Thinking about violent radicalism among young people CONNEKT Horizon 2020 project

"Contexts of extremism in Mena and Balkan societies"

Moulay Ismail University (UMI), Meknes- Morocco

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Within the framework of the research project called CONNEKT in the context of "violent extremism" in societies of the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans and Europe that is funded by the European Commission and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed - Barcelona), organized a webinar on the basis of the interactive digital equity in the presidency of Moulay Ismail university on the theme "Reflection on violent radicalism among young people", in which a group of researchers interested in governmental and local institutions, as well as civil society organizations and community development actors who are interested by the phenomenon.

Among the participants in the webinar, Professor Lurdes Vidal of the European Institute in the Mediterranean and North Africa, professor Salwa Zarhouni, a researcher in political science at the Rabat Institute for Social Studies, professor Basu Najat, a researcher at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in Rabat, professor Jihad Belzal on the mediator for the sake of Democracy and human rights, professor Abdel-Wahhab Rafiqi as a researcher in Islamic affairs, and professor Mohamed Gammar for the Moroccan Observatory on Renouncing Terrorism and Extremism.

The webinar began at 2:30 PM with an introduction presented by Professor Khaled Mouna, in which he became acquainted with the interventionists and their research path in the field of combating violent extremism. Moreover, the professor also examined the constraints encountered in organizing the webinar, including the reluctance of a group of official and association institutions to participate in thinking and discussing loudly about the phenomenon despite the sensitivity of the topic and the observations on the level of scarcity of field data related to the phenomenon of extremism and terrorism, which makes us fall in a paradox since it discloses the ambiguous relationship that is established between the researcher and the institutions or the social actor.

After the introduction of professor Khalid Mouna, the right to participate was initially given to Professor Lurdes Vidal, the scientific coordinator of the CONNEKT project in the Arab world and in the Mediterranean region. Thus, she noted the initiative of the Moroccan team participating in the project to hold a seminar on the phenomenon of violent extremism and terrorism. According to professor Lurdes Vidal, it is necessary to share different thinking and discuss more about the phenomenon.

And after Ms Lurdes Vidal introduced the project and its aim in identifying the factors that harm the category of young people between the ages of 12 and 30 years to fall into the arms of extremism. She also emphasized on the areas concerned with the study that are of interest to the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans. Then she finally informed us about the duration of the study which will extend to three Four years and a half. Therefore, Professor Khalid Mouna moved on to clarify the methodology of the study, which is expected to constitute a shift in research paths because it adopts human and social sciences approaches, which are based on field research data in touching reality, as it will work to listen to the actors directly without relying on boring preconceived agendas from the donors to the project. This study will also depend on the comparative approach that guarantees to provide us with the radical differences that exist between the areas under study, thus leaving the paradigms that have dominated for a period of the analysis explaining extremism and terrorism, with the possibility of drawing lessons aimed at limiting the phenomenon of extremism and terrorism, whether at the level of the countries concerned with the study or even in other ones. However, as Ms. Lawrence noted, this study remains open to all interested parties, who can closely track its stages and activities through the available digital platform.

The researcher Professor Salwa Zerhouni, in her intervention about "Youth in the Margins, and the Continuity of Violence in Morocco: The Role of Structural Violence" "Jeunes à la marge et continuum des violences au Maroc: le rôle de la violence structurelle" It takes many forms and appears across different contexts and fields, which makes it a difficult phenomenon to grasp which poses a problem at the level of the study method. Therefore, it carries on the researcher to use the concept of "continuum" of violence, which crystallized in 2004 with Philippe Bourgois and Scheper-Hughes ... as a concept that does not recognize the hierarchy of violence, that is, as a linear process that moves from one domain to another, allowing to reveal the interplay between the various manifestations of violence, its forms, areas, effects, intersections and growth in an interchangeable way, taking into account the socio-cultural violence dimensions in the analysis.

On the other hand, the concept can shed light on the less obvious structural violence, which also makes young people a victim of it rather than talking about it as an actor in it. Instead of considering violence as a dangerous act, the concept becomes normalised and socially accepted within the sphere of the family, the school, and the society in general.

Regarding the study carried out by the researcher with a group of multidisciplinary researchers during 2015, 2016 and 2017 on the topic of youth and structural violence, the researcher raised the methodological difficulties that obstruct the study of this age group, considering that it is a

heterogeneous social group at the level of opinions, behaviours, attitudes and aspirations, depending on the differences that exist between young people at the educational, economic level or at the urban or rural areas from which they descend, and all of them are variables that are reflected in the representations of young people as well as the capabilities available to them, and who must take into account these differences in order to not get wrong generalizations.

