An attempt at a theoretical explaination of violent Islamist radicalization in Spain

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Abstract
This paper is the first of a series of papers which aims to address Islamist violent radicalization from different angles: the nature of violent radicalization in the context of Spain, a comparison between European, North American and Indian violent radicalization, the need to refine territorial radicalization indexes within the context of preventing violent radicalization and the relation between Islamist violent radicalization and other forms of violent radicalization in Europe. This set of articles builds upon the general theoretical framework set by the author on two previous works (García, 2018; 2019). These works are framed under the known conception of three layers of micro, meso and macro factors contributing to violent radicalization processes (McCauley, Moskalenko, 2017). The paper starts by defining Islamist violent radicalization, then it explores different theoretical explanations and finally proposes an explanatory hypothesis that is tested against, on the one hand, data proceeding from different institutional sources in Spain and, on the other, some initial conversations which will become *life stories* and a *in depth interviews* to Spanish security officials and people who whether radicalized and regretted or lived very close to others that did it.

1. Conceptual definition

Although there is no consensus on its meaning, the radicalization could be described as a complex non-linear process where structural, cognitive and attitudinal factors lead an individual or collective to question and reject the norms of the society or the group which they belong to. In other words, it could be said that this process makes that the person or group is placed on the margins of the society and they move away from "normality".

In addition to being individual and collective, the radicalization could be positive or negative (García, 2019). The positive radicalization is related to a critique of the *statu quo* and advocates, through non violent means, creating a more just, sustainable and peaceful order. Historical characters as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela or Mahatma Gandhi, who today are considered to lead big social transformations, in their time were described as radicals. This possible positive meaning of the radicalization looks like the conceptualization of Mannheim (1987), refined by Ricoeur (1989), about the social role of the ideology - as an alternative vision that questions the prevalent order and reveals its shortcomings-. The positive radicalization would have, in this way, a social function comparable to that of utopia.

On the contrary, radicalization on its negative side, justifies and legitimizes the use of different types of violence, such as physical and verbal. When the violent acts are carried out systematically to achieve a goal, both individually and collectively, taking not only the State but also civils as objective and exploiting terror intentionally, is often referred to as terrorism (Calera, 2002: 53). Nevertheless, not all those who are radicals or in the process of violent radicalization end up committing violent acts. That is, not every radical is a terrorist, but every terrorist is a radical. Typifying the radicalization or elaborate a detailed taxonomy of the same exceeds the scope of this document. However, from the previous introduction it can be identified several categories of radicalization: (a) positive or negative; (b) individual or collective. Several axes could be introduced such as motivations -political-ideological, religious or criminal- or the intensity and the type of violence used -high, low, verbal, physical-.

At this point, it may be necessary to observe that negative radicalization, although it is often associated with individuals, may also affect entire societies. Now, as the radicalization always takes place in the function of a broader collective by moving away from the center to the periphery of the *normal*, the reference framework may be that of human rights and the basic norms of peaceful coexistence. So, when a society begins to normalize extreme approaches, close to violence, and begins to develop a too polarized culture, it can also be said to have started a radicalization process: is directed towards the margins of the minimum

ethical and moral framework accepted by the international community, a framework that it is expressed mainly in the language of human rights.

According to the goals they follow, radical terrorist groups that advocate to the use of violence can be also grouped in different categories: nationalist groups or separatists that pretend to independize a certain territory, such as the terrorist band Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain or the Islamic States of Iraq and the East (ISIS) in Syria and Iraq; groups of extreme right/far right that defend the superiority of the white race and the rejection of inmigration, such as the Ku Ku Klan in the United States or Golden Dawn in Greece; groups of extreme left that search the social justice, the redistribution of wealth and are opposed to the capitalism, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in Colombia or the Red Brigades in Italy; groups with religious motivation which fight for the implementation of a narrow interpretation of the religious writings and convert non-believers, such as the Army of God in the United States or Al Qaeda; and last, groups focusing mainly on a single social issue such as environment, animal rights or abortion (Sant, 2019).

