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**THE SALAFI IDEOLOGY AND ITS EFFECTS ON RADICALIZATION  
IN EUROPE**

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**THE SALAFI IDEOLOGY AND ITS EFFECTS ON RADICALIZATION  
IN EUROPE**



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“I, Hasan Bařmısırlı, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own, where information has been derived from other sources. I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.”



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# THE SALAFI IDEOLOGY AND ITS EFFECTS ON RADICALIZATION IN EUROPE

## ABSTRACT

The radical Islamist movements are on the rise across Europe. A new generation of homegrown jihadists creates an even greater challenge for European policy makers. Since the attacks of 9/11, the global war on terror may have some success in terms of conventional fighting but it seems to be failing in terms of preventing radicalization. The Salafi ideology is the main system of thinking behind many fundamentalist organizations and terror groups. The radicalization occurs as a result of the Salafi interpretation of Islamic revelation and its doctrines. Despite the sheer number of studies and literature on religious radicalization, few seem to be actually contributing in understanding the radical tendencies and indoctrination of the European youth by the Salafi rhetoric. Salafism is funded by the proponents of the Salafi ideology. Due to this global logistical support, the Salafi mosques and religious centers are on the rise across Europe. Most European youth naturally run into these centers in order to fulfill their religious needs and naturally perceive that the Salafi interpretation of Islam is the only legitimate and righteous one. This study aims to provide the necessary evidence to prove that the content of the Salafi rhetoric and the rising number of Salafi mosques are the main tools of radicalization used by Jihadists.

**Keywords:** Radicalization, Jihad, Salafism, Wahhabism, Salafi-Jihadism, Europe, France, United Kingdom, and Germany.



## ÖZET

Radikal İslamcı hareketler Avrupa genelinde bir yükseliş trendi göstermektedir. Avrupa'da büyümüş yeni nesil jihadçılar Avrupalı politika ve kanun koyuculara her zamankinden daha fazla meydan okumaktadır. 11 Eylül saldırılarından bu yana global terrörle mücadele ve savaş başarılı gözüksede, radikalleşmeyi önleme açısından başarısız sonuçlar vermektedir. Bir çok köktendinci örgüt ve grubun düşünce yapısındaki temel ideoloji Selefi düşüncedir. Radikalleşmenin kaynağı Selefi düşüncenin İslami vahiy ve doktrinleri yorumlama biçiminden kaynaklanmaktadır. Radikalleşme üzerine yazılmış mevcut literatür ve çalışmaların çokluğuna rağmen, çok az araştırma genç Avrupalıların radikalleşme süreci konusunda Selefi ideolojiye yönelmiş veya konsantre olmuştur. Selefi ideoloji Avrupa genelinde Selefi deolojiyi benimsemiş çevreler tarafından finanse edilmektedir ve bu global lojistik desteğin bir sonucu olarak Selefi camiler ve dini merkezler Avrupada çoğalmaktadır. Birçok genç Avrupalı Müslüman dini ve manevi ihtiyaçlarını gidermek için bu camilere yönelmekte, ve Selefi ideolojiyi İslamın tek meşru ve doğru yorumu zannetmektedir. Bu çalışma Salafi ideolojinin içeriksel söyleminin ve artan Selefi dini merkezlerin genç avrupalıları radikalleşmesi üzerine etkilerini analiz etmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Radikalleşme, Cihad, Selefilik, Wehhabilik, Selefi-Jihadçılık, Avrupa, Fransa, Birleşik Krallık, and Almanya.



This thesis is dedicated to my family

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>BfV</b>	Domestic intelligence service of the Federal Republic of Germany
<b>CFCM</b>	French Council of the Muslim Faith
<b>DA'ISH</b>	The Islamic State of Iraq and Sham
<b>DCRI</b>	Direction Centrale des Renseignements Intérieur
<b>DITIB</b>	Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs
<b>GIA</b>	Armed Islamic Group of Algeria
<b>HuT</b>	Hizb' ut-Tahrir
<b>NYPD</b>	New York Police Department
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Islam as a religion more politicized than ever became a major issue in world politics which many of its groups exercising illegitimate actions and extreme violence in the name of the faith. Unfortunately Islamic activism is an understudied notion, which affects the international system as a whole. Religious radicalization is growing in Europe as well as in other parts of the world. Today, European Islam is more than half a century old and since the end of the 1980s, a new form of religiosity has emerged among Europe's young Muslims. Radical Islamist tendencies are spreading across Europe especially among the descendants of Muslim immigrants in parallel with growing anti-immigration sentiment. EU officials like Federica Mogherini, trying to point to the fact that, Islam as a religion and culture is not foreign to Europe but is part of its cosmopolitan culture and society. Although officials like Mogherini attempt to embrace the Islamic religion and the fundamental components of modern European culture, there is much to deal with Islam in Europe that has become a cradle of radical jihadists and violent religious activists.

This particular study deals with one of the most controversial as well as complex issue of religious radicalism. This research is an attempt to contextualize the Salafi movement and its influence in Europe. The focus is on the growing influences of Salafi-Jihadism, which is spreading among the Muslim youth of Europe. Most research shows that there is a considerable amount of European Muslims joining the ranks of the Salafi-jihadist organizations. There is a visible trend that the radicalization of the European Muslim youth is on the rise. It is also very puzzling that the radicalization is occurring in the most liberal as well as tolerant states of Europe where Muslims enjoy a considerable amount of social and religious freedom. This study argues that there is a correlation between the ideological foundation of the

Islamist Salafi ideology and the violent radicalization of Muslim youth in Europe. This research also argues that the Salafi rhetoric and its interpretation of many Islamic concepts is the main catalyzer for religious radicalization in Europe. By drawing upon the existing literature on homegrown radicalization, this particular study empirically explores the effects of the Salafi ideology in particular. The research shows that the ideology is being institutionalized in Europe via foreign funding. Most of the mosques and religious centers in Europe are under the control of Salafi groups and operate as the radicals' hotbeds spreading the Salafi propaganda. The Salafi rhetoric transmits a message that contains the motivation for violence and intolerance. We argue that among the many individual, national, and global factors that contribute to Islamic radicalization of European Muslims, the Salafi ideology and its fundamentalist arguments play an important role in the process. We argue that the ideological content of the Salafi message and its growing scope and influence in Europe along with the increasing number of its mosques and religious centers leaves no space for other peaceful interpretations of Islamic thought and life.

The framework of this study is based on the hypothetical model that young Muslims develop a religious receptiveness, and an identity problematic as immigrants due to the hardships of their society. In need of a greater spiritual guidance, during a visit to a religious gathering, they generally run into Salafi circles and groups, which are numerous across Europe. Given the fact that the content of the Salafi message promotes a puritanical view of religion, many young western Muslims adopt radical ideas of Salafi-Wahabism as the only legitimate view and way of Islam. Throughout this study the main focus will concentrate on the ideological propaganda and the structural capacity of the Salafi ideology as the main indoctrinating agent of religious radicalisation in Europe.

The research question will be tested and analyzed according to three country cases. France, the United Kingdom, and Germany are specifically chosen for this study. The Muslim minorities in these countries are ethnically diverse and subject to different immigration policies. Such differences will contribute to the validity of this study and provide a diversity of context.

### **1.1 Theoretical approach and methodology**

In order to address the phenomenon of homegrown radicalization in Europe we will utilize the “theories of radicalization”. The three important models and frameworks we will utilize to test our hypothesis are the models put forward by Quintan Wiktorowicz, Marc Sageman’s study of “understanding terror networks” and the four phases of radicalisation designed by the NYPD (New York Police Department) study conducted by Mitchell Silber & Arvin Bhatt. All of these studies provide important evidence for the effects of religious ideology and the forces of indoctrination with Salafism in focus. Contrary to other models, these three studies focus more on the ideological aspect of the radicalization phenomenon. These studies complete each other’s missing components and provide for a greater understanding for the argument of this research.

In order to address the main question of our research it is important to identify the concepts of Islamism, Salafism, Wahhabism, and the modern concept of Salafi-Jihadism. Following the section on the historical development of Salafism, the research will provide a content analysis of how the justification of violence was introduced into Islamic thinking. Following the identification of various ideologues that have contributed to this system of thinking and the development of more radical approaches, the focus will move to the European context. The analysis of the Euro-Muslim’s identity problematique, the Salafi ideology’s de-culturation process, and the

institutional capacity of the ideology in Europe will constitute the main components of the argument.

The aim of this study is to provide evidence that the content of the Salafi message actually contributes to the radicalization of young Muslims through its rhetoric. Using a content analysis method, this study will test whether or not these theories fit within the framework of the argument. Both the NYPD and Wiktorowicz studies emphasize that individuals run into Salafi ideology in Europe as a result of a phase they undergo which is called the “cognitive opening” and religious seeking.” During this phase individuals are subjected to the doctrinal message of Salafi interpretation and they steps into the domain of religious radicalization. The evidence presented in this research, aims to identify the content of the message that stimulates radicalization and observes the national level and individual level of analysis about how radicalization by Salafi-Jihadism occurs. We provide an ideological and theological approach for the Islamic concepts used by the Salafi ideologues to justify their methods and actions, which leads individuals to radicalization. The three country studies will be utilized and analyzed in order to understand how the Salafi message is being transmitted in these countries. We will look at the institutionalization capacity of the ideology and analyze individual cases of jihadists whether or not the indoctrination by the Salafi ideology is present during the radicalization process.

## **1.2 Limitations to this study**

It is extremely difficult to measure the precise influence exerted by Wahhabism or Salafi-Jihadism on Muslim’s religious practices and way of life. In the case of European Muslims, the influence cannot simply be measured by statistics. Especially in the Muslim minorities of Europe, where the necessary institutions for religious education are lacking, the easy access to the Salafi doctrine creates an



environment that promotes religious radicalization. Unfortunately, most of the literature on Islamist extremism fails to focus on the ideological level of analysis when it comes to this particular phenomenon. Surprisingly many valuable sources on the study of Islamist radicalization do not even mention concepts like Salafism, Wahhabism, or Jihadism. An understanding of Islamist fundamentalism without the understanding of these concepts would be deficient and incomplete. The Salafi ideology is a minority thinking with a high level of social acceptance. As Taslaman argues, a hermeneutic and theological understanding has to be adopted to provide the problems within this ideology. In order to shed light on the process of Islamist radicalization we need to clarify the important Islamic concepts of war, rebellion, and political action. Evidence shows that the idea of violent Jihad and radicalism is embedded in the Salafi ideology. In this regard framing becomes an important factor for the role of ideas and cognitive influences. In order to obtain an efficient measurement of this phenomenon we need to monitor the religious education in the Salafi-dominated mosques across Europe and analyze the content of the message to identify the roots of violent activism.

### **1.3 Expected findings**

This study follows a number of reviews on the literature of radicalization and offers a different angle for looking at this phenomenon. In this research, we trace the origins of this ideology in the works of renowned ideologues of Salafism. We expect to find evidence that the content of the Salafi message transforms moderate Muslims into becoming Islamist radicals. This will be the ideological level of analysis for the radicalization of homegrown European radicals. In order to provide empirical evidence, to test our hypothesis we utilize three country studies to determine the institutionalization of Salafism and the individual cases of Salafi-Jihadists by

analyzing their relationship with the ideology. We expect to find a growing number of mosques and religious centers under the Salafi influence across Europe. Most of these religious institutions can be identified by the source of their funding. Because many Gulf States are proponents of the Salafi-Wahhabi ideology, they financially support these establishments in order to spread their ideology. Such places of worship outnumber the other moderate Islamic centers in Europe and become the only option for many young European Muslims. We expect to find a certain point in the lives of Jihadists where they were subjected to Salafi ideology and its literalist radical approach.

#### **1.4 The Selection of the cases studies**

The three countries chosen for this study share a common challenge with the phenomenon of the homegrown radicalization of its citizens. In many cases these radicals are the third generation Muslims and new converts who were raised in a western setting. Looking at the population level of Muslims in these three states, more Muslims live in them than in any other Western European country. In Britain and France, most immigrants come primarily from the former colonies of Pakistan, and Algeria respectively. Both Britain and France have contrasting policies of integrating immigrants. The difference in policies and the perception of integration may provide insight for the actual process of radicalization. Germany is quite different because most of its Muslims immigrants arrived from Turkey. The British policy of integration and multiculturalism, the French policy of assimilation with strict regulations of secularism and the German model of interactionism with a drop of assimilationism are the policy models that might influence radicalization overall. Britain and France with their colonial experience have a different demographic character of Muslim immigrants compared to Germany. German Muslims being

predominantly Turkish would be useful to test the Turkish ethnicity's experience and relationship with the Salafi ideology in Germany. Most of the Muslim population in France is Arabic-speaking. On the other hand, the UK has a diverse population of Muslims with a majority of South Asians and Indo-Pakistanis. The diverse character of the Muslims minorities in these countries will contribute much for the analysis of radicalization.

In these three countries there is a firm commitment to religious freedom and individual liberties are respected. The French and German constitutions enforce the notion that the state remains neutral among the religions. Britain does not have a constitutional protection for religious rights, however common law and traditional values protect religious pluralism and liberties. The relationship between the minority religions and the state is regulated according to the national regimes. The minority religions in these countries are not recognized and are given official status. In this manner, the religion is kept away from the social landscape. The republicanism and the existence of secularity, force these countries to adopt stricter policies of immigration when dealing with religious minorities. The anticlericalism and the commitment to the strict separation of the church and the state becomes the major obstacle for these countries to deal, monitor and regulate the religious affairs of the minorities causing many radical movements to operate in an uncontrolled manner. (Fetzer & Soper 2004)

## **1.5 Literature review**

Since the attacks of 9/11 a tremendous number of studies were added to the literature of radicalization. Scholars like Roy, Piscatori, Kepel, Denoex, and Esposito have made tremendous contribution to the study of political Islam, and the development of Islamism in the West. In addition to the literature provided by these

respective scholars of political Islam, there are also important studies and theoretical models on the effects of ideological indoctrination and the process of radicalization. In particular, the works of Marc Sageman provide important insights for the contribution of the Salafi-Jihadist ideology to the radicalization phenomenon and the Global Salafi networks. Wiktorowicz, apart from his study on the Jihadist group al-Muhajiroun, provides important literature on the genealogy and the rise of radical Islamist tendencies in the West. In his studies, he has discussed the rationality of religious doctrines, which leads to radicalization and analyzed Islamic activism from the framework of social movement theory. In addition to valuable literature provided by Wiktorowicz, Magnus Ranstorp and Carolin Goerzig have made significant contribution in terms of radicalization in the West from the framework of integration, public discourse, and identity. Ranstorp has collected important studies from various scholars of radicalization and has created a collection of works dealing with the root causes of terrorism, ideological issues as well as an analysis of terrorism in major European countries. Unfortunately apart from aforementioned studies, many radicalization studies fail to provide the necessary ideological background for Islamist doctrines that lead to radical action. Most of these studies have a narrow view that focuses on the structural and situational factors of terrorism and fail to focus on Salafi ideology and Jihadist violence. Another important study worth mentioning is a collection of essays and studies by Frederic Volpi on the concepts of Islamism, Political Islam, Islamic fundamentalism and Political violence. Volpi's collection of works provides a comprehensive introduction to the study of political Islam. This work has provided the necessary conceptual background for the modern understanding and explanation of Islamism, the emergence and development of Islamism and Jihadism, political responses to these movements, and terrorism.

The following section provides the important theoretical models and theories, which explain the phenomenon of radicalization. Providing every single study on this issue will exceed the limit of this research therefore we have presented the most relevant studies for the argument of this research.

