

**Policy Department C
Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs**



**PREVENTING VIOLENT RADICALISATION
AND TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN THE EU**

**THE THREAT TO EUROPE BY RADICAL
ISLAMIC TERRORIST GROUPS**

CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS



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**Directorate-General Internal Policies
Policy Department C
Citizens Rights and Constitutional Affairs**

PREVENTING VIOLENT RADICALISATION AND TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN THE EU

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BRIEFING PAPER

Abstract:

The ad hoc briefing paper “Preventing violent radicalisation and terrorist recruitment in the EU - The threat to Europe by radical Islamic terrorist groups” provides an original analysis and evaluation of the different strategies that are meant to deal with such phenomena, as well as their effectiveness. This perspective takes into account the dynamics of actions/reactions between the various parts involved in violence and its repression, thus going beyond recommendations mainly aiming at controlling the networks through which individuals enter the radicalizing dynamics, in a “worst-case scenario” perspective. The core point of the paper is to transgress the different forms of self-censorship that exist in the field of the counterterrorist public policies, by insisting upon the fact that some of the measures taken can contribute to the radicalisation, or more accurately, to the dynamics of escalation. The priority is then to move the focus, while widening the angle of the problem, to highlight the interactions not only between clandestine organisations and reference fields but also public authorities, journalists and others. The question of the radicalisation must be reconsidered and redefined as a subsidiary of the questions on escalation and de-escalation dynamics of the conflicts.

The ad hoc briefing paper is thus structured as follows: the first part aims at understanding the radicalisation processes; the second part deals with the questions of clandestineness, radicalisation and recruitment; the third part deals with the dilemma faced by authorities and their policies, that can either lead to an escalation or a de-escalation, depending on whether they tend to mimetic rivalry or distanciation. Finally, the paper provides certain policy recommendations, mainly based on favouring distanciation, taking into account the pernicious effects of intensified measures of control, repression or war on violent radicalisation, and controlling and supervising counter radicalisation.

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AD HOC BRIEFING PAPER

Preventing violent radicalisation and terrorist recruitment in the EU.

The threat to Europe by radical Islamic terrorist groups

Didier BIGO and Laurent BONELLI, December 2007

Introduction

European institutions and Member States feel more and more concerned by the question of the violent radicalisation in our societies and the recruitment of potential “terrorists”. The Member States started to get organized after the 9/11 events, but wanted to reinforce the means of the fight against terrorism at the European scale after the bomb attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004. They asked the European Commission to initiate a reflection on what can be gained from cooperation and on the causes of such a phenomenon. The Communication, called “Fight against terrorism: prevention, preparedness and response” was published in October 2004 and, for the first time, refers to the notion of “violent radicalisation”, linking it to the problem of recruitment: “Opposing violent radicalisation within our societies and disrupting the conditions facilitating the recruitment of terrorists must be fundamental priorities in a strategy to prevent terrorism”¹. The question of recruitment is part of any major statement on the war against terrorism, especially since the London bomb attacks that took place on July 7 and 21, 2005: they showed that the hermetic control of the frontiers against foreign individuals was not only impossible but also effectless when the terrorists come from within, when they are members of the targeted society (*home grown terrorists*). Thus, in 2005, the Council Declaration on Combating Terrorism dedicated one of its seven objectives to “address[ing] the factors which contribute to support for, and recruitment into terrorism”. These also include (1) identifying factors which “contribute to recruitment”, (2) investigating links between “extreme religious or political beliefs, as well as socio-economic and other factors, and support for terrorism”, (3) addressing good governance and the rule of law, and (4) implementing a strategy for “cross-cultural and inter-religious understanding between Europe and the Islamic

¹ European Commission (2004) (COM(2004) 698 final). *Fight against terrorism: prevention, preparedness and response*.

world”². In December 2005, the Council adopted a strategy in which the concern for recruitment and violent radicalisation holds a prominent position³. In September 2005, the Commission adopted a Communication concerning "Terrorism recruitment: addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation". An Action Plan on combating Radicalisation and Recruitment was adopted by the European Council in December 2005. In 2006 and 2007, the European Commission Vice-President, Franco Frattini, made multiple interventions on this subject, and a group of experts was even set up in April 2006⁴.

A great number of reports and studies have been written in order to define the radicalisation and its processes, revealing the interest of the European institutions for Islamic radicalisation, considered as the “greatest threat to Europe”, as Gilles de Kerchove, the new Counterterrorism Coordinator, declared⁵. Many specific studies were proposed by the Directorate-General for Research and the Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security, as well as by the major research institutions in the various member states, especially the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in Great-Britain. Many of these studies are of great value and add to the knowledge on individuals that became actors, on their systems of justification and sometimes on their motives and links to external groups. Going further than the usual experts on “terrorism”, the researchers on Islam, migrations and minorities living in Europe produced subtle and complex views, but most of the time, these studies have been integrated into a larger, pre-established frame, insisting – almost exclusively – upon the motivations and mechanisms of recruitment and thus keeping their focus on the relation between the individuals and the clandestine organisations, which are however *but one part of* the phenomenon we are trying to describe. All the studies that have been criticising “terroristology” for being partial and slanted and that have assimilated the lessons taught by the theories on collective actions, show indeed that though this relation should not be undermined, the public authorities are nonetheless *as much as* important actors: their actions, reactions and abilities to structure the context of political opportunities contribute to develop the various forms of radicalism. Studies on terrorism, which started to form a specific sub-field in the 1970s, wanted to get differentiated from the studies on sociology and conflict resolution, emphasizing their particularity and the constantly renewed newness of their subject. So to speak, they have always tried to avoid the ethical and political questions in order to better serve the

² Council of the European Union (2004), *Declaration on Combating Terrorism*.

³ Council of the European Union (2005) (14469/4/05), *The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy*.

⁴ Commission Decision of 19 April 2006 *setting up a group of experts to provide policy advice to the Commission on fighting violent radicalisation* (2006/299/CE).

⁵ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/019-12644-309-11-45-902-20071105IPR12636-05-11-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

decision-makers. But by refusing to have a look at the dynamics of actions/reactions between the various actors involved in the violence and its repression, they have come to a deadlock in which their diversity is nothing but semblance when one comes to consider the questions generally raised by the sociology of conflict. Thus, our purpose here is not to produce recommendations aiming at controlling more or less the socialising networks through which the individuals come to the radicalising dynamics, especially in a context of the worst-case scenario which gives *de facto* the priority to the enhancement of the possibilities of intervention for the police and intelligence services, in the name of a new balance between liberties and security, and which restrains the presumption of innocence and favours the discourse on “prevention” (even though we will come back on this issue in our conclusion). The core point in our note is rather to transgress the different forms of self-censorship that exist in the field of the counterterrorist public policies, by insisting upon the fact that some of the measures taken can contribute to the radicalisation, or more accurately, to the dynamics of escalation. Our priority is then to move the focus, while widening the angle of the problem, to highlight the interactions not only between clandestine organisations and reference fields but also public authorities, journalists and others. The question of the radicalisation must be reconsidered and redefined as a subsidiary of the questions on escalation and de-escalation dynamics of the conflicts.

The first question to be raised must define the referent object of the radicalising process: the radicalisation of what? Do we refer to the radicalisation of individuals, or of ideologies, or of networked clandestine organisations developing with or without the support from some states? On this matter, one realizes that very often the texts in the calls for tenders and the answers proposed by the academics are ambiguous, because they deal with the violent radicalisation at a general level. Many reports issued by Member States hence call upon a “radical era”, especially when those have been written by British *think tanks* in collaboration with their American peers. This “radical era” then turns out to be the era when one particular religion became radical: Islamism. This is exactly what we can see in the scenarios written by the CIA when they asked all the *think tanks* to describe what the world would be in 2020⁶. For most of these texts or discourses, 9/11 is the key turning-point from which we could distinguish an “ancient” form of terrorism from a “new” one. But the following paradox springs up: the authors who were the most attached to the idea that former terrorism was a sort of third world war are the very same who now assert that it was not that important and that it could even be considered as a “moderate terrorism” comparatively to the

⁶ *Mapping the Global Future: Report of the National Intelligence Council's 2020 Project* (http://www.dni.gov/nic/NIC_globaltrend2020.html)

present situation. This is quite obvious when we take the example of the authors who formerly worked on the cases of Northern Ireland and Spain (ETA) and are now working on Al Qaeda. We can even add those who worked on India and the Sikh or on the Tamils from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. On the contrary, experts on the Middle-East question are the less prone to adopt this differentiation and emphasize the continuities, related to the situation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iranian revolution and its transformations, the situation in Lebanon and the relations to Syria. The idea of a violent radicalisation in relation with a new form of terrorism must then be balanced: if there are indeed some logics of intensified violence and *capillarisation* that have taken place between the 1970s and nowadays⁷, we cannot say that there is a before and an after.

Another important issue is to redefine the radicalisation as a process: should we go back to the origins and argue the radicalism of the ideas that would almost automatically radicalize the acts: from the first speech acts, then the mobilisation, the support to the individuals who laud violence to the final plunge into violence itself? Most of the studies that developed the terminology of violent radicalisation seem to adopt this point of view⁸. Though very diverse, the thorough debates on solutions to be provided presented by the various reports eventually adopt the same and unique perspective: the one that analyses the deviant behaviours and the phenomenon of absolute and relative frustration. These works have been initiated by Ted R. Gurr's fundamental book, *Why men rebel*, which he updated later on in *Why minorities rebel*⁹ and in which he emphasized the differences of hopes that individuals can have in a given society, their objective chances to have their situation improve and the coercive structure of the states. Throughout the liberal periods, offering freedom of thought and circulation, people feel less constrained by social norms in a given society and express more easily their differences, oppositions and resentments. Several books and articles, when studying the question of radicalisation, did apply these analyses to the post-9/11 situation, according to which deviance comes from relative frustrations and is considered as the deviant behaviours of particular individuals¹⁰. Ted R. Gurr stays cautious when he considers the

⁷ On the capillarisation of violence, see Didier BIGO, "Guerres, conflits, transnational et territoire", *Cultures & Conflits* #21-22 (1996) pp. 397-418.

⁸ The European Commission has embraced a similar working definition, stating that radicalisation constitutes "the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to terrorism"; quoted from European Commission, "Commission Programme for the Prevention of and Response to Violent Radicalisation: Call for Proposals 2007"; available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/2004_2007/radicalisation/doc/call_2007_en.pdf.

⁹ Ted R. GURR, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1970 et "Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict since 1945", *International Political Science Review*, #14, 1993, pp.161-201.

