

THE INPUT: PATHWAYS TO JIHAD, vol. 2

A Closer Look at 56 Cases

National Security Programme



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INTRODUCTION

This report picks up where the previous report published within the framework of the project run by GLOBSEC and the Counter Extremism Project, *The Input: Pathways to Jihad. A Thematic Analysis of 310 Cases*,¹ left off in early April 2019. In that report, the authors mapped the thematically studied pathways towards jihad of the 310 individuals included in their database of European jihadis.² Eight such pathways were identified, i.e., dissatisfaction and outrage, radicalism or “thuggish” nihilism as an antechamber to global jihad, previous criminal involvement as a springboard into global jihad, prison as a key but understudied and misunderstood hub of jihadi recruitment, the “glocal” nature of recruitment into jihad, role of the family in the radicalisation process, the ongoing inflammatory character of certain places of worship as recruitment hubs, and European jihadism as a conveyor belt for sending fighters towards conflict zones in the broader MENA region.

This report goes beyond the mapping exercise and looks more closely at the individual pathways of 56 individuals from six countries. Their cases have been chosen because of the availability of information related to their jihadist pasts and because their past life stories vividly demonstrate the practical ins and outs of what a pathway towards jihad looks like in the current European setting.³ The authors appreciate that this is a sample taken from a wider dataset of now more than 310 jihadis that GLOBSEC is building in parallel to this project. At the same time, the authors would like to stress that when figuring out which cases to include in their study (out of the wider dataset), it became a question of available resources, as their preference would be to look more closely at all of the 300-plus cases included in their jihadi dataset. However, choices had to be made and the authors finally settled upon zooming in on the aforementioned 56 cases. As will become clear, these are not all individuals who had gone through multiple pathways in their radicalisation towards jihadism. Sometimes, all it took was just 1 pathway while in other cases, it could have been as many as 6. Cases representing both ends of this spectrum are included in this study to better illustrate the practicalities of the pathways. Thus, this study should not be just treated as an exercise in depicting the most “colourful” jihadi life stories included in the database developed by GLOBSEC. Some are seemingly uneventful but nonetheless important to our attempt to depict how in practice an individual becomes a jihadi. To achieve this, the authors next take a macro look at the 56 cases, followed by closer examination of 11 of them, drawn from five European countries.

1 See: <https://www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/The-Input-Pathways-to-Jihad.pdf>.

2 This database is developed within the framework of the *From Terrorists to Criminals and Back?*, see: <https://www.globsec.org/projects/criminals-terrorists-back/>.

3 GLOBSEC utilized a codebook of 55 variables for each of the 60 individuals covered in this study. Source wise, see: https://www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GLOBSEC_WhoAreTheEuropeanJihadis.pdf, p. 6.

THE 56

As the table makes clear, there is 1 individual in the sample with as many as 6 pathways into jihad during his “career” and 11 with just one pathway. The whole sample could almost be divided into half, with 28 individuals (50% of the total) with 3 pathways or more (1 individual had 6 pathways, 3 had 5, 10 had 4, and 14 had 3 for a total of 28 individuals) and the rest (30 individuals or 50% of the total) with 1 or 2 pathways to jihad. The most dominant pathways in our sample are the following four:

- 1. “glocalism” of jihadi recruitment (i.e., a situation in which one’s given radicalising trajectory bears the hallmarks of a local and homegrown process, sometimes conducted in one’s immediate neighbourhood and surroundings and with a simultaneous link to jihadi individuals based abroad, usually in conflict zones) – 33 individuals;**
- 2. dissatisfaction and outrage (i.e., a situation in which a given individual is originally set on jihad due to his/her “dissatisfaction with current reality” or “moral outrage”, which develop simultaneously with views such as that the West is “at war with Islam”)⁴, 31 individuals;**
- 3. role of the family of a given individual in the process of turning him/her into a jihadi (comes in many forms because different family members of different generations could play the role of instigators or igniters of their kin’s radicalisation) – 30 individuals; and,**
- 4. the so-called “criminal” pathway (i.e., a situation in which a given jihadi has a criminal past, marked by an earlier arrest) – 28 individuals.**

The remaining pathways, i.e., “mosque” (a process in which an individual is acquainted and recruited via contacts forged in a given place of worship), “travel bureau” (when one is involved in the process of recruiting foreign terrorist fighters and sending them to a conflict zone) and “prison” (radicalisation is started or develops during a period of imprisonment, usually for non-terrorist crimes) are more modestly evident in this sample with the results of 10, 10, and 6, respectively.

