
Analysis of the Resource Mobilization Mechanism of the Islamic State

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Abstract

This article examines the structure of resource mobilization for the Islamic State by focusing on its recruitment mechanism. This mechanism consists of several actors, and their relationships and interactions are quite important for successful recruitment. Since Islamic extremist organizations need to avoid unreliable members, their resource mobilization in general and recruitment in particular have to be conducted through personal networks, such as kinship networks of each activist. Following the Islamic extremists' success in agitations and propaganda done in cyber space, changes have appeared in the recruitment mechanism as well. Thus, nowadays, the mechanism is formed by "Muhajirun", "recruiters", "coordinators", "temporary and real accepters", and "disseminators". Detailed observations of each actor and their nature, function, and even location reveal several important findings. Furthermore, these findings provide valuable insights about the threat potential of the Islamic State, and of providing counter measures against it. As a consequence, it is possible to say that an effective obstruction of the Islamic State's resource mobilization is as important as direct military actions or police measures against it.

Key Words

Islamic Extremism, The Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh), Resource Mobilization, Mujahidun, Muhajirun, Cross Border Migration, Terrorism.

Introduction

This study aims to explore the mechanism of resource mobilization of the Islamic State, and provide some insights to facilitate formulation of counter measures against this mobilization. To achieve this purpose, it focuses on the group's recruitment methods. Nowadays, expansion of the Islamic State's influence and their possible terrorist attacks around the world have become a central concern for international security. Particularly after attacks in Paris (January and November 2015), Jakarta (January 2016), and Brussels (March 2016), concern has increased worldwide. Meanwhile, what kind of counter measures are to be taken remains unclear. The questions of what kind of policies should be employed to curb the Islamic State's resource mobilization ability, or how to conduct new operations around the world, have also not been answered sufficiently. As a result of the absence of concrete policies

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on this issue, the estimated number of foreigners who joined the Islamic State or other extremist organizations in Iraq or Syria increased from 12,000 to 31,000 between 2014 and 2015.¹ The difficulty of managing such policies stems from the complex activities and the organizational structure of the Islamic State. Therefore, revealing their resource mobilization mechanism and analyzing various actors taking part in the process will contribute to our knowledge of this complex structure.

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There are already numerous research studies and publications about resource mobilization by the Islamic State, such as its fundraising, logistics or armament, and recruitment.² Taking this literature into consideration, this article will look mainly at the recruitment process and migration of foreigners into the Islamic State. Since this study focuses on the mechanism of resource mobilization of the Islamic State, it will not provide details on the motivations or social statuses of various actors taking part in the mechanism. These are so diverse that portraying a general image of the people involved is quite difficult.³

This article first examines the traditional model of recruitment by Islamic extremists.⁴ However, under the present circumstances, this model needs to be modified because of the existence and importance of the Muhajirun (migrants for Jihad), who are inspired by the internet, especially by SNS (Social Networking Services such as twitter, etc.). Hence after giving consideration to the role of SNS by Islamic extremists, this study provides a modified model of recruitment. As a result of examinations of the mechanism of recruitment, it also points out some findings and implications for deterrence of the Islamic State.

The Traditional Model of Recruitment

When Islamic extremists began to mobilize resources for their activities in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the process of recruitment mainly relied on social relationships, such as the extended family of each activist. This tendency seemed to be a result of the relative primitiveness of the Islamic extremists' recruitment techniques. As leaders like Abdullah Azzam (1941-1989, a major leader of the Arab fighters against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan) or Usama bin Ladin (1957-2011) made journeys around the world to mobilize resources, Islamic extremists of those days ran resource mobilization based on direct personal relationships, and did not have a highly organized character. The nature of their activities probably determined

the way of recruitment. The activities of Islamic extremists were sometimes illegal or criminal and thus they needed trustworthy persons for recruitment. It was natural therefore, for them to seek trustworthy individuals among their relatives. In other words, face-to-face communication between recruiters and recruited was essential.⁵ Even after Islamic extremists began to use the internet for their agitations at the beginning of the 21st century, communications via internet were believed to be monitored by state security apparatuses, and therefore they preferred to avoid online resource mobilization. This tendency has continued from the end of the Jihad against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan to the present. However, there was a minor change in the expanded base, as they added their colleagues in Afghanistan as a source of recruitment as well. Islamic extremists' recruitment further developed through the experiences of al-Qaida and the infiltration of foreign fighters (Mujahidun) into Iraq.