¹⁰ This is for instance Marc SAGEMAN's presupposition, in *Understanding Terrorist Networks*, Philadelphia, Philadelphia University Press 2004.

relation between radicalism of thought and the plunge into violence, and following Alex Schmid, he often prefers to see political and religious ideologies as systems justifying a state of violence that is already pre-existing¹¹. However, many authors forget any restraint and consider that any hint of radicalisation in ideas and opinions leads to actual violent acts¹². It is more than obvious as the recent measures proposed by the Commission or some governments to prevent terrorist acts tend to follow too quickly the latter category of authors. In addition to ideology, all these analyses explain the violent radicalisation by the opening of new possibilities provided by new technologies. During the 1960s, many works on the violent radicalisation of American Black movements pointed out the more intensive use of local radios, actions by the civil movement itself, or broadcast shows criticising the government. Likewise, the technologies targeted today are quick communication systems, for which it is hard to track back the origins of the communications and detect the actual identities of the individuals: mobile phones of course, but also phone cards that allow the mixing of networks and the possibility to inscribe and encrypt the communications at any level, and evidently, Internet. Very often, these perspectives contemplate all the possibilities opened by technology and consider that criminals or clandestine organisations will use them all because there is no moral or legal constraint at stake, while on the other hand, the services that are trying to hunt them down have limited means. As a consequence, these organisations would then be more favoured because they would be more skilled than the democratic governments' services in the mastering of these technical tools. That is why we are witnessing the elaboration of many worst-case scenarios which sole limits are the ones in the imagination of those who write them.

Taking the opposite direction, we would like to insist on the other branch of collective action's theories: denying strongly the idea that the radicalisation process comes from a single group's actions, it rather emphasizes the *relations* between the different actors and the idea that radicalisation leads to counter-radicalisation manifestations, which, depending on how they are approached, sometimes contribute to reinforce, and not to eradicate, the initial radicalisation. The plunge into violence is then the result of dynamics of involvement between actors. This is what is called the "spiral" process and it is significant that the radicalisation terminology used in the reports on terrorism is nothing else but the same terminology that has been well-known by any expert on violence: the terminology of *escalation*.

¹¹ See for instance Alex SCHMID, *Political terrorism: a new guide to actors, authors, concepts, data bases, theories, and literature*, Transaction Books, Amsterdam, 1988.

¹² Either by calling upon the contamination via image impact, which meets with the belief of organisations in the propaganda by the facts; or by calling upon the *gateway organisations* who would "prepare" the radicals to become violent without analysing the tensions related to the plunge into action and without analysing its dynamics, which actually are quite far from this hypothetical linearity.

If we consider this approach, which stresses the actions and reactions of the actors, the relations between the clandestine organisations' actions, the various forms of fight against these organisations or the relation to either the rule of law or to the rule of exception, then we can see a more global analysis on radicalisation emerging: it shows not only some phenomena of mimetic rivalry between the actors who use violence and the ones who try to repress it, but it also reveals problematical mechanisms of distance from the populations that are but third parties and get more and more despaired by the inability to put an end to erratic violent acts performed by clandestine organisations and by the intrusive – and nonetheless inefficient – forms of control introduced by the governments. This generalised distance does not however prevent – quite contrarily, it seems to encourage – some small groups to get even more involved in radicalisation, by some mimetic effect. Through violence, individuals that have no strong political or religious background can find a deeper sense to their involvement in society. We can also see the emergence of various forms of “vigilantism” and active racism. As Charles Tilly reports, what matters is less the actual plunge into violence than the question of its rarity¹³. He explains that even the smallest groups have strategies, “repertoires of collective action”, and use different forms of collective actions depending on the opportunity structures. He rejects the theories that point out the irrationality of the actors under study: there is always a minimal culture of strategy that is even more important as the organisations are related to each other and work as a network.

In order to face these contemporaneous approaches that repeat the hypotheses of deviant behaviours, it will be useful to remind of the escalation and de-escalation phenomena and the strategic culture, and to apply them to the current forms of violence, including the “terrorist” forms. Terrorism is not radical in the sense of non-rational, fanatic, religious, individual or coming from manipulated or frustrated individuals: it has political roots, even though the causes it endorses are not legitimate and are not approved by significantly large parts of the third-party population¹⁴.

Depending on which vision of collective action is chosen, the questions of recruitment and reasons of the plunge into violent action will be treated quite differently. According to the theses favouring frustration and psychologising explanations, recruitment is settled through the

¹³ See for instance Charles TILLY, *Contention and Democracy in Europe, 1650-2000*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004 and also Barrington MOORE, *Injustice: The Social Basis of Obedience and Revolt*, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1978.

¹⁴ See Louise RICHARDSON, “Introduction” in Louise RICHARDSON (ed.), *The Roots of Terrorism*, New York Routledge, 2006, p. 2; Sidney TARROW, *Power in Movement*, Cambridge, CUP, 1998; Doug MCADAM, Sidney TARROW and Charles TILLY, *Dynamics of Contention*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001; Donatella DELLA PORTA, *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995 and Didier BIGO and Daniel HERMANT, “La relation terroriste”, *Etudes Polémologiques* #47, 1988.

clandestine organisations and the detection of individuals who are already fragile and “frustrated”, and who need some motivation to go further, to leave speech for action; hence the majority of these studies focus on the analysis of radical discourses, the authorities, the places where these discourses are spoken and the communication tools. No other actor is to be taken into consideration, and the relation is established between the clandestine organisation and its “environment”. Moreover, as it is presupposed that propaganda is effective through the facts and that new recruits are attracted through distant motivation, no serious study has been led on this matter: there are only lists of the means available to the organisation and the only proposition consists of monitoring, controlling, or simply banning them. As these means are often of common use (phones, Internet, gyms, pubs or places of worship), the recommendations eventually come to be more and more extremist, which only limits are the will to keep a certain presumption of innocence and to create “profiles” of potential groups to avoid the generalised suspicion of everybody by everyone. In the version favouring the interactionist and strategical theories, recruitment is most of the time made against an actor rather than for another one. The third party considers that action is required against one of the adversaries in a situation of injustice or domination, and thus joins the other adversary. What is at stake are the *errors made in the policies led by one adversary, which counts as much as the abilities of recruitment and the list of means of the other adversary*, the “radicalisation” is a loss of a certain indifference, or median position: the strikes and counter-strikes are the processes that lead third parties from one adversary to another. The recruitment into a clandestine organisation is not the result of its own skills, but rather often the consequence of errors in the previous policies of counter-terrorism or anti-terrorism.

Foreign policies led towards some countries, certain forms of war, coercion, and even torture, have definitely played a part in the dynamics of radicalisation and counter-radicalisation: more than that, the generalisation of controlling measures undertaken to fight against radicalisation can paradoxically increase the radicalisation process. It is then essential to give a thorough thinking on the policies implemented by all actors instead of concentrating only on the clandestine organisation’s tactics and strategies: this is what we call the “terrorist relation”.

If we now consider the solutions to be brought to the violent radicalisation phenomenon, we can see that the former theses call upon the army, the police or the intelligence services as the only answers. Eradication and total war are the terms used and the tendency is to go beyond the limits allowed or to push back the limits of the previous legal system, in the name of a discrepancy in efficiency that would exist between the possibility to act under cover and the possibility to use surveillance. Such terms as detection and prevention are privileged in order to fill the gap, but

shouldn't we remind that all these processes in which intransigency and preventive action are lauded were strongly unadvised in the relational approach on the dangers of escalation? It should indeed be useful and relevant to re-read and remember the lessons taught by the *Peace Studies* or the sociology of conflicts, on the Cold War period and the escalation process between actors. Everybody knows the resistances that sprung at that time, and even the insults that the researchers and parliamentary members had to face when they dared to bring up the necessity of de-escalation. Everybody also knows that this approach was more pertinent because it included more components, gave a part to the civil society and emphasized the relational dimension of violence. Likewise, the contemporaneous approaches of the conflict resolution insisting on the de-escalation phenomenon can also be used for the forms of political violence that affect western societies and they must not be considered as specific to "exotic" conflicts.

I. Understanding the radicalisation processes

To think the terrorist relation without allocating *a priori* the "origin of evil" to one of the actors – their "bad" violence purifying *a contrario* the violence practised by the others – leads to the necessity to study (echoing thus an economic metaphor) the production and circulation of violence between actors.

Thus, the analysis must uppermost define these actors and draw their relations and the mechanisms that give them a structure: these are the only means to understand the processes of radicalisation and counter-radicalisation, of escalation between actors, as radicalisation does not come from one side or one actor only.

Some studies favouring the irrational behaviour of the individual members of the clandestine group take great delight in writing the biographies, the personal trajectories of such or such "leader": once it was Carlos, Abou Nidal, Andreas Baader, even Jean-Marc Rouillan or Hans Joachīm Klein, nowadays Bin Laden, Al-Zarkaoui, or Al-Zaouahri¹⁵. The details of their lives, often quite common until they went underground, are scrupulously examined to find the proofs that this passage was but inescapable. Terrorism is not a relation, but is linked to one single actor: the terrorist is an individual cut from reality and suffers all the symptoms of megalomaniac paranoia.

¹⁵ Among many publications, see for instance Peter L. BERGEN, "The Bin Laden trial: what did we learn?", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (2001-11/12) vol. 24, #6, p.429-434; Michael COLLINS DUNN, "Usama Bin Laden: the nature of the challenge", *Middle East Policy* (1998-10) vol. 6 #2, p.23-28; Yossef BODANSKY, *Bin Laden: the Man who Declared War on America*, Rocklin, California, Forum, 1999; Jean-Charles BRISARD, *Zarkaoui. Le nouveau visage d'Al-Qaida*, Fayard, Paris, 2005.

In order to avoid this psychological reduction, other analyses carry on the same type of studies on the clandestine organisations, but include not only the group's pressure on the individual but also the group's aim: its objectives, targets, etc., which, though they might look irrational to external people, provide an intrinsic rationality that could explain the acts of actors defined as terrorists. The analysis of the ideology, action programmes, propaganda documents and declarations of individuals under arrest can give us an insight of their motives, and possibly anticipate their actions. Unfortunately, the study of ideologies only is still in the perspective of the single actor, unique acting subject, except when it sympathises with the victims and gives advice to the government forces, which supposedly are not able to interpret what they have in front of them.

