

When the “Lone Wolf” Hid the Herd: Deconstructing a Security Myth

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ABSTRACT

The Islamist attacks of 2015, the collective departures to carry out jihad (holy war) or hijra (exile after the model of Mohammed) in Syria, the family or friendly financing of Islamist terrorism, and the associations of coordination and support for Islamist terrorists who are prisoners have shown that in reality, the lone wolf hid the herd.

Researcher Hugo Micheron, a political science PhD student under the direction of Gilles Kepel, conducted five years of investigations in the suburbs of Paris, Toulouse, Nice, and Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, in the Middle East (in Turkey, in Lebanon, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Syria, where he lived for a year from 2008 to 2009) and in the four prisons receiving radicalized Islamists, where he conducted eighty interviews of groups or individuals.

Keywords: Islam, terrorism, Paris, Micheron, Kepel,

Cuando el “lobo solitario” escondió el rebaño: deconstruyendo un mito de seguridad

RESUMEN

Los atentados islamistas de 2015, las salidas colectivas para llevar a cabo la yihad (guerra santa) o yijira (exilio según el modelo de Mahoma) en Siria, la financiación familiar o amistosa del terrorismo islamista, y las asociaciones de coordinación y apoyo a terroristas islamistas que Son prisioneros que han demostrado que en realidad, el lobo solitario escondía la manada.

El investigador Hugo Micheron, estudiante de doctorado en ciencias políticas bajo la dirección de Gilles Kepel, llevó a cabo cinco años de investigaciones en los suburbios de París, Toulouse, Niza y Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, en el Medio Oriente (en Turquía, Líbano, Irak Kurdistán y Siria, donde vivió durante un año de 2008 a 2009) y en las cuatro cárceles que reciben a islamistas radicalizados, donde realizó ochenta entrevistas a grupos o individuos.

Palabras clave: Islam, terrorismo, París, Micheron, Kepel

当“独狼”成群—解构安全传闻

摘要

2015年伊斯兰恐怖袭击、在叙利亚发动圣战或希吉拉（跟随穆罕默德迁移）的集体行动、伊斯兰恐怖主义的家族或友好资助、以及对身为囚犯的伊斯兰恐怖分子予以协调和支持的各机构都已表明：在现实中，独狼已经成群。

研究人员Hugo Micheron, Gilles Kepel指导下的政治学博士生）在下列地点开展了5年的调查：巴黎、图卢兹、尼斯、里尔、鲁贝和图尔宽的郊区，中东（土耳其、黎巴嫩、伊拉克库尔德斯坦以及叙利亚，Hugo于2008-2009年间在叙利亚生活），以及四所接收激进伊斯兰主义者的监狱，他在监狱中进行了80次包含群体和个体的面谈。

关键词：伊斯兰，恐怖主义，巴黎，Micheron, Kepel

A classic silvicultural metaphor asserts that the tree hides the forest. Reading Hugo Micheron's *Le jihadisme français. Quartiers, Syrie, prisons*, published in 2020 by Gallimard, one becomes aware that French politicians and intelligence officials have spread the myth of the lone wolf to reassure public opinion. The Islamist attacks of 2015, the collective departures to carry out jihad (holy war) or hijra (exile after the model of Mohammed) in Syria, the family or friendly financing of Islamist terrorism, and the associations of coordination and support for Islamist terrorists who are prisoners have shown that in reality, the lone wolf hid the herd. In the preface to his book, French political scientist specializing in Islam, Gilles Kepel, explains that it is necessary to seek the causes of these individual and collective attacks that have bruised France from 2015 to 2019, from Charlie Hebdo to the attack in the heart of the Paris prefecture. The latter sees it as the Salafist subversion of French society. Arab researcher Hugo Micheron, a political science PhD student under the direction of Gilles Kepel, conducted five years of investigations in the suburbs of Paris, Toulouse, Nice, and Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, in the Middle East (in Turkey, in Lebanon, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Syria, where he lived for a year from 2008 to 2009) and in the four prisons receiving radicalized Islamists, where he conducted eighty interviews of groups or individuals, including "Maurad," who converted the Clain brothers.