It seems that radicalization turns more dangerous when religion is implicated. The reason is that this assumes such a deep motivational force that it achieves that the person is able to sacrifice himself for later generations, renounce his own wellbeing and take any action that interprets as the will of God. Therefore, one of the assumptions of the line of the ongoing research that this article informs is that, when the radicalization is connected with religious motivation, it is necessary to pay attention to the religious logics to find viable solutions that do not produce unexpectable side effects that aggravate the problem in the long term. This is a classic study topic in Sociology which has several implications, one of which has already examined in depth by Durkheim in *Suicide[1]*, and whose particularity has almost inexhaustible meaning/significance.

The radicalization explored here is, more particularly, the islamic violent radicalization. On an attempt to synthesize, it could be said that, being Islam a religion with more than 1400 years, islamism is a modern political current which advocates applying the social, political and economic dimensions of Islam to the collective organisation of the society[2]. Within the islamist currents there are different versions, some of them advocating for democracy and others for the stablishment of Islamic States where islamic law called *sharia* is applied. Of those who advocate establishment of *sharia* law, some groups opt for the peaceful way, which means winning the election and start from there making changes while its majority deepens; and others take the violence, the revolutionary action as axe of their transformation strategy. The latter can be divided into groups with national aspirations, which assume

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[1] For a current review of *Suicide*, see the monographic of Ramón Ramos Torre of the Center of Sociological Research, The sociology of Émili Durkheim (1999), or the special number (81) of the Spanish Sociological Research Magazine on the occasion of the centenary of the publication of *Suicide*.

[2] The author, in his book *Desafíos del sistema de seguridad colectiva: análisis sociológico de su efectividad ante las amenazas globales* (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2016)*,* adresses extensively, from page 336, the difference between Islam, Islamism, Salafism, Jihadism, as well as the different variants of each of them.

nationalist approaches and internationalist groups seeking to extend the *umma* (the religious-political Islamic community) to a constantly expanding transnational territory within which the sharia rules. Modern Salafism is a rigorous Islamist current, circumscribed to Saudi Arabia decades ago but prevalent today in the world for its growth linked to oil money. All salafist groups do not advocate violence but most islamist groups that advocate for revolutionary and violent action emerge from Salafism and draw inspiration from different versions of it. Finally, the notion of jihad is often assumed with a double meaning among Muslims: individual effort to overcome and improve individually and defensive warfare. Some Islamist currents also refer to jihad as a preventive defensive war in anticipation although the Al-Qaeda and Daesh ideologues apply the jihad to extend their territorial model or achieve political goals.

For all these reasons, violent Islamist radicalization is often called violent Salafist radicalization, Salafist-jihadist radicalization or jihadist radicalization. This is the object of study of this work, particularly, in the context of Spain. The expression *violent Islamist radicalization* will be chosen as it is probably the most precise and the least responsive, although it is recognised that the most common denomination is usually salafist-jihadist radicalization or just jihadist radicalization.

2. *Theoretical explanations of violent radicalization*

The different theoretical efforts to explain violent radicalization in a casual and universal way, as well as monofactorial explanations, although at one point they gained popularity and aroused enthusiasm, have been unsuccessful by being contrasted with the vast empirical evidence from different countries around the world. This had led large researches to conclude that there is not a single profile. Some of them have been more cautious in proclaiming that the profile has not been discovered (López Melero, 2017). In the following paragraphs it will be enunciated some of the big theories and explanations that have been used to explain such an elusive phenomenon for, finally, raise, with our own voice, which could be the reasons why there haven't been discovered universals and focus on the diversity of phenomena -but interrelated- that seek to be explained, to the difficulty of gaining first-hand access to those who have become radicalized and acted in a violent way, to the idiosyncratic of each country and area and the need of hypotheses with great heuristic potential.