Many research studies done by academics and state apparatuses have analyzed this issue, and have revealed important points about the mechanism of recruitment or cross-border migration of Mujahidun.⁶ In addition to these studies, some supporters of Islamic extremists themselves provided useful information on the internet to potential recruits about how to enter into Iraq via Syria.⁷ They eagerly recommended to those who wanted to

go Iraq to fight, that they find credible guides before their departure. They also provided technical and logistic advice for their journey. According to previous research and such sources of information given above, it is possible to classify four actors participating in the mechanism of recruitment and infiltration:

1. The Infiltrators: Individuals who actually try to take part in Islamic extremist organizations;
2. The Recruiters: Actors who recruit and select the 'infiltrators', and train them ideologically;
3. The Coordinators: Actors who assist 'infiltrators' in cross border migration;
4. The Accepters: Actors who absorb 'infiltrators' into Islamic extremist organizations.

It is important that the key factor in successful infiltration is not the ability of the infiltrators but the establishment of good relations and cooperation among the "recruiters", the "coordinators" and the "acceptors". Several case studies have shown that prior to the departure of the "infiltrators", "recruiters" select and indoctrinate them. "Coordinators" then determine their route and/or accommodations, and their access to the "acceptors", who will be the ones to decide to take in the "infiltrators". Guide-book like information for the "infiltrators" warns them to find trustworthy coordinators in advance to begin the journey. Interestingly,

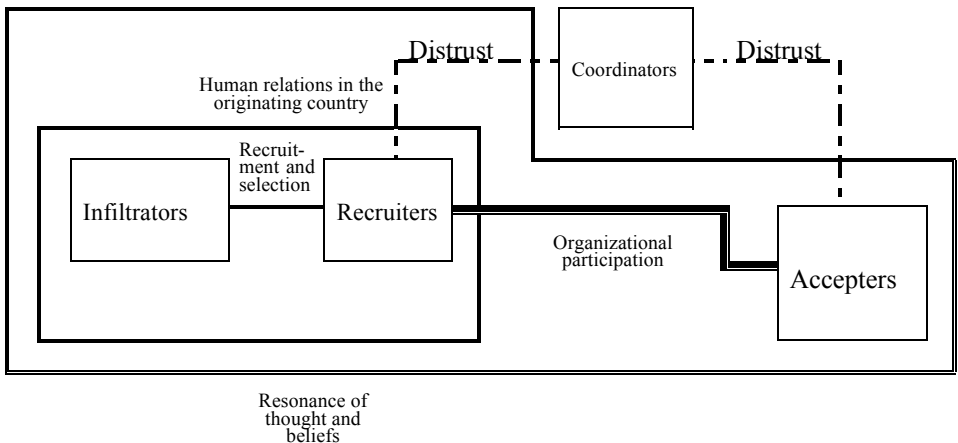
studies have shown that there is little ideological sympathy between the “coordinators” and other actors. For instance, Felter and Fishman stressed a deep distrust on the part of the organization [i.e. “acceptors”] towards the “coordinators”.⁸ Thus, it is assumed that “infiltrators”, “recruiters”, and “acceptors” share a radical religious ideology, in contrast to the “coordinators”, who do not always share such an outlook. Consequently, previous research has pointed to local tribal people or smugglers playing the role of the “coordinators” for economic incentives. The relationship between actors, the recruitment mechanism, and the cross border migration of Mujahidun, is summarized in Figure 1.

When considering the correlation between the solicitation by Islamic extremists and the actors involved in the cross border migration of

Mujahidun, the “infiltrators” and “recruiters” are located in the originating country of the “infiltrators”, and the “acceptors” exist in the conflict regions. Meanwhile, “coordinators” are believed to be local dwellers of transit countries (tribal people and local smugglers for instance). “Infiltrators” are recruited and selected in their origin country by the “recruiters”, who also give ideological training to the “infiltrators”. The “recruiters” generally seem to be affiliated with certain Islamic extremist organizations (i.e. the “acceptors”), or at least, they have personal ties with some members of the “acceptors”. Overall, successful infiltration depends on cooperation between “recruiters”, “coordinators”, and “acceptors”.