Royalists versus Képéliens

The publication of Hugo Micheron’s book in January 2020 is part of the quarrel among humanities researchers over the interpretation of jihadism. Indeed, this publication has revived the conceptual war within the academic world, between the sociological trend defended by Olivier Roy (with François Burgat and Farhad Khosrokhavar) and the politico-religious trend of the Arabist Gilles Kepel and his students, Bernard Rougier and Hugo Micheron. This quarrel has been summarized in two formulas by the media. Olivier Roy defends the idea that French jihadists represent the Islamization of radicality: young people from the suburbs have become jihadists through hatred of society. Conversely, Gilles Kepel defends that of the radicalization of Islam: within Islam, a radical religious current was born, having set up an imaginary community that gives religious meaning to the lives of young uprooted suburbanites with no moral landmarks.

Scholars close to Olivier Roy are accused by the Gilles Kepel camp of refusing to see the religious aspects of French jihadism. Olivier Roy’s university clan blames Gilles Kepel and his students for neglecting the economic and social aspects that were at the source of the jihadist commitment: the precariousness of young people, the relegation of the suburbs, the family destructuring, the absence of social rules, or the contradictions between them (*anomie*, Emile Durkheim’s notion). The Képéliens ignore the social conditions that have allowed the jihadist phenomenon to flourish. According to Farhad Khosrokhavar, “the thesis of the religious whole is a violence to the social and thus presents a falsely transparent image of a reality in which the religious enters into symbiosis with other determinants.”¹ Moreover, Olivier Roy rejects the postulate of continuity between Salafism and terrorism. He does not admit that “the Salafist incubation from ‘enclaves’ on French territory would mechanically produce (which) would produce terrorism.” For him, the movement is carried above all by “a nihilist vision fascinated by death,” in which the religious aspect intervenes little. “The Abdeslam had a bistro where they sold Jupiler beer and hashish.” He does not believe at all in the concept of Takiyah (concealment), according to which the jihadist would have a way of life voluntarily contradicting his convictions in order to conceal his intentions.

For Farhad Khosrokhavar, who belongs to Olivier Roy’s clan, Gilles Kepel’s thesis can only propose to “reconquer the lost territories [of the Republic] without asking the question of the social conditions of the emergence of these phenomena.” For this researcher, by amalgamating Wahhabism, Salafism, Tabligh, the Muslim Brotherhood, and jihadism and by giving it a hegemonic dimension, Kepelian researchers would be making a serious methodological error by reducing a com-

1 Jérôme Ferret et Farhad Khosrokhavar, “La fausse alternative: la radicalisation de l’islam ou l’islamisation de la radicalité,” *Tribune*, 13 février 2020, [Sovhypotheses.org/2345](https://sovhypothèses.org/2345).

plex phenomenon to a single cause. Hugo Micheron does not fall into this trap; in fact, he defines and distinguishes them very carefully.

Behind this academic quarrel over the sociological or religious interpretation of the jihadist phenomenon are hidden power struggles to appoint young PhDs as lecturers, to secure positions in the humanities, to attract funding, to influence public policy, to impose themselves as experts on jihadism in the mainstream press, public radio, and continuous information channels. The *képéliens* control Sciences-Po and the Ecole Normale Supérieure and disseminate their ideas through the Gallimard publishing house and in the collection Proche-Orient des PUF directed by Gilles Kepel. They popularize them through Le Point and Le Figaro. Radio France Inter, disenchanted by the sociological interpretation it had helped to broadcast, now seems to be seduced: Nicolas Demorand evokes “a rather formidable book on Jihadism” about Hugo Micheron’s work.

Olivier Roy and Farhad Khosrokhavar are directors of studies at EHESS. Olivier Roy is director of research at the CNRS, while Farhad Khosrokhavar is director of the Observatoire de la radicalisation de la Fondation de la Maison des sciences de l’homme. Their books are published by Le Seuil, and their theses are relayed by *Le Monde*, *L’Opinion*, and *L’Obs*.