## **2 THEORETICAL APPROACH: THE THEORY OF RADICALIZATION**

After the terrorist attacks in Madrid of March 2004, and July 2005 in London, the focus of International Relations studies shifted and the term “radicalization” became an important concept to explain homegrown political activism and violence in Europe. This was a new phenomenon to understand the process of the new form of terrorism that was emerging in Europe. The homegrown jihadists became a critical challenge for Western societies. As soon as scholars handled the issue, the immediate attention was focused on the immigrant communities where most radicals were emerging. Since then much has been written on this issue. Many theoretical models were designed to analyze the process of radicalization and understand if there is a certain dynamic or recurrence during the evolution of this phenomenon.

When searching for a deeper analysis of the effects of religious indoctrination, it is important to determine which theoretical perspectives are the most useful. Choosing the right model will provide for a better understanding of the mechanisms, dynamics, and evolution of Islamic fundamentalism and Salafi-Jihadism, which is the subject of this research. This study acknowledges that in the world of modern political science where much empirical evidence is needed today, it is a challenging task to understand the place and centrality of religious indoctrination and its cognitive influences over individuals. There are almost no sources in the West conducting an ideological and hermeneutic approach to the study of radicalisation and the ideological forces behind it.

Following the violent attacks in Europe, many researchers tended to explain radicalization through personality characteristics, psychological states, situational as well as structural factors. Many ignored the actual cognitive effects of the ideological messages. Many psychological traits of individuals, as well as situational and structural factors cannot alone account for the process of radicalisation therefore a combination of all factors should be used. According to M. Ranstorp, understanding radicalization as a process is a complex phenomenon. “It is simply a multifaceted combination of push-pull factors involving a combination of socio-psychological factors, political grievance, religious motivation and discourse.” He argues that identity politics matter most and there are many triggering mechanisms that collectively move individuals towards extremism. (Ranstorp 2010)

## **2.1 Radicalisation: a conceptual and definitional analysis**

Defining the term “radicalization” is another difficult task. In order to define what is “radical,” we also need to define what is “moderate” which is its semantic opposite. Mandel defines the term “radicalization” as “being extreme relative to something.” (Mandel 2008) However, the term “radical” is as problematic as the concept of “terrorist.” A terrorist for a particular society can be considered as a freedom fighter for another. As for the case of the term radical, it is a matter of perspective to define the content of the particular concept. It is a matter of perception that certain behavior might not be considered as radical, whereas the same behavior in another context might be considered as very radical. (Mandel 2008) As for Maskaliunaité, radicalism and its conceptual terminology have a much broader meaning. He argues that, “in the context of current studies and policy-making, radicalisation tends to mean a pathway to terrorism, gradual slide into extremism, fundamentalism, or even more generally, a movement towards justifying violence and

finally personally engaging in it.” (Maskaliunaité 2015) Most definitions within the literature thus agree on the fact that the phenomenon of radicalization has something to do with the justification of violence. According to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police report on the *Terrorism and violent extremism awareness guide*, “Radicalization is the process by which individuals are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs toward extreme views.” (RCMP 2016)

In this particular study we move from these two aforementioned definitions. The specific form of radicalization we will refer to here is the process of progressively accepting the radical beliefs of the Salafi doctrine that leads to radical activism and violence through its puritanical approach. The main argument of this research revolves around the idea that the radicalization in many Muslims communities across Europe is a product of Salafi-jihadist ideology. Before going into a deeper analysis of how the indoctrination of Salafi ideology leads to radicalization, we need to identify what the discipline has already said and produced in designing the theoretical framework of this phenomenon.

## **2.2 Theories and models of radicalization**

The study of radicalization has a vast amount of literature with considerable amount of theorizing. Among these studies there are several full-scale models, which describe the entire process of radicalization. Although none of these models refer to the origins or the actual effects of religious indoctrination, they successfully describe the structural, psychological and geo-political factors that contribute to the process. Each case of radicalization may fit in a different framework or model. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize and have a single model that would be able to explain the process of religious radicalization.

Given the complex nature of the human condition there are many factors that contribute to this process. When the issue is religious fundamentalism, although each of these models provides a significant dimension, none of them seriously focus on the actual radicalizing capacity and content of the religious message. After reviewing most of the literature on radicalization, I have noticed that most of these studies ignore the content of the religious message that leads to religious radicalization.

One of the most important studies of radicalization is the model designed by Randy Borum, which is named the “*Borum’s pathway*.” In his Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) law enforcement bulletin, Borum describes a psychological pathway, where the individual develops an ideology that justifies the acts of terrorism. He states four stages, which begins with the initial stage of judging his/her condition as “undesirable.” In the second stage, the subject perceives his/her condition as being “unjust.” Borum’s third stage is the phase where the mind reaches a conclusion saying “*this is not your fault*.” After this stage, the subject begins to blame other groups for the illegitimate conditions, and finally creates negative stereotypes of the target group and justifies the violence against it. (Borum et al. 2003) Borum approaches the process from different dimensions. He utilizes individual, group, network, and mass movement explanations. He also utilizes the theories of social movement, and social psychology. In support of our argument, Borum views the radical beliefs as a precursor for terrorism. However, to be critical not all kinds of radical thinking engage in terrorist activities. Radical thinking only becomes a societal threat when it leads an individual to engage in violence as a means of achieving political, ideological, or religious goals. (RCMP 2016) Borum successfully distinguishes between Islam and Islamism and perfectly defines *Islamism* as a politically driven totalitarian ideology with a strong anti-Western stance. It is important to consider that there is a distinction between the original revelation and the narrow ideologies



originating from its false interpretation. These narrow interpretations and divergent movements need to be studied thoroughly in order to have a greater perspective of radicalisation. (Gartenstein-Ross 2012)

The next model of radicalization is Fathali Moghaddam's *metaphor of Staircase to Terrorism*. In his study, Moghaddam defines terrorism "as politically motivated violence that is perpetrated by individuals, groups, or state-sponsored agents and intended to bring about feelings of terror and helplessness in a population in order to influence decision making and to change behavior." (Moghaddam 2006)

He describes his model of radicalization with six stages. He uses a metaphor of a staircase with six floors, which is narrowing at the top and finally leading to violence. On the ground floor of the staircase, the subject experiences feelings of deprivation as the initial step of radicalization. This is the psychological interpretation of the subject's material conditions, which usually result in a perception of injustice. Moghaddam emphasizes the "perceived deprivation" as a fundamental factor for terrorism. (Lygre et al. 2011)

On the second floor of the staircase, the feelings of deprivation and discontent are channeled towards a target. Then the subject morally justifies terrorism and becomes affiliated with like-minded people, where they begin to radicalize each other. The next stage revolves around the displacement of aggression as the subject joins a group or organization. Moghaddam proposes that radicalization takes place in a group, where the feelings of isolation, attachment, secrecy, and fear become central. Finally, the last two floors are the stages where the actual violence occurs. (Moghaddam 2005)

Reviewing his work, Lygre et al. note that Moghaddam aims to describe only terrorist acts perpetrated by Islamic organizations, and he does not describe their violence as religiously motivated, but rather as politically motivated. (Lygre et al. 2011)

This ignorance of the actual impact of religious ideology disqualifies this particular model to be used in this research

because Moghaddam's model rests on the assumption that the intentions of the terrorists are purely political and they are made through a process driven by different psychological factors instead of the adoption of radical religious messages. Moghaddam's metaphor explains the origins of political terrorism, not the origins of fundamentalist ideology.

Another study worth mentioning here is Marc Sageman's radicalization model based on his book "*Understanding terror networks.*" Sageman conducted an empirical study by analyzing 172 cases of mujahedeen warriors. He analyzed the development of terror networks by discussing its ideology and the impact of such thinking. He provides the historical development of the Jihadist ideology and illustrates its spread and indoctrinating force. In his study, he stresses the mobilization of likeminded individuals through networks and connections. Sageman describes Al-Qaeda-inspired terrorism as a social movement and a modern phenomenon. He argues that the mobilization of the subjects occurs through social and virtual networks. Socialization is at the heart of his model. He argues that the Global Salafi Jihad is a threat to the world and attempts to identify the origins, objectives of the members of Global Jihad, and their social network. Sageman traces the origins of the Salafi movement from its origins until modern times. (Sageman 2004) Sageman's study was subject to much critique about the narrow scope of its data sample as being representative of the Global Salafi-Jihadist network.

Another model also worth mentioning here is the study of New York Police Department (NYPD) by Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt, focusing on homegrown radicalization in North America and Western Europe. Their trajectory of radicalization involves four stages. The first stage of "pre-radicalization" defines the social environment and profile of the potential subject. The next stage is the "self-identification" stage where the subject turns to the Islamic message as a response to

his/her personal crisis. In this stage, the subject explores the religion and becomes exposed to the radical interpretations of the religious doctrine. In the third stage, the subject fully accepts the indoctrination of the radical interpretation of Islam and is influenced by the Salafi ideology that justifies violence. In the last stage, the subject becomes an active member of the violent Salafi-jihadist organization. (Silber & Bhatt 2007) Silber and Bhatt argue that each of the phases above are unique and has specific features on individuals. Not all individuals pass through these stages and may abandon the process at some point. However they argue “individuals who do pass through this entire process are quite likely to be involved in the planning or implementation of a terrorist act.” (Silber & Bhatt 2007)

Another significant study of radicalization is the research by Quintan Wiktorowicz. Although Wiktorowicz has provided considerable amount of literature on this subject his study named *“joining the cause: Al Muhajiroun and radical Islam”* account for one of the most suitable models in understanding the phenomenon of radicalization. In this particular study, his analysis of radicalization is based on a case study focusing on a UK-based Islamic group called the *Al-Muhajiroun*. The group operates transnationally promoting Islamic revolution across Muslim populated lands. Using this case, Wiktorowicz designed a trajectory of four processes, which leads the subject eventually to the ranks of a radical extremist organization. Within these four phases of the radicalization process, Wiktorowicz describes two important concepts. The “cognitive opening” phase, which is a personal crisis usually originating from experiences of discrimination or victimization and the phase of “religious seeking,” which defines the receptiveness that moves the subject towards a religious message. Wiktorowicz’s third level is the phase of “frame alignment.” In this stage, the person’s newly adopted worldview coincides with his previous one. Then, finally comes the last stage of “socialization and joining” in which the individual embraces

the ideology and joins the group adopting the group identity. (Wiktorowicz 2004) Much like Sageman, Wiktorowicz also stresses the importance of socialization. These four processes constitute a framework, which is a great contribution to the understanding of the effects of religious indoctrination. We will apply this model throughout the study and measure our hypothesis according to its findings.

### **2.3 Why applying these theories?**

Each of these models above provides many important insights for the understanding of religious indoctrination that leads to radicalization. Some of these studies lack a deeper analysis and ignore the fact that there is an ideological factor contributing to radicalization. These studies mostly engage with structural factors and define the motivations as being purely political. The ideological content analysis method is mostly neglected throughout the literature. It is however a challenging task to provide a theological and ideological argument for the study of radicalization. As Paniagua argues, the scholars of this discipline need to adopt a theological understanding of the radical religious doctrines to prevent ideological radicalization. (Paniagua 2005) There is a widespread scholarly consensus that the fundamentalist ideology of Salafi-Wahhabism and its Jihadist offshoot are the main reasons behind many Islamist radical groups and organizations operating across the globe. The Salafi ideology provides the necessary cognitive framework that contributes to individuals' radicalization. Therefore a content analysis method and an ideological approach have to be adopted.

Within this particular framework, the models provided by Marc Sageman, Quintan Wiktorowicz and Silber & Bhatt stress the fact that somewhere in the process of radicalization there is a phase of indoctrination to the *Salafi ideology* in particular. Especially the NYPD study is aware of the content of the Salafi message, which

eventually leads the subjects to radical action. This study provides that individuals at a certain time in their life become exposed to this ideology and eventually adopt this way of thinking as the only legitimate form of Islam. (Silber & Bhatt 2007) The two important concepts of “religious seeking” and “cognitive opening” presented by Wiktorowicz are also fundamental for this research. According to Wiktorowicz, “given the extreme views of radical religious groups, a basic prerequisite for joining is an individual’s willingness to expose him or herself to the movement message. Prior *socialization* experiences heavily influence a priori views of radical groups and thus the likelihood of conscious exposure.” (Wiktorowicz 2004) Both Sageman and Wiktorowicz argue that during these stages the subjects are drawn into Salafi ideology through religious establishments and gatherings where *socialization* occurs. (Wiktorowicz 2004; Sageman 2004) Individuals are usually inspired by a cognitive opening phase that shakes the previous beliefs they hold and become willing to expose themselves to new ways of thinking. This particular cognitive process facilitates the receptivity to the message, and the message itself becomes a major catalyzer for all actions and ideas. (Wiktorowicz 2004) Given the fact that the Salafi ideology is growing and spreading in the West, individuals that are undergoing a potential phases of “cognitive opening” or “religious opening,” are more likely to fall into Salafi circles and perceive that this is the only legitimate Islamic message

Most of these scholars above rely on the fact that the radicalization is in some degree the product of radical ideologies. However, contrary to the mainstream scholars of radicalization, Olivier Roy suggests quite an opposite approach. According to Roy’s theory, it is not a question of Islam being radicalized but the Islamisation of radicalism that is the problem. Roy argues that the young Muslims undergo a generational revolt and break apart from their parents. He further expresses that these young Muslims find Islam as the best way to express their rejection of

society. However, Roy's ideas are considered to be quite controversial as many scholars argue that the Salafi ideology, in particular, is the main reason behind radicalization. However, Roy openly suggests that, "It is not religious radicalization that leads to political radicalization. When they became radical, they are religious. They frame their wrath in a religious narrative. They think they will go to paradise. It is Islamization of radicalization. I think Islam is the framework of the radicalization; it is not the primary cause. What I am saying, which there is a lot of misunderstanding about: It is not because they pray more and more, or go more and more to a mosque, that they become radicals. When they became radicals, they choose the religious narrative and believe in it." (Chotiner 2016)

Before we analyze deeply why many Western Muslims become radicalized by this ideology, we need to explore the content of its message as well as its historical development that leads to radical Jihadism. In order to have a greater understanding of how the Salafi message contributes to radicalization, we need to check the content of the religious message and provide evidence of how the notion of violence was historically justified. Thus the following section will provide the necessary debate for a deeper grasp of the subject and will aim to explain the motivation behind Salafi-Jihadism.<sup>1</sup>

### **3 LEADING THE WAY: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CONCEPTS OF ISLAMISM AND SALAFISM**

There are no religions or respected belief systems in the world that would justify any threat to the sanctity of life. Islam is no exception. The Islamic message is a universal message that appeals to 3 billion people in the world through its emphasis

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<sup>1</sup> A caveat I would like to express here that there are doubts in terms of how ethical the cases selected for the radicalization studies by Silber & Bhatt and Wiktorowicz. Most of the subjects interviewed and selected in this study were in custody and they provided their detailed profile and background during the interrogation by law enforcement agencies. We are unaware under what circumstances the subjects were interviewed therefore it is difficult to determine the validity of their response and have concrete conclusions upon this information.

on peace and harmony. However, it is a reality that throughout history many belief systems undergo a certain period of change or give birth to interpretations leading to divergent currents. In most of cases, fundamentalist movements originate from the spread of a specific ideology and doctrine. The Salafi movement within Islam was born in the same way. Theologians of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century interpreted the Islamic message in such a way that would suit the needs and conditions of their time. This interpretation was transformed into a purist, and intolerant religious ideology, which challenges the whole of International system today.