The “infiltrators”, “recruiters” and “acceptors” share religious and ideological thoughts and beliefs. “Coordinators” on the other hand,

Figure 1: Conventional Model of Recruitment by Islamic Extremists



although they assist “infiltrators” to join “accepters”, do not necessarily have an ideological sympathy with the other actors in the mechanism, and seek rather to maximize their own economic benefits. Therefore, there seems to be a deep distrust between the “coordinators” and other actors.⁹

Modified Model of Recruitment

Since 2011, with expansion of the Islamic State on the ground and their heavy exploitation of SNS, they managed to attract more than 30,000 people from around 100 countries. Based on this phenomenon, two derivations can be made. The first concerns the case of those “infiltrators” who did not experience face-to-face communications with the “recruiters” and “coordinators”. It is considered that these infiltrators have radicalized themselves based on agitations or propaganda distributed via SNS, and made the journey to the areas occupied by the Islamic State depending on the guidance they found through SNS. The second concerns non-combatant infiltrators, such as the families of Mujahidun or female infiltrators who aim to provide sexual services for Mujahidun under the excuse of “Jihad al-Nikah” (Jihad for marriage). To comprehend these new kinds of infiltrators into the mechanism of recruitment, this article calls all infiltrators as Muhajirun,¹⁰ and argues

that the above mentioned model should be modified.

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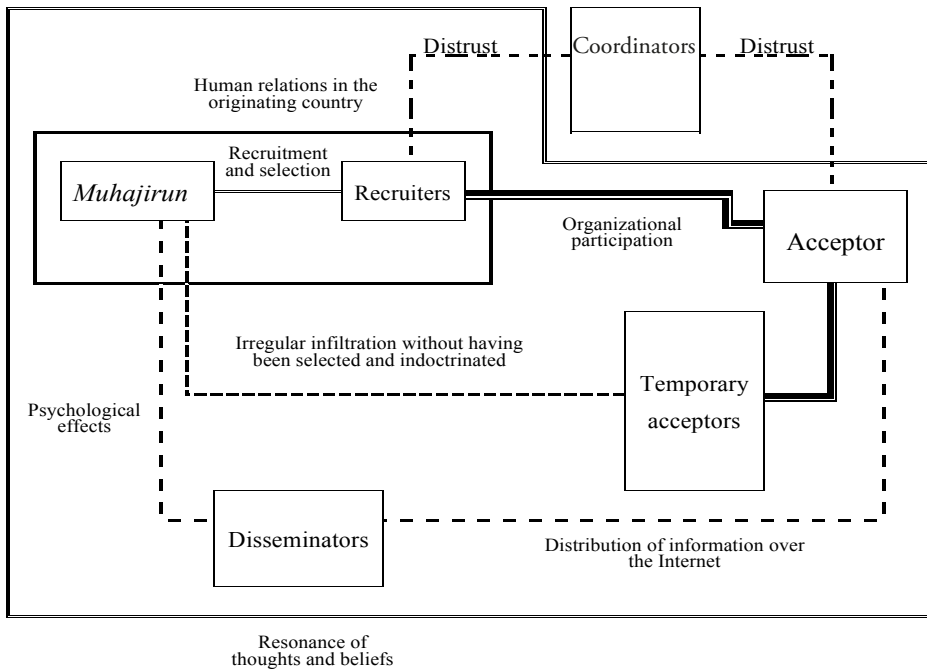
With regard to the first group, even though the Islamic State makes its agitations and propaganda mainly in Arabic, it is believed that some of these infiltrators cannot read, write or speak Arabic. Thus, the question is; how did they get the necessary information, or how did they become familiar with the ideology of Islamic extremism? Normally these are serious obstacles, but the fact that such infiltrators still exist means that there are important individuals who gather articles and movies on Jihad, and then summarize and translate them into different languages on SNS. The literature on this issue points out that these people’s accounts on social media are more popular than the official accounts of Islamic extremist organizations¹¹. And it is also noteworthy that these persons have knowledge about Arabic language and religious literature, but are not necessarily affiliated with any particular Islamic extremist organization. Furthermore, they do not seem to have organizational or

personal ties with Islamic extremists. Therefore, it is necessary to add these persons into the model of recruitment as new actors. This article will call them the “disseminators”, providing information and inspiration to candidate “infiltrators”. Several religious intellectuals or activists have been known as fitting in to the category of “disseminators”.¹²

These Muhajirun can join the formal organization of the Islamic State only after confirmation of their credibility and skill by several other members.