These divergent interpretations were reunited after Mohamed Merah’s assassination attempt on March 19, 2012 against the Jewish school in Toulouse. This attack is interpreted by Gilles Kepel as a reference to the cease-fire in Algeria in March 1962, that is to say, a historic symbolic act against French colonialism that would be perpetuated with regard to the youth of the suburbs. Olivier Roy sees in Mr. Merah’s action only the action of a “lone wolf;” an expression that will flourish in the media to explain jihadist terrorism. The attacks at the Bataclan in 2015 re-launched the war between the two enemy brothers. In Olivier Roy, Gilles Kepel denounced “a [henceforth] naked king” who refused to denounce Islamism for fear of falling into Islamophobia. As for programs of deradicalization, inspired by the sociological interpretation of Olivier Roy, they have been shown to be inefficient.

Behind this quarrel lies the importance, or not, of the religious in the jihadist phenomenon. Arabists emphasize it; non-Arabists neglect it to the benefit of the social. The strength of Hugo Micheron’s work is to return to the field by highlighting the testimonies of actors of jihadism.

The Wolf in the Sheepfold

Two thousand Frenchmen left to make jihad, from 2012 to 2018, in Afghanistan and Bosnia and within the Islamic State in Syria or Iraq, but behind these departures, Hugo Micheron explains that about fifteen places grouped together almost all departures. When the phenomenon concerns a city, the departures concern a single district of the city and even a single bar of buildings. The geography of

the departures is not confined to the phenomenon of the suburbs. Hugo Micheron thus gives the example of eighty departures from Trappes for jihad, whereas the neighboring commune of Chanteloup-les-Vignes, which has exactly the same problems, has none. Lunel, a quiet town, has twenty-five departures, while the northern districts of Marseille have no departures to Syria. For Hugo Micheron, these two examples clearly contradict Olivier Roy's sociological model of the Islamization of radicalism.

Hugo Micheron shows how puritanical Salafist precepts (refusal of co-education, sober clothing, food without pork or alcohol) lead in the mind of his follower to an impossible contradiction between young people and their local, professional, friendly, and family environment, as shown by the itinerary of the Clain brothers and their family converts in 1999. The only escape for these young Salafists is the creation of Salafist community enclaves in a neighborhood on the model of Peshawar in Pakistan, the refugee camp of Ain al-Houeh in Lebanon, the Londonistan of Finsbury Park, Molenbeek in Brussels, or a village enclaved in a mountain (Gornja Maoca in Bosnia). France has experienced this phenomenon in the heart of the French suburbs in the Izards or Mirail neighborhood in Toulouse or in rural areas in Artigat in the Ariège where the Muslim Brother of Hama, Olivier Corel, a refugee for political reasons, officiates. Artigat has been a nursery of jihadists from Toulouse for the Clain brothers; Sabri Essid, mentor of Mohamed Merah and Thomas Barnouin, ideologue of the jihadists from Toulouse, regularly visits Lunel.

Members of the GIA, sometimes-former jihadists from Afghanistan and Bosnia, amnestied by Bouteflika in 1999, took refuge in France for political reasons and settled in Trappes, Strasbourg, Roubaix, and Toulouse. As a result of their sermons in mosques or in religious seminaries, they manage to make jihadist emulators about fifteen years later. The Clain and Sabri Essid formed by frequenting Chadli, one of these members of the GIA, before moving on to religious proselytizing: they went door-to-door, sold Islamic products on the markets, handed out recorded a cappella religious songs (Anashid), multiplied injunctions to prayer and the practice of Ramadan, and made contact with young people through sports and free snacks. The September 11, 2001 attacks provoked a shock and a massive return to religion among young Muslims, which the Clain brothers took advantage of to spread their fundamentalist conception of Islam. In the neighborhoods, this return to religion in its fundamentalist character is seen by the multiplication of veiled women, Islamic bookstores, halal snacks, and the construction of new mosques. During the beginning of the 2000s, young people living in the Salafist enclaves devoted themselves to perfecting their religious training in Cairo or Molenbeek. Taking advantage of the riots in the suburbs in 2005, the Clain brothers identified the struggle of Muslims in the suburbs with that of the Palestinians against Israel or the Iraqis against the American presence. Between 2004 and