More sociological works place back the ideological discourses in a larger cultural and political frame and try to describe how the clandestine organisations are part, or not, of the expressions of a social movement that would be larger. They analyse how the clandestine organisation takes root and how this process is reflected or not in its ideology. The studies led on the RAF by the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA) centre, were without a doubt amongst the most complete ones made on the relations between ideology and strategy, ideology and social basis. When the Italian Communist Party studied the Red Brigades and the "movementist" wing, it also developed this type of approach, adding considerations about representation in terms of social class. More recently, Gilles Kepel and his students analysed Al Qaeda and their texts and demonstrated the interest we could draw when the texts and discourses of the actors are taken seriously, instead of getting lost in the hypotheses on the psychology of individuals as provided by services and journalists¹⁶. This is even more crucial when many supposed analysts of Islamism and Al Qaeda do not read Arabic and refer *de facto* in their own analyses to the services' discourses quoting extracts from the clandestine organisation's speech translated into English. A quick survey of the main magazines in which the term "terrorism" appears in the title, shows that most of them come from the "expert" field¹⁷.

The authors, going beyond these analyses, and more familiar with the collective action theses, include the dynamic of the answer given by the government forces in their scheme. But once perceived, this dynamic blurs the readability of the clandestine organisations' ideologies: they adapt their tactics, if not their strategy, to their adversaries. The battle between the government forces and the clandestine organisations are stressed, be it at the local, national or transnational level: at the local level, the State's actions are placed at the scale of the criminal police or law; at

¹⁶ Gilles KEPEL (ed.) *Al-Qaida dans le texte. Ecrits d'Oussama ben Laden, Abdallah Azzam, Ayman al-Zawahiri et Abou Moussab al-Zarqawi*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2005.

¹⁷ Edna F. REID and Hsinchun CHEN, "Mapping the contemporary terrorism research domain", *Human-Computer Studies* 65 (2007) 42-56.

the national level, administrative derogations and exception laws often tend to be added, as they allow the intelligence services, and even the military forces to intervene (for instance, in the case of Northern Ireland); at the transnational level, the tendency is to generalise and consider it as a fight of coalesced States that would combine the police, legal and military forces, and the diplomatic services to face a set of clandestine groups that would be organised reticularly and that are often fantasised as coordinated at the planetary level.

Depending on the authors and institutions, the word “terrorist” is used to refer either to the clandestine organisations (almost the totality of the definitions given by the Code of Criminal Procedures in the Western countries), or to the State and the government members (a certain number of countries in South America keep using “State terror” to designate the dictatorships which they have been subjected to), or to both actors, in the same process of disapproval (however, UNO fails to give an unanimous definition of terrorism because it sort of sets on an equal footing both the action of the military forces and the action of the armed groups¹⁸). For a long time, in this kind of approach, the term “terrorism” was replaced by “urban guerrilla”, “subversion” or “insurrection”. Nowadays, the term “terrorism” and even “global terrorism” are used in every instance, even though in the specific case of Iraq, the British forces stood out and insisted upon keeping the distinction between antiterrorist operations and counter-insurrection¹⁹.

The model of the military confrontation takes over psychologism, and tactics of the various adversaries, their mobiles and means, the situation in which they enter action, or the sympathies they can rely upon are now taken into account.

Beyond the classical approach to conflict, when some authors come to consider the power struggle between two adversaries, they emphasize the fact that the society as a whole does not feel involved in the conflict and only exceptionally does it take side with one or the other adversary. Most of the time, third parties witness the fight indifferently and only feel concerned remotely, through a violence that is mediatised and experienced on the subjective mode of a partial or total identification to the victims. Since the 1980s, Schmid and Van de Graff showed, with the case of Southern Moluccas, that the dramatisation via the media not only brings an emotional participation and a political mobilisation, but also a distance and a paralysing fascination in front of violent acts

¹⁸ The discussions at the UNO in 2006 showed the impossibility for the Western governments to reach a consensus on the definition of terrorism as coming from one single actor: the bomb planter. See Thomas MERCIER, *La définition du terrorisme au sein des organisations internationales*, thesis for the IEP school, Paris 2006.

¹⁹ Christian OLSSON, “Afghanistan et Irak: les origines coloniales des guerres antiterroristes”, in Didier BIGO, Laurent BONELLI and Thomas DELTHOMBE (eds.), *La guerre au terrorisme et ses ombres*, Paris, La Découverte, 2008.

performed by clandestine organisations and shown on television²⁰. This lessens the relevance of the arguments that focus on the newness of spectacular attacks and the theses that insist upon the population's unanimity when condemning an organisation²¹.

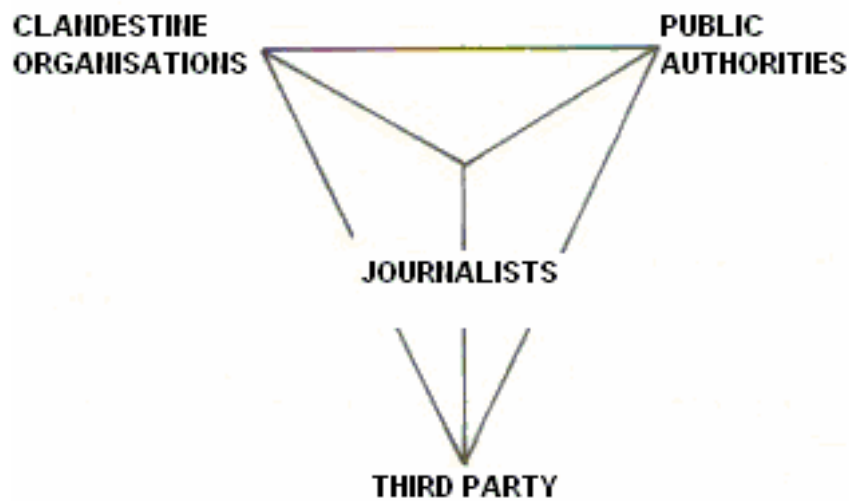
However, underlining the presence of a third party is not enough, as its identification is still not clear: victims, civilians, or media? Also, nothing has been made yet to question the structural conditions in modern societies that allow forms of violence to emerge, in which the violence as a show and the third party as an indifferent spectator are as important elements as the two adversaries engaged in the conflict. If we want to understand the various forms of individual involvement into violence and the constitution of clandestine micro-organisations, we need to understand first that they organise themselves at the very same moment and for the same reasons as the ones mobilising to obtain the unanimity against terrorism. To get support from 90% of the population but to let the remaining 10% get involved in violence, which thus questions the global social cohesion, is one of the paradoxical side-effect of the democratic governments' policies when they call upon unanimism. One emblematic example is the case of Spain dealing with the Basque question. Likewise, the anti-Americanism observed in some Middle-East and Asian areas can be interpreted as one of the results of the discourse of the world-wide union in the war against terrorism. Though it might seem scandalous, a certain indifference – instead of policies that emphasise enrolment, unanimity and integration as a form of assimilation – is structurally necessary as it allows tolerance between social groups, be it at the local, national, or translational levels.

Eventually, the triangle figure can be kept as it includes the relation to the third party that is the specific basis of the terrorist relation, which contrasts with other forms of fights such as guerrillas or civil wars. This figure should even be preferred to other formalisations that only include the clandestine organisations and the political authorities. Clausewitzian readings in terms of a dual mobilisation that leads to the “with us or against us” motto are inoperative and even have perverse effects, such as the pressure to obtain an unanimous condemnation of the illegal organisations eventually entice some individuals to support their objectives and join their means.

However, the triangle figure must be completed with median lines in order to include four actors, as shown below:

²⁰ A.P. SCHMID and V. de GRAFF, *Insurgent terrorism and the Western New Media*, Leiden, Pays Bas, Center for Study of Social Conflicts, 1980.

²¹ To be convinced, one just needs to remember the oppositions that arose among the readers of the French newspaper *Le Monde*'s editorial, called “nous sommes tous américains” (we are all Americans), just after the 9/11 bomb attacks, or to acknowledge the positions of the major newspapers in Chile and Argentina where the event was seen as a regrettable but nevertheless quite justified backlash of the American foreign policy symbolised by the *coup d'état* against Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973).



With this symbolisation of the relations, we enter a more original perspective that incorporates terrorism back to the social analysis and does not consider it as a product of the inter-state international relations or of military strategy, be it counter-insurrectional.

Indeed, the classical analyses of “terrorism” are always linked to an approach that defines the conflict in terms of rupture, difference or power struggle and lead to read the phenomenon as a crisis, a disorder or an exception... which encourages a Manichean simplification and exception effects. This approach makes superfluous any examination of the social conditions that produce violence, as violence is assigned from the start. This prejudice, which has never been questioned, is used as the basis for all the moral and philosophical discourses that thrive on the phenomenon and put the blame of violence on the individual.

Yet, if we accept the hypothesis that a conflict is an agonistic relation²², it is necessary to suppose a kind of continuity that specifies the number, the frame, the conditions and the challenges of the exchanges between the actors. The relation that settles between two groups and which sometimes can last, is made of this exchange of blows. However, contrary to the vindictory systems, durability is not a criterion for the terrorist relation: it remains unpredictable and can concentrate on a single act without any reciprocity. It does not open to a stable field from which a relational frame could be drawn and it thus keeps an erratic dimension that prevents any easy geographical or temporal circumscription.

²² As showed the now classical works by DURKHEIM, MAUSS, WEBER, CLAUSEWITZ or BOURDIEU.

Before even considering the analysis of the terrorist relation as the production and circulation of violence between the actors, we need to define our method. We do not think that the actors are fully conscious of the “rules of the game”. Moreover, the sole study of their discourses and acts is not sufficient to treat of terrorism. Actions are structured by similar mechanisms that emerge from the relation and create required milestones and nodosities in the individual or organisational trajectories.

Thus, if we absolutely need a sociology of action, such as inspired by Max Weber, it must be extended to what Pierre Bourdieu calls “genetic structuralism”, or to put it more simply, to a relational analysis of the trajectories. This analysis focuses more on the relation than on individuals, and aims at going beyond the actors’ strategies and representations to reveal the mechanisms that more or less unconsciously structure their behaviours.

With this approach, the purpose is to transcend the artificial opposition between structures and representations, to break with substantialism and to define actors only within and in respect to the relation itself. For us, this relational mode of thinking is the one and only possible to reach a true sociology of the violent phenomena, through the definition of their topology, that is by “*l’analyse des mécanismes qui définissent la proximité, le voisinage ou la distance de positions qui, apparemment, sont extérieures les une aux autres*” (the analysis of the mechanisms that define the proximity, the closeness or distance of positions that seem to be external to each other)²³.