However, the journey of infiltration and the process of joining the Islamic State cannot be easy, and the numbers of fighters who join via recruitment that is inspired solely by such “disseminators” is not likely to be a majority among members of the Islamic State. Indeed, this sort of recruitment may be considered as an irregular one. Certainly, on SNS, there are many narratives of Muhajirun who joined the Islamic State without organized recruitment.¹³ Nevertheless, because these narratives (particularly stories on motivation, journey, the “coordinators”, “an ideal life” in the Islamic State... etc.) may be a part of the Islamic State’s propaganda, analysts should not depend on them completely as their source for research. As Neumann

revealed in his study on the narratives of defectors from the Islamic State, that ideal life is not always secured under the Islamic State. The defectors witnessed injustice, corruption, and poor quality of life in the “Caliphate”.¹⁴ Furthermore, the Islamic State has its own circumstances. For instance, it needs some specific skills to run its organization and activities (bureaucrats, IT engineers, doctors or medical workers, engineers for oil or gas fields, and experienced fighters and specialists for explosives in particular). In addition to these, the Islamic State is seriously required to screen out spies among its members. To secure the credibility of Muhajirun or to train them adequately, the Islamic State attaches them to training facilities or the lowest combat units.¹⁵ These Muhajirun can join the formal organization of the Islamic State only after confirmation of their credibility and skill by several other members. Leaked personal data of numerous fighters of the Islamic State has revealed that the Islamic State actually requires the declaration of candidates’ recommenders to the organization for accountability.¹⁶ Thus, this process has to be taken into consideration when dealing with the mechanism of recruitment. In other words, the Islamic state has introduced what could be called ‘temporary acceptors’, as a tool to avoid penetration by unreliable or unskilled individuals into the organization. Taking the above mentioned changes into consideration, the model of recruitment can be modified as below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Modified Model of Recruitment by Islamic Extremists

In this revised model, all infiltrators are referred to as Muhajirun, since among those who want to join the Islamic State, there are a considerable number of non-combatants or females, children and elders. The model also takes into consideration the fact that, although face-to-face communications remains a core factor for recruitment, a number of irregular infiltrations cannot be ignored. To avoid penetration by spies from hostile entities and unskilled infiltrators emanating from irregular infiltration, the model also adds to the category of “acceptors” a new actor, the “temporary acceptors”. Those Muhajirun who infiltrate through irregular means became official members of the “acceptors”

only after screening and training under “temporary acceptors”. The “temporary acceptors” seem to be loosely organized under the “acceptors” within the conflict region. Another new actor, the “disseminators,” also is shown in this revised model as it plays important role to prompt irregular infiltration by distributing information over the internet about the Islamic State or the journey to join it. While the “disseminators” share thoughts and beliefs with the “infiltrators”, “recruiters”, and “acceptors”, they do not have direct organizational or personal connections to any of the “acceptors”. Finally, the “disseminators” do not need to conduct illegal or criminal acts at their locations.¹⁷

Findings

This examination on the mechanism of recruitment revealed various important points and led to the above revised model. This model may be applicable not only to Mujahidun and other human resources mobilization, but also to the mobilization of other resources such as money and weapons. Therefore, this part of the study will discuss the characteristics of resources mobilization for Islamic extremists in general, and the Islamic State in particular.

It is evident that Islamic extremists (the Islamic State in particular) inevitably mobilize resources from outside of the conflict region. According to their view, the conflict in Syria and Iraq is not a problem for these two states, but a problem for the Islamic Community (Umma) as a whole.

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all Muslims should contribute to win the strife in accordance with each individual's capacity in various fields (i.e. not only on the battleground, but also, for example, in fundraising or propaganda spreading). This approach towards world jihad is assumed to prompt irregular infiltration and to mobilize the efforts of "disseminators", who contribute to the Islamic State outside of its organizational frameworks and personal relationships.