2007, the first volunteers tried to leave for Iraq to carry out jihad, but the jihadist networks of Artigat (Fabien Clain), the Buttes Chaumont (Chérif Kouachi), and Molenbeek were dismantled and their followers arrested in Europe or Syria, such as Sabri ESSID or Thomas Barnouin, and served their first prison sentences (four to six years).

The prison allows young jihadists to proselytize detainees, to launch calls for jihad, and to ask to attack the guards of the prisons. This is the case of Sabri ESSID, who from 2007 to 2010 has this type of attitude in all the prisons of Fresnes, Fleury-Mérogis, and Osny where he passes, while Fabien Clain, on the contrary, is discreet and takes advantage of this to convert prisoners. He wants to create a non-profit organization named Sanabil, which is intended to support Muslim prisoners and their families. He had it declared in 2010 by a Parisian friend, “Souleymane” (Antho Dolamba-Digbo), a close friend of Leonard Lopez, one of the creators of the French jihadist website Ansar al-Haq. Sanabil supports prisoners convicted of terrorism. The association is monitored by the French intelligence services, which accumulate information and note that the organization networks jihadist detainees from different places of detention in France (290) and Europe (450). Among the active members of Sanabil are Amedy Coulibaly, the terrorist of the Hyper Cacher, and Larossi Abballa, the killer of the police couple in Magnanville, who finance, participate in meetings, and write letters to detainees.

The contradiction between apolitical pacifist Salafism and violent political jihadism is only apparent; in fact, there are common points between the two fundamentalist Muslim currents. The followers of both sects want to return to a golden age in the life of Mohammed and his companions (the Salafis) when the doctrine was pure and had to be disseminated to the whole world. Hugo Micheron does not hesitate, in light of the religious itineraries of the people he studied, to amalgamate the two fundamentalist Islamist tendencies, pacifist and violent, under the term Salaf-Jihadists. The latter want to revive this mythical past in order to bring about the apocalypse of the end time, which, according to hadiths, is to take place in the land of Sham (in Dabiq) in Syria. The antichrist and the messiah (Mohammed) will confront each other. Those who gather with him in hijra (exile) and jihad (holy war) will be saved; the others will be damned. This millenarian vision is the guiding idea of the Islamic state, which appears repeatedly in its slogans, its videos, and is in line with the Manichean vision of the Salafists.

The Strength of the Wolf is in the Pack (Rudyard Kipling)

When Mohammed Merah, a young delinquent who grew up in the Izards neighborhood of Toulouse and attempted to carry out jihad in Afghanistan in 2011, returns to Toulouse to carry out attacks, between March 11 and 19, 2012, against four soldiers and children from a Jewish school, the thesis of the “lone wolf” is immediately brandished by Bernard Squarcini, director of the DCRI (future DGSI),

when in reality he is the product of ideology that has spread since the 2000s within his family (his brother Abdelkader was later sentenced to thirty years in prison in 2019 for complicity), his friends, and his neighborhood. Mr. Merah frequented Artigat in 2006 where he met the Clain brothers. He married there under the aegis of Olivier Corel before separating from his girlfriend. He became a model for some Islamic fundamentalists, such as Djibril, who became interested in his career and this religious movement while he was a high school student and left to join ISIS at the age of nineteen. He explains: “Merah is more than a martyr. He has opened a new era” and, following the consultation of Islamic fundamentalist forums, Djibril finds a justification for the assassinations of Mr. Merah: the Jewish religion and the military function of the victims are symbolically more important than their identity as children or their belonging to the Muslim religion. Others find in Merah’s action a justification for making jihad on French territory and not in the land of Islam.

