



Online Channels for the Spread of Jihadist Ideology in 2016¹

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Jihadist invasion of Internet has enabled organizations such as Al Qaeda or the Islamic State (IS) open a second front in their “war” against the Western countries and its allies in Muslim-majority countries. Particularly, the progressive radicalization of young Muslims in the European diaspora cannot be nowadays understood without paying attention to the jihadist propaganda spread through the network.

The terrorism of jihadist inspiration has been enthusiastic in relation to a technology that has not only provided its traditional activities with a renewed efficacy, among others, (1) the propaganda spreading, (2) the incitation to violence, (3) the funding, (4)

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the getting of operational information, (5) the internal communications, (6) the indoctrination or (7) the recruitment and the training. Moreover, it has also opened new possibilities for interacting and keeping alive a wide network of supporters all around the world (Torres Soriano, 2014: 14). In this respect, it is certainly an irony that jihadists make use of the most *modern* means of communication to precisely fight against modernity in the name of a *primitive* ideology.

In most cases, Internet has a significant role in the radicalization process, as it intensifies and accelerates the abovementioned process. The global network may provide the users with the information they are looking for. Besides, it helps to reinforce their beliefs. Special attention should be paid to those videos and images that strengthen a particular vision of the world and may be used as potential trigger for the radicalization process, mainly in relation to those youngsters living in the western diaspora who practice the Muslim religion. Furthermore, Internet enables individuals find ideologically related people, something which obviously occurs more rarely in a physical environment. Thus, an on-line community has been created. By doing so, opinions and abnormal behaviors are normalized. Among these, the ideological viewpoints of extremist nature that defend, among others, the use of violence to solve problems coming from possible affronts (Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2011: 3).

Based on what is stated in the preceding paragraphs, this paper aims at analyzing the environmental element in the context of jihadist terrorism, paying special attention to those virtual places through which a message of hate and incitation to terrorist violence is currently being spread. Besides this eminently criminological approach, the second part of this work is dedicated to show a set of measures that are considered appropriate to fight against the radical message in Internet. Particularly, this study highlights the importance of the development of “counter-narratives” directed to face the dominant message of the extremists.

2. FROM WHERE AND THROUGH which MECHANISMS IS CURRENTLY BEING SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF HATE AND INCITEMENT To jihadist VIOLENCE? ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT

2.1. Introduction



Firstly, it is fundamental to take into account that, from 2002/2003 onwards, the Islamic terrorist organizations abandoned their determination to keep their own websites. The continuous cyber-attacks suffered by these led the terrorists to adopt an alternative strategy consisting of having a presence apparently more horizontal and diffuse in Internet. In this way, both Internet forums and social networks have taken the main role in this new stage. At the same time, the terrorist organizations are being adapted to the incipient beginning of the so-called Web 2.0. That is to say, the radical Internet users have abandoned their passive consumer profiles of the material available in the net (Web 1.0), and have entered a community online which allows them become their own content producers (Torres Soriano, 2014: 68). This evolution is especially reflected in the use of social networks such as Facebook or Twitter, or by using video platforms as YouTube. Thus, the so-called Web 2.0 has enabled jihadists to spread more widely their propaganda material, achieving a number of potential consumers extensively superior to those existing in the past. Furthermore, the existence of these new virtual interaction means offer jihadists the opportunity of addressing themselves directly and in a selective way both to individuals and groups, instead of having to wait for the Internet users to decide to visit these webs with a radical Islamic content.

2.2 Jihadist forums

The creation of jihadist forums led to the appearance of a propagandist net with an extensive ramification, characterized by a significant horizontal nature and consequently, by a clear lack of hierarchy.

Nowadays, there are about ten forums in the Arabic language and many others in Western ones, all of them can be regarded as the epicenter of the so called “cyber jihad”. Among them, the most outstanding ones are the Al-Fida al-Islamiyyah, Ansar Al-Mujahideen, Shamukh al-Islam or Al-Faloja; all of them quite popular within the global jihadist movement.