To secure trustworthy supporters, the Islamic extremists prefer to mobilize resources through their personal networks such as kinship networks or territorial connections. Consequently, face-to-face communication between the recruiter and the recruited plays an essential role in resource mobilization. This tendency did not change in principal even after recruitment via SNS became conspicuous. Thus leading class or skilled Muhajirun are supposed to be recruited through face-to-face recruitment.

From the view-point of each actor's location, it is natural to believe in the existence of a well-organized network within the originating countries of the Muhajirun and other resources to a certain extent. Therefore, such attacks as those in Paris (November 2015), Jakarta (January 2016), or Brussels (March 2016), for which the Islamic State claimed responsibility, do not reveal so much a problem about its expansion or "globalization", but show

how the Islamic State uses its capacity and resources in these arenas. In these countries there are already organized networks to mobilize resources for the Islamic State, and the attacks show that it has capability to conduct attacks at any location into which its network extends. From this point of view, there is a high probability of further attacks by the Islamic State in the countries where it has already developed its capacity to mobilize resources.

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Concerning the “coordinators”, these actors can be located around the routes between the origin countries of the Muhajirun and the conflict zone. In this case, Turkey can be considered as a main route for the cross border migration of Muhajirun. As stressed above, although the “coordinators” play a crucial role for successful infiltration, the “coordinators” do not have to share religious ideology or political aims of other actors in the mechanism of resource mobilizations. Therefore, the relationship between the “coordinators” and other actors seems to be tense and vulnerable. Nevertheless, since the

infiltration of Islamic extremists into Iraq or Syria has been continuing for at least five years, the “accepters” have had enough time to establish and develop their own activities to provide assistance for the Muhajirun.

Meanwhile, although the effects of the “disseminators” are not necessary to be limited within a specific geographic area, their location seems to be quite important. Certainly the “disseminators” are active in cyber space and they may therefore be free from some real world restrictions, however, when a person wants to act as a “disseminator”, it is still more convenient for him to be in a country or society with a culture of tolerance, freedom of expression and religious freedoms. If the “disseminator” is located in an oppressive regime or one with poor internet infrastructure, it becomes virtually impossible to act effectively.

Ultimately, only the “accepters” actually exist in the conflict zone. They seem to be quite skeptical toward Muhajirun who reach Syria or Iraq by irregular means. Therefore the layer of “temporary acceptors” has been established as a proxy to impose screening on Muhajirun and to train them. There have been several reports on difficulties experienced by Muhajirun under the “acceptors”.¹⁸

Implications and Conclusion

This part discusses implications of the threat from the Islamic State in the

future, and counter measure policies against its activities. The potential threat of the Islamic State against a certain country can be estimated by the actual results of its resource mobilization. Some European and South Asian countries act as resource sources for the Islamic State, and several hundred of the *Muhajirun* have been recruited from these countries. This fact means that there is an organized base of the Islamic State within these countries, and this organized base can easily turn into aggressors against their host countries. Therefore, it is important to see the motive of the Islamic State to change its organized base's activities there from resource mobilization to aggressive operations. As one intelligence agency stated, it is important for the Islamic State to maintain its image as a "strong" group attracting streams of new recruits, thus it needs to continuously achieve brilliant war results.¹⁹ In addition to this motivation, increasing pressure on resource mobilization activities by the Islamic State in resource supplying countries may increase the possibility of attacks within these countries, because it is natural that an increase in state scrutiny against resource mobilization would let "recruiters" consider a counterattack.

As several resolutions by the U.N. Security Council have demonstrated, cutting resource supplies for the Islamic State is considered as a key counter measure against it. Thus

further analysis of the structure of resource mobilization and the model of recruitment, which this research aimed to provide in particular, is useful to deal with the issue. According to this model, countries involved in this issue can be grouped into three categories according to their place in the recruitment mechanism. The first consists of the "supply side," such as European countries, countries of the former Soviet Union, South Asian countries, China, and Arab countries. The *Muhajirun*, the "recruiters", and in many case, the "disseminators" are active there. The Islamic State (the "acceptors") exploits these countries for resource mobilization. As the "acceptors" rely for an essential part of their recruitment on face-to-face communications, it is highly probable that the "recruiters" are coordinating closely with the "acceptors". Furthermore, the "recruiters" may be organized under the direction of the "acceptors" to a certain extent. Although these "supply side" countries should concentrate their efforts to prevent "recruiters" from carrying out their activities, this effort may increase the possibility of attacks in these countries, at least in the short term. Attacks in Paris and Brussels may be considered as a result of this. In accordance with this point of view, the possibility of a large scale attack by the Islamic State in, for example, Japan, is not high. Even though there was a case of a Japanese infiltrator detained in Turkey in the

end of March 2016, this seems to be an exception and there are only minor resource mobilization activities for the Islamic State in Japan.²⁰ Therefore, in addition to keeping guard on the ground, checking for the possible activities or the presence of “recruiters” is important for countries like Japan to avoid such an attack.

