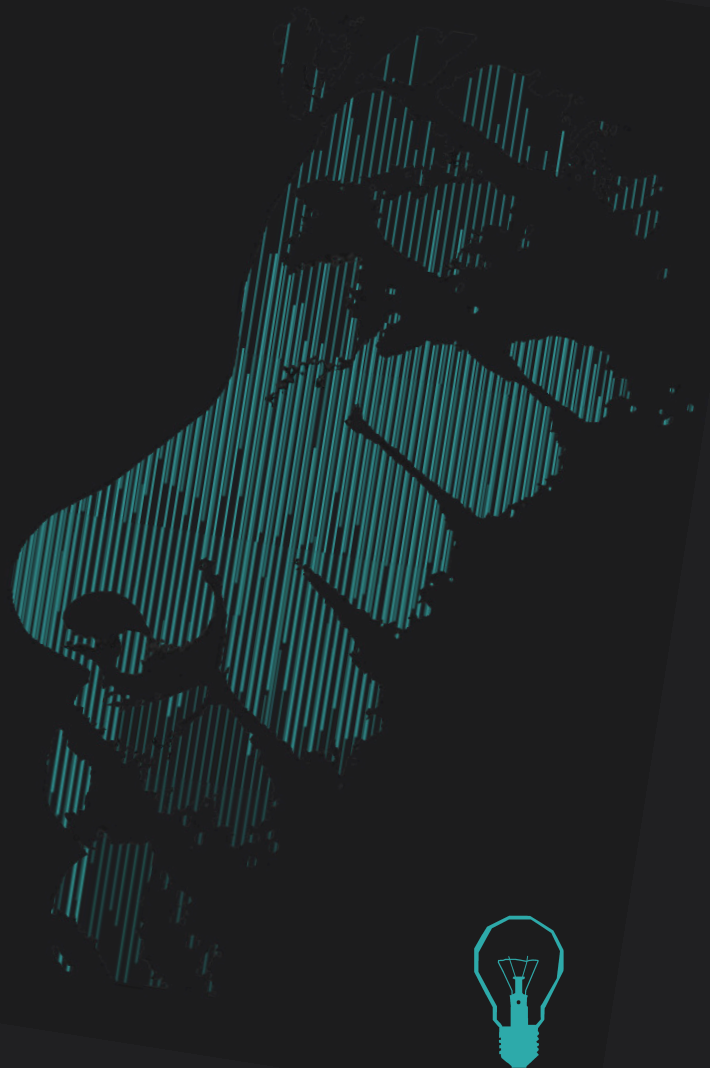


What Lessons Can Be Learned From Mohamed Merah's Radicalisation?

Nicolò Scremin



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NextGen 5.0 is a pioneering non-profit, independent, and virtual think tank committed to inspiring and empowering the next generation of peace and security leaders in order to build a more secure and prosperous world.

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INTRODUCTION

After more than fifteen years without experiencing Islamist terrorist attacks on its soil, in March 2012 France suffered a wave of violent acts that shocked the whole country. The person responsible for shaking the nation was Mohamed Merah, a 23 year-old Frenchman of Algerian descent with a criminal history. His terror-spree began on 11 March when he shot dead a French-Muslim paratrooper in Toulouse. Four days later, he killed two more French soldiers of North African origin in Montauban. Before being killed by security forces after a 32-hour siege, he also brutally murdered a rabbi and three children at a Jewish school in Toulouse.¹ As these killings were symptomatic of issues of wider identity crisis, the matter of homegrown radicalisation among young French Muslims rapidly re-emerged within the country's political debate. By using Wiktorowitz's four stages model as the main tool of analysis, this analysis seeks to draw what lessons can be learned from Merah's case of violent radicalisation. In doing so, this paper explores and supports the belief that Merah's radicalisation was a process nurtured by the familial milieu in which he grew up, was accelerated in prison, and was successfully enabled during his travels abroad. As such, the first part of the investigation assesses the impact that incarceration had on Merah's turning to neojihadism, examining issues of identity crises and how micro, macro, and meso factors fostered his "cognitive opening". The second section investigates his rediscovering of Islam and his search for "real brothers", while the third part ponders over his internalisation of jihadist ideology.