This summary of pathways present in the life stories of the aforementioned individuals does not include one which the authors developed in the previous report, namely the “radical vs ‘thuggish’” pathway. It describes the roles or the style of development into a full-blown jihadi (either via a radical, “street-wise” or

outright criminal group, also as a retribution for past sins, or a process of radicalisation underpinned by a relatively prolonged study of Salafi jihadi writings and thought), and not the process of continuing down a given pathway itself. Thus, the table does not include the results from the coding exercise related to data concerning this pathway. These results, however, should be discussed separately, especially in the light of the fact that 7 out of the 56 individuals included in the sample, i.e., 13%, are “hybrids”, jihadis who are both thuggish nihilists and outright gangsters, who nonetheless have a relatively strong background in Salafi jihadi thought.⁵ At the same time, and contrary to Olivier Roy’s claim of an over-representation of “thugs” in jihadi ranks, “only” 5 (9%) could be classified as such. The huge majority, 38, or 68%, could be described as Gilles Keppel’s outright “radicals.” As mentioned above, this sample is a mere snapshot of a wider group of jihadis included in GLOBSEC’s dataset, but it points to the fact that there might be more than meets the eye vis-à-vis actual religious radicalism of the members of jihadi networks in Europe. In short, and as GLOBSEC’s earlier reports on the subject clearly demonstrate, their relatively unsuccessful professional careers or humble educational background does not necessarily mean they are Roy’s “thugs.” In fact, there might be more “hybrids” amongst the cohorts of European jihad.

Interestingly, it turns out that having a multitude of pathways is not a precondition to becoming what Petter Nesser called a jihadi “entrepreneur”, i.e., a “resourceful and ideologically motivated terrorist cell builder”, often a veteran of a foreign conflict in the broader MENA region or South Asia.⁶ There are indeed entrepreneurs also amongst the almost 28 individuals that developed along fewer than 3 pathways to jihad in their life stories. Nonetheless, this group includes more of Nesser’s outright “drifters” (a member of a jihadist cell who usually lacks a strong agenda and is instead motivated by social responsibility to other members of the cell or looks for social rewards) or “misfits” (a member of a jihadist cell motivated by personal misfortune and/or social ties; he/she looks for solutions to personal problems in jihad, sometimes in the form of salvation or to cleanse past mistakes).⁷

Unsurprisingly, the picture gleaned from the analysis of the pathways to jihad of the aforementioned 56 individuals reveals that there is no single jihadi profile. Yet, there exists a number of commonalities amongst the jihadis in the sample:

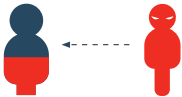
⁴ See: note 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶ See: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/553/html>.

⁷ See: Petter Nesser, *Islamist Terrorism in Europe. A History*, London: Hurst, 2016.