Supporters enjoy great authority in these forums, some of which have tens of thousands of visitors every day. Many of them tend to have between 4,000 and 18,000 active users including obviously the members of the security agencies who observe and, if necessary, manipulate discussions.



Besides being used for generating ideological support, jihadist forums have also been commonly used to share tactical information. Thus, instantaneous messages platforms as well as the own spaces for on-line conversations, have been known to have “experts” who directly answer questions in relation to matters so diverse as to how to mix poisonous substances, how to carry out attacks with chemical weapons, how to perpetrate suicide attacks or how to break into the *enemy* computer systems. In all these jihadist forums, new recruits are encouraged to actively participate and to read jihadist literature. Simultaneously, these radical forums also act as a sounding board or echo chamber in order to convince potential members to join the Jihad and perpetrate suicide attacks (Weimann, 2010: 21).

Jihadist forums have been a key instrument for promoting the feeling of belonging to the same community. This community normalizes behaviors and reinforces norms. Even though supporters of the Jihad must sometimes face the uncomfortable perception of their extreme ideas not being numerous enough in their immediate social context, or they are directly rejected by all the people around them, these forums enable compensate this isolation by connecting the individual with thousands of Internet users from all over the world who share the same beliefs and attitudes (virtual socialization). Furthermore, both cyberspace in general and more specifically jihadist forums generate a false sense of anonymity which provokes a real “online disinhibition”. Potential jihadists become convinced that they can hide their identities permanently without having to assume any responsibilities for their actions.

2.3. The “Jihad” written in English: The magazine *Inspire*

In the summer of 2010, the terrorist organization Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) published the first issue of the legendary magazine *Inspire*, a jihadist magazine in English that is produced exclusively online.² From the very beginning, the aforementioned publication has achieved a considerable media attention, especially in Europe and USA. The reason: The magazine has always had as a main goal to encourage potential jihadists and sympathizers in the western diaspora to carry out the

² In this context it is important to highlight that the IS currently distributes on the Internet the magazine *Dabiq*, which is published in many languages. It also shows a marked propagandistic nature. Its main aim is to show the IS to the world as it sees itself: bragging about its victories, conveying a romantic image of the fighting and invoking the restoration of the caliphate through Jihad.



so called "individual jihad" and inciting them to commit attacks. In this case, the main aim is to mobilize the second and third generations of Muslim immigrants living in the West, to whom the Arabic language had become a problem to access the radical contents. From July 2010 sixteen issues of the magazine have appeared. The last published one until now was in the autumn of 2016.

The fundamental objectives of the *Inspire* magazine are as follows: (1) Ideological instruction (admittedly of rudimentary character); (2) Incitement to violence (along with the demonization of the West); (3) Practical training to commit attacks (Amble, 2012: 342-343).

(1) Obviously, the transmission of a particular ideology of radical character occupies a key role in the content of the magazine *Inspire*. However, instead of addressing theological discussions with a large academic content, something quite common in other jihadist publications, *Inspire* prefers to give priority to action and adventure (Peil, 2012: 35). In this sense, its authors suggest a kind of counter-culture opposite to the western way of living, providing at the same time figures with whom readers can identify. Due to the simplified way in which the magazine *Inspire* regards the world, it is clear that this publication is directed mainly to supporters without a solid religious culture.

(2) Another of the priorities of *Inspire* is to mobilize potential recruits and collaborators of the jihadist cause. The main target group is supporters who live in countries where English is handled, especially in the West, but also in Africa and Asia. The result of all this is a magazine that clearly strives to enliven a phenomenon that worries much to the USA and European security forces: The well-known «*homegrown terrorism*», that is to say, terrorist attacks in western soil committed by individuals living in the same country where they operate, and who in some cases lack any link with terrorist structures. Consequently, it can hardly be detected prior to the attack.