The acts of Mr. Merah considered as “isolated acts with no future” are in reality the opposite. Never has the quotation from Roman de Renart written in the twelfth century been so well applied to the DCRI’s watchmen: “Bad guard allows the wolf to feed.” Bernard Squarcini, the director of the DCRI, compared Mr. Merah in November 2016 to “one of the confetti that wander around.” In reality, the lone wolf hides the herd, as the naive and dreamy Sansa Stark says in her own way in season 7 of *Games of Thrones*, broadcast in 2017, “The lone wolf dies ... but the pack survives.” The so-called isolated act announces, five years later, the massive involvement of thousands of French people in the jihad in Syria or on the national territory.

Five months after Mr. Merah’s attacks, the first jihadist volunteers leaving to fight in Syria in July 2012 are “ideologically hardened” and know perfectly well, according to the testimony of one of their number, “what they were going to do!” After the split in Syria in 2013 between Al-Nosra (Al-Qaeda), composed of Syrians, and the Islamic State, composed of a majority of foreigners, the French jihadists were charged with convincing their family, friends, and acquaintances to come to the Caliphate by means of social networks and discussion forums; this is how Fabien Clain and his entire family left to settle there. The newcomers are now young women, young people between eighteen and twenty-five years old, converts (20 percent) with less religious training than the first arrivals, seduced by videos, and making the decision to leave on a whim. They are fighting to establish the laws of Allah in a politico-religious state, the Caliphate, which is a far cry, according to Hugo Micheron, from the nihilist vision defended by Olivier Roy, where jihadists only seek death.

In 2014, having arrived in the caliphate of Syria and Iraq, the foreigner is taken care of; he is destined to be either a fighter or to drive a vehicle and die as a kamikaze (istichhadi). The latter is a kind of human bomb in charge of taking a

position by sowing panic after the explosion facilitating the assault. He can also be an *inghimasi*, that is, a suicide bomber who is armed with a belt of explosives and is sent to take a building or an enemy position by blowing himself up in the midst of the opponents. After three weeks of physical and military training and religious indoctrination, jihadists are sent to the front. Girls who arrive alone are placed in a bachelor's house where they remain until they accept a husband. They are destined to provide children who will be indoctrinated and serve as cannon fodder in the new caliphate. Families are given a confiscated home in the rear. The French are grouped by geographical origin: the Lunellois go to Deir ez-Zor, the Nîmois settle in Mandjib, while the capital of ISIS Raqqa welcomes the French from Toulouse, Strasbourg, and other regions. ISIS does not spare the lives of its volunteers and they quickly realize the gap between their ideals and reality. They decide to go to the supreme sacrifice, not out of nihilism but out of weariness, after seeing their comrades die. Others prefer to leave and know that their fate in France will be limited to a few years in prison.

Hugo Micheron gives us several explanations for the attacks on France. The attacks in Europe are intended to radicalize communities and provoke a civil war, allowing the ISIS to establish itself as it did in Syria and Iraq. Hugo Micheron takes up, without quoting it, the strategy theorized by Abu Bakr Naji, the pseudonym of Egyptian Al-Hakaymah, who was responsible for Al-Qaeda's propaganda dating from 2004 and was killed in an American strike in 2008. Mehdi Nemmouche was sent to Europe to carry out an attack against the Jewish Museum in Brussels in May 2014; Amedy Coulibaly aimed at a Hyper Cacher at the Porte de Vincennes in January 2015; in April 2015, an attack with automatic weapons was planned against two churches in Villejuif by Sid Ahmed Ghlam, who was injured while trying to steal the car of a fitness teacher; in August 2015, American soldiers were targeted in the Thalys by El Khazzani, whose weapon jammed; and in November 2015, attacks targeted the Stade de France, the Bataclan, and Parisian terraces. Aware of the danger, Europeans, Americans, and Russians made common cause to fight the ISIS, and the borders were controlled to prevent volunteers from leaving to carry out jihad.