Before proceeding, it is paramount to make a methodological clarification. As previously mentioned, this analysis uses the model designed by Wiktorowicz as a tool to explore Merah's radicalisation

¹ Associated Press. "Toulouse shootings: a timeline of events." *The Guardian*, 22 March 2012.

process.² The model in question is composed of four stages. In the first phase, named “cognitive opening”, the individual becomes more receptive towards new beliefs and ideas, while in second step, “religious seeking”, he/she applies meaning to his/her newfound worldview through religious frameworks. During the third stage, “frame alignment”, the individual accepts and internalises radical ideologies, which suddenly “make sense”. In the last phase, “socialisation and joining”, the individual finally embraces the new ideology.³ In regard to the specific case of Merah, however, it is necessary to point out that these four stages do not seem to be clearly definite, for they rather tend to overlap. Bearing this caveat in mind, Wikotorowitz’s model of radicalisation remains the most appropriate among all existing models featured in the literature, for it provides a solid grounds to determine Merah’s radicalisation trajectory.

MOHAMED MERAH’S COGNITIVE OPENING

The first step in explaining Merah’s trajectory towards violence begins from the factors that shaped his cognitive opening. A cognitive opening is indeed a basic prerequisite for adopting an extremist belief system. As Wikotorowitz points out, “cognitive opening” can be described as a process by which a person becomes more receptive to radical ideas and extreme visions while questioning the previously held beliefs.⁴ This process, however, does not occur in a vacuum, but it is the result of an identity crisis of some sort, a traumatic personal experience or, as the case of Merah suggests, a combination of all factors. In fact, the case of Mohamed shows that prison, identity crisis, and familial milieu were all instrumental elements in shaping his radical trajectory and triggering his cognitive opening.

² Although a consensus on the definition of radicalisation has proven to be an arduous task, for the purpose of the present analysis, radicalisation has been defined as the gradual process by which Merah adopted a Jihadi-Salafi ideology, which led him to justify and use violence as a method to achieve particular ideological goals.

³ King, Michael, and Donald M. Taylor. “The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A Review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, n. 4 (2011): 605-606.

⁴ Wiktorowicz, Quintan. *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West*. Blue Ridge Summit: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005, 20-24, 85-127.

To begin with, as it emerges in his biography, Merah was not new to prison. He began his criminal career when he was still a minor, for he was arrested on charges of vandalism in 2005. Over the course of the following two years, he was detained another 18 times for multiple misdemeanours. And in 2007 he was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment for a violent theft with no opportunity of early release.⁵ According to Merah's older brother Abdelghani, it was precisely during this period that Mohamed came under the influence of Salafist actors who turned him from a petty criminal to a neojihadist.⁶

Prison's pivotal role in Merah's radicalisation process is hardly astonishing. A growing body of evidence suggests that prisons have become a breeding ground for radicalisation over the years.⁷ Particularly, prisons are "places of vulnerability" where inmates are more likely to explore new and, at times, even radical beliefs.⁸ According to Peter Neumann, traumas derived from incarceration might trigger individual, existential questions to which religion may often provide answers.⁹ By the same token, it is possible that Jihadi-Salafi ideology offered answers to Merah's already problematic personality. As Abdelghani reports, his brother was in terrible need of recognition,¹⁰ suffering from a profound existential crisis that led him to attempt suicide on Christmas Day 2008.¹¹ Thus, it is not difficult to believe that Mohamed, while searching for the meaning of his existence, found in Salafism his new *raison d'être*.

⁵ Harriet Alexander, and Fiona Govan, "Toulouse shootings: the making of a French jihadi killer with a double life," *The Telegraph*, March 17, 2012.

⁶ Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, "Mohamed Merah: From Petty Criminal to Neojihadist," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 14, no. 2 (2013): 309-312.

⁷ Vidino, Lorenzo, Francesco Marone, e Eva Entenmann. *Fear Thy Neighbor: Radicalization and Jihadist Attacks in the West*. Report, Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI), Milano: Ledizioni LediPublishing, 2017.

⁸ Neumann, Peter. *Joining al-Qaeda: Jihadist Recruitment in Europe*. International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2009, 26.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, "Mohamed Merah", 312.