(3) Finally, one of the main ideas of the magazine *Inspire* is the practical instruction for the preparation of attacks. In the referred context it is tremendously revealing the section 'Open Source Jihad' which appears in every issue of the magazine. This aims at encouraging potential terrorists to commit attacks in those Western countries where they live, providing them with the necessary technical knowledge to commit these attacks using a number of household items or consumer goods. Topics covered in this section range from instructions for building explosives ("How to make a bomb in the kitchen of your mom" appeared in the first issue of the magazine), handling an assault rifle AK-47, how to set off an explosive device in a building or how to learn techniques for secure communication.



It can be stated that *Inspire* is the magazine of jihadist origin which has attracted most attention from the West. The international media coverage that accompanies the appearance of each new issue corroborates the huge propagandist success of the mentioned publication. Thus, the main magazine objective, so to know, is the mobilization of sympathizers in order to achieve the participation of them in the armed struggle, something that has been frequently reached.

2.4. Social networks (Facebook and Twitter)

Social networks have increasingly become a very important means for attracting members and supporters to the Jihad. Indeed, opposite to what happens with the closed forums, social networks allow male and female youngsters to be targeted by jihadist terrorist groups so as to recruit them. In a special way, those online communities with wide acceptance in the West such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or Second Life, as well as their Arab counterparts, are being increasingly used by terrorist groups and their supporters.

Facebook is currently enabling both jihadists and their sympathizers search and direct themselves to a specific group of people or to individuals, to whom previously it was nearly impossible to get in contact with. Through Facebook and other social networks, jihadists operating online track the network for groups of friends, whose members sometimes support anti-Western and anti-Semitic positions, becoming then potential candidates who might be receptive to jihadist ideology. The aim is to attract them to their cause by a careful plan of convincing them in long-term perspective. After an apparently harmless conversation, the potential recruits are slowly seduced and invited to present their views. In case that the dialogue is prolonged in time and become more intensive, the jihadists begin to address issues such as Islam and, above all, the suffering of Muslims in the world, proving it by video documentaries. At this stage of intercommunication, the online recruiter invites the potential candidate to move the conversation from the social network in question to a jihadist forum which can be accessed only through a password.



By itself, Twitter, conceived as a platform for communication and distribution of short messages, allows jihadists and their supporters to distribute in real time and throughout the world the latest news on the global jihad. Thus, the IS itself stands out as a regular user of social networks and, in particular, by using Twitter to transmit their messages. Its popularity in jihadist contexts has been so great that only in 2014, several studies reported about 46.000 accounts belonging to members of IS, although the figure could be even higher (Tapia Rojo, 2016: 6). It is undeniable that the use of *hashtags* is probably the most effective way to get a message to become viral and thereby achieve maximum spreading. According to some sources, currently, about the 80 per cent of the communicative work of the IS is transmitted through Twitter. The reason leading to this decision is based on the fact that this social network is less restricted than others.

In relation to the specific case of IS, one of the main topic in messages is brutality. Thus, for example, under the *hashtag* #decapitation and #beheading are thousands of Twitter messages on executions that IS has committed in recent years. In this regard we can mention notorious cases such as the beheading of journalist James Foley or the video “Healing of the Believers’ Chests”, in which the Jordanian pilot Muaz al-Kasasbeh was burned alive. On both occasions, the IS resorted to Twitter to spread information and publish a video with the facts.

In recent time, several *tweets* and messages on social networks like Facebook, published by dozens of extremists who coming from the United Kingdom, have already arrived in the Middle East, have shown the chilling reality of the so called "Jihad cool". Young British jihadists such as Abu Hussain Al Britani (better known as "Jihadi John"), are using Twitter or Facebook to promote their message, boasting online of their brutal activities in the hope of encouraging others to travel to Iraq and Syria.³

2.5. Audiovisual Platforms (YouTube)

In general, videos have played a fundamental role in the jihadist propaganda through Internet. These have gained prominence over recent years due to the fact that the expansion of the Internet and the implementation of social networks make them more

³ «“Jihad Cool”: The young Americans lured to fight for ISIS militants with rap videos, adventurism and first hand accounts of the 'fun' of guerrilla war», *Daily Mail*, 19 Juni 2014.



accessible than in the past. In addition, due both to technical innovations, and the increased capabilities of their creators, these videos have been reaching a level of professionalism and quality that definitely should be highlighted.