Individual	Role	Pathways							Count
	Thugs/Radicals/Hybrids	Glocal	Outrage	Family	Crime-Terror Nexus	Mosques	Travel Bureau	Prison	
FRA 1	Radical	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	6
FRA 30	Radical	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	5
FRA 8	Hybrid	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	5
FRA 7	Thug	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	5
BEL 1	Radical	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	4
BGR 5	Radical	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4
BGR 8	Radical	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4
FRA 11	Radical	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	4
FRA 3	Radical	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	4
FRA 32	Radical	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
ITA 52	Radical	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	4
FRA 40	Thug	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	4
UK 16	Hybrid	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	4
UK 20	Hybrid	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
BEL 2	Radical	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
BEL 3	Radical	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
BEL 4	Radical	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
BEL 5	Radical	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
BEL 6	Radical	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
BGR 6	Radical	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
BGR 7	Radical	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
FRA 20	Radical	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
ITA 1	Radical	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
FRA 18	Radical	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
FRA 27	Hybrid	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
BEL 8	-	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
FRA 29	Thug	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
UK 15	Hybrid	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
BEL 10	Radical	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
BEL 7	Radical	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
FRA 41	Radical	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
ITA 33	Radical	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
ITA 39	Radical	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
ITA 5	Radical	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
UK 19	Radical	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
UK 2	Radical	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
UK 27	Radical	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
FRA 5	Hybrid	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
BGR 1	Thug	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
BGR 2	-	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
BGR 3	-	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
BGR 4	-	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
FRA 97	Radical	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
ITA 38	Hybrid	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
ITA 42	-	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
BEL 9	Radical	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
FRA 38	Radical	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
FRA 79	Radical	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
ITA 25	Radical	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
ITA 3	Radical	1	0	0	0	0	-	0	1
UK 10	Radical	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
UK 21	Radical	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
UK 31	Radical	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
UK 6	Radical	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
FRA 98	-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
UK 23	Thug	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Count		33	31	30	28	10	10	6	



1. Many (especially from the Belgian, French, or Italian subsets) are second-generation immigrants born in Europe (Belgium, France) or first-generation immigrants who arrived in Europe at a very young age with their parents (Italy).
2. They often hail from localities and neighbourhoods with a history of terrorism arrests or presence of well-known jihadi “entrepreneurs” (Belgium, France), and graduate into jihad by association with well-established recruitment networks (Belgium) or entrepreneurial individuals (France, Bulgaria).
3. Sometimes, the role of entrepreneur is played by their most immediate social circle (UK) or families (France, Belgium, and, to some extent, Italy), which act as a radicalising echo chamber for future jihadis.
4. The phenomenon of European jihadism is not only global but also local, or localised in nature, as many of the future jihadis form radicalising clusters amongst their school friends or colleagues (Belgium) and sometimes move between different criminal worlds (“ordinary crime” and terrorism) together in a classic crime-terror nexus trajectory (Belgium, France, and, to some extent, the UK).
5. There is conflicting evidence as to the role of feelings of discrimination and oppression or outrage with Western policies and their potential for pushing these individuals to the path to jihad—the French subset is full of individuals who expressed, e.g., later at their trials, the experience of “Western” oppression, allegedly because of their Muslim or non-European identities. Interestingly, similar cases are present in the Italian or Bulgarian subsets, but to a much lesser extent in the Belgian one, theoretically reminiscent of the French subset.
6. There is conflicting evidence as to the role of mosques—in the French or Bulgarian cases these played a role or constituted a pathway to jihad of the individuals included in the study. This is not, however, the case with the Italian or British cases.
7. Finally, the radicalisation of the 56 individuals was primarily offline in nature, i.e., fostered by individual or group-radicalising agents. Only the Italian subset partly contradicts this view given the preponderance of cases with histories of “mixed” radicalisation in which online contacts with ISIL agents in the broader MENA also played a role.

A SNAPSHOT: THE 11

The 56 cases discussed in this report constitute around a fifth (to be exact: 18%) of the 310 cases in the original dataset maintained by GLOBSEC. Consequently, the authors chose to take a closer look at another fifth, this time the aforementioned 56 individuals. Thus, what follows is a snapshot of 11 cases from this larger pool. These have not been chosen at random, as the authors looked for individuals who could be representative of the larger national subsets in the sense that their life stories contain several popular themes present but of a volume less than those of other jihadis included in the GLOBSEC dataset. To some extent, however, this is a subjective choice, as the authors worked with qualitative and sometimes incomplete data. These cases are not meant to give a full picture of jihadi “stories”, rather to show the tangible differences on the pathways to jihad and to demonstrate how unique these pathways can become as one looks more closely at how European jihadis evolve. The individuals discussed in this snapshot will remain anonymous, and below, the authors first enumerate the pathways down which they travelled to jihad and then discuss both the overall radicalisation process of the jihadis and provide more data on each pathway.