¹¹ Harriet Alexander, and Fiona Govan, "Toulouse shootings"

The experience of incarceration also fuelled Merah's anti-French sentiment. As his lawyer Christian Etelin declared, Mohamed became convinced of the injustice of the system after being sentenced. As he held grudges against France,¹² the rigidity of the prison system furthered amplified Merah's resentment, likely accelerating his turn to Salafism. As pointed out by Khosrokhavar, prisons' strict rules concerning Islamic icons and rituals modelled after principles of secularism (*laïcité*)¹³ often hamper free expression of Muslim identity.¹⁴ As a result, unable to fully experience their faith, a number of frustrated inmates might adopt extremist beliefs right behind bars.¹⁵¹⁶ In this context, there is little doubt that prison had a major in Merah's radicalisation process and cognitive opening.

In addition to prison, identity crisis was another instrumental tool in determining Merah's path towards violence. But in order to better grasp the nature of his personal discomfort, it is paramount to touch upon those micro, macro, and meso factors¹⁷ that favoured Merah's cognitive opening while in prison.

To start with, Merah was a troubled young man consumed by visceral crises linked to his identity. Unlike his older brothers Abdelghani and Abdelkader, who were both born in Algeria, Mohamed was born in Toulouse and raised in Les Izards, a socio-economically disadvantaged suburb with a predominant gypsy community.¹⁸ As many other

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Laïcité* (state secularism) is a core concept in the French constitution.

¹⁴ Farhad Khosrokhavar, "Radicalization in Prison: The French Case," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 14, no. 2 (2013): 288-289.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ For instance, a study from ISPI on 51 Jihadist attacks in the West from 2014 to 2017, shows that 34% of the perpetrators (22/65) served time in prison. (Lorenzo Vidino, Francesco Marone and Eva Entenmann, *Fear Thy Neighbor*).

¹⁷ To clarify, "micro factors" are those factors such as identity problems, marginalisation and humiliation that directly affected Merah. "Meso factors" are contextual factors related to the familial milieu he grew up. Finally, "macro factors" includes those French domestic policies that had an impact on his radicalisation process.

¹⁸ Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, "Mohamed Merah", 308.

alienated second-generation French Muslims trapped between two cultures, Merah suffered from a double sense of non-belonging.¹⁹ On one hand, he had become “Frenchified” to the extent of no longer feeling part of the Algerian community. On the other hand, he experienced various forms of discrimination, grievances, and lack of acceptance that led him to disconnect with French society. During prison, therefore, Merah found in Salafism the remedy to his identity crisis. But even his release from jail did not cease his sense of marginalisation, for Merah even attempted to join the Foreign Legion only to be rejected on account of his criminal record.²⁰ To his lawyer Etelin, this event in particular, “even more than prison, made him feel that he would definitely never have a place in French society”.²¹

More generally, macro factors were too responsible for facilitating Merah’s cognitive opening. For instance, the stigmatisation of Muslim community in French society as well as the rigorous application of the principle of *laïcité* by French government fueled Merah’s resentment against his native country. Abdelghani refers that Mohamed was particularly sensitive to public debates regarding street prayers, the matters of the wearing of the *burqa* and the *hijab*, and anti-Muslim discourses of Marine Le Pen infuriated him.²² Particularly, the enforcement of restrictive policies in the disguise of secularism such the *Niqab* Ban strengthened his radical worldview and accelerated his commitment to violent action. According to Merah, one of the reasons why he carried out the attacks was indeed to punish France for the ban on full-face veils.²³ Furthermore, Mohamed was also affected by France’s preventive counter-terrorism measures, for he was occasionally subjected to thorough questioning and interrogation by security services.²⁴

¹⁹ Dalgaard-Nielsen, Anja. “Violent Radicalization in Europe: What We Know and What We Do Not Know.” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, n. 9 (2010): 800.

²⁰ Harriet Alexander, and Fiona Govan, “Toulouse shootings”.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, “Mohamed Merah”, 317.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Suraj Lakhani “Mohammed Merah - Lone Wolf or Al-Qa’ida Operative?,” *RUSI Commentary*, March 23, 2012.