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The second group of countries is the “transit route” countries, such as Turkey. The “coordinators” here are assumed to use smuggling routes or pasture fields to assist the journeys of the “infiltrators,” in exchange for economic incentives. In addition to the activities of the “coordinators”, “accepters” may develop their organizational base in this category of countries. Countries in this category are assumed to have difficulties in controlling their border areas, or seem to have specific circumstances including social, economic, political, or tribal divisions. At least some of latest attacks in Turkey reflect its nature as a “transit route” used by thousands of Muhajirun going to the Islamic State.

The third group consists of the “demand side” countries, such as Iraq, Syria, and possibly Libya, where the “accepters” and “temporary accepters” are active. In these countries, there are power vacuums, which allow the “accepters” or the “temporary accepters” to act freely to a certain extent. Since the “accepters” have their own circumstances, they prefer to absorb trustworthy, trained, skilled fighters or professionals and even their wives. Moreover, the “accepters” are in need of various economic and military resources, and these actors are necessary to develop infrastructure to train or screen Muhajirun. Furthermore, these countries will possibly export trained and experienced fighters abroad as returnees in the future.

Thus further analysis of the structure of resource mobilization and the model of recruitment, which this research aimed to provide in particular, is useful to deal with the issue. According to this model, countries involved in this issue can be grouped into three categories according to their place in the recruitment mechanism.

By looking at this picture one can conclude that counter measures should

differ in accordance to these categories. In “supply side” countries, it is necessary to check “recruiters” and their network as the top priority, because this network may turn into a base from which major attacks can be launched. EU countries have already expressed their concern about possible threats that emanate from returnees of Islamic extremist organizations. Nevertheless, these countries should remember that when there are returnees, they can be a source of recruitment themselves. In this context, it is worth emphasizing that the conventional tendency is to recruit fighters through kinship, local community ties or by relationship to Jihadi colleagues. When these Islamic extremists form an organization they tend to include several members from same family. The militant composition in the latest attacks in Paris and Brussels support this argument. This experience must to be a lesson for “supply side” countries.

For “transit route” countries, taking measures against the “coordinators” is the most important step. In addition to border control and police measures, a kind of political, economic, and social conciliation for tribes or rural dwellers might be required as well. Although imposing visa restrictions is considered as the most effective measure for a country to avoid being a “transit route” for *Muhajirun*, this measure may sometimes contradict with goals of economic development, as it might

discourage foreign investors or tourists. Therefore, conciliation seems to be the most preferable measure against would be “coordinators”. Moreover, conciliation with the “coordinators” may also prompt disputes between them and other actors taking part in the resource mobilization mechanism. “Coordinators” who do not always share similar religious ideologies with other actors is an important vulnerability for resource mobilization of the Islamic State.

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As for the “demand side” countries, enacting countermeasure policies against facilities and infrastructures used to receive *Muhajirun* is necessary. Within these measures, the option of utilizing various military means should be open as well. In addition to policies aiming to dissolve functions and facilities of the “acceptors”, determined efforts to find rational and

sustainable solutions for the conflicts in Iraq and Syria should be pursued. It is the incessant political disputes that have justified the existence of Islamic extremists in the first place. In addition, harmful discourse and analysis have provided convenient excuses for the Islamic extremists, especially the Islamic State, to mobilize resources around the world. Hence a combination of military measures to destroy the infrastructures of the “acceptors” on the one hand, and the introducing of political initiatives to deprive justifications for Islamic extremists on the other, should be considered as a single integrated measure in “demand side” countries.