As defined by Johan Galtung, the structural violence is every form of political and economic coercion that pressurize the individual's potential, and which are related to unequal access to education, health, justice, etc. resources, on the grounds that it is a type of violence produced by state institutions with an exclusionary political system or due to social practices and norms that may also be exclusionary.

This continuation of violence among young people is evident through the interrogations that targeted this social segment about its representations of violent practices within the family, school and community spheres. The researcher concluded that this structural violence affecting young people is mainly due to the family and to the communication problems faced with fathers, in terms of the absence of individual freedom and the difference in opinions about religion, which often leads to conflict and verbal violence. However, this violence, under religious and social justifications, is a tolerant project, especially in childhood, with the evidence that young people understand this violence and justify it in turn. Thus, this violence becomes the means through which parents get rid of the daily economic and marginal violence that they are entrenched underneath.

The high school and university, in turn, have re-produced this violence - the researcher adds - in terms of the approved educational system that ended up producing social exclusion instead of developing cognitive abilities and competencies to aid social integration, which appears in the ideological struggle between the student factions, which hurts most cases and lead to physical violence, and in cases of school and university interruption and waste, which explains the extremism trends of young people as one of the results of the state's failure in the educational field and the integration of young people into social life, In addition to the structural violence of the state marked by the "Makhzen", which remains true to its old approach of restricting the freedoms of opinion, thought and action, exposing the broad groups of society to exclusion, whether at the economic and social level, as well as discrimination at the ethnic and sexual levels.

With regard to the intervention of the researcher specializing in Islamic affairs, Muhammad Abdel-Wahhab Rafiki, chose to talk about the religious factor that feeds extremism among young people,

considering that the religious interpretation of the texts that remained true to the interpretations established by ancient jurists in certain social and political contexts could no longer be able to keep pace with the spirit of the times, which made it a motivation to nurture extremism among youth.

Even if the economic, social and political factors were to some extent one of the main factors driving the embrace of extremist ideology, especially the democratic setbacks in Arab countries and the sense of civilizational defeat that raised the shares of ISIS, their influence remains limited, and they are not the main harmful dimension of extremism. This explanation finds its justification - according to what our colleague noted - based on his case, that most of the young people who were drifted into extremist lived in socially comfortable conditions if some of them did not come from affluent families such as the case of "Fatiha Al-Majati", which our colleague described in one of the famous profiles in the world of extremism and terrorism She was distinguished in her studies, and was fluent in many languages, in addition to the fact that she was received and nominated by the king of the country now when he was the crown prince among the outstanding students. Despite this comfortable position that Fatiha Al-Majati was in at all levels, she preferred to join ISIS which assigned one of the leadership responsibilities to her.

This led the researcher Rafiki to emphasize on the religious dimension as a fundamental factor, which constitutes the commonality that unites all extremists in Morocco and outside of it, despite the different contexts that exists. These young people who join extremist organizations find themselves imbued with the interpretations of these groups theorists in downloading the texts in the way they see correct, in which they urge martyrdom as a means of atonement for all sins and sins, no matter how great, and the narrations - according to the researcher - which are highly charged with the topic of sex, and what he has prepared God is the martyr of Houris in Heaven as a reward for him. It finds a place for it in the sexual repression that young people suffer from and which pushes them to extremism.

The reason for this extremism in general - according to the researcher - is related to the Islamic mind, Islamic jurisprudence and Islamic heritage, which remained attached to texts produced in a political and historical context that no longer exist with the context of the modern state, international law, the Qatari state, and international relations in their modern form. The interpretations that the texts were subjected to by the terrorist organizations were cut from their political and historical context, and were reduced to a different reality that excluded the conditions around which the interpretations of the ancient jurists were produced, such as the imperial expansion that was not known by the Islamic state alone, but by all the empires at that time.

And this is what was produced around its jurisprudence, such as the house of Islam and the house of war and the division of people according to their religious affiliations into a Muslim and to my blood into a warrior, to institutes and to trustees, and what it requires of jihad and imposing tribute on non-Muslims. It is the jurisprudence that still exists to this day, and which is taught even in universities specialized in Islamic studies, and every conversation about its historicity is accused of taking the text out of its sanctity and exposing its owner to atonement.

The researcher concludes his call to extract the texts and teachings of the Prophet's Sunnah from the problem in which they are placed, which advocates extremism exploitation to deceive the youth and justify their hostile practices, by re-reading them in light of the context of the age and its variables and bypassing the logic of interpretations related to the apparent ready texts and valid for every time and place.

After the first session, which culminated in a thorough discussion by both Professor Muhammad Fadel and doctoral student Amina Al-Rifai, the move to the second session was led by Professor Abdul-Wahab Al-Najari.