At the meso level, Merah's cognitive opening was also facilitated by a series of traumatic experiences that marked his childhood. From an early age, Merah was exposed to daily physical abuse by his father. At the age of five his parents divorced and three years later he was provisionally placed in State care due to his mother's neglect.²⁵ According to Abdelghani, Mohamed perceived both events as parental abandonment and expressed his frustration through violence.²⁶ In the following years, he withdrew from school and began living off the proceeds of mendicancy and pilferage.²⁷ Surprisingly, Merah's mother, Zoulikha Aziri, did not condemn the numerous misconducts committed by her son, but rather justified him.²⁸

Finally, the familial milieu in which Merah grew up had a significant impact on his radicalisation process too. His father was sentenced to 5 years in prison for drug-trafficking while Mohamed's brother Abdelkader was linked to various neojihadist networks.²⁹³⁰ Likewise, his sister Souad was arrested by French authorities in 2014 for supporting terrorism.³¹ The siblings also arranged for Zoulikha to marry the father of Sabri ESSID, a member of the neojihadist network called the "Toulouse group" who was captured in Syria in 2006 while running an al Qaeda safe house for militants en route to Iraq.³² Particularly, as the following sections will show, Abdelkader and Souad appear to have played an important role in transmitting to Mohamed a radical ideology, actively encouraging him to perpetrate the terrorist attacks.

²⁵ Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, "Mohamed Merah", 309.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Furthermore, many Algerian relatives of Merah were active supporters of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS); an Algerian groups whose objective was to turn the country into an Islamic state ruled by sharia law. Some of them were also members of the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria (GIA). (*Ibid.*)

³¹ Joseph Strich, "Merah Affair: Sister and Mother of Islamist Terrorist Arrested," *The Jerusalem Post*, April 17, 2014.

³² Harriet Alexander, and Fiona Govan, "Toulouse shootings".

Within this picture, it may therefore be argued that the search for identity and existential meaning combined with a series of traumatic experiences, grievances and a familial enabling environment were the pre-cognitive conditions that prompted in Merah a receptiveness towards more radical worldviews. And imprisonment was the trigger event that definitively fostered his cognitive opening towards Salafism.

FROM “RELIGIOUS REDISCOVERING” TO “FRAME ALIGNMENT”

As previously discussed, Merah’s delinquent behaviour was given new meaning by Jihadi-Salafism while incarcerated. Particularly, radical Islam provided him with a moral code, a new rhetoric and an identity.³³ According to Wikotorowitz, those individuals whose identities are in part tied to religion are indeed more likely to search for religious meaning to respond to their cognitive openings and interpret and resolve their discontent.³⁴ Yet, in the specific case of Merah, it is more proper to introduce the term “religious rediscovering” rather than “religious seeking”. As Souad notes, during his period in jail, Mohamed “rediscovered Islam... having largely ignored his family faith as a young man”.³⁵

Merah was exposed to an atmosphere of hatred, violence and extremism from a young age. His father allegedly turned to Islamism in 1992, while his sister Souad explicitly stated that she would one day carry out a suicide bombing attack in Toulouse.³⁶ Further, anti-Semitism was normalised in Merah’s family, and this could partly explain why he decided to attack a Jewish school. When he was still a child, he was taught that, “Arabs are born to hate the Jews”. On another occasion, his uncle told him that, “Jews should die to the last”.³⁷ Moreover, when Mohamed was five, Abdelkader stabbed seven times Abdelghani for his

³³ Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, “Mohamed Merah”, 312.

³⁴ Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 26.

³⁵ Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, “Mohamed Merah”, 312.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

refusal to break up with a girl with Jewish ancestry.³⁸ Early experiences in Algeria also influenced Merah's acceptance of violence,³⁹ as he used to visit relatives during the Algerian civil war, when executions and beheadings were a daily occurrence.⁴⁰ Given his upbringing and childhood, it is easy to understand that Salafism “gathered a bomb already wired to explode”.⁴¹

In line with all the above, it can be argued that Merah's familial milieu was a crucial channel for the transmission of a radical ideology.⁴² Kinship and pre-existing social ties are indeed critical factors that may favour radicalisation and recruitment into extremist groups.⁴³ In this direction, Abdelkader and Souad seem to have been the actors who had the major impact on Mohamed's involvement with neojihadism. Particularly, as claimed by a family friend, Abdelkader initially indoctrinated his sister Souad, which in turn began to proselytise their mother, then both sibling radicalised Mohamed.⁴⁴

After his release from prison, Mohamed openly proclaimed his fascination for Jihadi-Salafi ideology. Additionally, he began to develop a sense of belonging to wider Muslim *ummah*⁴⁵, voicing his sense of “moral outrage” caused by oppression of Muslims by non-Muslims around the world. According to Abdelghani, Mohamed began to perceive his criminal behaviour as a way to please Allah by punishing the infidels responsible for the suffering of Muslims.⁴⁶ He became thoroughly convinced that the Muslim brothers would kill all Jewish people in the world and execute all French soldiers in order to create a

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Lee, Benjamin, and Kim Knott. *Ideological Transmission I: Family*. Report, The Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST), 2017, 1-58.

