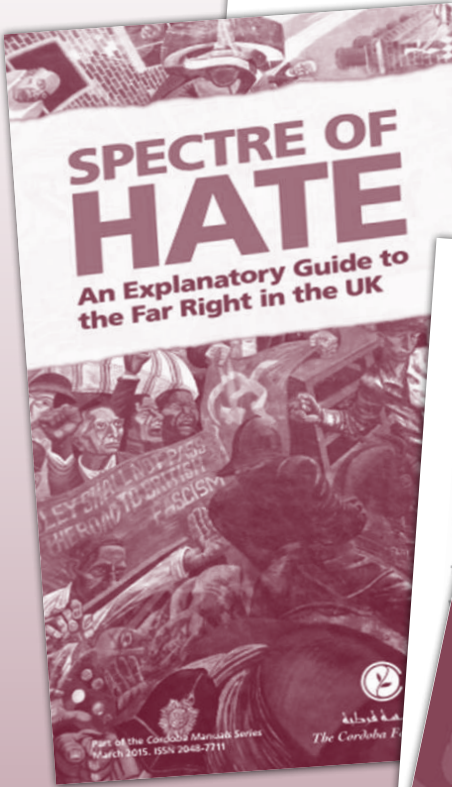
ENDNOTES

1. See in particular *Muslims in the West after 9/11. Religion, Politics, and Law* (2009) and *Why the West Fears Islam: An Exploration of Islam in Western Liberal Democracies* (2013)

2. Author is borrowing this expression from Professor Raphaël Liogier's important essay, *Le Mythe de l'islamisation. Essai sur une obsession collective* (2016)

3. Data available on the following links (last accessed January 20, 2016) : https://www.europol.europa.eu/latest_publications/37 , https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/terrorism-2002-2005/terror02_05#terror_05sum , http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/01/14/are-all-terrorists-muslims-it-s-not-even-close.html , http://thinkprogress.org/world/2015/01/08/3609796/islamist-terrorism-europe/

4. See presentation at http://kurzman.unc.edu/the-missing-martyrs/ (last accessed January 20, 2016)

5. Report available at http://sites.duke.edu/tcths/files/2013/06/Kurzman_Muslim-American_Terrorism_in_2013.pdf (last accessed January 20, 2016)

6. Report available at http://securitydata.newamerica.net/extremists/deadly-attacks.html (last accessed January 20, 2016)

7. See http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/16/opinion/the-other-terror-threat.html?_r=1 (last accessed January 20, 2016)

8. http://www.juancole.com/2012/08/top-ten-differences-between-white-terrorists-and-others.html and http://www.juancole.com/2015/02/radicalized-islamophobic-terrorists.html (last accessed January 20, 2016)

9. http://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/18/politics/obama-south-carolina-church-shooting/ and http://www.mediaite.com/tv/fbi-director-says-charleston-shooting-not-terrorism/ (last accessed January 23, 2016)

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11. Available at http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/globe/index.html and http://www.start.umd.edu/ (last accessed January 23, 2016)

12. Giroux Archives available at http://www.henryagiroux.com/index.html

13. See for example http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonkblog/wp/2013/09/11/nine-facts-about-terrorism-in-the-united-states-since-911/ and http://www.saphirnews.com/L-islam-religion-violente-3-6-%E2%80%92-Les-vrais-chiffres-de-la-menace-jihadiste_a21096.html (last accessed January 23, 2016)

14. Exhaustive data available at http://www.atlantico.fr/decryptage/102-morts-nombre-total-victimes-francaises-terrorisme-depuis-11-septembre-2001-eric-denece-2127361.html Author added the 2015 counts.

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17. http://www.france24.com/fr/20150209-manuel-valls-freres-musulmans-france-uoif-salafistes-salafisme-terrorisme-salon-bourget/ (last accessed January 23, 2016)

18. The site is available at http://www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr/

19. Visible here with an interview of Dounia Bouzar: http://www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr/decrypter.html

20. Increasingly, given the rise of right-wing extremism(s) all over the Western world as attested by the recent European elections or the rise of a Donald Trump with his quasi fascist ideology yet massive follow up, the type of radicalisation that prevails in the West is not Islamist but right-wing, including Western Christian Supremacists, nationalists, separatists, anti-government sovereignists, and more, with their own brands of deadly terrorist violence, from attacks against abortion clinics by pro-lifers to racist murders of the Dylann Roof type, lynching of immigrants (Greece's Golden Dawn) or the Islamophobic, anti-immigrant xenophobic rage of an Anders Breivik, the 2011 Oslo killer. Yet, the obsession with "Islamist extremism" has rendered invisible *those* forms of radicalisation and their frightening rise throughout the Western world. Many academics, too, have been deliberately or unintentionally complicit. Typically, the web site of the ICSR at King's College London http://icsr.info/ (last checked Jan. 5, 2015) is almost entirely about "Islamists", "Jihadists", Muslims, al-Qaeda, Syria etc., illustrating the incestuous collusion of those researchers with their governments' foreign policy goals, as well as the fact "terrorism" has become a code word for "Jihadism", which led Juan Cole to humorously declare that today only Muslims can be terrorists http://www.juancole.com/2015/11/differences-between-terrorists.html Similarly, the King's College Center's Publication Page contains nothing other than material on Muslims, the usual suspects. There is not a single paper there on any other type of radicalisation, despite the fact right-wing extremism has been sweeping the whole European continent and the U.S for years if not decades, getting worse by the day. Professor Neumann's own remarks at the White House Summit on "Countering Violent Extremism" http://icsr.info/2015/02/icsr-insight-professor-neumanns-remarks-white-house-summit/ were exclusively about "Islamist Muslims", in another typical case of this ideological bias and politicisation of "expertise" also flagrant in the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database, as noted above. A politicisation and instrumentalisation of scholarly research by the state, by which these institutions are first and foremost data-churning organs for the military-industrial-national security complex, offering intellectual alibis and prestigious academic titles to our Powers that Be and their "war-on-terror". This well-understood and mutually beneficial cozy relationship between certain academics and their governments is hardly surprising, since those 'research" centers and programs are so often funded by the states' national security apparatuses themselves (e.g. the case of U.S. Homeland Security and START, with which, again not surprisingly, King's College London's ICSR partners with).

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23. http://www.timesofisrael.com/un-over-22000-foreignfighters-in-syria-and-iraq/ (Last checked on January 20, 2016)

Spectre of Hate

Across Europe, the shadow of the Far Right is rising

Populist anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim political parties led by powerful rhetoricians now regularly poll up to 20% of the vote (sometimes higher) during national European elections. From burqa to minaret bans, calls to "halt the Islamisation of Europe" and a poisoned debate where "Islam = terrorism", some of these movements are now powerful enough to join coalition governments.

This 'new' Right has started replacing and overshadowing some of the more traditional neo-Nazi and violent far-right movements of the past. These newer populist movements are led by demagogues and charismatic politicians such as Geert Wilders, leader of the Freedom Party in Holland; Timo of the Finns Party in Finland.

SPECTRE OF HATE

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