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The Kurds of Daesh: Reasons behind the radicalization of a generation

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Summary : Kurdish jihadism already has a 40-year history. It has gone through various stages: from the Islamisation of the Kurdish struggle (Islamic Movement of Kurdistan) to the internationalization of the Islamic struggle (Ansar al-Islam). More recently, from 2012 to 2017, the new generation of Kurdish jihadists entered a reterritorialization process of their armed struggle and joined the Islamic State.

Kurdish jihadism already has a 40-year history. It has gone through various stages: from the Islamisation of the Kurdish struggle (Islamic Movement of Kurdistan) to the internationalization of the Islamic struggle (Ansar al-Islam). More recently, from 2012 to 2017, the new generation of Kurdish jihadists entered a reterritorialization process of their armed struggle and joined the Islamic State.

Daesh's Kurds[1]! Here is an expression that could surprise quite a few Westerners (researchers, journalists and even diplomats without even mentioning citizens[2]). Is this possible? I have been asked this question multiple times in disbelief, as it seems that in the eyes of many, Kurdish fighters could only be found amongst the Peshmerga and not Daesh. This narrative matches western aspirations searching for new heroes to face these new radical « barbarians ». This omits a more complex reality from a new Kurdish society that has provided at least 200 jihadists to Daesh.

Kurdish jihad wasn't born with Daesh. It has a 40-year history. During the first Gulf War (1980-1988), an entire first generation of jihadists appeared on the Kurdish scene. Issued from the Muslim brotherhood at their start in 1952 and strong of a robust support from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the actors of this first generation cut their organisational but also ideological ties with the International Organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1987. They declared the jihad against Saddam Hussein's Iraqi State[3]. Thus, they were no longer part of the Muslim brotherhood but found themselves in the Islamic movement of Kurdistan (Bzotnawa in Kurdish). In 2001, under the influence of Ben Laden, the Salafist Branch of jihadism of this first generation separated and created the Organisation Jund al-Islam, which became a few months later Ansar al-Islam.

This second generation of jihadists were young and shaped with the ideology of « international jihadism » of al-Qaida. For the first time in the history of the Islamic Kurdish struggle, they adopted terrorism as a weapon. Their capital Byara became the new promised land of international jihadists such as Abu-Wael and Abou Moussab Al-Zarqaoui[4]. From 2004 to 2012, despite a few terrorist attacks, the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) was sheltered from the instability and violence the rest of the country was faced with. During this period, we observed the sidelining of Kurdistan-issued jihadists, which lasted until the start of the Arab spring, particularly in Syria and in the fractured Sunni Iraq. From 2012 to 2017, a new generation of jihadist Kurds shaped itself. Between 2014 and 2017, Daesh's Kurds even played a major role in the war waged between the caliphate and the peshmerga.

While this phenomenon is silenced, questions start to arise: Why does one become a jihadist in Kurdistan? What are the characteristics of these new jihadists ? How do radicalisation processes operate in a Kurdistan seeking its own independence? What are the strategies of the KRG regarding the different radicalisation processes that operate?

To highlight this question, we suggest an analysis grid with six levels[5]: Islam's role in the radicalisation of this new generation, the integration of violence as a means to a goal in recent Kurdish history; the social exclusion exerted by this new Kurdish oligarchy and the frustrations of an entire generation left on the streets; the influence of revolutions from the Arab world; the encroachment of social media networks that see Facebook replace the Mosque and lastly, the Kurdistanisation of Islamist movements, which have disappointed certain actors. As the scope of an article limits a detailed analysis on each level, we have decided to keep a synthetic approach to this issue.

Islam and the Process of Radicalisation

From Paris to Erbil, the debate rages on the link between Jihadism and Islam. Within the French university field, three overly mediatised approaches face one another.

The first emphasises the Islamisation of radicalness (Oliver Roy) and tends to present jihadists as rootless individuals, barbarians, without any links to the world they live in. Here, jihadists are « nihilists », « losers », even « nickel-plated

feet[6] ». For Oliver Roy, Islam does not speak, it is spoken. In other words, Islam is instrumentalised as a source of legitimisation for radicalisation processes that precede the Islamisation process.