Unfortunately, contemporary Islam continues to be an arena of divergent and conflicting interpretations. The lack of given authority in Islam and the absence of a single “orthodoxy” prevents the existence of a universal consensus. As a result, Islam as a religion continues to be politicized and be subject to various interpretations and ideologies. Islam as a religion, unlike other Abrahamic traditions is in fact political and covers all aspects of human life. It not only appeals to the religious practices and obligations of individuals but also regulates all forms of social, political, and economic life of the community. Many modern day scholars argue that political Islam is an illegitimate extension of the Islamic tradition outside of the religious domain it has occupied throughout the history. This is an important debate beyond the purview of this thesis. However, there is an important fact that the Islamic faith combines and fuses religion and politics in such a way that is incompatible with the Western understanding and its analytical models. (Hirschkind 1997) This combination is usually the source of all political actions in the name of Islam.

### **3.1 From Islamism to Salafism: evolution of radical ideologies**

To understand the concepts of Salafism and Jihadism, we need to have a greater understanding of the concept of Islamism. To explain the concept of Islamism we intend to refer to the political dynamics generated by those who place the Islamic faith as a source that organizes society and the social order. All ideas generated and activities defined have an Islamic point of view and define the boundaries of all socio-cultural and political realm of human life. (Volpi 2011) It is a phenomenon that incorporates a wide spectrum of behavior and belief. It promotes the idea that Islam with its laws and system of values should play a central role in public life. In other words, “the point of Islamism is to advocate for a privileged social and political role for Islamic belief.” (Dar & Hamid 2016)

In Western literature, the concepts of Islamism and political Islam are most of the time used interchangeably. There is greater sense today that Islamism is a modern phenomenon, which came to being in the 1970s and 1980s with the Islamic revolution of Iran. (Mozaffari 2007) However, it is a very old concept that with its foundation embedded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Islamic theology. Islamism was born out of the revivalist movements within Islam. It is a product of a trend that challenges the traditional form of Islamic governance. It requires a return to the early years of the prophethood and the rejection of all the great traditions of Islamic history that are considered to be a form of negative deviation. This new trend and challenge was in fact revolutionary in that during the early phase of its development it was intended to cure the decline the Islamic civilization during times of turmoil and invasion. As a reaction to these hard times, it was transformed into an ideology that began to spread intolerance, civil disobedience, and violence. (Volpi 2011) To understand the nature of this movement we need to begin by discussing the evolution of the Salafi ideology.



The early revivalist movements in Islamic history developed through time and gave birth to a movement that came to be known as the *Salafi movement*. The earliest form of this revivalist ideology was developed in the ideas of the 13<sup>th</sup> century theologian Ibn Taymiyyah. His ideas influenced many Islamic reformers such as Muhammad Abduh, Jamal al-din Afghani, and in modern times, figures like Muhammad abd-al Wahhab, Sayyid Qutb, and Abul A ‘la Mawdudi. Each of these figures contributed to the ideological development of Salafism in general. This ideology was further developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which led to the creation of Salafi-Jihadism. This modern ideology is considered to be the main thinking behind many terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda, Da’ish (The Islamic State of Iraq and Sham), or Afghan Taliban. (Bowering et al. 2013)

It is generally accepted today that the Salafi ideology and its fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic doctrine is the main cause of radicalization and violence. Although the Salafi ideology does not represent the majority of the Islamic world, it has become the most influential and politically organized one. This new interpretation provided a whole new political vision for Islam and challenged the traditional forms of Islamic life and practices. Before we go in deep to analyze and explain the Salafi movement, we need to clarify the various schools of thoughts and ideological traditions within Islam and then move to the actual discussion of radicalization and the affects of the Salafi ideology.

### **3.2 The diversity of thinking within Islam**

Islam is a religion enriched by a family of religious beliefs and religious movements. All Muslims today, although part of a single greater community, identify themselves as either Sunni, Shi’a, or Alawi. The distinctions that separated the Islamic community go back to early seventh century political disputes over the

succession for the leadership. These political disputes over time led to various differences in beliefs, practices, and theological thinking. (Lapidus 1983) As a result of these social, political and demographic differences various schools of law and thinking came into being. Since the 9<sup>th</sup> century, these various schools of law provided the normative legal framework in which both the Sunnis and the Shia Muslims have lived their lives. Within Sunni Islam there are four important Schools of Jurisprudence. These are the *Maliki*, *Hanafi*, *Shafi'i*, and the *Hanbali* schools. The geographical as well demographic differences of the Islamic community mostly led the creation of these main schools of law. These four major law schools are the most accepted schools of jurisprudence among more than a hundred different ones, which did not survive to our time. Among these schools, the Hanbali School of Jurisprudence, which was founded by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal gave birth to the Salafi system of thinking and later to the Wahhabi movement. It is ironic that according to Sayyid Hossein Nasr, the Hanbali School has the least number of followers in the Islamic world. However, compared to the spread and dominance of the Salafi ideology, it creates an illusion that this is the only dominant school of thought in Islam. In addition to the Hanbali School, the Shafi'i School is strong in Egypt and across Malaysia, the Maliki School is dominant in North Africa, and the Hanafi School was accepted by the Turks and the peoples of Western Central Asia and the Indo-Pakistani sub-continent. (Nasr 2000)

Another great Islamic tradition that many Muslims were also participants was *Sufism*. Sufism<sup>2</sup> was a form of Islamic mysticism, based on the Quranic revelation and the prophetic tradition enriched by “spiritual practices designed to cultivate an

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<sup>2</sup> **Sufism:** the “mystical Islamic belief and practice in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God. It consists of a variety of mystical paths that are designed to ascertain the nature of humanity and of God and to facilitate the experience of the presence of divine love and wisdom in the world.” Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sufism>

outward conformity to Muslim norms and an inner insight into the ultimate spiritual realities.” (Lapidus 1983) In other words, it was a “spiritual discipline which leads to direct experience of the reality of God’s being.” (Lapidus 1983) Sufism was an umbrella tradition that the practitioners of all the schools of jurisprudence took part in. Sufism was the mystical interpretation of Islam, which emphasized the centrality of the unity of the universe and the creation of the universal man.

These various Islamic traditions and schools of thinking are not very well understood in the West. As a result of this lack of understanding, all actions caused by Muslims were perceived as the product of mainstream Islamic teaching. However, some of revivalist movements like Salafism or Kharijism are not representative of the Islamic faith. The widespread acceptance of a particular ideology or doctrine within Islam does not originate from its appeal but from the proposed solutions for the modern way of life.

#### **4 THE SALAFI IDEOLOGY: ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION UNTIL THE MODERN ERA**

The widespread perception of the scholars of fundamentalism and radicalization, agree on the fact that any form of excessive identification with a radical interpretation leads to some kind of extremism. The religious radicalization is the expression of such an interpretation. Many scholars agree on the fact that ranging from third generation radicals of Europe to Al-Qaeda operatives, all have a unifying Islamic element, which is the Salafi interpretation of Islamic faith and doctrine.

##### **4.1 The Salafism and Salafi movement**

The Salafi ideology or its popular terminology *Salafism* comes from the word “*salaf*” meaning the “*ancestor*.” As a religious doctrine, it refers to the early period of the prophet of Islam and his companions, which were the first Muslims. Even though

it refers to such an early period of the faith, the Salafi thought is a contemporary movement. Salafi thought argues that the purist form of Islam is the Islam of the early period of the first three generations. The interpretative strategy of Salafism is characterized as a return to the texts of the Quran and the tradition of the Prophet of called the “Sunna”. These two sources are essential to guide the beliefs and actions of the Salafis. They do not accept an imitation of the codified jurisprudence found in the established law schools and approach the foundational texts directly without intermediaries. Another important characteristic of the Salafis is their literalist approach and rejection of the metaphorical and esoterical reading and understanding of the Quran and the Sunna, which was the method of Sufism. (Denoeux 2011) Salafis usually call themselves “*ahl al-hadi'th*,” the people of the traditions of the prophet of Islam to underline the importance of Sunna as a source.<sup>3</sup> For Salafis, any tradition prior to the early years of the faith is considered an invention and considered to be unislamic; such a puritan ideology even dares to refuse the Sufi tradition, which has been there since the time of the prophet including its universal message of peace and love. Salafis believe that they hold the purist form of Islam, which has been practiced by the first three generations of Islam. The Salafi movement gave birth to many ideological branches such as the Saudi Wahhabism. This form of thinking also led to the creation of religious organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood or its more radical Jihadist form such as the Da'ish, Al-Shahab, and Al-Qaeda. All of these groups have the same origin that goes back to the early theoreticians of Salafism such as Ibn Taymiyyah, and Muhammad abd-al Wahhab. (Bowering et al. 2013)

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<sup>3</sup> Hadi'th: a collection of traditions containing the sayings of the prophet Muhammad that, with accounts of his daily practice (the Sunna), constitutes the major source of guidance for Muslims apart from the revelation. Source: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/hadith>

## **4.2 The ideological origins of Salafism: Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328)**

The origins of the Salafi system of thinking developed as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century and dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century to Islamic scholars of jurisprudence like Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Bishri. Although these scholars are considered to be the earliest scholars of Islamic fundamentalism, we can trace the origins of the modern ideology of Salafism to one and only Islamic scholar, Taqī ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah. We consider Taymiyyah as a prominent figure of Islamic fundamentalism and Salafism. He is one of the scholars who have deeply influenced the Islamic schools of thought in many parts of the Islamic world. Born in the city of Harran in Northern Syria, Taymiyyah was a member of a family belonging to the Hanbali School of Islamic jurisprudence. Taymiyyah witnessed the destructive force of the Mongol invasion and the crumbling of the Abbasid Caliphate. The fall of the caliphate and the destruction caused by the Mongols forced Taymiyya to migrate to Damascus with his family. The establishment of Mongol rule in Egypt and their control over Damascus and most of Arabia created a social and political upheaval across the geography and caused the spread of many ideas and movements not accepted by the Islamic doctrine and thought. It was in this context that Ibn Taymiyya began to formulate his ideas on Islamic revivalism and a return for Muslims to original ideas and practices of the Quran and the Prophetic tradition. (Mohd Sharif 2011)

Khatab considers Taymiyyah as a sociopolitical reformer who worked on analyzing the weaknesses and instability of the Muslim Society during his time. He states that Taymiyyah has “developed a political and ideological legacy by allocating the roots of Islamic revivalism in contemporary political processes and associated events.” Taymiyyah’s ideas developed as a reaction to the Mongol rule in Syria. Although the Mongols considered themselves to be Muslims, they used Islamic law

along with their Manichean law enriched with tribal beliefs and practices. This mixture of law was troubling for Taymiyyah and he thought that it was against the Islamic tradition. Consequently, Taymiyyah considered the Mongol rulers as unislamic and illegitimate invaders and declared that the Jihad was a legitimate action for their overthrow. The ideas of Taymiyyah were a breakthrough for Islamic thinking. This concept of *Takfir*<sup>4</sup> was later adopted by many fundamentalist organizations and used to justify their actions for killing other Muslim populations. (Khatab 2011) Ibn Taymiyyah, promoting a form of rationalism strictly rejects all mystical interpretations and dimensions of Islam. These include Sufism, Shi'ism, and other Abrahamic traditions such as Christianity and Judaism. His intolerance of other traditions and the idea of *takfir* became the ideal method for many Salafi groups. This new interpretation of takfir led to the use of violence against many fellow Muslims and reformulated the nature of war and Jihad in Islamic history.

The idea and practice of Jihad was central and revolutionary to Ibn Taymiyyah's thinking. He urged many fellow jurists and scholars to issue rulings to promote and revive Jihad for the defeat of their fellow Muslim rulers. (Amghar et al. 2007) Taymiyyah led the concept of jihad to be degraded to the level of the individual, and emphasized that it was every Muslim's duty to protect his/her religion and act upon it. He transformed the concept of Jihad as an individual duty of a Muslim rather than a collective duty or action. For the first time in Islamic history, Jihad was considered to be an active duty of every able Muslim in various shapes and

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<sup>4</sup> **Takfir:** "Pronouncement that someone is an unbeliever (kafir) and no longer Muslim. Takfir is used in the modern era for sanctioning violence against leaders of Islamic states who are deemed insufficiently religious. It has become a central ideology of militant groups such as those in Egypt, which reflect the ideas of Sayyid Qutb, Mawdudi, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn Kathir. Mainstream Muslims and Islamist groups reject the concept as a doctrinal deviation. Leaders such as Hasan al-Hudaybi (d. 1977) and Yusuf al-Qaradawi reject takfir as un-Islamic and marked by bigotry and zealotry." Source: <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2319>

forms. “He authorized everyone in society with the sword of Jihad, so that farming was the sword of the farmer, medicine was the sword of physicians, production was the sword of factory workers, and knowledge was the sword of school and university teachers.” (Khatab 2011) The idea of Jihad was reformulated by Taymiyyah and instead of being a defensive act in times of repression it became a tool for the promotion of a group’s self-interest. These ideas laid the foundations of the fundamentalist approach in Islam. Taymiyyah’s radical and revolutionary ideas still continue to be the major framework for many Salafists. However, to understand the radical conduct of war and violence we need to further analyze the concepts of jihad and political action in Islam.

#### **4.3 The justification of violence and the Salafi interpretation of *Jihad (holy War)* and *Baghy (rebellion)***

The Islamic legal system covers all spheres of life including warfare. Many rulings and regulations about warfare found mainly in the Surahs were revealed during the time of Madina following the migration from Mecca. (McAuliffe 2003) Jihad like many other Islamic concepts has been used as a form of rhetoric by many movements and groups. This rhetoric has changed according to the end goals of each movement and group. There is an ontological difference between what people understood Jihad to be and what has the Islamic revelation actually means. Away from the different forms of rhetoric, the real meaning of Jihad requires a coherent and consistent hermeneutic approach to Quranic revelation. Human beings’ utilitarian interests, political needs and the old traditions are some of the reasons of misunderstanding the Quranic revelation. A coherent hermeneutic approach to revelation will enable us to clarify the concepts, of Jihad, war, or freedom of belief really means. This will prevent the political motivation behind deviated

interpretations and create a new age of greater understanding and tolerance. (Taslaman 2007)

The word Jihad comes from the Arabic word root of “*J-h-d*”, which literally means, “*striving*.” In various Islamic traditions like Sufism it is also interpreted as a form of “*moral striving*.” (Lewis 2003) There are only ten places in the Qur’an where *j-h-d* definitely denotes warfare. Many sources interpret Jihad as a war against the infidels. However, some sources interpret the word Jihad as combating against the individual’s own desires and weaknesses, preserving religious law, seeking religious knowledge, obedience to God, and summoning people to follow religious practices and rules. All of these meanings are never explicit in the holy book. (McAuliffe 2003) The Arabic word Jihad does not actually mean “*holy war*” or “*just war*.” jihad has the specific sense of fighting for the sake of God. For most of the recorded history of Islamic civilization, the word Jihad was used in a military sense but it also referred strictly to a body of legal doctrines with specific permissions, limitations, and conduct of war. (Bonner 2015) The revelation stresses that people could only wage Jihad as long as it is in pursuit of God’s will and as an act of self-defense. The revelation says, “so if you are oppressed, oppress those who oppress you to the same degree, and fear God and know that God is with those who are pious and follow the right path.”<sup>5</sup> When personal interests are at stake, Jihad is out of the question. Conceptionally the term Jihad is not the only word used for “war.” The words “*harb*” and “*qital*” are two other words used in the Quran. According to its motivation, the terminology for war and aggression changes. Thus the revelation uses different concepts and terms to show that not all forms of war are considered to be a Jihad. (Taslaman 2007) However in Salafi ideology, the word Jihad was preferred and used regardless of the nature of the struggle being waged. If we take the revelation as a whole, Jihad could only be waged

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<sup>5</sup> The Quran: 2- Bakarah, 193



against those who wage a war against the Islamic community. “To those against whom war is made, permission is given, because they are wronged.”<sup>6</sup> These verses directly from the Quran are proof of this idea behind the conduct of Jihad.