SUBJECT: BEL 1

1. **Pathways to jihad: 5—thug, crime-terror nexus, prison, “glocal”, family and friends.**
2. **Radicalisation process: radicalised in prison together with another terrorist involved in the Paris attacks. According to his sister, prior to his imprisonment he barely visited a mosque. Of Moroccan origin, a former attendee of a Catholic school. He rose to prominence within ISIL as a propagandist and planner of attacks outside the territory of the “Caliphate.”**
 - a. thug and crime-terror nexus: long and intensive criminal past. Arrested in 2002 for the first time, followed by multiple arrests between 2006 and 2012 for petty theft and an assault. Tried in absentia and in July 2015 sentenced to 20 years for recruiting people into jihad.
 - b. prison: his radicalisation occurred after serving time in St. Gilles prison (South of Brussels) for petty theft
 - c. “glocal”: spent most of his life in Brussels-Molenbeek, a municipality with a track record of other terrorism arrestees living there. Later on, he went to craft a high-profile career in the ranks of ISIL.
 - d. family and friends: many of his childhood friends also “graduated” to the ranks of ISIL and some joined him in Syria.

SUBJECT: BEL 4

1. Pathways: 4—outrage, radical, “glocal”, family and friends.
2. Radicalisation process: his family member said he gave no warning signs of being radicalised before he left for Syria in 2013 and broke all contact with his family. Dual Belgian/Moroccan citizen, one of the more educated jihadis in the subset, attended what were called “good schools.” Training in electromechanics, key to development of ISIL bombmaking capabilities in Europe.
 - a. outrage: track record of expressing feelings of injustice and anger towards society because of its perceived lack of understanding of Islamic values. He initially defined these values as “freedom, peace and education.”
 - b. radical: initially a cliché Westernised Muslim, renowned for his clothes, then seeking faith and slowly drawn into Salafi radicalism, changing his attire and refusing to shake hands with women (in contradiction of his family’s perception).
 - c. “glocal”: spent most of his life in Brussels-Schaerbeek, a municipality known for its diversity and high unemployment rate. While in Syria, he acted as a member of a “welcoming party” and was involved in training of new recruits.
 - d. family and friends: known for and developed longstanding relationships with other jihadis from Francophone countries.

SUBJECT: BGR 1

1. Pathways: 2—dissatisfaction and outrage, travel bureau.
2. Radicalisation process: four years in duration. Actively sought contacts in the radical Islamist milieu and was recruited into a proselytising group active in another country.
 - a. dissatisfaction and outrage: has a mild form of autism and had trouble with maintaining social relations. The effect of this allegedly incensed his mother, who held him accountable for his state of affairs and abused him because of it. BGR 1 also experienced bullying at school and later had to change schools because of a conflict that developed between his parents and one of the teachers. Turned away from Christianity and towards Islam after his parents’ divorce and a subsequent personal crisis. Found friends amongst the newly met Muslims and was later said to have most enjoyed the camaraderie that developed around the mosque he attended.
 - b. travel bureau: motivated by the atrocities committed by Assad’s forces, he decided to travel to Syria in 2013 but was turned around after eight days because of his physical unpreparedness for combat. Remained in contact with another individual from his native country (not Bulgaria) who operated as a smuggler/recruiter on the Turkish/Syrian border. BGR 1 never made it to the “Caliphate” but was arrested after honing his shooting skills at a local range made him look suspicious.