The second, to the contrary, concentrates itself on Islam as the principal generator of radicalisation (Gilles Kepel). According to this approach, there is indeed a need for religious ideology to run the factory that produces the jihadists. This approach, if it does not refute the effects of the environment does focus on the texts. Gilles Kepel's insistence on the fact that Oliver Roy does not speak Arabic is guided by his desire to focus on the latter's lack of access to the founding texts. Those constitute the ideology and the framework of the jihadist actions[7].

The last approach explains the jihadist phenomenon by the political event (Francois Burgat). Jihadism cannot be comprehended without adding the angles of the colonisation of Muslim countries, the Gulf War, the invasion of Iraq, the Arab-Israeli conflict, racism and exclusion into the context[8].

Despite the input of these various approaches, it is clear that none of these three, by themselves, suffice to give the greater picture of the link between these new radicals and Islam. Combining these three approaches is more pertinent as an analysis grid than an exclusivist approach, because it allows us to broaden the explanation on multiple levels.

Take for example the case of the new Kurdish jihadists and their link with Islam[9]. Eighty-three percent of these jihadists have no diplomas. Consequently, they cannot understand Arabic[10] and thus have no direct access to the Quran and Sunnah. Nevertheless, there are two facts to take into account: the first is the number of Salafists, that has reached 23% amongst the population. These Salafists have had a religious socialisation before their radicalisation. The second is that amongst the leaders of this jihadist generation, 95% have been Salafists before being jihadists.

The intervention of Islam is thus an observable tangible reality. The militant base that has had access neither to the Quran, nor the Sunnah, finds itself in permanent interaction with Islam but through the intermediary of their leaders. It is in the name of Islam that we radicalise oneself, hate society, take up arms, that we kill and are killed. Nevertheless, the interpretation of this Islam from these radicals is but one version amongst many, which is radically opposed to the version of Islam adopted by a majority of Muslims. This is why one of the first signs of radicalisation is the « takfir » of the Muslim society. The « takfir » is an excommunication of a person or a society. In this case, it means that a society has exited Islam and the Ummah society (community of believers). In this scenario, it gives the permission to kill because henceforth the blood of Muslims from an excommunicated society is impure[11].

It is evident that the rhetoric that this « has nothing to do with Islam[12] » is impertinent for the analysis of the links between jihadists and Islam, as much as the discourse that describes terrorist violence as a specificity to Islam, is a methodological mistake. The data demonstrates that we are left with interpretations that are in contradiction with one another, or even at war with Islam itself in certain instances[13]. Yet these contradictions only allow one level of analysis in the interpretation of the rise to power of this generation of jihadists. There are many other elements that have the same importance within the radicalisation processes.

A Culture of Violence

The monopoly of violent actions held by jihadist actors in the last few years place themselves within the continuity of this « culture of violence » that characterises the political Kurdish history, at least since a century. Wars, occupations, resistance, revolutions have transformed the Kurdish world into a factory producing all categories of violence: nationalist violence, communist violence, violence towards collaborators[14] and finally the violence of jihadists.

As a territory and population without a state, from 1921 to 2021, the Kurdish world has been restricted by and within

radical violence. From Cheikh Mahmud (1878-1956[15]) to Masoud Bargain (born in 1946), radicalism is transmitted from one generation to another as a sacred culture. As soon as they are brought into this world, the Kurdish child becomes a radical actor, as much through their primary than secondary socialisation. Institutions such as the family, the neighbourhood, the school, the mosque, the university and even the museums, function as places of transmission of this culture of violence, revolt, revolution and martyrdom. The Anfal operations conducted by the Iraqi army between 1988 and 1989 were responsible for more than 180 000 civilian victims according to Human Rights Watch[16]. The city of Halabja, gassed by Baghdad the 16th of March 1988, has entered the Kurdish collective memory as well as the place of the martyr, with 5000 dead[17]. It is within this socialisation culture that violence for the Kurds becomes normalised, to quote Durkheim. The PKK-issued Kurd that sets themselves on fire in the street or sacrifice themselves for a cause[18], is thus a product of the same socialisation processes as the Daesh-affiliated Kurd that blows themselves up in a cafe.