Apart from this literal meaning of Jihad including its conduct and limitations, there is also an esoteric dimension. This particular dimension carries an expression of a clear notion that the believers must prove their worthiness for divine reward. The proof of such worthiness is achieved through enduring various hardships and self-mortification. Esoterically these hardships are understood as divine tests meant to provide the believers with the opportunity to prove their faith and worthiness. Jihad is one of the means of such testing. Apart from its meaning of participation in warfare it also refers to efforts made in connection with a commitment to the true religion. (McAuliffe 2003)

Sharif describes the most complete definition and interpretation of Jihad in this esoteric sense. Sharif declares that, “Jihad refers to the concerted effort and energy that one must expend while striving for a high purpose or a noble ideal; this is the means by which Muslims obtains God’s forgiveness and blessing.” He further elaborates that; “Jihad consists of any focused effort towards the achievement of a desired end or the prevention of an undesired end. Jihad according to Quran is a broad concept that encompasses the utilization of all aspects of a Muslim’s abilities, energies and strengths, while facing his enemies. The term ‘enemies’ as used here, includes all the internal enemy of all humans that is our lower selves that perpetually tempt humans both the physical and spiritual realms. ” (Mohd Sharif 2011) This idea of the *internal enemy of all humans that is our lower selves* is very central and important for the actual understanding of Jihad. There are many examples of the

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<sup>6</sup> The Quran: 22- Pilgrimage, 39

prophetic tradition that most sayings of the prophet transmitted by his close companions describe the term Jihad as an endless struggle against the selfish and egoistic nature of the lower self and the super ego. This does not mean that Jihad is solely a spiritual struggle but, apart from the common meaning, it is considered to have a higher form of struggle.

Zaidi points out that Sufism accepts this esoteric definition of Jihad as the ideal form of holy struggle. Basing their arguments on the sayings of the prophet of Islam, many Sufis interpret the duty of Jihad in a spiritual and moral sense. In the Sufi tradition the duty of Jihad was seen in a two-dimensional way. The outer meaning of jihad was perceived as "*Jihad-ı Asghar*," the "lesser" or "lower" version of Jihad, which meant the armed struggle against the enemy, and the other "inner" meaning of Jihad which was called "*Jihad-ı Akbar*" or the higher form of Jihad meaning that the struggle given against the evils of the self and the ego. As Zaidi provides, "the greater jihad is supposed to regulate the entire life, as it denotes the constant struggle within Muslim consciousness to live life within the boundaries of morality; a strenuous struggle is launched to resist the negative forces of temptation likely to distract followers from the prescribed path." (Zaidi 2010)

Given the fact that the general principles of the Islamic faith promote and maintain peace, all the verses in the Quran or the sayings of the prophet deter Muslims to be aggressive, and promote tolerance when dealing with other faiths and religions. The only exception is when there is an open threat or oppression to the Islamic faith. Jihad in Islam is a religious obligation. The Islamic law prescribes the correct behavior and encourages respect for the rules of war such as the treatments of non-combatants, prisoners, and diplomatic envoys. Islamic law strictly forbids killing women, children, and the aged, unless they attack first. Torture and mutilating prisoners is banned and most jurists even ban the use of missiles, poison, and

chemical warfare, whose effects does not discriminate between the victims. At no point the basic classical texts of Islam justify terrorism and murder. (Lewis 2003)

Another concept that contributes to the Salafi-jihadist movements' ideological foundation is the concept of *rebellion (baghy)*. Taymiyyah justified the act of baghy under certain conditions. “*Baghy*” in Islam is an act of rebellion or political resistance and a crime subject to punishment. *Terrorism* in Islamic jurisprudence is called *hirabah*. Like baghy, all forms of terrorism are illegal and require severe punishment. It was accepted that *hirabah* would destroy the very fabric of society and it would create a state of social unease. It is difficult to consider the act of *baghy* as an act of terrorism or plain violence because the act of *baghy* refers to taking armed action against the legitimate authority. Unlike terrorism, *Baghy* has a political purpose and should not target civilians but only the ruling authority. However, many classical texts of Islamic jurisprudence do not distinguish between *rebellion (baghy)* and *terrorism (hirabah)* both of which are considered both to be an act of terrorism. This blurry image of the two concepts is a major source of debate and disagreement among Islamic thinkers and theologians. Many revivalist Islamic scholars and thinkers that follow Taymiyyah's heritage such as Jamal al-Din Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, al Mawdudi, and Sayyid Qutb, have written much about the concept and use of Jihad and some of them promoted the idea of *rebellion (baghy)* in their community. Although Taymiyya allowed for the act of rebellion, many classical jurists of Islam have consistently forbidden the act of rebellion (*baghy*) and the oppression of the people of other religions. (Mohd Sharif 2011)

As Taslaman states on this matter, “despite to the Quranic verses, this kind of jihad comprehension within a religious package and compulsion of belief will lead us to a “communicative pathology.” It is not hard to imagine that a world with no communication will be full of violence.” (Taslaman 2007) The radical approach of

Salafis originates from the interpretation of Jihad and rebellion in the works of early Islamist revivalists. The nature of this interpretation affects very much the actions of many Salafi groups and organizations. Many Salafist groups today justify the act of violence towards civilians and fellow Muslims according to this interpretation.

## **5 LEADING THE WAY TO MODERN SALAFISM**

### **5.1 Origins of Wahabism and the evolution of Jihadism**

In addition to what has been said on the origins of the Salafi ideology and the conduct of war and rebellion, there is another Islamic movement that was born out of Salafism. This movement was called Wahhabism. In terms of ideological commonality, Wahhabism is considered to be the most radical and ultraconservative form of Salafi thinking. Some refer to this ideology as Salafi-Wahhabism. This form of Salafi ideology is very influential today and is the main ideology of many terrorist organizations and fundamentalist groups. Wahhabism has evolved from Salafism and is responsible for the institutionalization of the Salafi ideology across the world and in Europe through its religious centers and mosques. According to Sayed Khatab, the Wahhabi movement has a significant place in contemporary Islam in terms of its connotations of violence and terrorism. Many scholars argue that Wahhabi puritanism is the source of religious radicalism. (Khatab 2011)

The Wahhabi sect takes its name from its founder Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1791) who was a bedouin scholar of Islamic law and theology in Arabia. Esposito perfectly defines him as a scholar who was, “disillusioned by the decline and moral laxity of his society, denounced many popular beliefs and practices of Islam as un-Islamic idolatry and a return to the paganism of pre-Islamic Arabia.” (Esposito 2011) Following the footsteps of Ibn Taymiyyah, Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab suggested a return to the pure and orthodox practice of the fundamentals of

Islam, as embodied in the Quran. Since the emergence of the Wahhabi movement much conflict has occurred within the Islamic world because Wahabism using Ibn Taymiyyah's thinking opposed all esoteric and mystical dimensions of Islam. (Carl 2003) Theologically speaking, the radical approach of Wahhabism begins with its rejection of *taqlīd*, which is the imitation, and following of the past scholarship of the great traditions of Islam. Abd Al-Wahhab unconventionally regarded the medieval law and jurisprudence of the Ulama such as the great schools of law as fallible. He declared that many Islamic traditions like Sufism and their practices such as the rituals of remembrance, the veneration of saints, and the use of poetry, were un-Islamic innovations and a form of heresy. The Wahhabi movement took the Salafi ideology into a more radical sphere. Wahhabi puritanism went as far as destroying the sacred tombs of Prophet Muhammad and his close companions in Mecca in order to prevent Muslims from visiting. (Khatab 2011)

The spread of Wahhabism began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Wahhabi warriors and the Saudi Bedouins conquered and pillaged the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in Arabia and massacred those who did not accept the Salafi-Wahhabi ideology. The Wahhabis forced many Muslims to submit to their rule and accept their religious sect. Revolting against their rulers, Wahhabis soon declared the Ottoman authority as illegitimate and denied the access of pilgrimage to all Muslims living under their authority. On the brink of the First World War, the Wahhabi revolt was an opportunity for the British as well as for the Saudis who wanted the control of Arabia. The British thought that supporting the Wahhabi revolt and the Saudis would benefit their war effort strategically for the greater control of the Middle East. Finally, with the help of the British, the Saudi-Wahhabi state was finally recognized in 1927. The holy cities of Islam went under Saudi control along with the rest of Arabia where the Salafi-Wahhabi ideology was declared as the dominant sect. With the support of the

Saudi Kingdom, the Wahhabi ideology is spreading its fundamentalist philosophy across the Islamic world. The puritanical approach can be seen in all aspects of Saudi economic, social, and cultural life. Unfortunately, the scope and the sphere of its influence exceeded the Islamic lands thereby and threatening other parts of the world. (Bowering et al. 2013) The historical developments of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century facilitated the spread of this radical ideology. As Denooux well defines, “a unique configuration of geopolitical circumstances and world events led to the unexpected, rapid expansion of a rather sectarian branch of Islam which historically had been on the fringes of Islamic civilization. The ‘accident’ of oil wealth, the soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and America’s blessing for the Saudi regime’s militant promotion of Wahhabism all combined to give this minority quasi-sect within Islam a level of influence entirely out of proportion to what it could achieve on its own.” (Denooux 2011)

## **5.2 Contemporary Salafism and Salafi-Jihadism: S. Qutb (1906-1966) & Al Mawdudi (1903-1979)**

The first and broadest argument is that from a conceptual approach Jihadism is much more recent than one might expect. I contend that when thinking and speaking about Salafism one should view it as a phenomenon of the twentieth century. The Salafism that contributes to the radicalization of Muslim youth in Europe is actually a 20<sup>th</sup> century construct with roots dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was the introduction of the Wahhabi interpretation of Salafism that transformed this ideology into a more radical system of thinking. The ideas of Ibn Taymiyya with the even more radical contribution by Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab began to take a new form. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Salafi movement became politically more active. In this era a new generation of Salafis was formed under the influence of Salafi ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb and Abu Al’a al Mawdudi. I consider both Qutb and Mawdudi as the

ideologues of the first generation of contemporary Salafi-jihadists. Salafi-Jihadism was an approach to the concept of Islamic Jihad that was coupled with an adherence to Salafi ideology. Salafi-jihadists wanted to justify their violence by giving it a divine imperative. Most violent Salafi groups today can be generalized as Salafi-Jihadist. Organizations like Al Qaeda and Da'ish can be classified among this group. According to Silber & Bhatt, “the jihadist ideology combines the extreme and minority interpretation [jihadi- Salafi] of Islam with an activist-like commitment or responsibility to solve global political grievances through violence. Ultimately, the jihadist envisions a world in which jihadi-Salafi Islam is dominant and is the basis of government.” (Silber & Bhatt 2007) They justify violence against Muslims as well as against the non-combatants, by relying on the idea of *takfir*. Muslims who did not adhere to their ideology are considered as apostates and violence against them was also justified. (Dar & Hamid 2016)

Ideologically speaking, both Qutb and Mawdudi are very crucial to understand the modern phenomenon of Salafi-Jihadism. Both ideologues laid the theoretical foundations of modern Jihadism. The influence of Qutb is very influential in the Arab world and his ideas still echo in jihadist organizations. Qutb is considered to be the ideological father of the Egyptian Salafi group named the *Muslim Brotherhood*. Mawdudi, on the other hand, made the same impact in the Indo-Pakistani region across Afghanistan and Central Asia. Mawdudi was the founder of the political movement named *Jama'at-i-Islami*, the Indo-Pakistani equivalent of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. He was the most controversial thinker of his time and his thoughts contributed to the foundations of Salafi ideology as well as the modern Jihadist movements. (Bowering et al. 2013)

It the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was the political Islamists like Qutb and Mawdudi who argued that the failure of the Islamic civilization was a product of Western

imperialism and its military encroachment. Qutb began laying out his ideological path by describing what Islam must reject and move away from. Qutb declared the “Western ignorance as a demented evil.” (Qutb 1990) To him, the West represents a society and a man without God. To fight this situation, Qutb argued that Islam must use jihad as a mechanism of change. Jihad will be waged with the aim of returning to the society of God. (Qutb 1990) For Qutb it is not sufficient to be a Muslim by only following the practices of the religion. He argues that a Muslim must reflect upon his religion and articulate it. Qutb and other likeminded activists desire the Islamisation of their societies. “They have transformed religious beliefs into a conscious system, broadening the scope of religious authority, and redrawing the boundaries of political community.” (Eickelman & Piscatori 1996)

According to Turner, many ideologues created a perception that “European power, culture and ideas increasingly encroached upon the Islamic realm, inflicting insecurity and a feeling of cultural, spiritual and material decline. Scholars challenged the long-sustained Classical approach by asserting that the Islamic world was no longer capable of maintaining a position of transnationalism and universalism.” (Turner 2014) Theoreticians like Qutb and Mawdudi advocated the re-opening of the ‘*gates of ijtiḥad*’ (new Islamic ruling) to find a method for preserving and advancing Islam during such a period of rapid change and stagnation. Qutb said, “Crusades were a form of imperialism. The truth of the matter is that the latter-day imperialism is but a mask for the crusading spirit, since it is not possible for it to appear in its true form, as in the Middle ages.”(Qutb 1990 ) Turner added that it was the western colonialism that spurred a split amongst the Islamic reformists and this was Islam’s third debate being discussed by the Salafi reformists. (Turner 2014)

According to Wictorowicz, Mawdudi and Qutb offered a new understanding of the early Salafi texts. They adapted this new understanding to a certain level that it



increased the scope of permissible violence within the Salafi ideology. Mawdudi, drawing upon the theoretical foundation of Taymiyyah's thinking, sought to appropriate Western advancements such as technology, science, and other aspects of modernity while returning to the fundamentals of Islam. For Mawdudi, the positive aspects of the West could be used to strengthen the Islamic community against the Western imperialism. Mawdudi introduced the concept of "modern Jahiliyya" (the age of ignorance) literally meaning that today's society was a "period of ignorance." He argued that today's Muslims were like the people of Jahiliyya and he condemned all Muslims who did not follow the divine law. (Wiktorowicz 2005a)

Sayyid Qutb, on the other hand, created a synthesis of Mawdudi's concept of the "modern age of ignorance" with the Taymiyyah ideas on Muslims' obligation to follow the divine law. In the early 1960s, Qutb composed his political manifesto named *Milestones*. In this piece of work Qutb manifested most of his radical ideas on Salafism and Jihad. In 1964, before its was banned, the editions of the book were printed in a period of six months. Because of *Milestones*, Qutb was arrested once again in 1966, and was condemned to death. According to Robert Manne, Qutb was the first modern martyr of Salafi-Jihadism. He argued that, "the publication of *Milestones* marks the intellectual origin of the Salafi-jihadist movement. As such, *Milestones* is one of the most consequential ideological interventions of the twentieth century. If the genealogy of Salafi-Jihadism and the mind of the Islamic state are to be understood, acquaintance with both its argument and spirit is vital." (Manne 2016)

According to Eickelman and Piscatori, *Milestones* was not the only dramatic work of Qutb. His other book, called *Ma'alim fi-l-tariq*, became the most widely read book among the younger generations. (Eickelman & Piscatori 1996) With the help of mass printing and education, Qutb's ideas managed to reach the farthest corners of the Islamic world. Qutb's ideas were considered very radical. He even dared to proclaim

that many Muslims born in today's society are apostates and cannot be considered to be Muslims; therefore, they should have the same fate as the infidels. Qutb advocated the use of Jihad to establish an Islamic state. He argued that the rulers who do not implement Islamic law should be considered as unbelievers and be removed from power. (Wiktorowicz 2005a) These words of Qutb perfectly depict how radical and how puritan his state of mind and thinking was. He says, "Today, too we are surrounded by Jahiliyyah. Its nature is the same as during the first period of Islam, and it is perhaps a little more deeply entrenched. Our whole environment, people's beliefs and ideas, habits, and art, rules and laws – is Jahiliyyah, even to the extent that what we consider to be Islamic culture, Islamic sources, Islamic philosophy, and Islamic thought are also constructs of Jahiliyyah." (Qutb 1990)

Qutb's ideological argument marks the total rejection of the 1400 years of accumulated Islamic tradition. Salafi thinking is rejecting any tradition after the time of the prophet and the first three generations, therefore forcing Muslims even to reject their own culture. The Taliban actions and atrocities in Afghanistan is proof of this argument. The Taliban not only fight Westerners in Afghanistan but they also oppress fellow Afghans and their culture forged within the Islamic tradition. The Taliban are pressuring the Afghans to abandon their music, dance, clothing, and poetry. Another example in support of this argument is the actions of Da'ish (ISIS) in Syria and Iraq. They repress and torture their fellow Muslims because of their customs and traditions. The destruction of mosques, and the tombs of Muslim saints are representative of the the approach of the Salafi-Jihadist ideology (Marret 2010)

Unfortunately today, the success of the Salafi-Jihadism stems from two merging geopolitical trends. One is the spread of this ideology in the Gulf region and the second is its spread and roots in the Indo-Pakistani sub-continent. Salafi fundamentalism is the dominant ideology in the Gulf region. Its worldwide success

originates from the financial support provided by the Gulf regimes and other Gulf-based Salafi organizations. The second trend originates from the Indo-Pakistani region. Especially as a result of the war in Afghanistan, many Muslims were radicalized and forced to commit to the cause of Jihad. The region is considered to be a safe heaven for the Salafi international. (Denoeux 2011) These two power points of Salafism fuel the success of this ideology across the world. The radicalization phenomenon in the West has its roots in these two trends. In the next section we will analyze the cognitive effects of the Salafi doctrine on Muslims. We will analyze the role of identity, and the cognitive manipulation of salafism. Following this section we will analyze the institutionalization of the ideology across Europe by looking at the funding schemes and its influence in the national level of analysis.