About the initial explanations about violent Islamist radicalization, it was said that terrorists came from poor and marginalized enviroments, mainly from the Arab world. Therefore, poverty, oppression and exclusion were used as explanatory vectors. The September 11 attacks in the United States as well as those who linked to Al-Qaeda in the United Kingdom, revealed that rich youths, as well as others from middle-class with higher education, were the main architects/authors of the attacks (McCauley, 2017). This explanation, in addition, excluded the religious factor, so many initial studies went to the other extreme of taking just religion as a causal explanation. That pendulum, that tension between exclusively secular, social, economical and identity explanations, still last/exist, which impedes understanding

and explaining such a complex phenomenon which nature can not be unravelled by a single variable.

When this fact was established, a general framework of sets of factors was developed, to which reference was made in the introduction, that allow the radicalization: individual motivations -rational, identity, normative and emotional-, meso-sociological contextual factors -the group, the known, the radicalization agent- and macro-structural -large-scale conflicts, media, armed forces and police action, existence of terrorist organisations-. This pattern is a good matrix to approach radicalization but, at the same time, is so broad that it does not explain the process precisely.

After this first stage, the explanation had to become more sophisticated. Thus, two types of explanatory theories emerged: the staggered and progressive ones, which try to explain the individual trajectory of violent radicalization and the pyramid ones, which focus on collective dynamics. As for the sequential theories, they state that the person goes through critical stages. Depending on the author, the number and nature of the stages differ, but all start from the same premise: the person moves towards progressive levels of radicalization, from a normal to violent behavior. Some stages would be the exposition of radical ideas -that is the reason because, for example, in Spain the consumption of jihadist content by internet carries a sentence-, the assumption of a new identity, the association with radical groups and justificatin of violence, planning of small violent actions and their subsequent execution, etc. Sequential models change but they are all based on the same logic: anybody can radicalize when certain factors are present and, in addition, the process is regressive and goes from radical thinking to violent violent action (Moghaddam, 2005; Horgan, 2005).

Pyramid theories follow a similar key, but attend to social dynamics. The first level of the pyramid is composed by politically neutral people. The violent radicalization would depend on a broad base of people, on a second level, who sympathize with the violent Islamist cause. Then we would have another level of people who justify the use of violence. And finally, there would be the level of those who commit to the cause and join the terrorist group or cell (Leuprecht et al., 2010).

The fact that only a very small number of those who justify the violence take the effective step forward led to the questioning of these explanations and to the formulation of a new explanatory model: that of the double pyramid. Double pyramid means in essence that the cognitive radicalization (a pyramid) and the behavioral radicalization (the other pyramid) are not connected. That is, it is required to explain cognitive radicalization, in one hand, and behavioral radicalization in the other. From another angle, it can be said that this new proposal dissociates thought and action. Authors like Oliver Roy, without being the architects of this theory, have given empirical support to this explanation by showing how in France, for example, many of the terrorists were neither especially religious nor had they experienced a gradual process of radicalisation, but an abrupt conversion (2017). This explanation looks for other factors to explain violent behavior such as previous history with violence, strong uprooting, traumatic experiences or strong networks of identity and recruitment. What is

sometimes posed is that those who join global *jihad* or Islamist terrorist groups and cells were previously radicalized in search of a cause that could channel their desire to manifest that unease or euphoria: could have been both revolutionary comunism and violent anarchism (Moskalenko, 2017).

Despite the evidence, to accept that thinking, attitudes and action are not connected is quite complicated. In the following section it will be offered an alternative hypothesis to resolve this apparent dilemma; before that, this point will be closed, as had been announced, rescuing, on the one hand, some elements of consensus beyond the universal explanations and outlining, on the other hand, the reasons why it becomes challenging to find a more general theoretical explanation for this phenomenon.