In this context, the video platform YouTube has lately become the chosen vehicle for publishing videos and other jihadist contents since its audiovisual and multi-language format is fully adaptable for the current purpose of the jihadist movement. Nearly all the jihadist videos found nowadays in Internet answer to a propagandist purpose. However, the propaganda must find responses from different groups of addressers. Thus, five different groups of jihadist videos may be described: (1) Videos intimidating and threatening; (2) Videos praising martyrdom; (3) Videos of strategic and ideological content; (4) Those of terrorist operations; and (5) Instructional videos (Frohneberg/Steinberg, 2012: 82).

(1) This first category comprises those videos which present actions such as hostage-taking, executions and beheadings. The up to now most famous video of this kind is this showing the execution of the American businessman Nicholas Berg by Abu Musab al-Zarkawi in May 2004. Besides, it should be noted the video with the execution of the Jordanian pilot Muaz al-Kasasbeh on January 3, 2015 by the terrorists of the IS.

(2) In this second category of video, the death of jihadists in suicide terrorist attacks is celebrated, showing them as true Muslim and martyrs in the name of Allah. In the case of suicide operations, images of the preparation of the action and, if possible, of the terrorist's corpse are exhibited. The videos acclaiming martyrdom promote the Holy War, helping recruit new supporters, since the makers of these videos usually encourage potential Internet users to follow the suicide person's example.

(3) The main aim of the videos belonging to this category is to transmit and, above all, to legitimate both their jihadist ideology and the terrorist strategy they use. It is evident that visual propaganda plays an important role in the radicalization processes. Thus, the videos show the *injustices* denounced by the militant jihadists (i.e. the suffering of the Muslim community around the world) within a specific model of explanation, giving answers to questions about why something like this happens and showing orientations on how to act if this is the case (The Holy War).

(4) The videos showing terrorist operations are by far the most commonly displayed in the Internet. Within this category, those videos showing tactical formation which present people taking part in terrorist or fight training courses are included. As it is known, the goal of this specific audiovisual material is the propaganda for the armed struggle.



(5) Finally, some videos are intended to convey the necessary technical knowledge to build explosives or incendiary devices that may be used in a terrorist act, also explaining how to use different weapons. However, there has not been yet any significant terrorist attack based on its author learning the necessary knowhow exclusively through the Internet. The only case in which the terrorists may have acquired this knowledge from the net may have been the attacks perpetrated the 15 of April 2013 during the Boston Marathon by the brothers Tamerlan y Dzhokhar Tsarnaev.

2.6. The Jihad through music: *nasheeds*

There is no doubt that Internet has played a key role in creating a “jihadist identity” in which part of the young Muslims participate. Rap videos, romantic notions of revolution and adventure as well as first-hand accounts about the “fun” of the guerrilla war (“Jihad cool”) are the latest tactics used by Islamist recruiters as part of what experts have identified as an “intensification of radicalization” in many Western countries. Many authors consider the “Jihadi subculture” –conceived as a tool to create a common identity and mobilize new recruits irrespective of the country of origin– as important as the ideology of these recruits.

Thus, within this context, the spread of religious songs *a capella*, called “*nasheeds*” must be highlighted. These, as we will see later, have managed to set a style of music by their own in the jihadist context. It can be stated that *nasheeds* are as important for the global jihadist movement as the poetry for the Islamic world. These hymns are not only widely used within propaganda videos. But they, together with their texts, are also being displayed in the Internet as audio files.