## **SECTION 2**

### **6 THE ROLE OF IDENTITY AND ACCESS TO THE INDOCTRINATION OF SALAFI JIHADISM IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT**

#### **6.1 Muslim identity in Europe: The identity crisis of the Euro-Muslims**

This section specifically focuses on the Salafi ideology in the European context. To understand the cognitive effects of Salafi-Jihadism, we need to take a look at the profile of a European Muslim and his ongoing identity problematique. Many scholars of radicalization point to the important fact the Salafi ideology is the main catalyzer for radicalization. However, in addition to the ideological effects, identity also plays a very central role. According to Roy, the Salafi ideology creates disconnect between the individual and his culture and creates a new form of religiosity. (Roy 2006) He refers to this process as the process of *de-culturation*. The identity formation capability of Salafism creates a universal culture made up of Salafi ideals. The Salafi movement is building up this new identity in the European suburbs

under the camouflage of a pietistic service called *Tabligh*.<sup>7</sup> These efforts of communication and transmission (Tabligh) of the religious message play an important role in the process of de-culturation and provide a substitute for the individual's religious identity. The target of the Salafi message is "born again," meaning that "they do not promote a return to traditional Islamic customs, but on the contrary, a "global Islam." (Roy 2005)

According to Silber and Bhatt, the transnational phenomenon of radicalization in the West occurs because the Western Muslim is looking for an identity and a cause that will make his life and existence meaningful. (Silber & Bhatt 2007) As Silber and Bhatt puts it, "Self-Identification is the phase where individuals, influenced by both internal and external factors, begin to explore Salafi Islam, gradually gravitate away from their old identity and begin to associate themselves with like-minded individuals and adopt this ideology as their own. The catalyst for this 'religious seeking' is a cognitive opening, or crisis, which shakes one's certitude in previously held beliefs and opens an individual to be receptive to new worldviews." Following this phase of self-identification with the religious message then comes the phase of indoctrination which is "The phase in which an individual progressively intensifies his beliefs, wholly adopts jihadi-Salafi ideology and concludes, without question, that the conditions and circumstances exist where action is required to support and further the cause." (Silber & Bhatt 2007)

In Roel Meijer's observations, Salafi-Jihadism has the "capacity to empower and change identities, and in terms of the wider contexts of the resurgence of Islam and of the global resurgence of religion... Salafism, like other elements in the global

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<sup>7</sup> **Tabligh:** "Communication of a message or revelation; fulfillment of a mission. Interchangeable with dawah (propagation of faith) in modern usage. The Quranic use of related words signifies that proclamation of the message is sufficient for fulfillment of the mission; a preacher is not responsible for conversion." <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2295>

resurgence of religion, can be seen as an alternative approach to the pursuit of justice and the good life, and in this context, Salafism's capacity to empower and change identities can be seen as its most important social effect." (Sedgwick 2012)

Many studies on the radicalization of the European youth argue that those who are open to radicalization do not feel to be an integral part of their society and usually feel alienated and excluded. On this particular issue, Abbas states that many European Muslims experience prejudice, racism, and discrimination throughout their early lives and trying to sustain themselves through education despite the limitations of their society in relation to Muslims and other ethnic minorities. He finally concludes that, "by hoping to find 'the truth' they were ultimately misdirected by radicalising Islamists seeking to convert apparently once-decadent young Muslims or those yearning for a more literal interpretation of the religion. By giving them a sense of belonging, identity, or an association with a struggle that transcends their everyday boundaries and barriers, theologically, metaphysically and spiritually, Islamists have moved with a twisted message of salvation and redemption." (Abbas 2007)

## **6.2 The host identity vs. the heritage identity**

All immigrants within a host society adopt a heritage identity, which they intend to keep as long as they live. The Muslim identity of the European Muslims is therefore ever present and, no matter how much integration occurs it remains as an essential part of their culture. According to King and Taylor, the heritage identity never dies under the process of integration but undergoes a crisis with the host identity. Such a crisis becomes a problem and leads to the radicalisation of the subject when the social problems of discrimination, and lack of integration are present within the society they live. (King & Taylor 2011) The psychological research of Marilyn Brewer suggests that people usually want to adopt a balance between their

mainstream identity and the distinctive identity. (Brewer 1991) However, such a balance can be disrupted when outside sources such as the Salafi thinking fuel an imbalance and create a clash between the two distinct identities individuals adopt.

As for the case of the third generation Euro-Muslims, although they were born into a Western society, they have also adopted an ethnic and religious identity from their parents. According to Aly, managing these two identities is a difficult task, and it usually leads to uncertainty. Aly refers to this uncertainty as an *identity crisis*. He argues that when most Western Muslims face such a crisis, religion becomes their identity. Through the contribution of radical ideologies the identity becomes a movement, giving rise to a politicized lifestyle. Therefore, he argues that the process of identity building of Muslims in Europe is crucial to understand the dynamics of homegrown radicalisation. (Aly 2007) In addition to Aly, Peter Beyer states that the rigidity of religious social identity also leads to an identity crisis. This occurs when the religious identity is placed within a different socio-political context than where it was formed. (Beyer 2008) It is a serious challenge for most Muslims living within the modern social context of the West because of the Islamic social identity they have. The Salafi ideology stimulates the existence of the religious identity and creates a further dilemma in the minds of young Muslims already suffering between the dynamics of two separate cultures and identities.

In Meijer's ideas, "in a contentious age, Salafism transforms the humiliated, the downtrodden, disgruntled young people, the discriminated migrant, or the politically repressed into a chosen sect (*al-firqa al-najiya*) that immediately grants privileged access to the Truth. Salafis are thus able to contest the hegemonic power of their opponents: parents, the elite, the state, or dominant cultural and economic values of the global capitalist system." (Meijer 2014) Salafism with its strong opposition to western modernity and with its new design for life creates an even greater crisis

within the Muslim subconscious. Salafi ideology creates a perception that the modern Western thinking is a threat to the existence of Islamic tradition and identity.

Dovidio's study on group identity suggests that when there is an outside threat, people tend to protect the distinctiveness of their identity and act accordingly. (Dovidio et al. 1998) The Salafi ideology, as seen in the works of Sayyid Qutb, blames the Western civilization for the hardships that Muslims encounter. Salafism creates an image of the West as a threat to Islamic culture and way of life. As Fetzer & Soper state, through perception building and identity formation, the Salafi ideology becomes the main motivator of radicalization. They state that, "The process of radicalisation almost becomes self reinforcing: loosing identities through an outside threat, whether real or perceived, magnifies the potential of feeling threatened in the first place. It can be a perceived threat interpreted as an aim to discredit or undermine one's identity." (Fetzer & Soper 2004)

## **7 SALAFI-JIHADISM AND HOMEGROWN RADICALISATION IN EUROPE**

### **7.1 The contribution of Salafi ideology to the radicalisation of Muslims in Europe**

"Religious fundamentalism is not a marginal phenomenon in Western Europe," says Ruud Koopmans of the Berlin Social Science Center. In a study conducted in 2013, Koopmans analyzed extensive survey data of immigrants and natives from six Western European countries. During his survey, two thirds of the Muslims state that *religious rules are more important to them than the secular laws of the country they live in*. Three quarters of the same population also declared that there is only *one legitimate interpretation of the Islamic holy text*. These findings are sufficient enough to declare that there was an alarming trend of religious

fundamentalism in Europe. This new trend was not an innocent form of religiosity but instead a very puritan and strict form of it. (Mitteilungen 2013)

In light of this reality Olsson states that, Salafism in Europe has emerged as a framework from which many contemporary Muslims draw inspiration and regard as correct and authentic form of Islam. For Olsson, Salafi interpreters "reject imitation of the law-schools, i.e. the principle of *taqlīd*, and advocate new forms of authority and individual opportunity to access the Quran and Sunna." (Olsson 2014) Salafism is being portrayed as the only orthodox mainstream school of Islam. The promotion of the idea that Salafism is the only authentic form of Islam makes the ideology even more appealing for many young Muslims. The Salafi sermons and educational activities create a sense of community among the youth and lead to the formation of a distinct social identity. As Wiktorowicz argues, through the process of "socialization" (in these religious centers) individuals engage in violent activism. He further states that the "religious education exposes individuals to deliberate culturing intended to inculcate the movement ideology. Through lessons and other activities, the movement tries to shift individual understanding of self-interest in a manner that facilitates progression to risky activism." (Wiktorowicz 2005b) The Salafi movement "uses personal interactions, mosque related activities, seminars, conferences, and religious lessons to promote Salafi *manjah*,<sup>8</sup> or methodology for arriving at religious truth." (Wiktorowicz 2001) With regard to worship, Sageman stresses that places of worship do contribute prominently in the affiliation to the global Salafi Jihad. Several specific mosques show up in his study, and these religious institutions serve many functions in the transformation of young Muslims into global Salafi network. Many social groups formed around these mosques, where "each new group became a 'bunch of guys',

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<sup>8</sup> **Manjah:**(Arabic: *والمنهاج*) refers to the methodology of receiving, analyzing and applying knowledge. Available at: <http://islamic-dictionary.tumblr.com/post/10942728910/manhaj-arabic>  
*والمنهاج*-refers-to-the



transforming its members into potential mujahedin, actively seeking to join the global jihad.” (Sageman 2004)

In most of the Western diasporic Muslim communities’ the radicalized subjects are mostly migrants but locally born Muslims, and in some cases, converts. Young Muslims in the West, already suffering between the clashing forces of the two cultures, become an easy prey for radical ideologies. As a result of Sageman’s analysis of Jihadist profiles, the majority of these radicals are middle class, educated young people who grew up in a caring but religious environment with strong and positive values and very high occupational skills. A great majority of them are married and have children. The one and most important commonality among these individuals is that they are “socially and spiritually alienated and probably in some sort of distress.” (Sageman 2004)

According to Quintan Wiktorowicz, this alienation leads them to a phase of *cognitive opening* and *religious seeking*. Wiktorowicz’ concept of *cognitive opening* points to an individual’s willingness to be receptive to religious messages. Such a cognitive opening leads to religious seeking where the subject is looking for a religious message. The seeking originates from an urge to satisfy needs to resolve perceived injustices and personal discontent. (Wiktorowicz 2002) Wiktorowicz argues that the cognitive opening ignites a process of religious seeking in which the subject searches for answers for his identity problematic and meaning for his life.

There is an important fact that those who experience such a cognitive phase do not necessarily join a Salafi group. However, the growing number of Salafi centers and mosques in Europe increases the probability that many young Muslims or new converts will unintentionally run into the Salafi ideology when attending the mosques in their neighborhood. As Wiktorowicz argues, exposure to radical ideologies usually results from social networks and personal connections. (Wiktorowicz 2005b) Marc

Sageman also points to this fact that “social affiliation plays an important role in radicalization process.” (Sageman 2004)

## **7.2 The Spread and influence of Salafi ideology in Europe: The “institutionalization” of the ideology and the Wahhabi funding**

The success of the Salafi ideology and its widespread influence in Europe cannot solely be explained by the identity problematique and sociological explanations. There are other factors that make Salafism quite strong and very influential in the West. Among these factors are the structural organization and logistics capacity of the ideology in Western Europe. The Salafi-jihadist ideology is being financed and funded from outside Europe. According to Esposito, the Saudi-Wahhabi sponsored organizations and wealthy Saudis continue to export their ultraconservative version of Salafism in the Muslim world as well as in the West. They continue to offer development aid and logistics support to build mosques, prayer halls, libraries, and research centers. Apart from these structures, they fund religious meetings, and commission the necessary clerics that they have educated according to Salafi ideology and send them to the European cities to preach to the Muslim communities. (Esposito 2011)

Esposito also states that certain wealthy Saudis provide financial support to militant and fundamentalist groups of the Salafi-Wahhabi ideology, where Islamic Jihad is their main motivation. (Esposito 2011) It is an important and growing fact that the establishment of mosques and religious centers empower and institutionalize the Salafi ideology across Europe. The actual radicalisation is occurring in these structures and organizations. Marc Sageman backing up Esposito’s argument states that the mosques are the places where young Muslims are transformed into dedicated fanatics. Individuals are being radicalized in these mosques and they do not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the ideological cause of Jihadism. (Sageman 2004)

Today, Salafi-Wahhabism is being exported from the Gulf, and is actively dominating the mosques across Europe. There is a greater consensus that the Saudi Wahhabi organizations and charities are behind the establishment of Salafi mosques in Europe. There are many reports suggesting that Salafi charities continue to finance religious establishments and other ideological centers in Europe. In some cases they build their own mosques and in some they take over the existing mosques by sending Salafi clerics to preach. The Blanchard report for the U.S. Congress acknowledged that the Saudi government and wealthy Saudis have supported the spread of the Salafi-Wahhabi ideology in continental Europe as well as in other parts of the world. The report points to an important fact that some Saudi funded mosques, madrasas, and charities have been linked to terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda. This has raised concern that Wahhabi Islam has been used by militant organizations to suit their political goals. These reports also argued that the Salafi-Wahhabi doctrine has promoted terrorism and has spawned Islamic militancy throughout the world. (Blanchard 2004)

According to Lisa and Macleod, the Salafi doctrine and its proselytization continue to spread further in the West. As a result of these efforts, religious centers in Malaga, Madrid, Milan, Edinburgh, Brussels, Lisbon, Zagreb, Washington, Chicago, and Toronto were established. In addition to these centers, they also finance Islamic studies chairs and programs in American universities. Macleod quotes from the Saudi Magazine *Ain al-Yaqin* that the Saudi royal family is currently financing approximately 210 Islamic centers, 1,500 mosques, 202 colleges, and 2,000 Islamic schools in countries where Muslims minorities are present. (Beyer & Macleod 2003)