Towards finding consensus, the profile is perhaps the aspect that allows for greater agreements since it simply involves drawing up an average on categories such as gender, age, national origin, nationality, educational level, socioeconomic status, place of residence or radicalization time for all those accused of, for example, belonging to armed group or glorification of terrorism. Here, however, it's good to differentiate between those who have attempted or tried to attempt in their residence country and those who have traveled to Syria or Iraq to join Daesh. Data may vary a bit between different European countries and even more when Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Pakistan or Argelia are taken as reference.The Real Instituto Elcano develop a good profiling for the case of Spain every two years, but suffice it to mention that the profile in Spain -between more than three hundred cases- is of (a) men -in the last years there was a few women-, (b) unconverted Muslims of first and second generation -it begins to be converts, however, and the percentage of converts which opt for radical ways is bigger than the general percentage os Muslims, so it is considered a growing trend-, (c) youth, (d) nationals but from families with arab countries origin, (e) lower-middle class -this contrasts with what happens in other countries-, (f) with relatives or friends previously radicalized, (g) dissidents of their parents religion which adopt the jihadist-Salafism almost in an almost abrupt way, (h) they radicalize from top to bottom by means of an agent of radicalisation -in Spain there is not people which auto radicalize theirselves on internet, although more and more internet is used as a support- (i) they radicalize in Catalonia, Ceuta, Melilla and to a lesser degree in Madrid and Valencia, to mention some data (Reinares, García-Calvo and Vicente, 2019)[3].

Figure 1. Profile of radicalized people in Spain

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[3] For a more detailed analysis of the evolution of the jihadist profile in Spain, see the author's article: Sergio García, "A Sociological Approach to the Extremist Radicalization in Islam The Need for Indicators", *The International Journal of intelligence, security and public affairs,* Vol. 21 (1), 2019, pp. 66-83. The data are drawn from the reports of the Real Instituto Elcano and other sources referred to in that article.

RADICALIZED PROFILE
SPAIN

(a) Men
(b) Non-converted Muslims of first and second generation
(c) Youth
(d) Nationals, but from families from origin from Arab countries
(e) Lower-middle class
(f) With previously radicalized relatives or friends
(g) Dissidents of their parents religion which adopt the jihadist-Salafism almost in an almost abrupt way
(h) Radicalized by an radicalization agent
(i) Radicalized in Catalonia, Ceuta, Melilla and to a lesser degree in Madrid and Valencia

CATALONIA
MADRID
VALENCIA
CEUTA
MELILLA

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This profile, however, does not fully correspond to other countries in Europe. Professor Montserrat López Melero, who has had access to the penitentiaries in the country, uses to elaborate a good profiling which includes other variables such as the modus operandi (López, 2017).

Other perspectives which reach a certain level of consensus are the consideration of the Salafist-jihadist matrix as the breeding ground where radicalizacion takes place but in combination with other factors that are usually specified in two categories: internal push factors and external pull factors (Mirchandani, 2017). Regarding internal factors, we talk about existential crisis episodes commons in almost all the terrorists, real or perceived oppression, real or perceived exclusion, anger and frustration for the unfulfilled expectations

—the higher, the more difficult to satisfy, which connects both poor and middle unsatisfied classes or rich people with a desire for recognition, to mention several profiles apparently opposite—, lack of sense, search for ties, belonging and bonding, recognition and a better life desire (Trujillo *et al.*, 2017). Pull factors would be appeal of the Salafist-jihadist ideology, because in a very simple way (and reductionistic) explains the way Muslims individual and collective marginalization and offers a direct and clear response; beauty of the belonging group, the cell; fascination for adventure and violence; possibility of being recognised, having a full of sense life in the other life (if you are a suicide) or in the caliphate, etc. If a previous history of violence or criminality is added to that, the process is accelerated, since there are no internalized social control cords that stop the person from committing antisocial actions (Lemon, Mironova, Tobey, 2018).

Table 1. Factors that favour the radicalization

Factores internos de empuje	Factores externos de atracción
Episodes of existential crisis	Appeal of the Salafist-jihadist ideology
Real or perceived oppression	Beauty of the belonging group, the cell;
Real or perceived exclusion	Fascination for adventure and violence
Anger and frustration for the unfulfilled expectations	possibility of being recognised, having a full of sense life, in the other life (suicides) or in the caliphate, etc.
Lack of sense	
Search for ties, belonging and bonding	
Recognition and a better life desire	

Own elaboration

The so-called shift to resilience approaches expose strength factors and individual and collective vulnerability (Stephens, Sieckelinck and Boutellier, 2019: 1-16). These authors discover, for example, the importance of family, social (integration) and communitary (religious) roots. Those who have deep roots are less vulnerable (Baobaid, *et al.*, 2016: 32-37). Those who has more religious and scientific recognition opt to Islam contextualized versions which delegitimize use of violence in any form.