A second wave of attacks was then programmed by the ISIS in 2016, in March against the metro and Brussels airport as the group is tracked down. Since the ISIS no longer had any logistics or a unit formed in France or Belgium, Rachid Kassim then used young, inexperienced sympathizers to incite them to commit individual attacks with derisory means (knife, vehicle, gas bottles) on symbolic targets: in June 2016 against a couple of policemen in Magnanville, in July 2016 against the festivities in Nice with a truck and during a mass by slitting Father Hamel's throat in Saint-Etienne-de-Rouvray, and in September an abortive attack with gas bottles next to Notre-Dame Cathedral and an attack against two guards in Osny prison. But this death strategy caused a division within the ISIS, far from

being a radical monolithic bloc. Rachid Kassim, who inspired and coordinated the 2016 attacks, the theologian Thomas Barnouin and Sabri Essid, who had Rayan, one of his twelve-year-old stepsons, execute an Israeli Arab accused of being a spy for the Mossad, are respectively dismissed, imprisoned, and murdered by the terrorist organization.

From 2012 to 2019, more than eighty Islamist attacks took place or were thwarted in France, the most spectacular of which were the attacks against the editorial staff of *Charlie Hebdo* and the Bataclan auditorium. Prisons accommodate terrorists, logistical support, and jihadists returning or expelled.

A Tamed Wolf Does Not Make a Lamb of It (Nineteenth Century Armenian Proverb)

Since the 1990s, French prisons have housed Islamist terrorists, such as the perpetrators of the GIA attacks in 1995 (Ali Belkacem), the gang of Roubaix in 1996 that financed the jihad in Bosnia by attacks on banks, and the author of an abortive attack on the American embassy in Paris in September 2001 (Djamel Beghal). All these jihadists will convert to their doctrine petty criminals or young people who wanted to make the jihad. This is how Beghal met the delinquent Amedy Coulibaly and the apprentice jihadist Cherif Kouachi, a member of the Buttes-Chaumont branch in Fleury-Mérogis. Then came the members of the Artigat branch (Sabri Essid, Thomas Barnouin, and Fabien Clain), arrested and detained from 2007 to 2014. In 2014, eighty detainees were serving sentences for Islamist terrorism; in 2020, there were five hundred of them.

Prison overcrowding favored contacts. Cells can be opened in the summer and sleeping allowed in corridors favors contacts between detainees. Young people from the cities, of North African or sub-Saharan origin, sometimes represent 80 percent of the detainees, even though 50 percent of the detainees in the Île-de-France region are repeat offenders; 40 percent to 70 percent of the detainees are Muslims. Since 2010, Salafist behaviors have gradually become the norm among Muslims, as shown by the generalization of pork-free meals. Sociologists and researchers in the social sciences and humanities “prisoners [the ideas] of Michel Foucault” on the prison system (*Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison*, 1975) imagine the prison as a fortress, separating the internal world from the external world, where the omnipresent totalitarian surveillance of the prison guards reigns over the prisoners. The sociologist Farhad Khosrokhavar, a specialist in radicalization, is mentioned by name by Hugo Micheron as being influenced by Foucault’s Manichean theses: for this researcher, the prison would be the main cause of the radicalization of prisoners. In reality, the prison is porous with the outside (the Sanabil association or the illicit use of smartphones) and inside (the “yo-yo” system, sheets used to pass messages and objects through the windows), while the inmates manage to set up their own social order (the top is occupied by robbers or

mafia). Groups of detainees then establish themselves according to their ethnicity (Corsican, Basque, Gypsy, Roma) or belonging to a neighborhood in a city. Everything is questioned according to the arrivals and departures of detainees from the prison. Jihadists increased from fifteen to eighty during 2014 and were spread over three detention centers. At the beginning, jihadists tried in vain to cut the music, considered haram (forbidden) in the sports hall, but they were threatened by the caïds.