The first axis of your research will then consist of delineating the mechanisms that structure the actors’ actions and representations. It should be reminded that these mechanisms are not pre-existent and that they are elaborated within the relation and transformed by the actor’s and the time’s action. They nevertheless condition what is possible and what is thinkable for the actors. It is thus necessary to distinguish what comes from the actor’s own psychology and beliefs from the constraints imposed by the relational mechanisms: mimetic rivalry, dramatisation and aesthetisation of violence, distance and alterity, the logics of clandestinity in the organisation. Moreover, we also need to apply the methods of the sociology of organisations to these specific clandestine organisations that use violence with a political purpose.

Once these mechanisms and their morphogenetic dimension will be highlighted, the second axis of research will concern the localisation of the actors in relation to what could be called a field, if we decide to leave aside its usual characteristics, culture and stability. Through the analysis of the actors’ strategic and tactical calculations, the mediatisation and its effects, and the political

²³ See Pierre BOURDIEU, *Choses dites*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1987.

challenges, various configurations of the relation will be determined, for which the lack of knowledge will be essential. Finally, these various configurations will help us to widen the scope of the analysis, by demonstrating that the terrorist relation reveals the theoretical issues planted by the state, citizenship and democracy on the one hand, and by the inter-state system, the international cooperation and its consequences on the sovereignty on the other, as well as the frontier between liberal and “useful” regimes in the war against terrorism²⁴.

II. Clandestinity, radicalisation and recruitment

Behind the use of the word “terrorism”, which is far from being neutral, two direct protagonists in the relation of political violence are hidden: on the one hand, the clandestine organisation and on the other, the public authorities. Unfortunately, though apparently simple, this localisation of the actors is not made in numerous analyses, which use the same term “terrorist” to define both the acts performed by desperate individuals and those of a clandestine organisation aiming at promoting a cause or modifying a policy set by the public authorities, through bomb attacks for instance (terrorist is also employed to define the repressive actions of a State against another or against its own people). But the distinction individual/organisation is essential for several reasons.

1. The individuals: isolated actors or members of an organisation?

Psychologism often considers that radicalisation comes from an individual motive or act. Fanaticism and what nowadays is called auto-radicalisation, are emphasised: a good example is the case of the Franco-Algerian young man who “offered his services” via web forums to the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) and was arrested by the French DST (Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire, Territorial Surveillance Directorate) in May 2007. But until now and as far as we know, individual acts of political violence are rare: they are either acts from mentally unhinged individuals – which cannot be assimilated to political violence, except if we consider the

²⁴ Didier BIGO, *L'impact sur le respect des droits de l'Homme et des libertés fondamentales dans les pays tiers de la stratégie de l'UE de lutte contre le terrorisme*, Briefing note for The European Parliament: Sub Committee: Human Rights, NO. EP/EXPOL/B/2006/19, December 2007.

target victim (like Ali Ağca or Richard Reid²⁵) – or they are acts which motives are more a matter of tyrannicide than pure terrorism or *coup d'état*.

In these examples, the individual acts on his own and believes that the death of the leader will change people's life. His project is based on his own death, which introduces a form of reciprocity (one life for another) that gives the moral dimension to the act. The individual dismisses the forms that we will call terrorist, in which there is a collective project, a plan or strategy set by an organisation which does not enrol individuals exclusively from the political circles close to the leader: tactics and strategy in which the rebel's romanticism and morality, when they exist, are submitted to the "cause".

What is destabilising for the analytical categories, is the oscillation between on the one hand, the belief that there is a strong individual religious investment into action leading to sorts of sacrificial suicide, and on the other hand, the strong supervision practised by the organisations when they deal with this kind of individuals. A good example is provided by the London bomb attacks (especially those that took place on July 21, rather than on July 7): they show that we still do not know quite well the relation to the circulation of information between the isolated individuals and the organisation. Is this information transmitted via the Internet or is it part of common beliefs that do not need any leading structure? The relation between Al Qaeda and all the bomb attacks attributed or claimed in the world is not that far from what the first international police congresses had called "the global anarchist conspiracy" at the beginning of the 20th century.

This point being clearer now, it is easier to understand that the narrowing of our field of study to the clandestine organisations exclude only a few contemporaneous historical data and have several useful advantages: sociologising the study of terrorism enables to avoid psychologising excesses about terrorist profiles, and to explain why the law, which by definition refers to the individual and not to the organisation, is struggling to find a definition of terrorism that would link together an individual, a reprehensible act and a political motivation.

The terrorist relation does not set a State against a violent individual for political reasons, nor a crowd against a State (this is the riot scenario), but a clandestine organisation against the public authorities that represent the State.

The organisation has its own specificities: it wants to be political, and not public; it wants to be pedagogic but uses violence instead of words to "convince by the fear". Hence this is why it needs

²⁵ The first one is responsible for the murder attempt against the Pope, in May 1981. The other, known as the "Shoe Bomber", was arrested in December 2001 while he was trying to set on fire some explosives that were hidden in his shoes. The French intelligence services refer to these cases as "dossiers camisole" (straightjacket files)...

to be clandestine, as it willingly excludes itself, as much as it is excluded, from the sphere of discussions between political parties or between trends inside one party. Its adversaries become enemies and the radicalisation of the conflict leads to their demonization, and eventually to their neantization. This process is general and it can be applied at the local, national and transnational levels. But hurried authors, losing their historical memories, want us to believe that this phenomenon is specific to the globality embodied by Al Qaeda and now that the conflicts are almost finished, they also tend to under-estimate the extremism of the clandestine organisations' positions which aimed at eradicating capitalism and were as such quite comparable to the global Jihad. The willingness to eliminate capitalism is undoubtedly no more moderate than the proclamation of the new Caliphate, and no more subject to "negotiations". The differences rather come from the changes in the repertoires of violent action (and in particular, targeted murders *versus* mass murders).

2. Clandestine organisations and recruitment

An individual who is part of an organisation acts differently than when he is isolated. The organisation socialises the individual and restructures his personality by socially controlling him via a specific organisation culture. The individual does no longer exist by himself, he is member of a group and, torn from the general ambient individualism he finds a model of warm and affective socialization within the clandestine organisation. He also finds a lot of violence and suspicion as in all spaces where the other's eye is permanently watching one's every move.

Is it surprising in these circumstances that many authors have compared the clandestine organisation to a substitute of family cell, work cell, religious sect, company, group of commando...? Certainly not. They have all in their own way felt the impact of the collective and the organisational logic presiding and complexifying the problem of the use of violence when it is neither individual nor massive.

Saying that violence is the fact of a 3 to 100 members' organisation means situating its scale, and understanding which group dynamics need be referred to. On a methodological point of view, this means that we need to be careful with the strictly psychological explanations as with the ones of the other extreme that try through structural macro-sociological considerations to explain the irruption (or the non-irruption) of political violence by referring to analyses on movements (or social antimovements), on the state of international relations and foreign policy. Current analyses

on radicalisation are typically characterised by a short-circuit between the individual's psychology and global geopolitics. Services are often far more careful than experts and insist on mediations.

The sociology of minorities, of small groups, of "gangs", in other words of organisations, is probably a more relevant framework to approach the structure of clandestine organisations. The contributions of this sociology allow understanding the internal functioning of the organisation and very often how it can lead to the irruption of political violence, without even it always being intentional.

One just needs to listen to testimonies of former actors (reformed, dissociated, "war veterans"²⁶) to realise the state of affairs: when the organisation comes before the irruption of violence with a political aim and even the clandestine work.

At first, the grouping operates between actors of a social movement who disagree with the general line of this movement and who often consider it being too weak, inert, and incapable of assuming all its claims²⁷. Those who dissociated from Al Qaeda insisted on the dimension of the discussions in the mosques as well as on the gyms or the cafés showing videos of the Abu Graib tortures and, when entering an organisation, to the progressive going underground to escape from arrests following minor crimes. Such arrests and often the release are perceived as a form of harassment leading to looking for clandestine radical organisations and their support groups. This aspect is central in all the interviews done by Farhad Khosrokhavar in France²⁸. Those individuals who eventually act have often already been arrested for minor crimes and consider they were badly treated by police due to racism or careerism of some judges. Therefore, they focused on specific individuals who symbolically represent the persons to be killed, while some of them generalised the thinking to all the citizens supporting the political system. Or at least, this is how they justify their progressive engagement and their acting violently. Techniques of harassment, of stirring things up are dissuasive for some, but generate the opposite reaction to some others. It is these small interactions with the police forces, with society, that participate to the initial dynamic where a higher level of violence is imperceptibly justified.

²⁶ For example Omar GUENDOUZ, *Les soldats perdus de l'islam. Les réseaux français de Ben Laden*, Paris, Ramsay, 2002.

²⁷ The works of Gilles Kepel and Farhad Khosrokhavar show how the development of radical Islamist groups in Maghreb is one of the direct consequences of the failure of political Islam. See Gilles KEPÉL, *Jihad : expansion et déclin de l'islamisme*, Paris, Gallimard, 2000 and Farhad KHOSROKHAVAR, *Les nouveaux martyrs d'Allah*, Paris, Flammarion 2003.

²⁸ Farhad KHOSROKHAVAR, *Quand Al-Qaïda parle. Témoignages derrière les barreaux*, Paris, Grasset 2006. The trial allowed to reconstitute similar elements can be found in the trajectories of the responsible for the March 11 2004 attacks in Spain. See notably the account of the 57-day trial: "11-M. El relato", supplement of *El País*, 8 July 2007.

We are far from moral debates on the ban on killing²⁹ and far closer to what we can call a mechanism of the clandestine work leading to violence in certain circumstances; circumstances in which the role of public authorities is sometimes as determining as that of the members of the clandestine organisation. Voluntarism does exist and preliminary ideological, political or religious preparation is important, but it is much less significant than what the actors pretend afterwards (and tell the analysts who take their word for it).