In most cases, the *nasheeds* of militant nature have been made in Arabic, although they may as well be found in other languages spoken in Muslim countries, such as the Pashtu, Urdu, Turkish, and Bosnian. Nowadays, there are even songs in English, German or Dutch. There are four categories of *nasheeds*: (1) Battle Hymns; (2) Hymns of martyrdom glorification, (3) Mourning Hymns; (4) Praising Hymns (Said, 2012: 871).

It is undeniable that *nasheeds* are lately becoming an efficient tool to spread the Jihad. Their use pretends not only “appeal to reason” by their texts, but, more important, they



are aimed at “shaking the souls” (Said, 2012: 875). Those religious hymns are currently widely spread all through the Internet. Consequently, they are not only available to members of Jihadist movements, but also to sympathizers. They may find many radical *nasheeds* both in jihadist webs and in other apparently normal online sites which provide with “islamic *nasheeds*”. All this music, together with other factors, may radicalize individuals, both at rational and emotional levels. On the other hand, the songs are used as a link in the global jihadist scene, being tremendously useful in the creation of a common narrative and the construction and consolidation of a collective mentality.

2.7. The so-called “darknet”

The “darknet” is primarily a place of retreat for those who need to surf the Internet in an anonymous way. In this net, hired killers (hitmen) as well as drug dealers, pedophiles and terrorists may be found. However, there are also politic dissidents who fear for their lives. This is the only space they feel secure. According to computer experts, in the deep net, all those Webs which are not registered by the best known Internet browsers such as Google or Bing, are placed. Thus, it is useful to see Internet as a kind of ocean: Google searches only on the surface or just in the nearest layer.

The Websites located in this net can only be visualized after having downloaded the appropriate software. The best known is the net TOR (*The Onion Router*). Both the net TOR as well as the *darknet* are part of the so called *deep web*. So as to be able to surf in TOR, the user has to download in his-her computer a small program known as “TOR Browser Bundle” (<https://www.torproject.org/>). Once downloaded, the user may surf anonymously, being able to visit the dark side of the Internet.

The TOR browser is composed of a network of more than 5,000 servers, which are called "nodes". The TOR network came from the necessity certain people had that their content was not public or readily accessible. While initially it had limited access by invitation, it has been gradually opened to anyone who wants to enter. As is known, in the TOR network, data transmission is carried out between two nodal points. Thus, the computer of the TOR user's creates a coded connection with the first server which simultaneously resends the data to a second nodal point which resends to a third one.



However, the servers only know the former nodal point and the immediately following one. When a set of data has travelled through three nodal points, it becomes impossible to trace the IP address of the individual who has sent this data, because this receives a kind of invisible coat. This is because the data packets are recoded again between the two nodal codes, receiving a new direction. This is called "onion routing" because it is layered, and hence the logo of TOR server. Thus, it becomes impossible to know who is behind each "darknet" connection, becoming then a perfect space/tool to carry out criminal activities such as terrorism.

As it is well-known, one of the main problems related to the existence of this "darknet" is that the jurisdiction is restricted to a specific physical territory. Consequently, it cannot act on this net. Since it is nearly impossible to know where the crimes are committed or who commits them, it is very difficult to act against activities such as jihadist terrorism.

On the other hand, one of the most attractive services provided by the "darknet" is that of privacy in conversations. By means of a system known as PGP (acronym for *Pretty Good Privacy*), a user may communicate with other person exclusively by receiving a code from him-her. Therefore, this system opens a door to the confidential coordination of organizations at a worldwide level.

To sum up, in spite of the use of public or semi-public forums, extremists yet need safer and private places to meet each other, communicate and coordinate their activities. Thus, it is undeniable that the use of the so-called "deep web" or the "darknet" in jihadist contexts has consistently increased, becoming one of the most difficult areas to control.

3. measures to counter the radical message

The first thing to note is that it is nearly impossible to completely eradicate the jihadist presence in Internet. The propaganda material is downloaded by supporters at a meteoric speed, being immediately sent to other receivers and to other Web pages with radical content. Those pages that are the subject of either a cyber-attack or suspended by suppliers reappear elsewhere hours or days later with a similar name on the net.