Regarding the difficulties of finding explanatory theories with universal validity, it should be mentioned that, on one hand, conditions are different in each country. It is not the same Saudi Arabia as Spain, France, Nigeria or Russia. On the other hand, the path of those who decide

to commit a terrorist attack in their residence country probably differs from those who decide to go to Syria or Iraq, those who just offer logistic or economic support or those who con. In the same way, the terrorist organization has a structure and differentiated roles. Those who belong to the dome are different from those who are recruited in Afghanistan to transport weapons, those who sent to ISIS as doctors or engineers, operate in rural areas in Mali or the imams ideologues of attacks in cities like Barcelona.

In addition, to access the primary data about those who join the armed conflict is almost impossible so figuring out complex data searching for patterns or to rebuild the life paths to find similarities is a major challenge. In Spain, for example, deep data related to this kind of prisoners are not public and special permits are required to access to them. If the intention is to interview those who have been accused, the situation is still problematic: they are protected by law and procedures for universities or research centres to receive State permission to enter prison institutions can last two years. Finally, mention that, unless the person has regretted and wants to collaborate, in Sunni and Shiite Islam there is the precept of *taqiyya*, the lie in exceptional cases to protect the community. That means that information obtained through radicalized people may be not reliable, unless they have sincerely repented and want to collaborate.

Lastly, phenomenon is hisself complex and multidimensional, so there are multiple possible hypothesis and assumptions, which may lead a further empirical inquiry, an inquiry that, as it has been said, is not simple. It might be the case that no categories with sufficient heuristic and interpretative power have yet been obtained to approach this social problem with a generalising explanatory capacity that is effective.

3. *Starting hypothesis*

This research starts from three assumptions and suggests a fundamented in several concepts. The first assumption is that it is useful to differentiate between cognitive and behavioral radicalization. It is needed life stories and profile exhaustive analysis to find common and significant elements in those who opted to a violent way that have an explanatory value. Elements such as a previous history of violence, an accumulation of small illegal acts that break progressively social control forms and the captation networks composed by friends, relatives and colleagues would have a significant importance, as it occurs clearly in the russian case (Lenon *et al.*, 2018) and something less in the subjects that Oliver Roy studied, many of them from France (2017). A second assumption is that the thinking and action are connected at some point, so it can not be posed that it should be done such a strict dissociation between cognitive and behavioral radicalization. Finding this point is the key. What psychologists call strong convictions, awareness-raising (Gardner, 1991), may be the link that connects thought and action, especially in the cases where there is not any history of previous violence. Here it comes out again a large area of empirical study. The third assumption is that, even violent radicalization should have common elements, when there is a religious motivation the problem is more complex, since motivations are stronger and the cost-benefit analyses are no longer so fundamental. Merah case, in 2012, in France, who

jumped through the toilet window shooting while policemen went in to catch him is indicative of this. Philosophical nihilism doesn't seem a deep enough motivation to bring out such behaviors in a relatively large number of people who justify their actions by resorting to divine complacency.

Further than explanatory theories, it is known that, as it was described before, in all those who acted with violence, there were very strong sense of grievance, they had experimented a big existential crisis promoted by some personal hard episode, the had a contact network related to violence and, in most cases they lived in a triple family unroot: of their family, their society and their religious community.

Key concept of the hypothesis it starts from to connect radical thinking and violent action - that awareness and strong convictions are that elusive link- is that of the moral structure of behavior. This concept, accompanied by two auxiliary hypothesis, social control and resilience, could be used to bring together multiple social and psychological non-pathological factors which make that a person opts to the violent way, at the moment tending to Islamist terrorism.