Finally, obstructing the effectiveness of the “disseminators” is a very important challenge for all countries in their countering efforts against the Islamic State. Although the “disseminators” do not necessarily have personal or organizational ties with other actors in the resource mobilization mechanism, they significantly contribute to the effectiveness of the propaganda and messages of the Islamic State on SNS. Regarding this characteristic of the “disseminators”, they thus prefer to locate in those places that guarantee freedom of speech as well as full access to the internet. In other words, some Western countries have become a hot bed for the “disseminators”. Consequently, close monitoring and elaborate counter measures against

the “disseminators” in industrialized countries and their allies is seriously required. However, keeping the balance between the need to restrain the “disseminators” and defending civil rights and freedom is a very complicated issue. As the restriction of civil rights is closely related to the rise of terrorism or extremism, over-restrictions of these rights and freedoms harbors the danger of facilitating the further growth of Islamic extremism.

While, the Islamic State ostensibly denies all un-Islamic value systems in the world, it does not hesitate to mobilize essential resources for its activities from these infidel systems. At the same time it also exploits perceived “un-Islamic” civil rights and freedom in Western societies. The key point of carrying out counter measures against the Islamic State may be hidden in this contradiction. Therefore, understanding its mechanism of resource mobilization in general and recruitment in particular is necessary for developing an effective fusion of military and civil counter measures against the Islamic State’s activities.

Finally, it should be emphasized that revealing the complex structures of Islamic extremist organizations is essential to take any countermeasure, and observations on the mechanism for resource mobilization are an important step in that direction.

Endnotes

- 1 Richard Barrett, *Foreign Fighters in Syria*, New York, The Soufan Group, 2014, p.33; The Soufan Group, *Foreign Fighters An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq*, New York, The Soufan Group, 2015, p. 25.
- 2 On the fundraising, Janine Di Giovannni, and Leah Mcgrath Goodman and Damien Sharikov, “How does ISIS Fund Its Reign of Terror?”, *Newsweek*, 6 November 2014; Elizabeth Dickinson, *Playing with Fire: Why Private Gulf Financing for Syria’s Extremist Rebels Risks Igniting Sectarian Conflict at Home*, Washington, The SABAN Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, 2013; The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), *Financing of the Terrorist Organisation Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Paris*, The Financial Action Task Force, 2015; Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, and Aaron Y. Zalin, “Uncharitable Organizations”, *Foreign Policy*, 26 February 2013; Erika Solomon, Guy Chazan and Sam Joe, “ISIS Inc: How Oil Fuels the Jihadi Terrorists”, *Financial Times*, 14 October 2015; David Andrew Weinberg, *Qatar and Terror Finance Part I: Negligence*, Washington, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, 2014; Analyze sources of revenue for the Islamic State such as oil, smuggling and donations from Gulf States and even “taxation”. On the aspect of armament, see, Conflict Armament Research, *Islamic State Ammunition in Iraq and Syria*, London, Conflict Armament Research, 2014; conducted field research and provided very important analysis.
- 3 Major literatures which shed light on the motivation and social statuses of recruited members are Barrett, 2014; Joseph A. Carter, Shiraz Maher and Peter R. Neumann, *Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Network*, London, The International Centre for The Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, 2014; Briggs Rachel Obe and Tanya Silverman, *Western Foreign Fighters Innovations in Responding to the Threat*, London, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2015; Neumann summarized members’ diverse motivations into three: the Syrian conflict; faith and ideology; and personal and material needs. Nevertheless, he also pointed out that narratives of recruitment by the Islamic State are complex and multifaceted; Peter R Neumann, *Victims, Perpetrators, Assets: The Narratives of Islamic State Defectors*, London, The International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, 2015, p. 9; Dodwell provides important considerations on social statuses (education levels, job history, experiences of Jihad... etc.) of foreign fighters in the Islamic State, examining leaked personal files of foreign fighters, and pointing out this diversity, see, Brian Dodwell and Daniel Milton and Don Rasseler, *The Caliphate’s Global Workforce: An Inside Look at the Islamic State’s Foreign Fighter Paper Trail*, New York, Combating Terrorism Center, 2016.
- 4 There is no clear definition of the sorts of individuals and groups that the term ‘Islamic extremists’ refers to, and there are cases where different names, such as ‘Islamic radicals’,

are used to describe the same phenomenon. In this paper, the discussion is advanced by provisionally defining the following individuals and groups as Islamic extremists: (i) those who, in addition to analyzing the current situation and considering problem-solving based upon Islamic logic and its logical claims, justify their own actions by their own version of Islam; (ii) those who have a negative attitude toward existing states, country borders, and political systems (such as monarchies and republics); and (iii) those who have adopted terrorism as a political style of action and try to achieve their objectives through activities that are illegal within the framework of existing nations and institutions.