⁴³ Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 26.

⁴⁴ Harriet Alexander, and Fiona Govan, “Toulouse shootings”.

⁴⁵ Islamic community of believers whose aim is to unite all Muslim of the world by doing *Jihad* “holy struggle” and *da'wa* “propaganda”. (Eitan Azani, *Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 23).

⁴⁶ Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, “Mohamed Merah”.

Muslim state in France.⁴⁷ Finally, a family friend recalls that Merah used to cheer and repeat “God is with us” every time a French soldier was reported dead.⁴⁸

This change of attitude marks the transition between the second and third stages of Wikotorowitz’s model. During the “frame alignment”, there is indeed a convergence between the view of the individual and the radical ideology propagated by a certain group.⁴⁹⁵⁰ Particularly, Wikotorowitz points out that Islamist militant movements aim to attract the vast majority of Muslims by framing their messages in broad terms - for example, by raising awareness about the oppression of Muslims worldwide and claiming that the *ummah* is under attack by the *kuffār* (infidels) and the Crusaders.⁵¹ Thus, they call every Muslim to conduct a defensive *jihad* against Western enemies. Within this framework, it is not surprising that Merah stated he targeted French soldiers and Jewish people in revenge for French military involvement abroad and for the suffering of Palestinians.⁵²

Moreover, in the three years before the attacks, Merah travelled extensively throughout North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia⁵³ in search of the “real brothers and to learn the real Islam”.⁵⁴ According to Neumann, it is not uncommon that once released from prison some individuals try to join Islamist militant movements

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Peter Neuman, *Joining al-Qaeda*. 46.

⁵⁰ As regards the case of Merah, it is important to highlight that, at least at this stage, the view of Mohamed did not converge with a specific movement's grand narrative, but rather with a broader Jihadi-Salafi ideology.

⁵¹ Wiktorowicz, Quintan. *Joining the Cause: Al Muhajiroun and Radical Islam*. Research Paper, Department of International Studies, Rhodes College, 2004.

⁵² Harriet Alexander, and Fiona Govan, “Toulouse shootings”.

⁵³ According to the French authorities, between 2009 and 2011, Merah visited Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. (Siegel, Pascale C. “French Counterterrorism Policy in the Wake of Mohammed Merah’s Attack.” *CTC Sentinel* 5, n. 4 (2012): 5-8.)

⁵⁴ Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, “Mohamed Merah”, 314.

establishing personal links or through facilitators.⁵⁵ Particularly, Merah's siblings appear to have been instrumental in facilitating his foreign journeys. In 2011 Souad was indeed subjected to thorough questioning for having links to Salafists. In the same year, a joint investigation between France and Belgium revealed that Abdelkader was connected to a Brussels-based jihadist network. According to the authorities, this network may have facilitated the integration of European militants into jihadist groups in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region.⁵⁶ Additionally, Mohamed spent some time with Abdelkader in Cairo.⁵⁷ This experience was particularly significant for him, for it allowed him to develop international connections with jihadists.⁵⁸

SOCIALISATION AND JOINING

Once frame alignment is achieved, in whole or in part, the fourth and last stage of radicalisation can take place. During “socialisation and joining”, Wiktorowicz argues that the individual finally internalises the group's radical ideology through an assortment of micromobilisation contexts such lessons, one-on-one interactions and independent reading, and then he formally joins the group.⁵⁹ In the months following his release from prison, Merah attended secret religious classes that reinforced his radical worldviews.⁶⁰ He also used to meet with a French Syrian Salafist who was linked with his stepbrother Sabri Essid.⁶¹ Moreover, Mohamed spent significant amounts of time browsing on Jihadist websites and participating in jihadist-themed forums.⁶² He was also an active user of Twitter and YouTube, not to mention the fact he

⁵⁵ Peter Neuman, *Joining al-Qaeda*, 26.

⁵⁶ Cruickshank, Paul, and Tim Lister. “How did Mohammed Merah become a jihadist?.” *CNN*, 26 March 2012.

⁵⁷ At that time, Abdelkader was studying at a Koranic school.

⁵⁸ Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, “Mohamed Merah.”