The construction of religious centers, mosques, schools, and other Islamic institutions is not the only strategy to spread the Wahhabi ideology and its Salafi-jihadists radicalism. Further efforts also rely on mass media to promote and spread the

message. These efforts are executed through the circulation of visual aids, the setting up of web portals, and television shows. (Cesari 2013) Young European Muslims have now access to advanced religious texts reserved for Islamic scholars and that require a higher theological training. The result of the open access to advanced theological texts is, “ a new highly individualistic theology which often reads holy texts in a way with no understanding of the contexts in which different parts of the Islamic scriptures were framed.” (Vallely 2007)

According to Guilain Denoeux, the Saudi regime’s engagement to spread the Wahhabi ideology is due to counter the appeal of ideologies that were perceived as a threat to its regime and national security. For Denoeux, the Saudi effort to build these religious establishments across the world was to counter the ideology of the Iranian Shia revolution of 1979. Following the invasion of Afghanistan at the end of the same year, this was a new opportunity for the Saudi regime to spread the Wahhabi ideology in the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent that gave birth to the Taliban phenomenon. (Denoeux 2011) Saudi authorities reject the accusations that the Salafi-Wahhabi ideology is the main reason behind radical movements. They state that they do in fact take measures to control terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda operatives within the Saudi kingdom. However, the Saudi-funded biased research is widely available in the literature and they all argue that there is no connection between the Wahhabi sect and the Salafi-Jihadist ideology. (Cordesman 2002)

Moreover, Cordesman states that the influence of the Salafi thinking can still be observed in Saudi Arabia especially in the school curriculum. According to his report, Salafi-Wahhabi teachings are present within Saudi domestic schools, and they foster intolerance of other religions and cultures. Cordesman’s report also indicates that Saudi religious practices advocate religious hatred and encourage radicalism and violence. Some Saudi textbooks teach Islamic intolerance while others viciously

condemn Jews and Christians. (Cordesman 2002) This phenomenon is not new for the Saudi education system. Wiktorowicz also states that, in the 1960s after Egypt's massive crackdown on Salafi thinkers, ideologues like Sayyid Qutb and many of his associates, including his disciples migrated to Saudi Arabia by taking academic positions in Saudi Universities. It is also an important to note that Qutb's younger brother Mohammed Qutb was also among the university faculty in Saudi Arabia, which taught students like Osama bin Laden and other future Salafi-jihadist operatives. (Wiktorowicz 2005a)

“The significant difference between the global Salafi Islam of today and the original Wahhabi period is a difference in audience” writes Cesari. In other words, the Salafi doctrine and its interpretations are no longer limited to the Saudi kingdom, but are now followed by Muslims around the world. According to Cesari, “the fatwas of Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ibn Baaz (d. 1999), Grand Mufti of the Saudi Kingdom, and of Sheikh Al-Albani (d. 1999) are the common points of reference for their followers in Europe and the United States, and more generally throughout the Muslim world. The movement has succeeded in imposing its beliefs not as one interpretation among many but as the global orthodox doctrine of Sunni Islam.” Today we are not talking about a minority movement but a Global ideology with extensive network capabilities and transnational influence. (Cesari 2013)

## **8 COMPARING THE THREE CASES: SALAFISM IN FRANCE, UK AND GERMANY**

Europe's failure to integrate its immigrants socially and economically into Western society has left many young Muslims torn between the secular West and their religious heritage. As previously mentioned, this inner conflict makes them especially vulnerable to extremist and radical rhetoric that is highly advertised and becoming more and more fashionable among young Muslims. According to Roy,

European policies of integration seem to be failing because they are “unable to acknowledge and deal with what is at the root of the present forms of religious revivalism.” (Roy 2006)

There are many reasons behind the failure of European integration policies. Most importantly there is the failure to grasp the centrality and significance of religion as a form identity and culture. Roy has argued, that the assimilationist model has failed because it, “initially ignored the religious dimension of immigrants’ identities or more exactly, because it presupposed that this dimension would fade away during the processes of integration... But the rise of different forms of Islamic religious revival among integrated immigrants pushed the government to acknowledge the existence of a purely religious community.” Roy also commented on the multiculturalist model that it has also failed, “not because of the *multi* but because of the *culturalism*. The underlying idea was that a religion was embedded into a culture (or that any culture is based on religion). Religious believers form a community with its own customs, social fabric, diet and so on, and community leaders maintain some sort of social control on the community. To share a faith means to share a common culture.” (Roy 2006)

The Salafi ideology is creating a distinct global Islamic culture, which is threatening to dominate the Muslim youth in Europe. This new Islamic way is controversial and adopts a rhetoric that leads to radicalization. There is a growing trend of the Salafi ideology in Europe and the establishment of Salafi institutions is on the rise. The wealthy Gulf charities are constantly financing the Salafi propaganda across Europe through its mosques, ideological centers and charity programs. Europe has begun to develop an awareness for Salafi fueled radicalization. As part of the counter-terrorism efforts, many Salafi religious centers are being closed or radical clerics are being expelled from Europe. Most of these Salafist radical centers target

the non-Arabic speaking Muslim minorities. According to Jean-Luc Marret, the lack of the knowledge of the Arabic language in many European Muslims prevents them from learning the actual content of the Islamic religion directly from the Quran and from the written traditions. Consequently, they fell prey to the radical preaching of the Salafi clerics. The Salafi ideological propaganda in these mosques promotes violence and intolerance through manipulation of theological facts and rhetoric building. As will be presented in the following section, the renowned Islamists are radicals that have a connection with these mosques and centers. Most of the new recruits for terrorist organizations are being ideologically trained in these institutions. The Salafi mosques in Europe are considered to be terrorist hotbeds. Most of the known Salafi-Jihadists in Europe were educated and trained in these religious centers. The radical preaching is responsible for the process of radicalization and for the violent action, which is the end product. According to Marret, the youth are being radicalized through the Salafi rhetoric. “Imams encouraged them to glorify violence and death and used them as tools to promote a political agenda even espousing Al-Qaeda’s rhetoric.” (Marret 2010)

In the following section, we provide the evidence and findings on how the Salafi ideology is spreading across Europe and look for the actual radicalization of European Muslims in these centers. There is a trend that Salafism is being institutionalized as an ideology and becoming a norm within the European society. The ideology targets the immigrant youth and influences them through a series of ideological activities and doctrinal propaganda.

## **8.1 The French Case:**

### **8.1.1 Salafism in France**

France has the largest community of Muslims in Europe. The number is estimated to be approximately 5 million. Because of its colonial heritage most of the

Muslims in France are of Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan origin. Wars and instability in the Middle East and North African regions stimulated the influx of refugees to France and enhanced the needed workforce. Since then, the number of Muslim immigrants has been on the rise and Islam is becoming an essential part of the European culture. Nevertheless, the strong and rigid *Laïcité* (Secularism) of France refuses to acknowledge the official existence of various religions within it. Thus the ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities in France are not officially recognized. The strict separation of Church and state rejects the existence of a national religion or any religions in France. Therefore such a policy reduces the sphere of religious life to the individual level and leaves religious minorities outside the purview of government control. As a result of the lack of control, religious minorities function with a certain autonomy and with a need for foreign funding. (Goerzig & Al-Hashimi 2015)

### **8.1.2 Institutionalization of Salafi-Jihadism and radical preaching in France**

The Salafi ideology in France operates through a series of religious and cultural institutions and establishments. These structures are sometimes mosques, religious centers, prayer halls or secret Jihadists cells. The common factor among all of these places is the spread of Salafist ideology and propaganda. According to Amghar, the major Salafi Jihadist organizations in France, that committed most of the violence, were the part of the Algerian Armed Islamic group (GIA). He argued that GIA Salafism in France has left its place to Saudi Salafism. The reason behind this shift is the financial capacity of Salafi-Wahhabism through Saudi and Gulf funding. Through this financial support many Islamic clerics were educated in the Arabia according to Salafi-Wahhabism and were sent to Europe. Amghar pointed to the fact that many fundamentalist imams like *Abdelkader Bouziane* were educated in Saudi Arabia according to Wahhabi thinking. Also Amghar mentioned that the number of Salafi structures is on the rise across France. Apart from many Salafi mosques across



France, there are 20 religious centers in Paris, Lyon, Valence, Romans-Sur-Isère, and Aix en Provence that preach Salafism. According to Amghar, every year a congress on Salafism is held in Paris suburbs. In addition to these events, there are Saudi publishing houses in France that are printing Salafi sources in French. As a result of these activities, Salafism in France began to adopt a new phase of institutionalization and organizational structuring. Today, the French authorities began to accuse the movement as being the source of terrorist actions and radicalization. They began to closely monitor their activities and began to take counter actions such as closing down mosques, banning religious meetings and deporting radical clerics (Amghar 2006)

The number of religious facilities in France is quite dramatic. France has one mosque for every 3,333 Muslims. French followers of Islam are thus much less likely to be able to find prayer facilities than are their coreligionists in Britain. (Fetzer & Soper 2004) In addition to this lower number of religious institutions, since December 2015, the government acting under state of emergency has shut down around twenty mosques for preaching Salafism and radical ideas. According to the Minister of internal affaires at that time Bernard Cazeneuve, these mosques were shut down because of the preaching and their call for hatred, racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism. Government statistics show that about 120 of 2,500 mosques and prayer halls in France are considered to be under Salafi influence. (Cazeneuve 2016)

Jean-Luc Marret provides striking statistics from the French government's Direction Centrale des Renseignements Intérieur (DCRI). According to these numbers, it is estimated that there are 5,000 Salafis currently living in France. This number is constantly growing while new religious facilities are being built. Marret points out to an important fact that "one of the most tangible indicators of radicalization is the taking control of mosques. Salafist circles seem bent on infiltrating mosques by subterfuge in order to practice entryism after which they move

to take control.” Marret further states that Saudi, Algerian, Moroccan, Egyptian and Tunisian money is sponsoring the mosques and the Salafist civil society organizations in France. (Marret 2010)

The Salafi ideology and its mosques are not the only Islamic establishments in France. Other moderate groups and mosques also operate within the country. Sufi orders that are strongly opposing the Salafi way, are constantly involved in ideological clashes with their Salafi counterparts. When the French government decided to establish an umbrella organization named the French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM) this establishment failed as a result of the diverse ideological thinking of various Islamic groups in France. A report from *the Washington Post*, stated that the CFCM currently has delegates only from 90 mosques across France, given the fact that there are 5 million Muslims in France this number is hardly representative of the biggest religious community in France after Christianity. According to Adida’s report, the lack of Islamic preachers is a problem that eventually leads to radicalization. The report states that only 10 % out of 1800 preachers and imams were educated in France. (Adida et al. 2015) The lack of the formal recognition of religious minorities and the strict separation of religion and state, are the main obstacles in France to educate its own national religious clerics and preachers. There is a gap in terms of religious education and many Salafi mosques are naturally filling this gap by providing its own imams and preachers. (Marret 2010)

The French authorities are aware of the Salafi activities in France and the rising number of homegrown radicals. The authorities have made some efforts to start a program of de-radicalization. According to Henry Samuel, the French efforts at de-radicalization are considered to be a “total fiasco.” He reported that 238 people were killed since 2015 as a result of violent attacks. He stated that some 680 French citizens including 275 women have joined the Jihadists movements in the Middle

East. The authorities are worried that these Jihadists will return home one day and will continue their activities on French soil. (Samuel 2017)

### **8.1.3 Salafi-Jihadists in France: Individual cases**

Nesser's study provides a detailed profile of Jihadist terrorists as well as a typology to explain the process of radicalization in these individuals. In each individual case, Nesser provides structural and socio-economic conditions and commonalities to explain the violent actions. When analyzing each jihadist profile, there is one single common trait in each of these jihadists: their connection with the Salafi ideology through mosques and social networks. One of these Jihadists is *Djamel Beghal*, who was the head of a terrorist cell in Europe and who was responsible for the suicide bombing attacks in Belgium and France in 2001. In his detailed profile and biography, Nesser reported that Beghal, before becoming a radicalized political activist, "studied religion and was inspired by several Islamist intellectuals and preachers, including moderate so-called progressive reformists" (Nesser 2010)

Another homegrown terrorist profile from Nesser's study is Kamel Daoudi. Born in Algeria and raised in France, Daoudi wrote in his memoirs that he had a very happy childhood with good grades in school. Studying in a technical school, Daoudi portrays his radicalization as an "*intellectual process*" which through the writings of "*the great contemporary writers of political Islam*" he was involved with radical ideologies. It was Beghal who first introduced the Salafi texts to Daoudi. Daoudi's close association with Beghal show that he was part of the Salafi network and Beghal was a central figure for the conversion of many Muslims to extremism. (Nesser 2010) Marc Sageman mentions in his study that Daoudi was Beghal's deputy and they have met in a mosque in a French suburb. Through their connections with other Salafists they were able to create a contact with the Maghreb community in

London and with Salafi preachers like Othman and Kemal. (Sageman 2004) Kamel Daoudi is under house arrest in Saint-Jean-d'Angély since 2011 and according to recent French news report the arrest warrant of the house arrest issued by the interior ministry accused Daoudi of his close ties with the Salafi movement. (SudOuest 2016)

Another important profile to mention here is that of the Courtallier brothers. Former Catholics, the Courtallier Brothers are two popular athletic young brothers from the French Alps. As a result of the deteriorating life conditions they moved to the UK and through their socialization with Beghal began to attend Salafi mosques “where they encountered extremists.” According to Sageman, the Brothers met with Kamel Daoudi along with Djamel Beghal in the London network. The Brothers later traveled to Afghanistan and began training as Jihadists. (Nesser 2010) Both Sageman and Nesser attest that all of these Salafi-Jihadist terrorists are members of a bigger network. They have been radicalized in the Salafi mosques of France and the UK and even travelled to Afghanistan to train as armed jihadists, thereby becoming affiliated with the members of Global Salafi network.

As seen from these individual cases, almost all of the Salafi radicals undergo a similar process of radicalization. The existence of Salafi ideological centers and mosques with radical preachers contribute to the radicalization of many Muslims and new converts. The French government has realized the importance of the Salafi danger in order to prevent further radicalization of Muslim youth in France. Unfortunately recent events show that the French efforts to prevent the radicalization of homegrown extremists are failing and some officials argue that de-radicalization is an impossible process. (Samuel 2017) However, there is a reality that de-radicalization process should begin with the *de-Salafisation* of the Muslim youth in France.