The actors of this new Kurdish jihadist generation are extremely young, 75% of them are aged between 14 and 29 years old[19]. In other words, they underwent their socialisation between the 1990s and 2003 during a period scarred by major tragedies: the invasion of Kuwait by the Iraqi army (1990[20]), the liberation war of Kuwait (1991), the massive and dramatic exodus of Kurds from Iraq towards Turkey and Iran (1991[21]), the civil wars[22] between the PUK-KDP and the PKK (1992), the PUK and Bzotnawa[23] (1993), the PUK and KDP (1994-1998), the severe economic embargo (1991-2003), the war between PUK and Ansar Al-Islam (2001-2003), the occupation of Iraq by the USA (2003-2011). In this way, violence as a permanent cultural facet facilitates this radicalisation process.

The social frustration of a generation

In addition to this cult of violence that has been internalised, this generation witnessed since 2004 the emergence of new social class thanks to the oil revenue which produces their exclusion and frustration.

From 2003 to 2014, each month, a billion-dollar _ Kurdistan's share in the Iraqi national budget- arrives in Erbil from Baghdad, for a population of five million inhabitants. From 2003, the international embargo on Iraq and Kurdistan was lifted, which now permitted Iraqis to sell their petrol. In June 2013, AFP's correspondent could confirm with enthusiasm that since the collapse of Baghdad, Iraqi Kurdistan displayed a 12% growth rate per year and numbered close to 800 foreign firms, 500 being in neighbouring Turkey. This was in part due to the generous law on investments that entered in force since 2006[24]. It is also during this period that society polarised itself strongly socially.

At the summit of society, an oligarchy shapes itself. This oligarchy manifests itself through diverse practices: place of residences (they live in the suburbs of large cities, in villages closed off to the general public), by their means of transportation (they move around in luxury vehicles), by their education(their children are enrolled in private schools and are perfectly bilingual), lifestyle habits (they possess their own cinemas and theatres), professional careers (they occupy key positions within state institutions).

At the bottom of society, we find a relatively homogenous social level that can be characterised by realities that are the exact opposite of those from this new oligarchy: Places of residences (they often live within large cities, in difficult neighbourhoods), transport services (buses or at best, a second-hand car), an education (their children are in public disadvantaged schools and will never be able to pay for an Anglo-Saxon university, except rare instances). For the most fortunate amongst them, they will have to stay in a Kurdish school where a diploma is far from providing an employment opportunity, a decaying lifestyle infrastructure (one public library for a city like Sulaymaniyah, with a population that amounts to more than a million inhabitants), insufficient sports practices (football fields deprived of services and poorly maintained swimming pools), stagnant careers (stake clerk, workers, employees or unemployed).

Without stereotyping the social situation, the Kurdish society is thus divided between an oligarchy that possesses

everything and the majority of people often frustrated because their leeway to manoeuvre remains very limited. The relationship between these two groups is highly conflictual. This is clearly illustrated through the symbolic system where the disadvantaged call the privileged the « New Pharos » while the former self-identify as Moses on a quest towards victory[25].

Far from considering these frustrations as the sole determining factor for radicalisation and terrorism[26], the factual data that we possess provide, however, a few leads on the role of this factor in shaping a new jihadist generation in Kurdistan: 27% are unemployed, 41% are workers or employees, 25% students and only 7% occupied the position of civil servant before joining Daesh. 83% did not have a diploma[27]! The absolute majority of Kurdish jihadists belongs without a doubt to this new frustrated social class: a social class without a diploma. Even with one, they would not be able to obtain an employment nor find the social class mobility they are seeking. To the contrary, it would only exacerbate this laborious situation as the void between a worker from the bottom of Kurdish society and a member of this new oligarchy is considerable: a worker must work 347 years[28] to earn what an « average oligarch » earns in one year!

The Arab Spring as a Catalyser

It is within this context of profound division between the two opposite parts of society, that arises the « Arab spring » (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Sunni Iraq). This issue becomes rapidly a root cause of contestation for this new generation without opportunities in sight.