Finally, the organisation regroups “consciousized” individuals (whatever their theoretical engagement and their practice, be they intellectuals, billstickers, specialists of crowd control during the 1970s, preachers, proselytes, or even Internet specialists or fake ID paper makers today) who failed to have their voice heard in a larger group (from which they may come) that prefers other solutions than the radical engagement they advocate. The organisation then closes like a shell, seeks no longer to recruit massively, becomes elitist and perceives itself as “avant-garde”. Scissions after scissions, from sterile discussions to obscure glosses, and the group can progressively become a sect or cross political violence following actions condemned by the public authorities. Will then be at play the destiny of those who will choose to stay and promote violence within the organisation³⁰, and of those who will choose to split. Public debates on Islam and Islamism, on fundamentalist Islamism and salafist Islamism show the diversity of potential trajectories and the few who eventually choose to act violently. On the contrary, the so called “support groups” are often groups that mediate and allow for non-violent political engagement. This is true not only for nationalistic groups but also for NGOs or mosques that manage to gain the huge majority of actors engaged, when there is a competition between violent action and non violent action. It could reveal counter-productive to seek to ban or engage in an intrusive surveillance of these support groups, with potential undercover techniques. Indeed, these groups are not as much gateways towards radicalisation than buffers, allowing for the expression of some feelings of anger or injustice that may hurt the feelings of public authorities or other citizens, as they may be dishonest but are nonetheless symptomatic of specific readings of the world and political events. As long as the clandestine work is not concerned, these organisations that remain in the public game should not be pursued. We should rather observe the forms taken by the breaking-off of normal life and the start of underground meetings. This factor is probably crucial, and hastening via measures of closing down (groups) may be counter-productive. Some time ago, Martha Crenshaw highlighted the links

²⁹ On the legitimacy of Jihadist violence, in the circles close to radicals, see Luis MARTINEZ, *Structures, environnement et basculement dans le Jihadisme*. Working paper, 2007.

³⁰ The interviews we have been able to do with members of intelligence services reveal confrontations within some organisations between those who favour a logistical support for combattants in lands of *Jihad* (Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan) and those who wish to act on the European soil.

between going underground and the process of violent radicalisation through the confinement in a separate world – that of the organisation – and the link between the clandestine work and the fact of being pursued by police or going to prison. We have already mentioned this, as Donatella della Porta. “Clandestinity” should be slowed down in order to prevent radicalisation and the violent act. There should be zones where radicalism is limited to verbal and public expression. Public debate, even very local, is the best “fireguard” against violence. It does not serve as an agent of propaganda as some British politicians seem to believe as well as some researchers who oppose older lessons learnt from Northern Ireland, in the name of a so-called radical newness of the current situation.

It is the form and the nature of the clandestine work that are crucial: from a specific moment or place to a permanent status. Why? Entering the organisation and passing from a normal life to an underground life rather rapidly socializes the individual in a different way. The organisation is like a closed world, closed on itself (new family, new job, and new friends’ relations). As a clandestine counter-society, it uses the code of values of holist societies (personal relations, vengeance, honour, rites of passage) and poses the primacy of the whole (the organisation) on the sum of parties (individuals). The personal status disappears behind that of member of the group. Following Durkheim’s words, there is a return to a “mechanical solidarity” expressing the social cohesion of the group and explaining a certain number of phenomena that are more than just anecdotic. Thus, for the “terrorist apprentice” everything starts through “initiating rites”, through armed struggle. He needs to change his name, i.e. transform his identity and personality. He will have a new name, a symbolic nickname... Just as in gangs, the newcomer may have to go through some tests before being truly able to enter the group. Preaching, crossing borders with documents or money, or even participating to an armed action... This answers to two imperatives: the first, functional prevents the neophyte from “turning back”. The second, symbolic imperative makes him a brother in arms. In both cases there is a rupture with the past. When armed struggle is proof of something else, as a sign of ideological commitment or sign of a true “conversion”, the rupture will have an even stronger meaning for the individual. This is true whether local or transnational, but the uprooting can be even deeper in the second case. This has been expressed by many former Guantanamo prisoners who originated from Europe, Australia or the United States and for whom Afghanistan or Kashmir were places of fascination of which they knew only the name.

Once they have entered the organization, they obey to very precise norms of behaviour because they have to submit to their status. In a hiding place of Pavie discovered in 1975, a special instruction book entitled “Norms of Security and work style” describing a strict schedule regulating every aspect of daily life: food, clothes, phone calls, sexual interactions for the members of the Red

brigades. In 2006, the Spanish *Guardia civil* found a similar document in an apartment belonging to ETA. It seems other groups that have called themselves Al Qaeda in Morocco, Algeria, Indonesia or Iraq also have this style of instruction document that include even more precise rules on similar details as well as on religion.

Such a behaviour that reminds us of religions sects – even in secularist organisations – confuses the "reformed" and prevents them from understanding, even later, the meaning of their acts once they have left the organisation and become individuals again. When they describe their everyday life, many discourses vary between the warm sympathy uniting members of the organisation, a "real family" and on the other side, a bureaucratic organisation with leaders who are very far from the concerns at the basis. Thus, the sociology of organisations leads inexorably to a theorisation of rules ensuring security, efficiency and professionalisation of the group.

The organisation's will of seriousness will play an important role in its recruitment policy. The organisation will systematically avoid romantics, students, intellectuals, in sum all those who believe in exaltation in combat, a sense of sacrifice. The group will favour "professionals", or those who have a chance of belonging to the "reference" social class, national or religion group. The US trial of Zacarias Moussaoui linked to the 9/11 attacks showed that the organisation's leaders did not want him. If he was candidate, he was not serious enough for the organisation³¹.

This introverted aspect of the organisation's discourse is often neglected in analyses though it is an essential factor for self-motivation and depersonalisation. They do not murder, they kill victims by following orders of the organisation. Moreover, and this may be new, they may not hesitate to commit suicide in order to kill a maximum number of "enemies"³². All others, be they women or children, are included in this category of the enemy.

But are these implacable rules always followed? No. Most actors admit they did not respect them. Even the harshest ones had to transgress the rules once: a phone call to a parent, an adventurous *sortie*, meeting with women, drinking booze and watching porn movies occurred within the organisations that consider themselves as the "purest" for Islam, etc. But what does that cost to the organisation? On the contrary, they can play on the feeling of culpability, of fault of the

³¹ During his trial, Khaled Cheikh Mohammed, one of the organisers of the September 11 attacks denounced his "problematical personality", his "far too high degree of self-confidence" and the fact that he "speaks too much". The testimonies of the other members of Al Qaeda all went in this direction... On his trajectory, see Stéphane BEAUD and Olivier MASLET, "Un passage à l'acte improbable ? Notes de recherche sur la trajectoire sociale de Zacarias Moussaoui", *French Politics Culture and Society*, Volume 20, n°2, Summer 2002.

³² A lot of research has been dedicated to this dimension of the voluntary combattant death and to what has been designated as "suicide bombers". On this aspect, see the works by Diego Gambetta (*Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), those of Farhad Khosrokhavar and the special issue of *Cultures & Conflits* "Mort volontaire combattante : sacrifices et stratégies", n°63, Autumn 2006.

terrorist with regards to the cause. The “big brother” will come and explain to the young one the risks he took and that could have an effect on the organisation as a whole. He will remind him that he is no longer free to do what he wants of his own body, not even his death because he has given it all to the organisation, which in return takes care of everything for him: housing, food, pocket money... and especially “loves” him for his devotion.

Without looking into any deeper, let’s recall that for this code of relation to be effective, there needs to be a hierarchy: “the organisation comes from the pyramidal fantasy. The pyramid imposes its order. Efficiency arises from hierarchy”. Freud, in these words had already shown the relations of homology between the army and the church, and the clandestine organisation seems to be a summary and a concentrate of both. There is nothing really surprising then that this type of organisation cultivates the myths of chiefs who know every weak point of the “system” and serve the organisation. Nevertheless, this contradicts the relation of equality between brothers in arms. “The bases are there only to carry the top, to signify the existence of a central point, the one that links and unites”. Quite often, the actions of the adversaries who do not know the organisation but its leader reinforce this phenomenon ever more, as shown by the Bin Laden case, though he is at the top of an organisation named “the basis”³³.

This is the framework through which one ought to analyse the recruitment policy of contemporary Islamic militants. There is nothing exceptional here, nothing that would be linked to a cultural or religious specificity, only maybe some variations compared with other clandestine organisations. Even if mosques have been mentioned as a favoured place for recruitment, by trying to characterize them according to preaches and their imams belonging to more or less fundamentalist groups, there is no such evidence that mosques have favoured recruitment for clandestine organisations aiming to perpetrate attacks. Following the 1986 and 1995 matrix in France, it seems that the bomb makers came from another country than the one they attacked and that there were very few internal support groups. The latter sometimes even ignored that they were attempts to perpetrate attacks on their territory and their society. They may have thought that it was arms traffic in favour of their “brothers” engaged in combats far away. Apart from London, the main attempts for recruitment since 2001 have followed this kind of scenario as shown by the trials in Germany and Italy. The studies that have been done on the “careers” of the Islamic arrested for having attempted to perpetrate attacks (by Fernando Reinares in Spain and by Farhad

³³ Similarly, Laurent Bonnefoy shows that in Iraq the American focus on Al-Zarkaoui ended up in giving this relatively marginalised and contested man a position of power by the insurgents. See also Laurent BONNEFOY, “Le mythe Al-Zarkaoui, ou la légitimation de la guerre en Irak”, in Didier BIGO, Laurent BONELLI and Thomas DELTHOMBE (eds.), *La guerre au terrorisme et ses ombres*, Paris, La Découverte, 2008.

Khosrokhavar in France) seem to confirm this aspect³⁴. If the people arrested were often more religious than their families and had started a process of “born again Islam”, it is not always at the mosque that they have met their recruiters or that they have radicalised by listening to preaches. The idea according to which ardent discourses against the West preached by some imams could lead to violent actions is not really demonstrated. As we mentioned in the introduction, the discourses do not radicalise the individuals, but they serve as *justification structure* to those who already are radicals. Recruitment places are often more prosaic: cafés, gyms and prisons. These are common characteristics in the previous periods. A café is a place where it is easy to start a conversation and meet again without attracting the attention. They allow some recruiters to spot serious individuals, to select them from dreamers who could be dangerous for the organisation’s security. They often study the family and professional structure of the recruit and rarely privilege intellectuals who tend to be attracted by discourses rather than action, and are often too talkative. The fear for infiltration often plays a key role in the selection. The places that are known to be watched are banned. And this has reinforced the suspicion towards the preachers who speak too openly in the mosques. Moreover, as we will see later, clandestine organisations tend to think that the recruitment is not central and that the question is not to constitute a mass party but rather an “elite”, be it technical, political or religious that will “enlighten” the others through its actions. This explains the weak recruitment policy and the use of personal relations when someone is necessary. As a result, it is not the most motivated who will be “recruited” and who will act, but often the individuals who have no aim in life and who possess some kind of know-how that can be useful for the organisation.

The recruitment in prisons is therefore not so surprising. Individuals in prison are already socialised to a sort of rupture with society and have therefore less difficulty to live in a small and underground group if needed. Some of them have also another relation to the use of violence than the people living outside prison, and a certain idea of morality that is obviously not the one developed in places of worship.