## 8.2 The British Case:

### 8.2.1 Salafism in the United Kingdom

In contrast to French assimilationism, Great Britain appears more willing to accommodate and accept the diversity of its religious minorities. Public funding for Islamic education and policies encourage multiculturalism and it is the hallmark of British immigration policy. Unlike France, Britain seeks to meet the needs of Muslims in the public sphere. (Marret 2010; Goerzig & Al-Hashimi 2015) According to the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), there are 2.71 million Muslims in UK, accounting approximately for 4.8 % of the total population. Numbers suggest that 47 % of the Muslims were born in the UK. The majority of the Muslims in UK are of South Asian origin. (MCB 2015)

The British Muslim community is more diverse compared to France but organized mostly around ethnicity. There are four major Islamic tendencies within the UK: The *Barelwi* Sufi tradition; the *Deobandi* movement; the *Jama'at-i Islami*<sup>9</sup> of Al Mawdudi; and the *Ahl-i-hadith* network. All of these groups are considered to be influential in the Islamic community of Britain. These groups represent the ideological and theological trends that were brought to the UK by the South Asian immigrant communities who settled in the 1960s and 1970s. (Hamid 2008) Apart from these movements there are three orientations that many second generation British Muslims are part of and participate in collective action and political activism. These are the Salafi-oriented *JIMAS* (Jamiyyah Ihya'mihaj as Sunna), the radical pan-Islamist group of *Hizb-ut Tahrir*, and the *Neo-Sufi Traditional Islam*. According to Hamid, Salafis among these three groups became one of the most widespread and politically influential. This group is constantly working to discredit many Muslim

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<sup>9</sup> **Jama'at-e-Islami** (Urdu: جماعتِ اسلامی) is an Islamic political organization and social conservative movement founded in 1941 in British India by the Islamist theologian and socio-political philosopher, Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903-79). Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Jamaat-i-Islami>

individuals and institutions in the UK. While the British authorities are alarmed that religious radicalism is on the rise in the country, they unfortunately have failed to distinguish the differences between these groups. (Hamid 2016)

In Britain, the most common targets of the fundamentalist preaching are the non-Arabic speaking Muslims. Similar to the French case, the lack of Arabic and access to the holy texts is a factor that contributes to the radicalization of these individuals through relying solely on their interpretation by radical clerics. Many studies agree on the fact that most of the British radicals are mostly of Pakistani origin and some of them are converts. (Huband 2010; Abbas 2007) In addition to these two groups, Abbas includes the newly emerging Somalians who are forming new communities across Britain, due to the severe economic conditions and social disadvantages they encounter. (Abbas 2007)

A report issued by the British government following the July 2005 bombings, emphasized clearly the importance and centrality of radical religious ideas being the most fundamental part of the radicalization process. (Huband 2010) David Cameron, the prime minister at the time said in 2011 that, "As evidence emerges about the backgrounds of those convicted of terrorist offences, it is clear that many of them were initially influenced by what some have called 'non-violent extremists', and they then took those radical beliefs to the next level by embracing violence." (Cameron 2011) Cameron complained that some organizations which present themselves as representatives of the Islamic community are doing very little to fight extremism despite the public funds provided. Cameron says "the ideology of extremism is the problem; Islam emphatically is not." (Cameron 2011)

### 8.2.2 The institutionalization of Salafi-Jihadism and the radical preaching in the UK

Many Muslim charities and organizations in UK mostly operate on the local level beyond the control of the state. The only official organization among these is the Muslim Council of Britain. The MCB is viewed as the most successful attempt to form an umbrella association for the Muslims in the UK. (MCB 2017) Radicals and conservative Muslims have made an effort to discredit the MCB as an umbrella association and reject it as the sole authority over Muslims. As a result, many Muslims turn to their local mosques and charities for spiritual guidance. (Goerzig & Al-Hashimi 2015) For Muslims living in Great Britain, there is one mosque or prayer center for every 1,071 Muslims in England, Wales, and Scotland. (Fetzer & Soper 2004) There are 1,500 mosques in the UK and as a result of this sheer number many Muslim elders tend to recruit imams from their ancestral countries and some of these clerics have been educated in the very conservative madrasas or in some cases lack the necessary religious education. According to Klausen, some mosques in the UK have become a breeding ground for religious extremism. (Klausen 2008) The confession of a Muslim worker named Nazir Ahmed is valuable to understand the situation in these mosques. Ahmed says “young British Muslims go to the mosque and hear an imam delivering a sermon in a foreign language about the past. It has no relevance to the problems affecting Muslims in Britain. At the same time, it fills them with the absurd notions about the British. They leave the mosque feeling angry and confused and walk straight into the arms of extremist groups such as *Al-Muhajiroun*<sup>10</sup> which talk to them in a language they understand.” (Goerzig & Al-Hashimi 2015)

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<sup>10</sup> **Al-Muhajiroun** was a fundamentalist Islamic group in UK preaching radical ideas such as the establishment of Sharia law in Britain. It was disbanded by the British authorities. See “Al-Muhajiroon” Quintan Wiktorowicz’s *Joining the Cause: Al-Muhajiroun and Radical Islam* (Wiktorowicz 2004)

Strengthening the argument of this research, Huband points to the important fact that attendance of these mosques is linked to extremist activity. He argues that this has nothing to do with official mosque hierarchy but rather with the fact that the extremists identify and reach the potential candidates who are ready to consume the radical message. Huband also adds that due to increasing state control of mosques across Europe and the recent danger of closure, extremists move away from mosques to the houses and other meeting points thereby continuing their activities covertly. (Huband 2010)

The numbers show that back in 2007, 68 mosques out of 1528 were identified as being Salafists in the UK. This number in 2015 increased around 20% and reached 1850 mosques, which around 110 were thought to be Salafist. (Dale 2015) In addition to these institutions there are also significant Salafi-jihadist groups that operate across Britain. These are the radical Islamist groups such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (HuT), *Al-Muhajiroun*, and *Al Qaeda*. Many young British Muslims are attracted to the messages transmitted by these groups particularly in the Midlands and around London. Euphemistically, the capital city is called “*Londonistan*” because of the prevalence of radical fundamentalist groups in the capital. (Wiktorowicz 2005b) These groups propagate their ideas through internet-based publications, book sales, and planned demonstrations across Britain. According to Sadek Hamid, “Salafi groups in Britain are inspired by and are in constant communication with the Salafi scholars based in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Yemen.” (Hamid 2016)

Furthermore, There is also another major movement, which contributes to the radicalization of British Muslim. This is the generic form of Salafism called the *Deobandi Movement*.<sup>11</sup> The Deobandi movement is the largest single movement that

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<sup>11</sup> **Deobandi School:** “Arabic Dār Al-‘ulūm, (“House of Learning”), the leading Muslim theological centre (madrasah) of India. It was founded in 1867 by Muḥammad ‘Ābid Ḥusayn in the Sahāranpur district of Uttar Pradesh. The theological position of Deoband has always been heavily influenced by



influences Islamic thinking and learning among British Muslims. According to Bowen, it controls 45 % of the mosques in Britain and almost all of the training of Islamic scholars in the UK. Not very different from the Salafi ideology and with so much in common, the Deobandi scholars also advocate a very conservative interpretation of Islamic law such as the frowning of television and music or keeping women in their houses unless going out is necessary. The Deobandi movement preaches the same radical ideas as Salafism and gave birth to the Taliban movement in Pakistan. It is therefore also called the *Indian Wahhabiyyah*. (Bowen 2014) As a result of the sheer ideological resemblance between the two ideologies many scholars today do not distinguish them. Adding the Deobandi controlled mosques in the UK, there is an ever-growing threat of radicalisation. According to a scholarly report issued by Stanford University, the Deobandi movement has educated the top leaders of the Taliban like *Mullah Omar* and *Jalaluddin Haqqani* in their madrassas. According to this report, “The Taliban’s main goal is to establish a Taliban controlled government in Afghanistan and implement Sharia law. Overall the ideology of the Taliban is considered a shift away from the traditional Islamist views held by the anti-Soviet Mujahedeen fighters in the 1980s and early 1990s to a combination of strict anti-modern Pashtun tribal ideology mixed with radicalized Deobandi interpretations of Islam.” (Stanford 2017) Steve Bell argues that the Deobandi movement is similar to the Salafi-Wahhabi ideology aims to alienate Muslims in the West. (Bell 2016)

Another radical movement worth mentioning is *Al-Muhajiroun*. According to Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Al-Muhajiroun is a transnational Islamic movement based in the UK that supports the use of violence against western interests in Muslim countries and the establishment of an Islamic state through a military coup. In the British

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the 18th-century Muslim reformer Shāh Walī Allāh and the early 19th-century Indian Wahhābiyah, giving it a very puritanical and orthodox outlook.” Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Deoband-school>

media, the movement is linked to terrorism and even al-Qaeda itself. “ (Wiktorowicz 2004) Wiktorowicz based his entire model of radicalization from the data he collected from Al-Muhajiroun operatives. Therefore the samples he provided from this group enabled him to construct his four phases of radicalization, which we utilize in this research.

In his study, Wiktorowicz mentions that he made contact with the organization through Mohammad al-Masari who was the leader of a Saudi Islamist movement (Salafi). Al-Masari was a friend of the Al-Muhajiroun leader Omar Bakri. This connection proved that there was a strong connection between Wahhabi leaders and Al-Muhajiroun. (Wiktorowicz 2004) The group is very active in the UK. Al-Muhajiroun encourages its members and affiliates to live on state benefit and refuse to contribute to British society culturally and economically. The group’s followers are openly anti-Jewish/Israel, hostile to many non-Islamic cultures. Some mosques in the UK are considered to be under the influence of the organization. Finsbury mosque is an example of these institutions. The radical cleric Abu Hamza Al-Masri was a preacher in this mosque and contributed to the radicalisation of many Muslims in the UK. The Finsbury mosque was the main institution for Al-Muhajiroun activities and indoctrination. The group organizes rallies in public squares and has online sources that promote violence and anti-Semitism including leaflets and poster campaigns. (Smith 2005)

### **8.2.3 Salafi-Jihadists in the UK: analyzing Individual cases**

“The era of open radicalism” ended when the British radicals blew up the London underground and a double decked city bus killing more than 50 and injuring almost 700 people in 2005. Three of the bombers were of British–Pakistani origin and a new convert of Jamaican origin. Following these attacks, many radicals were either imprisoned or went abroad. This led many radicals to undertake covert propaganda

and remain silent. (Winsor 2014) Therefore, it is difficult to identify the British Salafi-Jihadists after 2005. Among these figures the leader of the Jihadist organization Al-Muhajiroun, Omar Bakri Muhammad is important to note here. He was a member of the *Hizb' ut Tahrir (HuT)* before he established Al-Muhajiroun. A Syrian born in 1958, Omar Bakri completed his primary education in Syria in an Islamic boarding school. After receiving a Salafist education in different parts of the world he began his career of radical activism. During his early youth he joined the Salafist organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, and later he joined *HuT* after he fled to Beirut. Later Bakri moved to Cairo and became a student at the Islamic University of *Al-Azhar*.<sup>12</sup> After developing contradicting ideas and clashing with the al-Azhar professors he moved to Saudi Arabia in 1979. He developed connections with the members of Saudi royal family which enabled him to act and move freely across Saudi Arabia. He established the Saudi branch of *HuT* and began to recruit activists for his cause. (Wiktorowicz 2005b) Bakri's life is full of evidence that he was a Salafi-jihadist, having become indoctrinated at a very early age. His connections with the Saudi royal family probably provided him with the necessary sources to spread the ideology and recruit other Salafi-Jihadists.

Interviewed by the Guardian, a *returning jihadist* from the war in Syria stated that the UK has a very "large Salafi minority" and mosques are used to recruit young Britons. Most of the young Muslims would unintentionally visit these places and become subjected to Salafi rhetoric. (Malik & Laville 2014) Khalid Masood, a recent convert who was responsible for the Westminster attacks in March 2017 is said to have links with mosques that preach radicalism. According to the report Masood,

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<sup>12</sup> **Al-Azhar University:** "Arabic Jāmi'at al-Azhar, chief center of Islamic and Arabic learning in the world, centered on the mosque of that name in the medieval quarter of Cairo, Egypt. It was founded by the Shī'ite (specifically, the Ismā'īlī sect) Fāṭimids in 970 ce and was formally organized by 988. Its name may allude to Fāṭimah, the Prophet's daughter, known as "al-Zahrā'" ("the Luminous"), from whom the Fāṭimid dynasty derives its name." Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/al-Azhar-University>

born as Adrian Ajao, had a very happy childhood in a caring environment. However, after he moved to Luton with his wife and kids, he began to participate in the sermons of radical Islamist preacher Anjem Choudary who is now in jail for alleged links to Da'ish. Masood spent six years in Luton and becomes a regular of Choudary's sermons. It is likely that Masood was influenced by the radical ideas of Choudary and this eventually led him to his recent violent actions around the British Parliament. (Mendick & Allen 2017)

Anabel Inge, infiltrating Salafist women circles has reported that many female British converts attend religious education in private homes expecting to learn their new religion. Unaware of the content of the teachings being transmitted, most of these women become hardline Salafists as they continue the private study groups and in-house seminars. Inge pointed to the fact that, most of these young women are completely foreign to the Islamic faith therefore began to perceive the Salafi ideology as the mainstream and most original form of Islam. (Inge 2016)

In all of the individual cases in the UK, there is a connection between the individuals and the radical preaching of the Salafi ideology. They are either unintentionally subjected to the ideology or become a member of the Salafi network through friends or contacts. Most of the clerics in the UK have connections with the Salafi network outside the UK.

### **8.3 The German Case**

#### **8.3.1 Salafism in Germany**

Unlike France and the UK, the Muslims of Germany are predominantly of Turkish origin. The total population reached 4 million in 2011. The Turkish origin Muslims contribute to two-thirds of the entire Muslim population in Germany. Despite the large number of Muslims, Germany refuses to acknowledge its position as an immigration country. Therefore its policies for Muslims can be considered as

restrictive. There is no Muslim organization that has a public corporation status and there is no recognition that Islam can be included in Germany's social landscape. (Goerzig & Al-Hashimi 2015)

Unfortunately, the Muslim community in Germany lacks a unitary umbrella organization to control illegitimate movements and actions within the Islamic community. Two separate establishments represent the biggest Muslim community of Turkish origin. *Milli Gorus* is the overarching organization of the *Islamrat der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* and the Turkish government-funded *DITIB, the Turkish Islamic Union for religious affairs*. Both institutions have legal limitations to be recognized officially because the German state refuses to recognize Islam as an official religion. As with the case of other countries this creates a funding problem for the German Muslims to establish their own religious centers and mosques. (Goerzig & Al-Hashimi 2015)

Germany lacks an umbrella organization for Muslims. DITIB is blamed to represent the interests of Ankara but is still very influential in the religious affairs of Turkish Muslims in Germany. It controls approximately 900 mosques. The religious sermons are closely monitored and issued by the Religious state authority *Diyanet* in Ankara. DITIB recently is under greater surveillance due to accusation of spying of its clerics on behalf of Ankara. The local intelligence agency accused DITIB of providing intelligence for the Gülen movement's operatives in Germany for the Turkish Diyanet, as a result of the failed coup attempt in July 2016. (King 2017)

The *Milli Gorus* is the most influential Islamist organization and one of the most important Islamist movements operating within the Turkish diaspora across Europe. The movement has 323 mosques in Germany. It is reported that the group has approximately 30.000 members in Germany out of 87.000 members in Europe. It is also estimated that about 300.000 people in Europe attend the religious services of the

group on a weekly basis. The major ideologue of the movement is *Necmettin Erbakan* who is an anti-secular Turkish political figure who was prime minister between 1996-1997. Coming from a Sufi tradition and being educated according to Sufi teachings, he rejected violent Jihadist revolution, instead favoring “bottom-up” Islamic revival and political reform relying on education. He created his movement in 1969 named it as his National Vision or *Milli Gorus*. There is no doubt that Milli Gorus is advocating political Islam and targeting mainly Turkish society. According to Vielhaber, we cannot classify *Milli Gorus* as a Salafi-jihadist organization. Vielhaber argued that umbrella charities of the group provide funds for Hamas as well as other groups in the Middle East that have ties with more radical jihadists groups. However, ideologically speaking the Milli Gorus is far away from the Salafist radicalism and approach. (Vielhaber 2012)