⁵⁹ Wiktorowicz, Quintan. *Joining the Cause*, 10.

⁶⁰ Virginie Andre, and Shandon Harris-Hogan, “Mohamed Merah,” 314.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

used to watch a lot of violent jihadist videos online.⁶³ According to Andre and Hogan, watching such material “would likely have increased his desensitisation to violence while simultaneously reinforcing his ideological worldview”.⁶⁴

Furthermore, in 2010 Merah spent two months in Waziristan, a tribal area of Pakistan. According to Bernard Squarcini,⁶⁵ during this period Merah claimed to have been trained by an instructor of Al Qaeda. He also stated that the “brothers in Pakistan” supplied him with approximately 20,000 euros for his attacks.⁶⁶ However, it remains unclear whether or not Mohamed was acting under instruction from Al Qaeda or affiliated groups. Whilst Merah's modus operandi fits with Al Qaeda's modern strategy, his profile appears to fall into the category of the “lone attackers” designed by Pantucci. A lone attacker is indeed an individual imbued with radical ideology who operates alone, but has contact with extremists and is actively involved in networks that provide him with the material and logistic support necessary to carry out the attack.⁶⁷ Particularly, Mohamed was in contact with Moez Garsallaoui, amir of the central Asian terrorist group Jund al Khilafah (JaK).⁶⁸ Additionally, he and his brother were also linked to the “Toulouse group”, and presumably to Forsane Alizza;⁶⁹ a pro-al Qaeda French group that was outlawed in 2012 for “encouraging French citizens to travel to Afghanistan to fight jihad”.⁷⁰

A final point on Merah's siblings involvement is important. Not only did Abdelkader and Souad fiercely encourage Mohamed to commit the terrorist attacks, but they also provided him with material and logistical

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ He was the head of the France's domestic security service (DRCI) until 2012.

⁶⁶ Cruickshank, Paul, and Tim Lister. “How did Mohammed Merah become a jihadist?”

⁶⁷ Pantucci, Raffaello. *A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists*. Research Paper, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), 2011, 29-30.

⁶⁸ Cruickshank, Paul, and Tim Lister. “How did Mohammed Merah become a jihadist?”

⁶⁹ Merah's last tweets were signed “Mohamed Merah-Forsane Alizza”.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

support. Specifically, in the months before the attacks, his sister supplied him with money, mobile phones and internet addresses, while Abdelkader helped him steal the scooter he used in the first two drive-by shootings.⁷¹ Moreover, Abdelkader and Mohamed dined together the night before the third attack.⁷² This demonstrates, once again, the crucial impact that Mohamed's family had on his radicalisation process.

CONCLUSION

This analysis has attempted to examine Mohamed Merah's radicalisation by using Wiktorowitz's four stages model as a prism of analysis. Overall, there are a number of lessons that can be learned from this case study. First of all, Merah's case demonstrates once again that radicalisation is a gradual process that is often the result of the kaleidoscopic interplay between grievances, psychological, and structural factors. Second, it demonstrates that prisons may be "places of vulnerability" where inmates are more likely to experience trauma, frustration, grievances or existential crisis, which may accelerate the radicalisation process. Lastly, it demonstrates that the familial milieu may play a crucial role in the transmission of a radical ideology. Particularly, Merah's family proves that in some cases the ideological transmission may be intra-generational (horizontal) rather than inter-generational (vertical). At the same time, it shows how family ties can be instrumental for the development of connections with both domestic and international extremist groups. Moreover, Merah's case also suggests that in certain occasions family members might even play more active roles by providing material and logistic support for committing violence. Although an extensive focus on individual biographies may produce "false positives"^{73,74} it should be still

⁷¹ On November 2, 2017, Abdelkader Merah was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for complicity in Mohamed's attacks. (Donadio, Rachel . "A Terrorist's Brother—and France—on Trial." *The Atlantic*, November 2017.

⁷² Harriet Alexander, and Fiona Govan, "Toulouse shootings".

⁷³ This is mainly due to the fact that not all persons who share the same or similar conditions will become automatically radicalised or will embrace violence.

⁷⁴ Groppi, Michele. "An Empirical Analysis of Causes of Islamist Radicalisation: Italian Case Study." *Perspective On Terrorism* 11, n. 1 (2017): 68-76.

acknowledged that Merah's case could considerably enhance the heated academic debate on drivers and mechanisms of radicalisation.

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