The French example of Safé Bourada, who was condemned in 1998 for his participation to the 1995 attacks and arrested again in September 2005 after he was freed from prison is often cited by intelligence services. Bourada was indeed suspected of being the driving force of a new group called *Ansar al-Fath* that he presumably founded during his imprisonment with some of his co detainees. According to suspicions, this group would have planned to send volunteers in Iraq or

³⁴ Fernando REINARES, “Hacia una caracterización social del terrorismo yihadista en España: implicaciones en seguridad interior y acción exterior”, Real Instituto Elcano, 2006 and Farhad KHOSROKHAVAR, *Quand Al-Qaïda parle. Témoignages derrière les barreaux*, Paris, Grasset 2006.

even to prepare attacks in France. Beyond this case, it is not surprising that prison does not stop the fighting of the radical groups' members but is only its continuation³⁵. Many practices as recruiting, trying to convince others politically or religiously, refusing to follow courses given by women, excluding non Muslim detainees, writing anti-Western poems, etc... extend the battle they fight outside against the values they reject. One should nevertheless not generalise and should distinguish the respect that these radicals may inspire to young delinquents (especially when they replace the disregard for the North African by a fear of the Muslim) and new dynamics of violence. This is even more the case that being known by police services often hinders recruiters.

Gyms have often been evoked following the July 7 attacks in London. The fact that they had watched videos of Abu Ghraib while jogging on the machines and that indignation was felt collectively makes us think of a reaction of anger and will of revenge, though it seems the trial limited this version. Though they went to the same gym, some of them had known each other before.

Recruitment is no "competition" wherein the most performing and most motivated ones would be chosen, it is rather a question of circumstances. This is no fishing activists ready to act, in a prepared space, like fishing farmed salmon. The "gateway organisations" thesis, according to which these organisations socialise individuals, prepare them to become radicals while only playing an intermediate role, is a fantasy born from recruitment procedures often used by intelligence services themselves. This is not the way clandestine organisations work and their relations with non-clandestine organisations are often tainted with hatred and opposition. It is certainly not a preparatory field to be used afterwards.

Beyond the organisational principle, the second term of the formula, "clandestinity" is crucial. It distinguishes organisations that act violently and sign by using a set of initials for example, leaving the individuals anonymous, from organisations that consider themselves as political parties united around known people and that may advocate violence. It also distinguishes these organisations from those that are engaged in public debates, even though in extreme terms. It has always been tempting to combine the various types of organisations and to forbid organisations or places that develop illegitimate discourses for the majority, but the conflict resolution processes show that it is these organisations that have managed to "deradicalise" clandestines and they have been far more useful than harmful for authorities. The case of Northern Ireland is quite marking in this way: no

³⁵ In another and much theorized register of the "penitentiary struggle", see Dominique LINHARDT, "Réclusion révolutionnaire. La confrontation en prison entre des organisations révolutionnaires et un Etat. Le cas de l'Allemagne dans les années 1970", *Cultures & Conflits* n°55, 2004, pp. 113-148.

Good Friday Agreement would have been possible without the role of all the non clandestine organisations expressing very opposite views.

We would also like to recall the mid-1970s when the PLO was considered as a clandestine organisation for some people and as a political resistance movement for others. Its leaders were known to all, and even if they would sometimes use terrorist attacks this homology did not suffice to make it a clandestine organisation. On the other hand, dissident branches of the PLO, such as the PFLP of Georges Habache, or the Revolutionary Fatah of Abou Nidal, were clandestine organisations; their leaders could not go public without fearing arrests. Why don't we ask the same question regarding Al Qaeda, be it the basis or organisations that claim their affiliation to it?

3. Clandestinity and its various implications

Clandestinity differs depending on the organisation. Some organisations are totally underground and possess no political expression, some play with the country's legality in order to create, in parallel to the clandestine organisation, a partisan or trade union organisation in charge of some aspects of the activist work, or a press organ in charge of justifying the actions, or influence places of worship.

Some authors use the expression "legal front" to describe this double structure. Though the term may be right, it supposes that one believes in a functional division of work between the clandestine organisation and its legal front. According to this division, the second would be subordinate to the first as the legal organisation would not have the same priorities as its clandestine counterpart and would wish to have a strong autonomy when it is not the direction of operations: "militaries must obey to the political". But even when a simple functionalist division existed at first, very rapidly conflicts of tendencies and scissions could appear between the clandestine and the legal organisation. Such a statement on nationalistic organisations can serve as a research avenue to analyse reticular links between Al Qaeda, national clandestine organisations and movements seeking to propagate faith.

Moreover, the two structures tend to recruit differently with time, thus deepening the difference between them. This rupture may sometimes be softened when the members of the clandestine organisation who are known by police stop their activity and enter the legal organisation in order to continue the combat in a different way.

The duality of structures due to clandestinity can be found at the individual level. Some members of the organisations who are researched by police are perpetual clandestines. Some others

have clandestine activities by night but have a regular life during the day because police is not looking for them. Some organisations regroup clandestine people in order to set up professional commandos, while some others stick to less dangerous “missions”. On the contrary, in other organisations, the two groups are mixed in order to harden the most “novice” elements.

The level of clandestinity of the individuals inside the organisation, and that of the organisation itself, are fundamental elements in order to understand the evolution of violence. The more powerful clandestinity is, the more individuals are cut from society, and the more they live in closed groups under the influence of a leader. Thus, there is a risk that the radicalism of actions increases as the small group necessarily lives by aligning itself to the more extreme positions that reinforce its identity and thereby exclude the moderate position that may endanger its very existence³⁶.

If clandestinity is very often synonymous of a rupture with society, it has been associated (since World War 2) to the idea of networks communicating between themselves and thus to a massive circulation of information and individuals within clandestinity.

The thesis of a “terrorist International” comes from this very idea. Beyond the existence of various clandestine organisations, there would exist very secret networks that would link them together, and which centre used to be in Moscow, in the KGB offices, and would today be located in the so-called tribal zones of the Afghan-Pakistan borders, or according to some more original versions in the United-States, in the CIA offices, when it’s not in Israel. This thesis of a “terrorist International” has globalised and speaks of a global terrorism³⁷.

If journalists or analysts are avid of such thesis to write successful books on a small number of personalities, the various police and intelligence services as well as military actors may laugh at such a simplistic reasoning. For them, we ought to abandon the idea of a fixed centre and keep the idea of a network of organisations in different countries, even if some may only have sporadic contacts, or even publicly pledge their alliance to Al Qaeda, such as the GSPC³⁸.

Once again, nothing is new today. We should remember the expert discourses on euroterrorism as a grouping of various organisations (BR, RAF, CCC, 17 November) and the prediction

³⁶ The testimonies of some spouses or partners of the authors of the March 11 attacks in Madrid during the 2007 trial clearly show the progressive process of closure of the group to the point of excluding even the close ones. See “11-M. El relato”, supplement of *El País*, 8 July 2007.

³⁷ See Paul L. WILLIAMS, *Al Qaida: Brotherhood of Terror*, New York, Alpha, 2002, Rohan GUNARATNA, *Inside Al Qaida*, London, Hurst, 2002; Alain BAUER and Xavier RAUFER, *La guerre ne fait que commencer*, Paris, JC Lattès, 2002.

³⁸ See Olivier ROY, “Le réseau de la terreur. Al Qaida franchisé”, *Le Monde diplomatique*, September 2004; Peter BERGEN, *Holy War Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden*, London, Phoenix, 2001.

according to which a third world war had started, led by combatant communist parties that would triumph. It was thought that at least European left-wing clandestine organisations had contacts, and common objectives and strategy. These organisations did not even hide it, and proclaimed it very clearly thus validating the thesis! Contemporary books (from similar authors sometimes) reproduced exactly the same errors of analysis. The incapacity of expert networks to renew their frame of analysis is surprising and would merit deeper research.

But beyond all factual errors of these hypotheses that have led to an overestimation of danger and to alarmist discourses from government coalitions at the transnational scale, from international institutions and from some analyses of the European Council, relayed by national governments and journalists, there is a real question for the contemporary period: is there a network of clandestine people moving from one organisation to the other?

Some individuals have moved from Algeria to Chechnya, then to Afghanistan and Iraq. But the fact that these individuals could move is not significant of the strength of the organisational structure. Following some individual trajectories, it is possible to reconstitute the logic of the move from one organisation to the other: this logic being quite different from that of clandestine networks that would suppose many active militants and a population that would be sensitive to their action.

The first and most frequent case of passage is that of specialisation. The clandestine becomes a specialist of his “professional” domain; he knows this or that weapon, explosive or triggering and this or that arms retailer, or has knowledge and know-how on the logistical aspect. Thus he may share his knowledge, sometimes for a fee, with members of other clandestine organisations that he may have met at training camps or during forced exiles in a neighbouring country or further away. If his organisation has problems, he is immediately welcomed in another organisation, independently to any ideological difference.

If we go further in this logic, we end up on mercenary practices or forms of “international brigades” of Islam and we should not be surprised by the lack of coherence of some trajectories. The transition of an individual from one organisation to another does in no way mean that there is an ideological convergence between the two clandestine organisations, nor a grouping of their objectives or their internationalisation: it just allows to observe that the rule of the division of work also applies in the world of clandestine organisations and that they even reproduce the social structures they are supposed to fight.

The second case of passage is that of the scission for ideological or personal reasons (problem of leadership). The individual takes some other people with him to form a new organisation that will

sign with a different acronym or may even claim paternity for the first and will later merge with another more important, more “prestigious” organisation. The formation of the Algerian GSPC breaking away from the GIA on the basis of a debate regarding the killing of civilians but also of a fight between “emirs”, is emblematic in this regard. Once again we find effects of hierarchy, “professional ascension”, contrasting sharply with the discourses trying to justify the scission and/or the joining to another organisation. Once again it is not a question of a built-up network with exchange of information and people, but of individual strategies of internal social promotion within clandestinity, of search for notoriety, cutting with the monotony of clandestine work.

The third and less common case of passage is closer to the idea of a network. An organisation will welcome by “brotherhood in arms” foreign comrades who would have been forced to flee their country or who would return from an armed conflict. This is probably the research avenue that ought to be privileged to explain the originality of links between the different clandestine organisations that claim to belong to Al Qaeda. The global approach of counter-terrorism has led to a multiplication of these brotherhoods for combats that were until then isolated. This is flagrant in Islamic countries. It can also be the case in other zones, such as Nepal.

The distinction between internal and international terrorism is not really significant, but if we decide to use these terms, we should recall that an internal clandestine organisation is often much more powerful and strong than an organisation that considers itself international by lack of internal roots. The global is often only a surface.

