Abstract

The aim of this thesis was to find out what role psychological and social factors play in the motivation of jihadist foreign fighters to leave for Syria. The sub-questions examine, on the one hand, how authors of the studies focused on motivation of foreign fighters work with the theoretical background and concepts related to the psychosocial sphere, their interpretation of the key concepts and motivation of foreign fighters and, on the other hand, what psychosocial motivation to leave for Syria prevails in existing studies. In order to answer these questions, I chose several theoretical models of radicalization that work mainly with the psychological and social dimension of the problem. Subsequently, I chose several main psychosocial categories and narratives to analyse the studies, with the possibility of new categories occurring. I was particularly interested in existential motivation such as search for meaning or the identity crisis, in the case of jihadists also connected with the ideology and the influence of social groups. Based on the analysis, I found out that the theoretical basis, the specific definitions of individual key concepts and the logic of the interpretation of the respondents' words in the majority of the studies are missing or not fully described. Without the proper definition and theoretical basis, the meaning of individual key concepts can coincide and lead to different interpretations of testimonies of foreign fighters. In addition, psychological factors have almost always been associated with some other factors - especially ideology, socio-economic factors or social group influences. Consequently, the authors work with psychosocial aspects, however, each of them does so differently.