SUBJECT: BGR 8

1. Pathways: 4—dissatisfaction and outrage, crime-terror nexus, “glocal”, mosque.
2. Radicalisation process: a drawn-out affair, it started in 2001 and was instigated by the innocent purchase of a book and then contact with the publishers connected to a then still legal Islamist organisation operating in Germany. Consequently, he connect with this organisation’s leader and visited its mosque, where he became acquainted with radical Islamist messaging.
 - a. dissatisfaction and outrage: claimed he ended up in jail because he crossed a local oligarch who wanted BGR 8 to secure votes for his political party in the local Islamic congregation. Also mentioned frequent instances of being discriminated against while living in his town in Bulgaria.
 - b. crime-terror nexus: arrested three times between 2004 and 2014. All of the arrests had no “ordinary criminal” connection but were related to his proselytising activities.
 - c. “glocal”: BGR 8 was an active preacher in the villages surrounding his town in Bulgaria, in Germany, where he converted to radical Islam, and in Turkey.
 - d. mosques: after 2001 and his exposure to radical Islam in Germany, he became instrumental in building a Salafi community in his hometown, mainly via the construction of a mosque, where he preached.

SUBJECT: FRA 1

1. Pathways: 7—outrage, “thug”, crime-terror nexus, “glocal”, family and friends, mosque, travel bureau.
2. Radicalisation process: associated with a long-standing terrorism network based in Paris around the Adda’wa mosque, where he is said to have been radicalised. Later, he travelled several times to Iraq and Syria, long before its civil war, and that only seemed to have consolidated his radicalisation. Dual citizenship (French-Tunisian). Active in the online space—posted videos online and conducted several interviews for ISIL’s central media outlets.
 - a. outrage: raised by his mother and his two sisters who displayed extreme views on the alleged incompatibility of female education with Islam. Protested against American intervention in Iraq (Iraq War). His brother joined Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and died in Fallujah in 2004.
 - b. “thug”: both a charismatic leader and a propagandist but also a murderer whose crimes were committed outside France.
 - c. crime-terror nexus: arrested in 2008 and sentenced to a term of 7 years for organising a recruiting jihadist network and sending young French Muslims to Iraq. Only served 3 years of his sentence.
 - d. “glocal”: involved with a Paris-based jihadi recruitment ring, of which several members went to fight in Iraq and Syria. First fought in the Iraq War as an AQI member and stayed on with the organisation as it morphed into ISIL.
 - e. family and friends: (see also: “outrage”) Was in a leadership position of a locally established and run jihadi recruitment ring consisting of individuals with pre-jihadi ties of friendship.
 - f. mosque: his network was based around the Adda’wa mosque, which acted as a gateway to jihad for many of the network’s members.
 - g. travel bureau: imprisoned for recruiting people into jihad and closely involved with facilitation of their travel to MENA.

SUBJECT: FRA 30

- 1. Pathways: 6—outrage, “thug”, crime-terror nexus, “glocal”, family and friends, mosque.**
- 2. Radicalisation process: member of a longstanding jihadi cell from the south of France. Had a history of substance abuse (cannabis and alcohol). Parents divorced in 1993; his father has been convicted of drug trafficking and imprisoned between 1999 and 2003.**
 - a.** outrage, “thug”: raised in an antisemitic and unstable, violent family environment. The family was dependent on social services and benefits, and together with his brother, was put into foster care. FRA 30 is known for beating his younger brother as well as his mother and sisters.
 - b.** crime-terror nexus: arrested several times during his youth for drug trafficking and robbery. Convicted in 2003 of domestic violence against his brother.
 - c.** “glocal”: involved with a locally based jihadist cell that produced some of France’s most infamous jihadists, who rose to prominence via their involvement in ISIL.
 - d.** family and friends: one of his brothers or sisters was also known to French intelligence services because of his/her radical background. FRA 30’s jihadi cell mates constituted his immediate social circle.
 - e.** mosque: frequented, with the other members of the cell, a mosque in Toulouse, France.