The 17th of February 2011, thousands of citizens with a majority of young individuals, filled the streets of Sulaymaniyah, in resonance with the beginnings of the Arab spring. Through their slogans, the protesters demanded loud and high the head of the KRG, seen as the culprit of this corruption and brutal gap between the poor and the wealthy as well as the socio-political reproduction of the Kurdish oligarchy. They found echo in what happened elsewhere. The 14th of January 2011, the Tunisian president Ben Ali, in power since 1987, left his country for Saudi Arabia[29]. The 11th of February of the same year, the president Hosni Mubarak, in power in Egypt since 1981, yielded his power under the pressure of the protesters[30]. The 14th of February 2011, the uprising reached the Gulf countries. Thousands of protesters gathered on the Perle Square of the Bahraini capital, Manama, calling for profound changes in the political and social system of the country[31]. In Yemen, the 27th of January 2011, the population mobilised against Ali Abdallah Saleh, in power since 1978. One year later, he was forced to leave the presidency[32]. In Libya, the 15th of February 2011, riots erupted in Benghazi and continued until the end the death of Muammar Gaddafi, the 20th of October 2011. He had been at the head of the country for 42 years[33]. It is in this regional context that the new generation, in a « revolutionary situation[34] » demanded in Sulaymaniyah sweeping changes within Iraqi Kurdistan. The three opposition political parties (Goran _ Movement for change, Yakgrtu _ Kurdistan Islamic Union and Komal _ Islamic group of Kurdistan) did not initially have a plannified participation strategy to this contestation but quickly understood the scope of this mobilisation. They then integrated themselves to this movement[35] that was clearly peaceful at its start. However, the violent reaction of the KRG in Sulaymaniyah towards the protesters (brutal repression, arrests, torture and even filmed live assassinations) radicalised an important part of this generation.

This radicalisation has revealed two distinct groups.The far left organised large gatherings in front of headquarters of the two political parties in power (the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) before trying to set on fire the surrounded headquarters. The security forces then responded with live ammunition, wounding and killing multiple protesters. In April, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan had deployed all of its security forces alongside peshmerga units to definitively squash the contestation. Later on, a handful, disappointed by the failure and brutal repression of this contestation, chose jihadism as a solution. The 175 hours of interviews that we conducted with Daesh's Kurds clearly show the role the large-scale repression of their peaceful contestation played in their radicalisation. Not only were they shocked

by the response of the KRG, but also by Baghdad's and Damas's response towards the Sunni protesters. For these disappointed young individuals, without a diploma, employment or hope, jihadism represented the sole opportunity that could still instil a sense of meaning in the face of this brutality. A brutality ordered by these corrupt elite-controlled institutions.

From the Mosque to Facebook: Mobilisation Vectors that Change

A trait that distinguishes the radicalisation of the third generation of jihadists from the first and second generations is without a doubt social networks. More particularly Facebook is not only a place of radicalisation for the youth, but also one of its causes. It is not only a means of communication but also the culture of a new generation[36].

Within the path of actors from the first two Kurdish generations of jihadists (1987-2012), the mosque was an essential space for religious socialisation, that steered them directly or indirectly towards radicalisation. It is within the mosque that each individual was offered a collective class given by an Islamic supervisor and private lesson that tailored itself to the intellectual, cultural, social and professional situation of the person[37]. During these classes, the individual interacted with a physical place, real people and a socialisation program that is factually observable. Are they praying five times a day in the Mosque? Are they properly learning the Quran and Sunnah? Are they respecting the distinct signs of their religion?

With the arrival of the third generation and the study of their trajectory, we observe that the mosque loses its central role in the radicalisation of the actors. Consequently, observing the everyday practices of the new jihadists within this environment becomes a complex mission. From the end of 2011, Facebook the most used social network in Kurdistan[38], becomes the hotspot for new jihadists virtual meetings. What do we find there? Firstly, a massive presence of recruiters that master communication techniques and that speak Kurdish to the Kurds. In addition, a well-structured discourse on the need to seek « revenge for all the massacred brothers and raped sisters by the non-believers in Syria and Iraq ». For this, many audio and video testimonies are provided. The mind of the recruited is made to work day and night. They are promised a better life with God's benediction. The goal of the recruiter is to persuade the recruited to do the *hijira*[39], in other words to leave their country and to join the land of jihad. If for different reasons, the *hijra* cannot be accomplished, it is asked of the actor to stay where they are, concealing their jihadist identity while remaining available to take part in underground actions[40].