The morphology of the terrorist relation that we suggest seeks to avoid errors concerning the separation between internal and international terrorism, and terrorism and State terror. This morphology allows with no doubt to better understand where some notions meet and overlap and puts the accent on the number of actors, the position they occupy in the relation, and their aims.

4. Clandestine organisations and screen organisations

The “internal” clandestine organisation, i.e. the one that will recruit on a local limited basis (linguistic, ethnical, ideological or religious “communities”) and structure itself according to the promotion of armed struggle can act either according to revolutionary or nationalistic and separatist motives, and most frequently a mixture of both. Even if the justifications are expressed in a religious discourse of restoration of an order linked to ideas – a neo-community according to

Farhad Khosrokhavar – the nationalistic motivations serve as a local basis to the recruitment.³⁹ The federative dimension is anti-Americanism, in the same vein as the anti-imperialism that used to be in Latin America and is being rediscovered. Very often, in typologies, reference is made to the objectives the clandestine organisations assign themselves, and very rarely the “public” objectives are distinguished from the real objectives.

The words of members of clandestine organisations are taken for granted when they proclaim themselves revolutionary, nationalists or djihadists, claiming symbolic values they will later seek to monopolize by all means. Their language strategy is also followed without any critical distance though they are treated on the same basis – they belong to the so-called terrorist category – while paradoxically the organisation’s rooting or legitimacy is not put into question. This time, there is a blind belief in the current political power.

This results in typologies that are both hybrid and dangerous because they generate confusion or even disinformation. This is the case when we speak of revolutionary terrorism (left or right), separatist terrorism (ethnic, regionalist, nationalist or independantist) and of diplomatic terrorism (state or organisation) or of fanatic religious terrorism. This gives reason to the thesis according to which the clandestine organisation is revolutionary, nationalistic, plays a diplomatic role, or is religious.

But even if the clandestine organisation was born from a social movement, that may be revolutionary, nationalistic, anti-imperialist or religious, it does not share the objectives of the movement, as Michel Wieviorka had showed.

Most of the time the organisation emerges from a relation between actors, through which the passage to violence is the result of reciprocal engagement dynamics, leading to the spiral of radicalisation, counter-radicalisation, and new radicalisation. Situations in Afghanistan and Iraq that have long been analysed as the ideological take of Al Qaeda on some groups must be read as reactions to the mass logics of counter-terrorism initiated by the actors of antiterrorism.

In order to put light on the distortion and the rupture that exist between the clandestine organisation and the revolution, the independence, the anti-imperialist fight or the restoration of an order based on sacred texts, we will use the key-word “vocation” in our typology.

³⁹ Farhad KHOSROKHAVAR, *Les nouveaux martyrs d’Allah*, Paris, Flammarion 2003. See also Romain BERTRAND, “Plus près d’Allah’. L’itinéraire social et idéologique d’Imam Samudra”, in Annie COLLOVALD and Brigitte GAÏTI (eds.), *La démocratie aux extrêmes. Sur la radicalisation politique*, Paris, La Dispute, 2006.

The clandestine organisation aims at promoting the revolutionary, nationalist or religious ideal. Or at least, this is what the organisation claims. But in each case, we will need to study whether the real objectives correspond to the legitimating discourse.

But what happens when the clandestine organisation is not at the origin of its own actions? It can be only an executive organ of a foreign government that would sponsor, finance and protect it in exchange of acts the organisation would commit for this government. The notion of screen organisation is here more effective than that of clandestine organisation.

This does not mean that the screen organisation is not clandestine, but the strong holist and communitarian structure, reinforced by the belief in a specific ideology and common “memories of arms” is looser. Clandestinity then exists only during the operation. Individuals depend on networks that are more or less linked to foreign intelligence services, and their faithfulness does not go to the organisation itself but sometimes to a much wider ethnical or religious community that would use the clandestine organisation only to obtain some political results that would otherwise remain limited in a general strategy. The screen organisation is at the mercy of the state that sponsors its logistic (weaponry, training camps, financing...) and does not have its own policy in this field in order to gain its independence, contrary to so-called internal clandestine organisations where burglaries, rackets, hostage tacking... are used to finance through crapulous means the work of clandestine individuals. The result is that screen organisations have greater means (more sophisticated weapons...), smaller risks (often, crapulous operations enabled police to catch members of clandestine organisations), but are far more dependant on the state-sponsor, which enables the latter to efficiently put pressure on those organisations that would go away from the political line and the objective this regime imposed. This reasoning that appeared to account for covert action practices by secret services was used as reasoning for the militaries when they needed to focus on clandestine organisations acting from abroad and hitting the national territory. The geopolitical approach seized the network to see it as a global territorial space. But the network is limited in terms of population. It is inscribed in reticularization but not in the homogenization of zones of control.

The notion of screen that we use (at the same time obstacle, hindrance and surface on which the image of an object reproduces) show that the originality of this form of terrorist relation remains in the fact that the organisation does not come first. The organisation is the intermediary, the “media”, the screen that hides the ones behind the action and prevents the victim from retaliating, by interposing itself between the main actors that are often (but not always) two States. The more reticulated and apparently global it seems, the more choosing to attack a state-sponsor is delicate. A

posteriori it would appear as arbitrary if the original suspicions ended not being confirmed. The war on terror wanted to place itself within retaliations that would be massive enough to be dissuasive. The first military successes made this strategy appear as successful. But this meant forgetting the role of third parties in the mobilisation of the conflict when a dual logic is totally applied, leaving them no right to be neither on one side nor the other.

III. Mimetic rivalry or distancing?

For these third parties, the actors of this relation seem to unconsciously imitate one another rather than being radically different or far from one another. They reproduce the same accusations, the same words. The more violence increases, the more undifferentiation reigns between these two foes that become twins through violence. Only the outside observer can perceive the symmetry of accusations, the structure of reciprocity that commands their relation beyond all the difference they never end putting forward. The imitation of the other in the discourse, in the attitude, the puerility of *“he’s the one who started”* are symptomatic of the mimetic force of rivalry opposing the adversaries and the illusory differences they seek to promote.

Consequently, it is the resemblances between opponents, the identity of the starting points and of manoeuvres, the symmetry of gestures that strike the observer. The following remark by René Girard could be applied to terrorism: “while we see the result above all, i.e. the victory or defeat of one or the other and the difference that emerges from the fighting, traditional and primitive societies put the accent on the reciprocity of the process, on the mutual imitation of antagonists”⁴⁰. But are the adversaries equivalent? Certainly not.

The position of clandestine organisations and the asymmetry of their opposition to governments explain their conception of violence. They need to believe that this violence will put an end to the indifference and will massively convince third parties in order to compensate from the unbalance of initial forces. Without this belief, the project cannot be achieved and is immediately invalid, and it is the heart of the ideological argument of all clandestine organisations. Propaganda by action yesterday, martyrdom by suicidal action today... and the exemplar value of these forms of actions are always pushed forward in order to generate new vocations. The fact of believing that it is possible to recruit without doing militant work, without mass organisation, that the fact of being so close to the reference people that they will obviously and spontaneously recognize in the action is a

⁴⁰ René GIRARD, *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*, Paris, Grasset, 1978.

structural characteristic coming from the rupture generated by clandestinity. It should be noted that very often in order to explain their incapacity to prevent terrorist attacks the opponents to the clandestine organisations tend to (unwillingly) relay the belief, exacerbate the discourse of the “contamination” of ideas and of act, and complain from the media while paradoxically permanently reproducing the horror of the attacks by associating them to apocalyptic comments. Instead of insisting on the difference of forces and of legitimacy, the governments often chose to exaggerate the potential of a handful of individuals by supposing the mechanical effects of impetus the clandestine organisation believes in. But seeing or even secretly approving does not mean doing. Recruitment barely uses televised mediation, DVD or Internet. Imitation attacks, called “copy cat”, in which amateurs who have no link with an organisation act after having seen the latter on television or after having been convinced by texts without any inter-connection with a particular milieu are rare. The attacks of July 21 in London are an example. It made the services shudder, because if propaganda by act hits the imaginaries enough to generate an automatic reproduction, then surveillance in the *milieus* is not enough and absolutely everyone should be kept under surveillance. But in fact such is not the case. On a sociological basis, propaganda by fact is not efficient and is very rare; it is currently crucial to remind this. Services, governments and many experts are so fascinated by the organisation they combat that they reproduce the thesis on its capacity in terms of danger and in terms of diffusion and tend to become zealous auxiliaries of this organisation because they do not understand the structures of mimetic rivalry and consequently participate to their sudden increase. Experts repeat in their own words and in the name of the condemnation of the clandestine organisation the very founding of the organisation’s discourse on its capacity to destroy and to generalize its acts. We will come back to this aspect in our recommendations that insist on the fact of not giving such importance to the organisation, of not exaggerating its power and of not worrying the third parties so as to generate a mobilisation that would favour the government as it would produce the opposite effect of what is wanted. The only rational attitude would be to calm things down, seek for de-escalation instead of transforming the fight against terrorism into a total war using intrusive surveillance of all suspects via the surveillance of the circulation of information. Permanently envisaging the worst case scenario is playing the game of propaganda of these clandestine organisations.

Considering the unfavourable balance of force of clandestine organisations, they cannot win militarily. They can therefore only destabilize governments through a more symbolic fight on legitimacy. Therefore, their obsession is to question the very idea of the legitimacy of the monopoly of violence exerted by those who govern, by directly attacking the notion of state, the use the

leaders have of it on a national basis, or to the notion of an international system ensuring a more or less fair but stable order on an external basis. The more the governments accept the idea that they are close to the end, that they are potentially threatened of destruction by clandestine organisations, the more they give reason to the latter.

All the discourses of clandestine organisations have a permanent element beyond their diversity: attacking the legitimacy of the security contract that is passed between society and state and the capacity to have an international order that would not be iniquitous. For long it has been on the first aspect that the justification of the use of violence by the clandestine organisations was built.

