

Anna Sroka / Fanny Castro-Rial Garrone /
Rubén Darío Torres Kumbrián (eds.)

Radicalism and Terrorism in the 21st Century

Implications for Security



PETER LANG
EDITION

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Radicalism and Terrorism in the 21st Century

STUDIES IN POLITICS, SECURITY AND SOCIETY

Edited by Stanisław Sulowski
Institute of Political Science of the University of Warsaw

VOLUME 9



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Introduction

This book can be described as the result of an ongoing research project within the International Permanent Seminar for Homeland and Foreign Security in the European Union in the era of Globalization. This event has been organized by the Institute of Political Science at the University of Warsaw and the Universitarian Institute for Homeland Security Research (Civil Guard and the Spanish Open University UNED), the Spanish-Polish Network for Scientific Research and the Legal Practice School at the UNED Law School.

Our purpose is to offer the reader the less-known comprehensive and unavoidable keys to understanding the violent radicalization and terrorism that has been labelled by the media, and a considerable portion of the scientific literature, as “Jihadism.” We cannot avoid pointing out that both the Spanish and Polish authors of this book, as well as the institutions which have promoted it, know and accept that the concept of “Jihad” rejects the current terrorist brutality perpetrated in its name, as well as in the name of Islam and Muslims.

According to statistics, approximately thirteen million Muslim citizens currently belong to a European Union Member States. If we take into account the entire European territory, Muslim communities make up a population segment of up to forty four million human beings.

A contextualized and precise reading of statistical data allows us to conclude that the millions of European Muslims follow a normalized social trend that rejects violent radicalization and terrorism of any denomination, and above all, the one committed in the name of Islam, the Jihad and Muslims.

Many among us are determined to eradicate the personalization of the ideology of hatred. To achieve this goal, European political and social leaders should always be assisted by Islamic religious leaders, who preach a moderate interpretation of Islamic scripture, effectively severing the link between the concept of Holy War and terrorism.

We must abandon the commonly used terms, such as “Islamic terrorism” or “jihadist terrorism,” since it is important to avoid the mistake of stigmatizing a religious belief such as the real Islam. We believe that repeated use of those terms could play into the argumentation of jihadist terrorists, thus turning the situation in their favor and creating the counterproductive side effect of reinforcing these groups’ false premise of western hostility toward Islam, which would support the intent of presenting themselves as victims of the western world for their beliefs. The very essence of democratic values in a multicultural society supports and

defends freedom, a freedom which is used perversely with criminal intent, lacking any true religious purpose, promoting a lawless indoctrination leading to terrorist acts, which are perpetrated against the citizens of a democratic society under the shelter of its established liberties.

In his speech before the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, Barack Obama stressed the urgency of specific codification, not as an issue of political correctness, but as a strategic and operational priority. This is considered an unavoidable option, since certain risks derived from an inadequate codification are the wrongful characterization of Islam as a synonym for terrorism, contributing to the spread of islamophobia and as a consequence, the risk of neutral or favorable reactions and attitudes of moderate Muslims toward terrorists.

The use of terms such as Jihad, with the only definition being “holy war”, or Salafism as a synonym for jihadist terrorism, among others, entails accepting and legitimizing the ideologists’ digital narrative supporting violent and terrorist radicalism. Those ideologists preach an exemplary action according to Islam principles, but in truthfulness, they digitally falsify their religion.

This work is encased within this perspective, analyzing the impact of globalization on the creation of new forms of terrorism and radicalization, testing the capacities of States, international organizations and the scientific community.

This research delved into the European scene, where jihadism constantly defies domestic and foreign security strengths, increases actions within the European Union, and strains the already delicate balance between security and fundamental rights or individual liberties.

The narrative resulting from this research emphasizes how the conceptual differentiation between Domestic and Foreign Security regains new and more precise meaning within the context of global strategies designed and implemented by the UN and the European Union. Strategic and operational multilateralism, together with a cross-disciplinary scientific research, the transfer of knowledge and the extrapolation of verified good practices, are imperative priorities in interventions against terrorism and radicalization – above all, in operational areas related to anticipation and prevention.

In the European Union, the risks derived from radicalization and terrorism are attributed to a geopolitical context of conflict, economic crisis, and a surge of ideologies of hatred. Along the Mediterranean, the causes are linked to the Arab spring, the definition of Libya as a failed state, the fragmentation of Syria and Iraq in favor of the expansion of Daesh, and the survival of Al Qaeda and an extensive network of its subsidiaries. In eastern Europe, the Russian annexation of Crimea and the Ukrainian war design a stage of crisis and instability. The terrorist attacks

in Madrid, London, Paris, and Copenhagen confirm that the European Member States constitute the main staging area for global jihadism.

Within the frame of this comprehensive context, Polish and Spanish authors enlist on an analytic immersion hoping to contribute from the respective fields of Law, Political Science, and Social Work to the knowledge and understanding of a pivotal issue of our time.

Fanny Castro-Rial Garrone

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