Yet, in this new virtual territory, Facebook has given security service actors the space to manoeuvre and seek out new radical individuals. The prisons of the GRK are thus filled with youth that has fallen into the traps set up by secret service agents, playing the role of Daesh or Al-Qaïda recruiters. According to the press releases of the Kurdish National Security Council (CSN), multiple terrorist attacks within Kurdish Iraq have been prevented thanks to these infiltrations[41].

The Kurdistanisation of Islamic Movements

The last factor of radicalisation, for both the second (2001-2003) and third generation (2012-2017) is what we have called in our previous works[42] the « kurdistanisation » of Islamic movements. By this process, the three great Islamic movements (Yakgrtu, Komal, Bzotnawa[43]) have successfully normalised themselves and become part of the political system of the KRG. From now on, Yakgrtu no longer represents the « Islamic dream » of the international Muslim brotherhood organisation. It no longer finds itself engaged in an international struggle to reconstruct the Oumma, but instead is now a political party that has inscribed the Independence of Kurdistan in its political program. Komal and Bzotnawa are no longer two armed jihadist organisation but instead two political parties with members of parliament and ministers. In July 2021, the three Islamic political parties held 18% of seats within the Kurdish parliament. They have also become the fourth biggest political force after the KDP, PUK and Goran.

This mainstreaming of Islamic movements by the KRG has caused a profound disappointment in the 2000s and contributed to the birth of the first organisation calling on terrorism as a means of combat, that is to say Ansar Al-Islam. In 2010, while the three Islamic movements could be found alongside the protesters facing the KRG, they gradually abandoned the « square of liberty » to participate in the 2013 elections and thus enter the government, fostering an even greater deception than the one from the 2000s! It is from this founding moment onwards that the young Kurds will take the path of the jihad and will make up what we now call « Daesh's Kurds ».

The 9th of July 2017, Mosul finally falls. The Iraqi prime minister, Haidar Al-Abadi announces that the city has been recaptured. The Americans and their Kurdish and Arab allies cry out « victory »[44]. Nonetheless, this alleged victory, despite their military and symbolic value, clearly do not signify the end of the jihadist movement (Daesh, Al-Qaïda, etc.). The objective conditions that have constructed this phenomenon are not only still present but have been reinforced in a Middle East that finds itself in the midst of a profound geopolitical restructuring.

In the Kurdish context, the recapture of Mosul paradoxically represents a threat for the security of the KRG. Since the fall of the Iraqi capital, a considerable portion of Daesh, especially the Kurds, have hidden in the mountains of Hamrin, which further complicates their eradication[45].

The case of the PKK fighters (Kurdistan workers Party) in the Qandil Mountains is a convincing example. Must it be reminded that in the last few years, Turkey mobilised all of its forces to drive out the PKK from Qandil and this without success. From Hamrin, Daesh could regularly send out small partisan groups to destabilise the KRG territory.

Significant numbers of Daesh's Kurds, since the fall of Mosul and by other means, have entered into Iraqi Kurdistan. In a chaotic hectic environment (political, economic, security and social disorder[46]), these jihadists are perfectly able to rapidly reorganise and transform the KRG's territory into a living nightmare. Mosul has been liberated but Kurdistan, regardless of if it is independent or part of Iraq, will be brought face to face with its own demons, this time on its own territory.

Reference

[1] The Arabic acronym for « The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant », See Hosham al-Hashmi, L'univers de Daech : de sa naissance au Califat, in arabic, Londres, Dar al-Hikma, 2015.

[2] On 17 March 2017, in the presence of internationally recognised professors and researchers, I gave a seminar at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, on jihadism in Kurdistan. The different interventions clearly provoked a generalised astonishment at the existence of *the Kurds of Daech*!

[3] For more details on this generation, see Adel Bakawan's article: « Les trois geᶥneᶥrations du djihadisme au Kurdistan d'Irak », *Notes de l'Ifri*, Institut Francᶥais des Relations Internationales, July 2017.

[4] Ibid. In the same article, we put all the characteristics of this second generation and their link to al-Qaeda into perspective.

[5] In our first article, already quoted, we focused on the factors of radicalisation of the Kurds in Daech. This new article gives me the opportunity to continue my analysis where I left off.