SUBJECT: FRA 97

- 1. Pathways: 3—outrage, “thug”, crime-terror nexus, family and friends.**
- 2. Radicalisation process: very little is known about the ins and outs of the radicalisation process of FRA 97. The suburb of Paris where FRA 97 lived and a neighbouring town has had a jihadi network presence (at least 20 individuals involved). FRA 97 is known for attending dawah meetings of the preacher Béchir Ben Hassen, previously banned for radicalism in Tunisia, and condemned by the French justice system in 2018.**
 - a.** outrage: moved between foster homes (oftentimes poor or could be described as dysfunctional), which partly motivated FRA 97’s evolution towards a nihilistic jihadi approach towards the society and country where FRA 97 lived.
 - b.** “thug”: FRA 97 praised and encouraged the terrorist attacks in France and exhorted family member to do the same. Became a jihadi icon because of far-reaching propaganda activities and involvement in “publicity stunts”, e.g., training to “kill infidels” with a crossbow.
 - c.** crime-terror nexus: was arrested in 2014 for the first time for being a terrorism apologist and possession of jihadist propaganda, however, was not tried.
 - d.** family and friends: moved in jihadi circles because of spousal relationships and socialised with jihadists living in different parts of France.

SUBJECT: ITA 1

1. Pathways: 3 - dissatisfaction and outrage, “glocal”, travel bureau.
2. Radicalisation process: in less than 2 years, the family and friends of ITA 1 nurtured and fostered her radicalisation. ITA 1’s sister was radicalised by a non-family member and consequently she kickstarted the whole family’s conversion from Christianity to Islam and the subsequent radicalisation into Salafi jihadi positions.
 - a. dissatisfaction and outrage: mentioned her perceived persecution in Italy and suffering from unjust treatment, and socio-economic deprivation after her arrest for an attempt to travel to Syria to join a terrorist organisation.
 - b. “glocal”: became a member of a terrorist cell that was an extension of an Albanian network that operated in northern Italy. The cell recruited people residing in Italy and its mother network had connections to ISIL.
 - c. travel bureau: her cell was involved in facilitating marriages in an Islamic centre and sending the newlyweds to Syria.

SUBJECT: ITA 52

1. Pathways: 4—dissatisfaction and outrage, “glocal,” family, travel bureau
2. Radicalisation process: difficult to exactly map out, especially timewise, but a key role was played by individuals close to ITA 52 who held radical beliefs.
 - a. dissatisfaction and outrage: mentioned his sister was beaten up for wearing a veil and on several occasions mentioned the West’s persecution of Muslims.
 - b. “glocal”: was in touch with another Moroccan whose family moved to Italy and who later got arrested for terrorism. His other known contact was far less “local”—first interpreter of ISIL texts into Italian, resident of another northern Italian city.
 - c. family: his younger brother was arrested for terrorism and expelled (had no Italian citizenship) before the same thing happened to ITA 52. Later on, it emerged that the parents had also been radicalised and they too were expelled from the country. They also aided ITA 52’s travel to Syria after his expulsion from Italy.
 - d. travel bureau: the highlight of his pathway to jihad was his travel from Morocco—to which he was expelled from Italy—to Syria in the summer of 2015.

SUBJECT: UK 16

1. Pathways: 4—crime-terror nexus, prison, “glocal”, family and friends.
2. Radicalisation process: he was radicalised at least 6 years before his 2015 terrorism arrest. UK16 had an illustrious career with ISIL and his radicalisation is one of the most diversified in the UK dataset. The collected data point at a criminal history, prison radicalisation, “glocal” connections, and the strong effect of his immediate milieu having had a formative effect on his radicalisation. The subject eventually ended up in Turkey where he was arrested in November 2015 for being a member of a terrorist group suspected of planning attacks in Istanbul similar to those in Paris later that same month. He is currently serving his sentence of 7.5 years in a Turkish prison after being convicted of belonging to a terrorist organisation.
 - a. crime-terror nexus: UK16 started as a drug dealer and gang member in west London. Apart from having been convicted 6 times for possession of drugs, in 2006 he was jailed for illegal firearms possession.
 - b. prison radicalisation: while imprisoned, UK16 converted to Islam, took an Islamic name, and after being released travelled across the Middle East.
 - c. “glocal”: after returning to London, UK16 started attending the same mosque as Mohammad Emwazi, also known as “Jihadi John” but was then thrown out of the congregation because of his radical beliefs. This helped spur him on the road Syria.
 - d. family and friends: in mid-2013, UK16 left his family in the UK and departed for Syria where he joined his west London friends. His wife seems to have shared his ideology, and shortly after his departure tried to smuggle €20,000 to her husband via Turkey, resulting in her being arrested for material support of terrorism.