At the end of 2014, the jihadists were too numerous to be diluted and manage to impose their way of life on their fellow inmates (ban on smoking and listening to the radio, selection of TV programs, food without pork). Aware of the threat, a warden decided to group them together to prevent them from proselytizing among the other inmates, provoking the ire of Christiane Taubira, Keeper of the Seals, in November 2014. The director, who was in danger of being laid off, was “saved” by the attacks of January 2015. Prime Minister Manuel Valls takes the ascendancy over the Keeper of the Seals by deciding to regroup radicalized prisoners, when he is informed that the perpetrators of the January 2015 attacks were indoctrinated in the prisons by the former generation of Algerian GIA and Al-Qaeda terrorists from Fleury-Mérogis and had weapons supplied by seven delinquents, former cell mates.

The activism of some jihadists (the returnees) even unfolds in broad daylight in Fleury-Mérogis, on July 31, 2016, two hundred common law prisoners supported the acts of the ISIS under the influence of three leaders (returnees). The Regional Specialized Intervention Teams (ERIS) needed to intervene and the leaders were put in isolation. The next day, the action was repeated with 160 prisoners dressed in black. Twice in August, sports were organized in black, and the leaders were dispersed to several detention centers.

In 2016, units for the prevention of radicalization were given the task of evaluating the dangerousness of Islamist detainees and setting up a de-radicalization program, according to their degree of dangerousness, following a method developed by sociologists, anthropologists (Dounia Bouzar), and psychologists, experts in radicalization. The program focuses on the character of the individual and neglects religious and political dynamics. Some jihadists understand the tests and adapt their responses and attitudes (smoking, listening to music, no public prayer) to those expected. The concentration of very dangerous detainees, certainly cut off from other detainees, creates synergy between them or, on the contrary, violent tensions (between Al-Nosra and Islamic state militants, between true and false repentant people, religious differences, conflicts between old and new returnees).

In September 2016, within the dedicated unit Bilal T., a jihadist from Trappes, committed an attack with a sharp iron bar against two guards. He had participated in all activities (massage, art projects) and was considered a model prisoner who had been de-radicalized. The experience of the dedicated units was

cancelled. In 2018, jihadist detainees were placed in airtight quarters in remand prisons with a tightening of detention and surveillance conditions under the control of the Central Bureau of Prison Surveillance. As for the new evaluation grids for radicalization, they still neglect religious commitment.

Taking advantage of the time left by prison, jihadists deepen their knowledge of the Quran and hadith, study and read in prison to reflect on their commitment, following the model of all revolutionaries. As one jihadist inmate explained very well, future leaders and new doctrines will come out of the prison to change jihad, either violently or peacefully by insisting on the education of young children entrusted to non-contractual schools by re-Islamizing society. As Youssef, a jihadist released from prison, explains, “if we manage to capture the heart of the Muslim community, then as we are all French, it will be either confrontation or communalization.” When we know that by 2022, 150 persons imprisoned for Islamist terrorism will be freed; we can imagine the challenge that the follow-up of these persons who will join the 270 terrorists already freed will represent.

The conclusion of the work of Hugo Micheron is a charge against the school of Olivier Roy. He thus calls for taking the interpretation of jihadism out of sociological analysis based on the socioeconomic and cultural marginalization of the French suburbs and privileging political-religious analyses. He spoke out against the notion of global jihadism, which ignores the modes of operation of small groups. “Decontextualized, de-historicized, jihadism is reduced to an abstract ‘revolt,’ a fashion that fascinates the unhealthy or fragile souls that the prison welcomes or fascinates within it.” These theories explain the failure of decision-makers to identify the jihadist phenomenon and to provide effective remedies. Hugo Micheron therefore calls for a return to field research to better define the jihadists. In other words, he asks that the disembodied and biased sociological analysis of the royalists be replaced by the historical-religious analysis of the Képéliens. If the war waged by the jihadists seems to be diminishing, that of their specialists is re-launched in an argumentative manner by the work of Hugo Micheron. At the university, the lone wolf also hides the herd.