[6] See Oliver Roy, *Le djihad est la mort,* Seuil, 2016

[7] See Gilles Kepel, Antoine Jardin, *Terreur dans l'hexagone: genèse du djihad français.* Paris, Gallimard, 2015

[8] See Francᶥois Burgat, Comprendre l'islam politique : Une trajectoire de recherche sur l'alteᶥriteᶥ islamiste, 1973-2016,

Paris, La Découverte, 2016.

[9] One could always argue that these approaches apply to Western jihadists and not to Middle Eastern ones. Personally, I think that in a globalised world, there are common features among jihadists from all countries, for example Islam as a regulating principle for action. This does not exclude the specificity of each case.

[10] In Kurdistan, Arabic like English is a foreign language taught in school.

[11] Nebel Mathias, « Violence et religions : réponse ouverte au Rapporteur spécial sur la liberté de religion et de croyance », *Revue d'éthique et de théologie morale*, 2016/5 (n° 292), p. 23-48.

[12] See Jean Birnbaum, Un silence religieux, La gauche face au djihadisme, Paris, Seuil, 2016.

[13] See Gilles Kepel, Fitna : Guerre au cœur de l'Islam, Paris, Gallimard, 2004.

[14] They are called *djach* ('' in Kurdish), which means 'traitor'. See Gérard Chaliand and Sophie Mousset, La Question kurde à l'heure de Daech, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 2015, p. 39.

[15] Omed Hama Amin, *Cheikh Mahmoud Hafid*, in Kurdis, Sulaymaniyah, Edition Tishk, 2007, p.15.

[16] Hamit Bozarslan, « Le nationalisme kurde, de la violence politique au suicide sacrificiel », *Critique internationale*, 2003/4 (n°21), p. 93-115.

[17] See Middle East Watch, *Génocide en Irak, la campagne d'Anfal contre les Kurdes*, Paris, Karthala, 2003.

[18] Olivier Grojean, « Investissement militant et violence contre soi au sein du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan », *Cultures & Conflits*, n°63 (autumn 2006) pp. 101-112.

[19] Adel Bakawan, « Djihadisme et sortie du djihadisme : le cas du Kurdistan d'Irak », *Notes de l'Ifri*, Ifri, may 2017.

[20] See Pierre-Jean Luizard, *La question irakienne*, Paris, Fayard, 2004.

[21] Institut Kurde de Paris, *Bulletin de liaison et d'information*, Paris, n° 73, avril 1991.

[22] Elizabeth Picard, « Les Kurdes et l'autodétermination. Une problématique légitime à l'épreuve de dynamiques sociales », *Revue française de science politique*, 1999/3 (Vol. 49), p. 421-442.

[23] Bzotnawa is an islamist parti that organised in an armed struggle in the 1980s against Saddam Hussein's regime

[24] AFP, « Au Kurdistan irakien, Erbil vit son boom loin des bombes », 23rd of june 2013.

[25] Adel Bakawan, « L'échec du nationalisme kurde : fragmentation, partisanisation, milicisation », *Confluences Méditerranée*, 2017/1 (N° 100), p. 89-100.

[26] To better comprehend the interactions between frustration and violence in general manner, see Michel Wieviroka, *La violence*, Paris, Fayard, 2012. Obviously, Michel Wieviorka criticises this thesis and describes it as 'outdated'.

[27] Adel Bakawan, « Djihadisme et sortie du djihadisme : le cas du Kurdistan d'Irak », *Notes de l'Ifri*, Ifri, may 2017.

[28] In our book, *The dark society*, we published the results of the emergence of a new class in Kurdistan and the tragic gap

that can lead to socio-political explosions within the RKG. Adel Bakawan, *La société noire*, in Kurdish, Kurdistan, Andésha, 2013.

[29] See Amin Allal, Vincent Geisser , « Tunisie : « Révolution de jasmin » ou Intifada ? », *Mouvements*, 2011/2 (n° 66), p. 62-68.

[30] See Ayyam Sureau, « La révolution égyptienne », *Commentaire*, 2011/2 (Numéro 134), p. 364-371.

[31] See Marc Valeri, « Autoritarisme et stratégies de légitimation dans le golfe Persique à l'heure du « Printemps arabe » », Revue internationale de politique comparée, 2012/4 (Vol. 19), p. 111-133.