SUBJECT: UK 31

1. Pathways: 1—family and friends
2. Radicalisation process: took less than 3 years before his arrest. The case of UK31 shows one very clear pathway to radicalisation exacerbated by his access to online propaganda. An apprentice bricklayer by training, UK31 is said to have been radicalised soon after leaving school when he became “fixated” on ISIL and its propaganda. Apart from online propaganda, his immediate milieu of friends sharing and mutually enforcing their similarly radical worldviews appears to have had the greatest impact on his increasing radicalism, eventually leading him to attempt to leave the country for Syria. The subject was arrested in 2015 after having been turned back in Turkey. In late 2016, UK31 was convicted of three counts of disseminating terrorist publications and engaging in preparation of terrorist acts and is currently serving a 9-year total jail term.
 - a. family and friends: UK31 was part of a small group of young men in the Birmingham area who sought to travel to Syria to join terrorist groups. The group’s members shared ISIL propaganda videos in an encrypted chatroom, including footage of beheadings and videos exhorting people to take part in jihad. The mobile phone of UK31, seized after his arrest, revealed hundreds of propaganda images and videos. A few months prior to the subject’s departure, the group took part in a paintballing session, allegedly to obtain rudimentary tactical skills and experience with firearms. Although the subject was stopped in Turkey and prevented from entering Syria, some of his group members eventually succeeded in the effort. Interestingly, the family factor in the case of UK31 is negligible, even contradictory—although his father was previously imprisoned for supplying equipment to Taliban fighters in Afghanistan, it was he who alerted the authorities once he discovered that his son might have run off to join ISIL.

THE RUNAWAYS AND THE HOME FRONTSMEN: A VERY TENTATIVE CONCLUSION

It comes as no surprise that a huge majority of the individuals discussed in more detail in this paper tried to or managed to get to Syria/Iraq so they could participate in jihad there. They were mostly outraged with reality. This might theoretically suggest that travelling on this pathway increases the chance of a given (potential) jihadi's seeking external contacts, propelling them to travel to a conflict zone abroad. This assertion, however, will have to be tested against the reality of a much less discernible "Caliphate" presence and territorial control in 2019, i.e., if there is nowhere to go then the outraged might as well stay home. Interestingly, not all of those seeking contacts want to utilise them for travel purposes. Some made travel arrangements on their own, in part not to endanger their chances of actually reaching the conflict zone. This could be called a true "on your own" jihadist.

What the authors found repetitive in all these stories is that ISIL and its recruiters were skilful at exploiting very specific vulnerabilities of their recruits. Some felt oppressed due as a minority (FRA 1, BGR 8), others because of their family background (FRA 30, FRA 97, BGR 1, and to some extent UK31). Then there is the issue of imprisonment and how vulnerable one is once behind bars (BEL 1, UK 16). What is more, some were born into families with existing extreme religious views that could, to some extent, have accelerated their progression on the pathways to jihad (ITA 52, UK 31, FRA 1).

In the end, the authors are of the opinion that this snapshot can be divided into two subgroups, nicknamed "**the runaways**" (UK 16, BEL 1, ITA 1, BGR 1) and the **home frontsmen** (FRA1, FRA30, FRA97, BGR8). The first group comprises individuals who are more keen ideologues, but who also, it seems, are trying to fix something from their past (UK16 and BEL1, their criminal history; ITA1's feeling of not being a good enough Muslim; BGR1's feeling of belittling by his parents and school), and consequently seeking to restart their lives while fighting for ISIL in Syria. This truly constitutes "running away" from something. The second group—born into radical

families or living in neighbourhoods were radicals were active for years. For these individuals, the opportunities at home were far greater and maybe there was no need for travel. The French trio had all been violent, and climbed the ranks of the local cells. BGR 8 differs from them but was a true jihadi "entrepreneur" who learnt his craft abroad and then made the most of the opportunities afforded to him vis-à-vis radicalisation in his immediate and original neighbourhood.



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