After the presentation on introducing the interveners, the floor as given at the beginning to Professor Bassu Najat, who addressed the topic of radicalization among girls, "La radicalisation des filles: des trajectoires individuelles", as she initially reported the researcher through her experience in framing youth in the Ministry of Youth and Sports or as a co-researcher In research programs for youth, there is a retreat for young people of both sexes in joining the role of youth compared to the situation they were in in the past, despite the activities that meet the needs of this group, which is what the researcher refers to the interest of young people today in what is fast and ready, such as activities and programs provided by social media.

Based on a field research project conducted by the researcher on the level of prison administration and integration between 2010 and 2016, and based on the available statistics, which showed the presence of 755 prisoners against the background of extremism and terrorism in 2010, the number rose to 1038 in 2016, which is the year that defined 12 women imprisoned for the same reasons. The statistics also showed the marital status of these prisoners, as well as their educational level.

According to the researcher, the saturation of women with the exclusionary ideology of the "ISIS" organization is due to the spread of the media that accompanied the ISIS phenomenon, which

developed a new vision for women's jihad that was not applied in previous extremist organizations, including Al-Qaeda, where the recognition of female human potentials for the purpose of exploiting them both sexually and in Jihad. Which will lead to the massive enrolment of women to this organization and the satisfaction of men's sexual pride.

In mapping out the life path of these women, the researcher examined several factors that led them to extremism, among them cases where their affiliation with extremist groups was linked to a personal factor, such as a marriage project, a love relationship, or revenge against a family and so on.

These women generally suffer from a sense of non-existence and belonging, which is due to the state of social fragility, and to family problems, so that the family is no longer a safe embrace for some of them as much as it has become a source of violence, which makes them fall into the embrace of groups that achieve this belonging for them and compensation for family problems as well as their ambition to improve their economic and social status.

As an example of these cases, in which women are exposed to violence that may harm them to extremism, the researcher recounts the case of a Moroccan girl who lives in France and who was subjected to violence in another form by her parents who were Salafists, who prevented her from entering school, and was only limited to her memorization of the Qur'an. More than that, they refused to let her leave the house for any purpose except in the case of the family's departure from one neighborhood to another or from one city to another, as the latter continued to move from one place to another, Moreover, the father used to ask his children to change their names so that they would not be known, and the children did not realize the secret about that except when they grew up to know that the matter was due to security reasons, as the father used to be careful not to discover his identity. However, when the girl discovered the outside world after she was over twelve years old, she decided to escape from her family's home and realize her presence in a different way.

However, the path taken by the extremist youth of both sexes - as the researcher expressed - passes through gradual transitions, as defined by the American psychologist John Morgan, which begins with the exploration of extremist ideology and then moves to the process of engagement, then the process of legitimization, then reaching the top of the pyramid, to move to action.

The intervention of Professor Mohamed Gammar, Head of the Moroccan Observatory against Terrorism and Extremism, entitled "Any civilian national strategy to combat extremism", began with the definition of the observatory and its objectives, as well as its action plans, which are fully

informed by the reports of the United Nations General Assembly, especially in the aspect related to developing a strategy to combat extremism and an action plan to prevent violent extremism.

Among the plans of this strategy, and as the report issued by the United Nations General Assembly at its seventieth session made clear, is to deprive extremist groups of continuous tacit support for their sympathizers, especially among the youth, and to immunize them from their slips, by expanding the participation of association institutions in the process of sensitizing groups to regressive Terrorist thoughts.

On this basis, the researcher believes that restoring trust between official and association institutions has become an urgent necessity for cooperation in combating violent extremism and terrorism, especially since civil associations are the first interface close to the population, direct interlocutors with them, and a safety valve against all forms of extremism. On this basis - as the researcher affirms - the multi-input and output strategy to confront terrorism must be based on family-centered counseling programs, as stipulated in the United Nations report, with a focus on individuals who have been convicted of criminal acts related to violent extremism, along with providing medical and psychological support, social and legal services for victims of violent extremism, including victims of crimes.

In an effort to extend its field experience in besieging extremism and terrorism, the observatory seeks - as its head explains - to find effective field formulas for collective action, including:

• Working on network with civil society associations, whether cultural, educational, professional or otherwise, in setting up programs to confront extremism and terrorism in partnership with the state, provided that they also work to address the ongoing human rights violations and social exclusion, which may be among the factors that encourage Extremism.

• State support for civil society as a key partner in combating extremism and terrorism.

• Working on investing in technological and modern social media to encourage communication with young people, and to confront, through these means, also everything that is rapidly spreading the culture of hatred and the rejection of hatred and violence and so on.

• Giving young people an opportunity to contribute to local and national decision-making, whether at the association or political level, which makes them feel responsible for change and strengthens their positions without isolation or exclusion, which may be justifications for extremism.