Nevertheless, security forces and intelligence services consider important to *tolerate* a certain number of jihadist pages so as to observe both the propaganda itself as well as the ideological evolution of the different organizations and groups. To do so, attention must be paid not only to the contents of the different pages, but also to their technical development, the amount and frequency of Internet users' contributions and the geographical spread.

In order to try to counteract the jihadist presence with propagandist purposes in Internet, including as exposed above, recruitment actions, indoctrination, and incitement to hate and terrorist violence, there are three possible approaches which may be carried out both by governments as well as by the security forces: (1) Promote measures aimed at monitoring and, if necessary, infiltrating in those pages linked in one way or another to the militant Jihadist movement. (2) Using a strategy to reduce the online jihadist offer based mainly on measures of criminal nature. (3) Developing preventive measures in order to reduce the demand, giving special importance to the well-known "counter-narratives" (El Difraoui, 2012: 17-18).

It should be stated that most countries have often adopted a mixed approach, using a combination of the three approaches in discussion depending on the nature of radical content, their creators' identities or servers, and the tools at their disposal. Nevertheless, these countries have given too much importance to those repressive measures based on penal aspects.

Due to the limited time available, I will focus only on the third approach. The measures to reduce the demand have as a priority to diminish the scope of the action of jihadist propaganda by using opposing ideological arguments.

What is intended by it, above all, is to disarm and counteract the jihadist discourse of violence through the presentation of positive world perceptions. The main aim is to carry out a preventive job to avoid radicalization from the very beginning.

With regard to this third area, where long- term measures are important, it must be said that in many European countries there is still a considerable deficit of acting in their performance. Indeed, till now, reactions to the jihadist movement have been directed almost exclusively to the security field.

Consequently, given the evolution nowadays, which clearly shows the birth of an online jihadist subculture becoming at the same time a propagandist war through the Internet, it is obvious that limiting the response to the security sphere is not enough. Thus, the focus of the research should be changed to the social variables of the radical groups and their online appearances, analyzing mainly the religious, rhetoric and visual aspects. As



LOHLKER points out, it is fundamental to understand the ideological Jihadist strategies, so as to develop others to counteract them.⁴

Based on my explanations in the preceding paragraphs, the long-term measures to reduce the demand cover three areas in particular: (1) Firstly, the online jihadist universe must be analyzed to be able to *fight* against it by spreading positive visions of the world. This process is known as “counter-narratives”; (2) Secondly, suitable actors from different disciplines should be included in this process; (3) Finally; appropriate communication and formation strategies as well as the institutions to implement them must be developed and identified. In this way, this positive perception of the world may be spread and may have an adequate reception.

(1) With respect to the first group of measures, the main objective is to offer alternative world perceptions to counteract the interpretative sovereignty of the Jihadist universe. After decades of propagandist material spreading through different physical and virtual channels, jihadists have become the most important authority when interpreting a great number of concepts or Islamic symbols, from specific Qu’ran passages to the meaning of “martyrdom” concept. Thus, to recover the interpretative sovereignty over all these concepts and symbols is now one of the priorities among the set of measures to combat jihadist propaganda throughout Internet.

(2) Secondly, a key element to contain the jihadist ideology on Internet is to achieve the involvement of religious authorities from different areas in the Islamic world. That is why it is extremely important to expand the cooperation of State institutions with sociologists, historians and theologians of Islam of independent character. These are the ones capable of using their solid knowledge of Islamic history and culture so as to unmask the primitive and brutal jihadist discourse, presenting a much richer and spiritual Islamic tradition (El Difraoui/Steinberg, 2012: 25).

(3) Finally, it is necessary to develop and implement a set of suitable communication and formation strategies in order to counteract the irrational thinking coming from the radical Islamic movement, offering this positive vision of the world which has been already mentioned in previous paragraphs. If terrorists may use the new means of communication such as Internet to attract people to their ideology, these means may be used as well by governments seeking to highlight a series of activities that, if necessary, could generate a good reception among that population susceptible to radicalization.