[32] See Laurent Bonnefoy, Marine Poirier, « La structuration de la révolution yéménite. Essai d'analyse d'un processus en marche », *Revue française de science politique*, 2012/5 (Vol. 62), p. 895-913.

[33] See Olivier Vallée, « Kadhafi : le dernier roi d'Afrique », *Politique africaine*, 2012/1 (N° 125), p. 147-167.

[34] Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi, OlivierFillieule, « Pour une sociologie des situations révolutionnaires. Retour sur les révoltes arabes », *Revue française de science politique*, 2012/5 (Vol. 62), p. 767-796.

[35] Interview with the author Aboubakr Ali, leader of the Yekgrtu, Iraqi Kurdistan, Sulaymaniyah, the 26th of April 2016.

[36] For more details on what Mathieu Guidère calls « the internetisation of radicalisation », see voir Mathieu Guidère, « Internet, haut lieu de la radicalisation », *Pouvoirs*, 2016/3 (N° 158), p. 115-123. DOI : 10.3917/ pouv.158.0115.

[37] In the sixth part of our doctoral thesis, the problematic of « deconversion », we presented with details the trajectories of these actors. Adel Bakawan, *L'Islamisme en mutation. Une étude pluridisciplinaire sur la mouvance islamiste kurde*, Paris, EHESS, 2010 (Doctoral thesis written under the supervision of Olivier Roy).

[38] It is rare to find a person in Kurdistan who does not have a Facebook account. From very important issues, such as the independence of Kurdistan, to the mundane practices of everyday life, such as preparing a meal, the whole country is on Facebook!

[39] « *Understood as the one made by the first Muslims leaving Mecca for the oasis of Medina (marking the birth of the Muslim calendar around the year 622 A.D.) in order to escape the attacks coming from the people who remained faithful to paganism.* » In Mohamed-AliAdraoui, « Le salafisme en France – Socialisation, politisation, mondialisation », *Confluences Méditerranée*, 2015/4 (N° 95), p. 69-80.

[40] Momen Zellmi and Harem Karem, « How do Kurdsjoin Al Nusrah in Syria – and who are they? », *The Kurdistan tribune*, article mis en ligne le 12 décembre 2013. http://kurdistantribune.com/how-do-kurds-join-al- nusrah-syria-who-are-they/

[41] The Kurdistan Region Security Council releases all of its press releases on it's Facebook page. See https://www.facebook.com/KRSCPress/

[42] Adel Bakawan, « Three Generations of Jihadism in Iraqi Kurdistan », Notes de l'Ifri, *Ifri*, July 2017.

[43] Yakgrtu is the political party that represents the Muslim Brotherhood organisation in Kurdistan. The party was created in 1994, but the organisation has been established in Kurdistan since at least 1952. Bzotnawa, it should be remembered, is the political party that organised the armed struggle against the regime of Saddam Hussein in the 1980s. It was one of the components of the Iraqi resistance. Komal is a Salafist jihadist organisation that split from Bzotnawa in 2001. In 2004,

it abandoned the armed struggle and integrated into the political system. See Aboubakr Ali, Being an Islamist in the Post-Islamic Phase, in Kurdish language, Kurdistan, Iraq, Sardam Publishing, 2016. The author of this book is a leading cadre of the Islamist movement, a well-known and respected intellectual in Kurdistan.

[44] « A Mossoul, la grande victoire annoncee contre l'Etat islamique », *Le Monde*, the 9th of May 2017.

[45] The head of the PUK secret service Lahur Sheikh Jangi Talabani, announced the 21st of July 2017, this mass departure of jihadists to the Hamrin mountains. See Lahur Sheikh Jangi Talabani, "Black days are ahead," Kurdish language, NRT, 21 July 2017. This statement was picked up from Reuters byNRT, which is an international pankurdish channel: http://www.nrttv.com/Details.aspx?Jimare=79032.

[46] For a broader perspective of this disorder, please see our article on the failure of Kurdish nationalism: Adel Bakawan, « L'echec du nationalisme kurde : fragmentation, partisanisation, milicisation », *Confluences Mediterranee*, 2017/1 (n° 100), p. 89-100.