Despite the large number of mosques run by *Milli Gorus* and DITIB, Salafi radicalization is on the rise in Germany. Official reports provided that the Salafi groups were behind violent attacks in Germany. These attacks have alarmed the German officials to take action against Salafi ideological centers and their cells across the country. In particular, the very recent attack on a Christmas market in Berlin by a Tunisian radical raised the concern about these radical establishments and cells. Sigmar Gabriel, chairman of Germany’s Social Democratic party at that time has openly taken a hard line on Salafi Islamism in Germany. He said that, “Salafist mosques must be banned, the communities dissolved and the preachers should be expelled, as soon as possible,” Montgomery argued in his report that German Federal Intelligence Service and the Federal office for the protection of the Constitution, estimated that there are 10,000 Salafists in Germany supported by Saudi backed missionary movements. Among these movements they named the Saudi Muslims World League, the Sheikh Eid Bin Mohammad al-Thani charitable organization and

the Kuwaiti Islamic heritage society, which was banned in the United States and Russia for the possible links to Al-Qaeda. (Montgomery 2017) The domestic intelligence service of the Federal Republic of Germany (BfV), reported that there are 43,000 Islamists currently living in Germany and the authorities state that the number of Salafi jihadists among them has risen since 2014. Most of these jihadists have left for the war in Syria and one third has returned to Germany while the rest died in the war. BfV argued that apart from the use of mosques and religious centers, the Salafis began to use electronic media to spread their ideology. The internet websites, short videos on YouTube, chat rooms, forums and other online tools are used to target young people in Germany. According to the BfV “the Internet does not only serve as a means of spreading Salafist propaganda, but it is also a central platform for Salafist actors to communicate (socialization) with one another.” (BfV 2017)

As a result of the civil war in Syria and the disturbances caused by the terrorist organization Da'ish, Germany has received significant amount of refugees from the Middle East. Most of these refugees were placed in temporary camps waiting for their demands of asylum. German authorities were alarmed after receiving reports that Salafi activists were operating within the refugee camps to recruit war-torn immigrants and asylum seekers. Officials pointed out that the newcomers would be vulnerable to appeals from the Salafi ideology. These concerns have alarmed the authorities to prevent recruitment of immigrants by the Salafi operatives. (Smale 2016)

The German authorities are strictly monitoring the Salafi jihadist network and their activities across Germany. Among many strategies to counter terrorist activities, prevention efforts are also being undertaken. A non-Salafist religious center in Berlin- being aware of the Salafi encroachment across Germany- has launched a new program to train Islamic clergymen close to the Sufi tradition. The Project was

launched by the *Institut Buhara* in Berlin that was linked to the traditions of the Naqshbandi Sufi order. This project was a result of a growing frustration by German Muslims, which had difficulty with radical clerics that come from abroad while rarely being able to speak German. Deputy Chairman of the institute Ayhan Coşkun stated “imams carrying out their work here lack the requirements needed for the future of Islam in Germany.” If the plan succeeds, 35 students will begin preaching after completing a six-year training course, while the institute has a 68-student capacity. (DW 2009)

In Germany, opinion varies about the role of both *DITIB* and *Milli Gorus* in terms of their contribution to the radicalization of German youth. The German authorities are closely monitoring the activities of both establishments. Despite some accusation that Milli Gorus is promoting political Islam, it is hard to conclude that there is a systematic ideological radicalization within the mosques under their control. DITIB, on the other hand, operates under the religious authority of Turkish Diyanet. The sermons are closely monitored and prepared according to the Turkish national agenda.

### **8.3.2 The institutionalization of Salafi-Jihadism and radical preaching in Germany**

A news report in Reuters in 2016 depicted the differences between the Salafi mosques and the moderate mosques across Europe and especially in Germany. The story is about Hani Salam who is a Syrian-Arab refugee in the city of Köln within the North-Rhine Westphalia state. Salam goes to an Arab mosque for a Friday prayer but is harshly criticized in the mosque for not growing a beard and for wearing shorts. Salam during an interview claims that most of the Arab mosques in Germany were ultraconservative and they had to go to the more moderate Turkish mosques even though they do not understand the language of the sermon. According to Nasr almost 70 % of the 890.000 asylum seekers who entered Germany in 2015 were Muslims and



one third came from Syria. Many of them do not want to go to Turkish mosques because of the linguistic obstacles. These immigrants prefer to worship in Arabic “yet in these mosques, other problems arise. They are often short of funds, or else supported by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Some back ultraconservative or highly literal interpretation of Islam, such as Wahhabism or Salafism.” (Nasr 2016)

The Salafi-Jihadists have a completely different strategy in Germany. According to an annual report issued by the domestic intelligence agency of the lower Saxony state of Germany (Verfassungsschutzbericht Niedersachsen), Salafis are using professional methods in Germany. Instead of using conventional methods such as the use of mosques or prayer halls, the Salafi operatives in Germany use the power of discourse and online publishing. They usually preach in German with a popular tone to influence the young. To a large extent the Internet is the biggest vehicle they use in spreading the ideology through the use of online forums, YouTube videos, documents and audio recordings. Individuals with naïve curiosity run into these sources unknowingly and become subjected to Salafi ideas. In addition to this high level of online media coverage, lectures and seminars also play a central role in spreading the radical ideology. The report points to the fact that these seminars and lectures mostly target young people who are not yet followers of Salafism and, in this manner a sense of community is created among them. This sense of community prepares the first step towards socialization, which is a step towards radical action. Many Germans and immigrants complain that there are limited facilities for religious learning therefore they rely on the online sources provided by these popular figures. Not aware of the content of the religious message many young Germans fall prey to the Salafi indoctrination and take one further step towards radicalization.

According to a BfV report, the Salafi propaganda is being spread in Germany in another manner. This is the nationwide use of Islamic information booths and street

kiosks. Through these information booths, ideological documents, books, and brochures are distributed. Thus, an easy access is provided to these religious sources for the young Muslims. (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz 2013) These documents reach the German youth without any censorship and are considered to be part of the freedom of information and education. However, the content of the Salafi propaganda in these sources has significant implications for process of their radicalization.

### **8.3.3 Salafi-Jihadists in Germany: Individual cases**

Like in many other western European countries that suffer from the radicalisation caused by Salafi ideology, Germany is also home to certain figures that contribute to the Salafist effort. Among them, there are Muslim born Germans and converts. Some of these individuals are celebrities and very popular among the youth. *Hassan Dabbagh, Ibrahim Abou-Nagie, Pierre Vogel* and *Sven Lau* are some of these popular Salafis worth mentioning here.

Hassan Dabbagh is a German citizen of Syrian origin. He is the head preacher of the *Al Rahman* mosque in Leipzig. He is regularly holding seminars and educative gatherings to spread the Salafi ideology in Germany. Authorities in the state of Saxony reported that “his aggressively presented sermons were suited to contribute to the radicalisation of young, less stable Muslims and converts.” (Allmeling et al. 2015) Another important Salafi preacher in Germany is Ibrahim Abou-Nagie. Born in a Palestinian refugee camp, and a German citizen since 1994, Abou-Nagie is considered to be one of the most influential Salafi preachers in Germany. Without having a theological education or background Abou-Nagie spreads his Salafist ideas through online sources and phone calls. (Allmeling et al. 2015) Abou-Nagie is the founder of the *True Islam movement (Die wahre Religion)* in Germany. In 2016, the authorities banned his activities and preaching network as being unconstitutional. It was reported that the interior Minister, Thomas Maiziere, stated that his activities were harmful and

under the intention of promoting hate messages thus radicalizing young people. (DPA 2016)

In addition to these clerics, there are also popular German converts that preach Salafism in Germany. Among these converts Pierre Vogel and Sven Lau are two prominent figures that contribute to the radicalisation of young Germans. Vogel calling himself a *Salafi* is considered to be the most influential Islamist in Germany. He has been preaching radical ideas since 2006. (Allmeling et al. 2015)

Pierre Vogel, otherwise named as Abu Hamza after his conversion to Islam in 2001, is a professional boxer and a very popular figure among German youth. According to Sirin, he is one of the most important preachers of Salafi-Wahhabism in Germany. It is not surprising that like many other radical preachers, Vogel apart from being a celebrity received religious training in Saudi Arabia after he converted to Islam. He is running a series of national lecture tours and websites to reach young German Muslims. Sirin stated that he is also influential among the non-Muslim German youth that have identity problems. His websites have received around five million hits during a period of one and a half years. The Salafi preachings of Vogel has been criticized by many German Muslim organizations and personalities for being discriminative and violent. (Sirin 2011)

Sven Lau like Vogel, comes from a Catholic family. He has been preaching Salafism since 2008. He was accused of helping young Germans to join Jihadist groups in Syria, and for setting up the controversial *Sharia police* patrols in the German city of Wuppertal. He is considered to be one of the most notorious figures of the Salafist subculture in Germany. (Porter 2016)

## 9 CONCLUSION

These examples provided in the country cases are numerous and they all point to one single reality, which is the contribution of Salafi propaganda for radicalization in Europe. Through the individual connections of its followers, the Salafi movement has acquired a transnational identity and operates as a global network. As we have shown above, Salafism is only one form of Islamist activism and represents a minority theological current. The Salafi ideology has developed through time and became one of the most radical religious ideologies today. The Salafist ideologues of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have transformed this ideology into a modern jihadist movement. The politically motivated interpretation of religious concepts such as Jihad and baghy has justified violence in the name of Islamic activism. The ideology's puritanical and literalist approach is portrayed as a response to western colonialism, and modernism. The literalist understanding of the revelation and the perception it has created suggests that it is the purist form of the faith and the only legitimate Islamic doctrine. The evidences provided in this thesis support the argument that the Salafi ideology and its institutional capacity are responsible for the radicalization of Europe's Muslims. The Salafi-Wahhabi operatives across Europe are targeting young Muslims and mostly immigrants through religious sermons and ideological propaganda. The Salafi ideology through its powerful funding and institutional capacity creates an easy access for the European Muslims. The recruitment and the radicalization efforts are projected to be the work of an Islamic mission.

The identity problematique of European Muslims and its stimulation with Salafi ideas stand as a social problem and should not be underestimated. The Salafi rhetoric creates a perceived identity in the minds of European Muslims and contributes to the creation of a global Islamist network. The de-culturation process of Salafi ideology replaces the dominant culture and the host identity of the individual

and substitutes it with a transnational identity painted with fundamentalist religious dogma. The Salafi ideology stimulates the ongoing identity problematique of the Muslims in the West and creates a perception that the West is behind all the problems that they encounter as individuals. Thus most young Muslims in the West are torn between their heritage culture and the culture of the host state they live in. The identity problematique facilitates the process of radicalization and during a potential phase of cognitive opening and religious seeking it marginalizes the individual forcing him to perceive that the Salafi way is the only legitimate way of the faith. The socialization in Salafi ideological centers and mosques creates a sense of community thus convincing individuals to commit to its cause. The socialization is followed by risky activism, which is enabled by the indoctrinating rhetoric of the Salafi message. Therefore the Salafi rhetoric is one of the important sources of homegrown radicalization in Europe. The Salafi rhetoric aims to create a negative image of Western Civilization and creates a perception in individuals that the hardships of their life occur because of the Western encroachment on their Muslim values. Understanding the actual radicalizing effects of the Salafi doctrines therefore requires a theological and hermeneutic approach. Such a theological analysis will prove that the Salafi interpretation of Islam is not the only connotation and not a legitimate one.

## **9.1 Findings**

The review of radicalization theories provided that, most of the models designed to explain religious radicalization fail to address the ideological indoctrination in depth and its effects to the actual process of radicalization. In this study the effort was to identify the codes of violence and radical activism within the Salafi-Wahhabi ideology. The historical examination was intended to provide how and when the idea of violent Jihad was introduced to the Islamic ideology and what

was the consensus on the use of Jihad. Among the many ideologues that we could consider as the fathers of Salafism, we have intentionally chosen the ones presented in this study in order to explain specifically the Salafi-Jihadism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the works of these ideologues, the idea of Jihad was presented as a norm and was transmitted as the sole duty of all Muslims. The justification of Jihad and rebellion is the most distinct characteristic of the Salafi ideology and the interpretation of these concepts were manipulated according to the political needs and interests of various fundamentalist groups.

The analysis of the three country case studies suggests that the level of radicalization in Europe is related to the number of Salafi mosques and the scale and scope of the ideology's activities in the country. In all of these three country cases, the gulf charities and wealthy Saudis finance most of the Salafi mosques and centers. In many cases the preachers are imported from native countries and villages and most of them were educated in conservative religious schools. The state regimes and the national policies are important determinants that stimulate the spread of Salafi ideology. The lack of control of the religious activities creates a free environment where many radical ideologies operate in an uncontrolled manner. Each country presented here adopts a different immigration policy while the official status of Muslims minorities differs. Most of the Muslims in France are of North African origin, the Muslims of the UK emigrated from South Asia and the majority of Muslims in Germany are predominantly of Turkish origin. The ethnic diversity of the cases selected is important to analyze the effects of the Salafi ideology on populations with different ethnic compositions and backgrounds.

In terms of integrating religious minorities, the British system is more accommodating than the French and German state policies. However, the multiculturalist policies in the UK create a safe haven for the radical groups. The

Salafi mosques are numerous in British cities and radical preaching is an alarming phenomenon. Radicalism in Britain is not only spread by the Salafi ideology but also other ideological movements and groups such as the Deobandi movement and Al-Muhajiroun.

France, on the other hand, with the promotion of a strong laicism rejects the existence of religious minorities, thereby creating resentment within the Muslim minority in the country. France has fewer religious facilities compared to Britain and Germany. Most of the French Muslims speak Arabic and have a direct access to Salafi texts and sermons. France and the UK have similarities in terms of their colonial heritage, which contribute to the Salafi rhetoric's argument of Western encroachment on Islamic lands. Germany on the other hand, lacking a colonial heritage compared to France and the UK, experiences a different Salafi rhetoric. Salafis in Germany mostly target foreign immigrants and German converts. The use popular German youth figures contribute to the radicalization of Muslims in Germany. On the other hand, the majority of Turkish Muslims in Germany affiliate themselves with other Islamic communities, which mostly prevents them from attending Salafi mosques therefore averting Salafi indoctrination and radicalization.

It is common in all the three country cases that the radicalization occurs as a result of attending the mosques controlled by proponents of the Salafi ideology. The activities and operations of Salafism in these countries differ according to the social, cultural, and ethnic differences of the Muslims minorities. Different strategies of propaganda or Tabligh are used as the ethnic social and cultural composition of Muslims changes. All these countries have made efforts to form umbrella organizations to unify the Muslims communities and keep their activities under control. However, most of these organizations fail to generate widespread acceptance among the fragmented Muslim societies with different sectarian affiliations.

The European states' resistance to recognize minority religions in the public sphere and the failure to educate national clerics contribute to the trend of rising radicalization. Research shows that the Wahhabi Gulf states, wealthy individuals and their charities fund all of the Salafi mosques, prayer halls and educational centers in Europe. Most of the radical Salafi clerics and preachers were educated in the Salafi-Wahhabi schools of the Gulf States. Apart from these ideological institutions the online sources, street rallies, and YouTube videos are very successful tools to indoctrinate young Muslims and acquire new converts.

The individual cases from each country also contribute further to the testing of the argument. Radical individuals involved or not in violent action received Salafi indoctrination through mosques, and Salafi clerics. The lack of integration in the European societies is not the only root cause of radicalization. Discrimination would definitely simulate the political activism of individuals but fails to explain religious radicalization by its own. At this junction, the radicalization studies need to focus more on the ideological content of Salafi-Jihadism.

## **9.2 Implications**

The counter-terrorism efforts across Europe are mostly focused on security-related threats. However, much effort is needed for the prevention of the Salafi radicalization at the early stages of indoctrination. The Salafi rhetoric and theological interpretation of the Islamic concepts of Jihad and political activism is the source of radicalization. The research on radicalization should widen its scope and adopt a theological and hermeneutic approach as well. The complex religious identities and various Islamic traditions should be identified and their rhetoric should be analyzed according to their affiliations and intentions. European states should accept the reality of religious culture and should consider Islam as the primary marker of identity for its



Muslim minorities. However, accepting the existence of religious communities and recognizing them officially in the European public sphere, might have other implications other than fighting and preventing radicalization.



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