They try to re-discuss the tacit agreement according to which the use of violence is a state monopoly. By presenting their leaders as a small mafia-type organisation, without any active support, they have planned to oppose this monopole in the name of a superior and more universal legitimacy. Discourses by the Brigadists, ETA, IRA and INLA activists and others, sufficiently preoccupied by the will to theorize their actions went in this direction: to break the symbolic link of State institutions and push them to pure violence in order to justify their own violence. Since the early 1980s, and particularly with the Israel-Palestine conflict, it is the second aspect – of a profoundly unequal international order – that has been attacked. Secularist discourses of the FPLP, of Abou Nidal, or more religious ones as those of Hamas or Al Qaeda are structured on this basis. When they focus on the international order rather than on a particular State and when they put injustice forward, or even the lack of equality and the arbitrariness of this order, they seek to reproduce the same reasoning and to transform a certain American hegemony into a mafia-style and pervert order (sometimes even a depraved order when the discourse is religious), that helps Israel to maintain against all. The fact that the Western political theory justifies much better the State from the inside than the international system in terms of global legitimate order has certainly played a crucial role in the success of the movements – at least regionally. They were able to use an anti-Israelism and anti-Americanism going much further than the previous organisations' capacity to promote the anti-capitalist revolution. But even if the legitimacy conflict was transposed at the global scale, it could not put on a same level the sum of all elected governments and an auto-proclaimed organisation such as Al Qaeda, except if we symbolically give it the implicit capacity to question legitimacy. In a famous article, Alexander Wendt mentioned that international anarchy exists only as long as the states believe it exists and behave as if it indeed exists. It is just the same thing with regards to global terrorism and to Al Qaeda's capacities.

Al Qaeda is a small organisation, especially at the global level. Its symbolic power of attraction comes from the force its opponents believe it has. If they associate the population of the entire

world and theirs to potential enemies, even from within, who would be contaminated by Bin Laden's ideology, by transforming a small group into an almighty enemy that can hit more or less when and where he wants, it is because they are stuck in the notion of duality and therefore reconstruct an enemy equal in size. They build the enemy as their twin, or even as the one they would like to be if they could deliver from the rule of law's "constraints"⁴¹. It is interesting to note that the more or less inventive descriptions of Al Qaeda in some popular books written by researchers who romance their description for commercial reasons after terrorist attacks, do not teach us anything on the attacks themselves but show a lot on the cultural stereotypes of those who write. In the British books, Al Qaeda resembles what would be a mixture of MI5 and MI6; in the American books, Al Qaeda seems to have the informational characteristics of the NSA and of the Point Dexter project on *Total Information Awareness* renamed *Terrorist Information Awareness*. In France, Al Qaeda is seen as playing at a smaller scale, as if home made and somehow similar to the French secret services... Those services that work at the European scale and are in need of collaboration believe that the Al Qaeda "basis" manages quite well to activate its local antennas that stay quite autonomous, in a similar way to how Europol imagines its own relation with national polices. The construction of the enemy by projection of the self, more or less fantasized and hated at the same time is a constant feature that have widely been showed by studies on the Cold war during the escalation. USSR was analysed as a monstrous double of the United States and not for what it was, which led to systematic errors of analysis on its power even until the last moments.

By mirror effect, the governments' errors of analysis give the clandestine organisation such self-confidence that it makes disproportionate plans compared to what the organisation can achieve. All CCC, IRA, ETA and today Al Qaeda imagine they are much more powerful than what they really are. It has often been the hard return to reality of small numbers that have created the conditions through which clandestine organisations have accepted to give up arms. The asymmetry, observed *a priori*, between the organisation and the target is being erased by a particular representation of violence and politics in which the clandestine organisation believes itself at the *avant garde* of a historical move that should necessarily be accomplished, and where those who govern are not supported by the population.

⁴¹ Speaking of counter-subversion in the United States, Michael Rogin shows the double function of his worried discourses: "giving substance to one's own fears while finding there the occasion to let one's forbidden desires flow freely. Indeed, the demonization of one's enemies legitimizes in a way the use of arms that are attributed to these enemies, but in the name of the superior necessity to defeat the subversion plans". We translated. See Michael ROGIN, *Les démons de l'Amérique*, Seuil, Paris 1998, pp. 17-18.

Nevertheless, the reciprocity and very apparent symmetry in the accusation discourses (and this favours clandestine organisations) are much more limited if one compares their positions within society in terms of their legitimacy. The asymmetry is almost complete in States where the law rules, where the rulers have credit and more or less active support by citizens (rather less than more if one considers the general indifference of third parties). This symmetry is much less palpable in states that do not respect the rights of the opposition and seek to assimilate any contest to a subversive enterprise. In this case, the clandestine organisation can pride itself of its fight against oppression and thereby justify its attacks against the leaders. The organisation can find support within the country or abroad. If the struggle is managed by developing recruitment and by polarizing society into two camps, the organisation may manage to obtain a territorial basis where it can act openly and where the conflict will transform into guerrilla-type warfare. If, on the contrary, the group develops a strategy of spectacular attacks in cities, the government will be able to justify its pursuing the organisation and hardening its position, even if it is badly considered by the citizens. And if it doesn't, it takes the risk of being put under severe pressure by other extremist groups that will also seek to seize the power. But if we think in terms of state coalitions, that are not always democratic and that pretend fighting against the same tentacular organisation against which they would all be "brothers in arms" in order to maintain the current political order, there is a real ambiguity in coalitions and interests of some to name the branches of Al Qaeda as their enemies. Egyptians, Russians and Chinese have understood that they could use these cards in the play with their opponents and that it would pose the problem of validity of a global antiterrorist regime which frontiers go beyond that of democracies. All the so-called Al Qaeda branches cannot be analysed in these terms and the practices of local governments ought to be looked at closely. When it uses torture⁴² or massacres local population, counter radicalisation, associated with the refusal of some Western states to criticise those mechanisms for fear of disrupting antiterrorist cooperation, both produce the bases for a legitimization by third parties of violent acts performed later on other territories. It is central to escape to such critics on complicity with the worst coercion practices that produce for dozens of years the best candidates for violent radicalisation and do much more to further the conflict by the escalation of violence they generate than the weak recruitment techniques by clandestine organisations. The latter live, *in fine* of the conditions of respect of the rule of law by governments. The mechanisms of exception, far from being efficient, harm the heart of legitimacy and paradoxically help the organisations that authorities say they combat.

⁴² See Vivienne JABRI, "La torture, une politique de guerre", in Didier BIGO, Laurent BONELLI and Thomas DELTHOMBE (eds.), *La guerre au terrorisme et ses ombres*, Paris, La Découverte, 2008.

IV. Recommendations for the European Parliament

If the European Parliament wishes to prevent radicalisation and recruitment, it would probably be relevant to reverse the perspectives of analyse as we suggest in this note. This supposes to think of the terrorist relation as we have described it and to establish the conditions of de-escalation instead of escalation we have been witnessing since 2001. Three axes may be identified.

1. Favouring distanciation

First, it is necessary to stop the dynamic of “with us or against us” by favouring *distanciation*. As we have seen, polarisation only favours clandestine organisations by giving them a space and a role they do not have.

Alarmist discourses and policies have disastrous effects from this point of view. First, because they influence the clandestine organisations’ strategies. Then, because they reinforce the suspicion that weights on some communities, thereby giving certain credibility to the discourses by clandestine organisations and sometimes creating the conditions of the going underground.

This is true within European states but also in terms of international relations. The polite (or ashamed) silence that may accompany the measures taken by some undemocratic states that do not hesitate to use their engagement within the “war on terror” to condemn all political opposition is not only an ethical problem. It favours the dynamics of both radicalisation and violence.

It is therefore necessary to be capable of putting clandestine organisations “back to where they belong” and coming back on the local conditions of radicalisation rather than sidestepping the issue behind unifying categories that blur their understanding. Today, almost all violent political actions of Muslim groups have become “Islamic terrorism”. But we have showed that nationalistic elements are often dominant and that we should not confuse the engagement of foreign volunteers in fields of conflict, the support given to combatants that are engaged in these conflicts and the violent actions that are led on the soil of European states. Any serious analysis of radicalisation must therefore escape from the systems of justifications of actors (i.e. of the question *why*) in order to focus on the dynamics of this radicalisation (i.e. *how*). This shift of analysis at the local, the national and the translational levels is one of the necessary conditions for the establishment of

alternative policies capable of limiting violence and of reinforcing social cohesion within European societies.

2. Taking into account the pernicious effects of intensified measures of control, repression or war on violent radicalisation

The hardening of measures of surveillance and of repression can have particularly pernicious effects by reinforcing a radicalisation they are supposed to fight.

Thus, the control of Internet suggested by the European strategy against terrorism proposed in September 2007 should take into account the elements we evoked previously. Is the Internet used by clandestine groups to transfer confidential information or by a non-clandestine organisation that defends a radical position, or at least one judged as radical, in the domain of ideas, without precisely suggesting to move on to violent acts? The first case should be sanctioned while the second is complex. When it is not instructions to act but a revolutionary terminology, one ought to be careful that the sanctions do not push into clandestinity those who limited their engagement to words. Democracy has allowed expressing ideas that can be politically or morally sanctioned. The most delicate case is that of a call for murder against a specific category of people accompanied by a certain agenda resembling instructions and placed on the Internet in the name of an encouragement to imitate actions that have already been initiated and thereby justifying action. It is almost impossible to legislate and it would probably be necessary to rely on judges and to act on a case-by-case basis as soon as the tools of the fight against racism are not relevant.

Similarly, it is important to keep open public spaces of mediation rather than closing them down, like some experts suggest. This is notably the case for what is sometimes called gateway organisations; or even for some radical preachers. It is not reasonable to consider all imams from certain obedience as “recruiters” and to compare them to breeding grounds used by clandestine organisations. Doing this would reflect a misunderstanding of the antagonisms between clandestine and legal organisations. Far from being crossing points or places of preparation, the organisations that are inscribed in a form of verbal contestation are often buffer zones, places of “withholding” that limit the autonomous dynamic of violence through self-radicalisation. Follow-up must therefore be individualized and controlled by a judge who would observe whether the person is indeed involved or if it is only a suspicion steaming from a set profile on the basis of previous statistics to which the individual corresponds by some aspects.

3. Controlling and supervising counter radicalisation

One of the key issues is the control a society and its representative institutions that do not govern can operate on the potential counter radicalisation of a government and its services faced to the radicalisation of the violence of a clandestine organisation. Fundamental rights have a crucial collective function beyond the protection of individuals taken individually. This means supervising, preventing a government to be taken into the spiral of violence / reinforced coercion / radicalised violence. The arguments in favour of the suspension of the usual laws, because of the newness of a phenomenon must also be read as attempts to emancipate from legal limitations and as an attempt to establish a counter-radicalisation with the hope that the police, military or technical solutions will eradicate a phenomenon before it increases its political scale. But the criminalisation or the war like simulation of the relation with the clandestine organisation have limits. It is necessary to have a political discussion, not with the clandestine organisation but with buffer organisations that seek, whether voluntarily or not, to legitimize the violence of clandestine organisations. It is also necessary to show to third parties the limits and shortcuts used in the argumentation of these organisations.