Moral structure is not a psychological entity (Farid-Arbab, 2012; Diessner, 2019: 212). It has to do with the internalization of (a) concepts and convictions, (b) thinking, feeling and behavior patterns, (c) foreseeing consequences in several courses of action as well as (d) emotional control qualities and competencies, (e) attitudes, (f) motivations that give direction to the purpose, (g) values that determine the priorities and (h) a language that has the capacity to connect all those components. Moral structure is the result of a socialization process but also something that the individual can build in a conscious way. Being this the key element of our explanation, as we will reveal below, social control also plays a relevant role. For a person to decide to break all the common social conventions in a society, and opt to the most extreme way, that of the indiscriminate violence, the natural social control mechanisms have had to gradually break down throughout life. This usually takes place in people who have little to lose with death, prison or social margination. It is often said that a very high number of people who have suicide and homicide thoughts but very few translate them into reality, depending on more or less disolution bonding to social control (Giner *et al.*, 2013: 171; Becker, 1963). Finally, individual and collective resilience, related to a strong moral structure, to deep scientific-religious knowledge and strong bonds -friends, family, religious community and society- would be main protective elements against external forces.

Moral structure so conceived connects thinking and action but in a very sophisticated way. A person can act with violence because assumes violent behavioral patterns or because doesn't have strong enough self-control mechanisms, but violence for political and religious aims, sustained over time, must be linked to convictions, whether strong or weak. Similarly, an indoctrinated person will only manifest violent behavior if, progressively, is exposed to violence, new patterns related to it and dissolves little by little his internalized social control mechanisms. Someone who has a great autocontrol, peaceful behavior patterns, strong convictions that delegitimize violence, it would be very rare to be indoctrinated and

experience a change in his moral structure. Social group, moreover, is key, as the moral structure is the result of a group socialization process and the interiorization of norms, so that the family, religious and social roots also acts as a shield against groups. radicalization agents and group cells which satisfy the desire to belong of those who have those weak bonds.

In this final part, an attempt to put this hypothesis into play will be made with the data and the several explanations that have been put forward so far to finally to approach the case of Spain. Some of the gaps that this hypothesis tries to explain, related with radicalization in different contexts, are the following: some jihadists were so religious while other did not seem so much; some jihadists had a history and previous violence histories, while other did not; some jihadists were poor while others were rich -or, at least, they come from the middle class-; some jihadists have higher education, while others did have so much; many people legitimize the use of violence and are Salagists but just a few of them make the move and act; some only propagate ideology while others join armed struggle in Syria or other conflict areas; some make recruitment while other attempt; some lead while others commit self-immolation.

Both the rational and the emotional weigh on the moral structure, so it is natural that the decision to act can be influenced by both normative conviction, strategic conviction and emotions. In addition, religion, regardless of the degree of knowledge of it, is a very powerful motivational force. For this reason, religion should always be used as one of the explanatory factors, although in dialogue with others. The highest degree of religious knowledge does not, however, always act as protection. If there are strong convictions that delegitimize violence, these will constitute a protective factor; if there are strong convictions that legitimate it, they will be an incentive; and if there are not almost convictions, the person will be more manipulable in one sense or another. The fact that only a percentage of people who justify violence take the final step towards it does not mean that from this perspective that thought and action are separated, but interact in a sophisticated and dynamic way. Those who have peaceful patterns, roots and internalized social control mechanisms as well as self-control, will need much stronger convictions, more time and more progressive contact with other radicalized environments to end up making the leap to armed struggle. Those who, however, come from a culture marked by violence and criminality, won't need more than an ideology to channel this impulse they have naturalized, but ideology will continue to weigh. The latter phenomenon would be the one that has gained popularity. Oliver Roy calls it *Islamizing radicalization*. But it is only a variant of a broader phenomenon that takes other forms and assumes different modalities.

The case of Spain -and with that it concludes-, at the moment, is somewhat easier, since the profile is not as diverse as in other countries. The last book from the Real Instituto Elcano already referred above, *Jihadism and jihadists in Spain. 15 years after 1 M,* is probably the best equipped empirical evidence and explanatory rigor among those published to date, due to the multiple agreements that this *think tank* has with diverse institutions. Not only describes the profile on evolution during the last 15 years, but also identifies which may have been the key factors of radicalization in the case of Spain. It eludes the generalized theoretical

explanation, probably because of the somewhat positivistic philosophy of science to which they seem to adhere, but does not in any way reduce the validity of a solid work with great methodological rigor.