⁴ «Dschihadismus online: Kriegerische Kommunikationsstrategien», *Scilog*, 9 March 2015. Available on Internet: <https://scilog.fwf.ac.at/kultur-gesellschaft/29/dschihadismus-online-kriegerische-kommunikationsstrategien> .



In relation to it, it should be noted that there is a National Group to Fight against Radicalization in Spain, one of its main objectives being to create an alternative message to Jihadism, that is to say, a “counter-narrative”. The Spanish Government, through the Intelligence Centre against Terrorism and Organized Crime (CITCO) intend to produce videos for their later spreading in social networks. They are directed to compensate the propaganda shown by the IS that is giving them such good results so as to recruit new radicals. The idea is to include testimonies, such as those of members of families whose sons or daughters have gone to the first battlefield (frontline) to Syria or Iraq or voices of those who have crossed the line to fight with the IS and, once there, have opened their eyes when facing reality. These voices and images are considered the key elements to articulate the mechanisms to stop the net of recruitment and indoctrination.

4. conclusions

The Jihadist Internet presence has changed quantitatively and qualitatively in recent years. Never before had it been so easy to have access to all kinds of extremist propaganda through the network in general and using new active online social means in particular. This is the result of the so-called Web 2.0. Specially the jihadist audiovisual propaganda has been considerably increased. In this sense, it is worth observing how supporters and followers of the radical Islamic movement are becoming more significant, while terrorist organizations themselves remain in the background.

Moreover, the dissemination of propagandist activities through social networks has allowed important elements of jihadist ideology to have access to wider circles, something not possible till now mainly due to language barriers. This has led to the birth and consolidation of a specific scenario, being even considered an online jihadist subculture, which –even though the adopted legal measures– is still present through various ways of spreading, thus helping decisively to the radicalization of young Muslims, including those living in the western diaspora.

In general, the expansion of the so-called “Jihadi Web 2.0” on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube has contributed to the consolidation of a multimedia interconnection on a global level. Thanks to this increased interactivity, the former distinction between material producers and users of such material has become much more blurred. This encourages people interacting in such forums to consider themselves as part of a broader global jihadist movement and not as mere occasional readers or online spectators. Indeed, the global, open, fast and direct communication through various



channels, as well as the proliferation of multimedia material with a high emotional content, such as particular stories, videos, music and texts create among users the feeling of belonging to an international community or a jihadist (sub)culture, which, through the new media, is presented as equal, almost at the same level and with the same rights as other communities and cultures.

The danger inherent in the binomial "Internet & jihadist propaganda" has encouraged experts from political, police and academic fields to discuss the most effective way with which they can deal with the jihadist presence in Internet.

Having in mind the importance and necessity of adopting criminal measures to fight against the most serious behaviors linked to jihadist terrorism, it is certain that the legal reforms may be completely ineffective when facing suicide terrorists immune to any kind of criminal intimidation. Thus, it is necessary to carry out an integrated approach to prevent violent radicalization of the immigrant young Muslims living in Europe who are the main recipient of the siren calls (mermaid songs) from organizations such as IS or Al Qaeda. This would be a complex long-term plan including the participation of the parts in "conflict", namely (1) State administration in the form of policies of social and labor integration for the immigrants, as well as ambitious preventive programs to inhibit a possible radicalization, and, at the same time, (2) the Muslim community living in the diaspora should be included. It is precisely within this community and especially but not exclusively, from positions of recognized religious authorities, where terrorism which proclaims itself as jihadist should be condemned without palliatives. In this way, processes of radicalization or socialization encouraging a violent behavior, which their promoters justify by defending a strict timeless and above all, irrational interpretation of the Qu'ranic texts and other traditional sources of the Muslim creed, should be inhibited.

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