• Work to establish regional and national councils for youth, to allow them to participate in the public political debate, which enhances their confidence in official institutions, restores confidence in and interest in political work, and promotes political participation rather than reluctance.

The researcher, Jihad Belghazal, addressing on behalf of the Mediator for Democracy and Human Rights Association, which has accumulated experience in working on the files of some detainees against the background of terrorism and contributing to the debate about the extent to which human rights are respected, whether through the trial of detainees or during the conditions of detention, focused in her intervention on hate speech and violent extremism through media stands and social media, based on the research that the researcher worked on, which focused on the levels and modalities of hate speech and incitement to violence and terrorism in the "ISIS" organization,
By studying the model of the official magazine of the Islamic State, "Dabiq", as a media body that carries the discourse of this organization, the first issue of which was published in Ramadan 1435 corresponding to July 2014. This magazine is published in English and is translated into other languages, and is promoted through social media, especially Facebook and Twitter.

The research conclusions came according to three basic systemic pillars:
-The framed format for the media message
- The framed format for the organizing pillar
- The orderly pattern of the levels of reception

Regarding the first pillar represented in the framing of the media message, he believes that the speech of violence, hatred and terrorism appears through the following determinants:

- The continuous endeavor to establish the idea of eradication, discrimination, hatred, erasure and demolition of the various religions, ideologies and styles of government.

-Striving to mold and standardize the consciousness of the recipient by creating an ideological mass of a crowd of fused attitudes, trends and behaviors around the regressive ideology of "ISIS" based on the so-called Islamic caliphate and rule by Sharia.

- The recurrence of the idea of the universality of the organization in an attempt to consolidate it by exposing the diversity of nationalities to its fighters.

-The desire for the fusion of sub-national, ethnic, and geographical identities within a single identity, which is the Islamic Caliphate State, in full exploitation of social media.

- Incitement to hatred, violence and terrorism through verbal violence that is embodied by stigmatizing the other who is different from the same organization and describing it with negative descriptions, as it makes religious belief a criterion for classification, which is defined for example in describing kings, presidents, personalities and officials as tyrants, apostates, Western media, The Crusaders, the Druze Shiites, the Houthis, the Rafidah, etc.

Mobilizing supporters from all over the world by focusing on the grievance that Muslims suffer from the ruling regimes in their countries with what the organization calls the Crusader forces.

As for the focus of the pattern framing the pillar of the organization, women and children formed one of the pillars of the organization that are more fragile within the structure of the organization, which makes them direct victims of the discourse of discrimination, and the consequent permissibility, enslavement, exploitation and continuous waste of their dignity.
-Consolidating the inferiority of women within the organization by withholding their pictures in the pictures accompanying the magazine's materials.
-Limiting their role in marriage (childbearing and obedience to the ruler).
-Legalization of the enslavement and captivity of Zaydi women.
-It is permissible to recruit children and deny them the right to childhood and schooling, to mobilize them in conflicts and battles, and to standardize their thinking with the organization's beliefs against international norms and laws that take into account children.
The third pillar related to the organized format of the reception level was defined in two levels:

- The direct reception left by the magazine from great reactions in view of the professionalism of the shape and the graphic design of its sixteen (16) issues, which media professionals have likened to the American magazine "New York Times", which raises a question about the source of funding and the ability of "ISIS" to launch a media strategy. It goes beyond the natural capabilities of an extremist organization, comparable to the media strategies of existing organizations.

However, professionalism at the level of form will be matched by confusion at the level of numbers, especially the last ones, which is due to the splits and defeats that ISIS will experience.

- On the level of supportive reception, the first four issues were presented on the international "Amazon" website for sale, which raises the accountability of influential websites regarding their responsibility to display content that perpetuates hate speech and incites violence and terrorism. As for the satirical reception of this speech on the website level, we find a group of blogs that mock the ideology of this organization, including the alternative blog "Dabiq", which was launched by the Syrian blogger "Rasha Abbas" to respond to violence and sexuality in the organization's discourse. There are also other websites that constitute reactions about the ISIS discourse as an entry point to protect the pioneers of social communication from the youth from this regressive thought.

The researcher concludes by arguing that there is an absence of a single and agreed-upon definition of terrorism and extremism. Therefore, there is an urgent need to adhere to the national strategy for the prevention of the phenomenon of violent extremism, terrorism and hatred, which civil society must engage in, with full responsibility. Hence, the state must adhere to all human rights guarantees to refer without prejudice to the freedom of individuals and full respect of human rights, given that such violations in turn lead to terrorism and fuel extremism and the radicalism that lead to it.

These interventions were directly followed by a discussion and some questions that were answered by the interventionist professors and the intervening professors, so that the webinar was concluded around six o'clock in the evening.