There is no need to elaborate on its conclusions here, as it has been done in other work already mentioned (García, 2018; 2019), but maybe a brief summary may be illustrative. From among the more than 200 arrested or killed in the period from 2001 to 2018 a clear profile emerges, although there are differences when comparing the periods before and after 2011, when the war in Syria began that attracted the European population. Most of arrested or killed are men, Moroccans origin or nationalized Spanish, married -which contrasts with other studies from criminology which consider family as a preventive factor of crime (Gallegos, 2017)-, with children, residents in Catalonia, Madrid, Ceuta -and in a lesser degree in Andalusia, Melilla and Valencia-, radicalised during early youth (almost adolescent), in company (90%), in Spain, through a radicalization agent, in places of worship or private homes, with no criminal record (only 25%), with previously radicalized relatives or friends, immigrants, second generations and some converts (10%), with low knowledge of Islam (80%), young people (18-35 on average), with secondary or higher education (although slightly lower than the Spanish average), radicalised in Catalonia, Madrid or Ceuta and in particular in five or six specific municipalities (Madrid, Ceuta, Melilla, Ripoll, Terrassa, Barcelona).

If we divide the periods we can observe some trends: more women, converts, more youths, preeminence in Ceuta, Melilla and Catalonia as places of radicalization, emergence of prisons as places of radicalizacion, more people sentenced for logistics, travel and propaganda (as in the case of women that, in Spain, have not executed any attack), etc. Regarding the explanatory factors, the Real Instituto Elcano highlights two of them: the agent of on-site radicalization that exposes the person face-to-face with violent ideologies and strong social and family bonds with previously radicalised people.

Here, again, we suggest that the understanding of this polyhedral reality would be greatly enriched and strengthened by the recourse, above all, to the notion of moral structure, and the complementary support provided by social control and resilience as auxiliary explanatory hypotheses. Young Muslims from immigrant families seem to be more vulnerable because, in attending to the components of their moral structure they might be characterized by a lack of strong convictions, being in connection with identity circles and social groups in which there is a certain degree of uprooting and the social control mechanisms are eroded by the lack of recognition and economic and professional success. They don't have much to lose, but they do have much to gain if they attend to the salafist-jihadist ideology that is presented to them not only in the form of a story full of deep meaning, but of an identity response, of true friendships, of a sense of mission, of an alternative to injustice, of an explanation to marginality and, in addition, of transcendent ultramundane reward.

Prevention policies, following this logic, would therefore have to respond to each and every one of the factors identified, if they were/aspires to be effective; but, above all, it would seem

appropriate to shift the focus from vulnerability to resilience. This, however, will be addressed at a later stage of the ongoing research. Furthermore, the explanatory model also needs to be applied to other countries in Europe and other regions of the world -starting with those with greater cultural closeness-, as well as to other forms of radicalisation.

Conclusions

Understanding the causes of jihadist radicalization is as important as it is complex. However, the definition of effective short-, medium- and long-term policies depends on this to a phenomenon with which we will have to coexist, unfortunately, for years. In this article - inserted into a larger research project-, after developing a small radicalization phenomenology using three main vectors (positive-negative / individualistic-collective / thematic), some of the most consolidated scientific explanatory theories have been overflown. After noting the existing gap in all of them, which comes from the apparent disconnection between radical thinking and violent action, as well as the empirical anomalies that accompany it (the can not stand the weight of empirical evidence as more data are accumulated), an alternative explanatory hypothesis has been proposed that seeks to fill in, although tentatively, this gap, and is underpinned by the notion of moral structure. After defining the moral structure and describing their components, attempts have been made to put in dialogue its explanatory potential to give sense to the existing gap in prevalent explanatory theories. Even on a provisional basis, it could be concluded that the concept of moral structure seems to have an important heuristic capability to move on the studies about violent radicalization, studies that, as it was already said, condition the effectiveness of the response, either in the prevention area, direct combat or de-radicalisation.

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