- 5 Thomas Hegghammer, "The Recruiter's Dilemma: Signaling and Rebel Recruitment Tactics", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (2013), pp. 3-16.
- 6 Nawaf Obaid and Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Militants in Iraq: Assessment and Kingdom's Response*, Washington DC, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2005; Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, *Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records*, New York, Combating Terrorism Centre, US Military Academy, 2007.
- 7 Although credibility is not confirmed, the articles below are examples of such information: *Hādhihi Hiyā al-Iarīq ilā al-Irāq* ("This is the way to Iraq"), at <http://www.hkmah.net/showthread.php?t=8953> (last visited: 4 June, 2005); *Iarīq ilā Bilād al-Rāfidayn al-Jadīd* ("New way to land of two rivers"), at <http://alfirdaws.org/forums/showthread.php?t=2821> (last visited 11 September 2005).
- 8 In this case the "acceptors" - the Islamic State in Iraq or al-Qaida in the land of Two Rivers-asked the "infiltrators" to declare the amount of money paid for the "coordinators", and filed it as an organized document. The document suggested that there were no fixed or regular fees for coordination, and suggested the existence of a dispute about the amount of fee the "coordinators" should get (Felter and Fishman, p.23-27).
- 9 Yutaka Takaoka and Masaki Mizobuchi, "How does Muhajiroun Get to Go to Jihad? Foreign Fighters and the Geopolitics of the Conflict in Syria", in Raymond Hinnebusch and Omar Imady (eds.), *The Syrian Uprising: roots and trajectories*, London, Routledge, 2016 (forthcoming).
- 10 UNSC defined *Muhajirun* as follows: "Nationals who travel or attempt to travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, and other individuals who travel or attempt to travel from their territories to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts, or the providing or receiving of terrorist training." UNSC: United Nations Security Council, *Letter dated 19 May 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/2015/358, 15 May 2015, p 5-6.

- 11 Carter, Maher and Neumann, *Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Network*, pp.15-18.
- 12 Ibid, pp.18-28.
- 13 Supporters of the Islamic state have compiled several narratives of *Muhajirun* as e-Books, for example, *Hijrah (migration) to the Islamic State 2015*, at <https://thejihadproject.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/hijrah-to-the-islamic-state.pdf#search=%27Hijrah+to+the+Islamic+State%27> (last visited 11 October 2016); Although the narratives in this e-book stress the “grace of Allah” or “the will of Allah” for successful journeys, it provides few details of infiltration processes.
- 14 Neumann, *Victims, Perpetrators, Assets*, pp.10-11.
- 15 An article in the Arabic newspaper *al-Sharq al-Awasat* on 6 November 2014, “Kaifa Yanndamm al-Shābb fi Misr ilā ‘Dā’ish?’ (‘How do Egyptian youth join into Da’ish?’) reported some examples of this reality.
- 16 Personal data of 122 ISIS suicide bombers, *Zaman Al Wasl*, at <https://en.zamanalwsl.net/news/14563.html> (last visited 15 October 2016), showed leaked forms with the personal data of fighters. In addition to name, date of birth and citizenship, etc. the form contains fields of ‘recommendation and recommender’.
- 17 Takaoka, and Mizobuchi, “How does Muhajiroun Get to Go to Jihad? Foreign Fighters and the Geopolitics of the Conflict in Syria” (forthcoming).
- 18 General Intelligence and Security Service Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, *Life with ISIS: the Myth Unravalled*, at <https://english.aivd.nl/binaries/aivd-en/documents/publications/2016/01/15/publication-life-with-isis-the-myth-unravalled/life-with-isis.pdf>, pp. 5-13 (last visited 12 October 2016).
- 19 Ibid, p.14.
- 20 The Soufan Group estimated that there were only nine Japanese infiltrators into the Islamic State between 2011 and 2015. This fact strongly indicates that there are weak recruitment activities, thus there is only a minor organizational base of the Islamic State in Japan, see, The Soufan Group, p.8.