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To cite this article: Mehmet Ozkan (2017) Latino Muslims and Radical Extremism: Why There Is No Daesh (ISIS) Threat in Latin America, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 37:3, 284-293, DOI: [10.1080/13602004.2017.1384673](https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2017.1384673)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2017.1384673>



Published online: 05 Oct 2017.



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Latino Muslims and Radical Extremism: Why There Is No *Daesh* (ISIS) Threat in Latin America

MEHMET OZKAN 

Abstract

Despite much talk about infiltration of ISIS into Latin America and participation from Latino Muslims, there is no concrete evidence yet. Latin America still represents the safest continent on the earth from ISIS threat. When we look at the recruitment strategy of ISIS, social media comes as a surprisingly first way of attracting young people to its ideology. Latin American Muslims are extremely well connected to social media, through which many of them do not only learn about Islam; but also feel close to Arabic or Middle Eastern culture. Yet, the strong presence of Latino Muslims in online spaces did not yield a success attracting Latinos to ISIS via these channels. Are Latino Muslims immune from ISIS's attractiveness? What makes them keep away from ISIS's social media messages and recruitment strategies? This article argues that this can only be explained with the nature of the socio-political context in which young and social media addicted Latino Muslims live.

Introduction

Terrorist attacks by ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) in Turkey, France, Belgium and elsewhere inevitably raised the issue of ISIS's reaching capacity all over the world. However, despite some false alarming voices, ISIS still has no place in Latin America.¹ According to the Soufan Group Report, it is estimated that over 27,000 foreign fighters have traveled to Iraq and Syria since fighting broke out in 2011.² Out of this number, there are approximately 6000 people from Europe, with most fighters joining from France, Germany and the UK. In the same report, it is also observed that the number of foreign fighters from Western Europe has more than doubled since June 2014.³

The increase in foreign fighters is not uniform throughout the world; certain regions and countries have seen more significant rises than others. For example, foreign fighters from Russia and Central Asia have shown a significant rise; some estimates suggest a near 300% increase in known fighters since June 2014.⁴ While there is an overall increase of foreign fighters joining ISIS from all over the world, Latin America still stands as a continent with least number of foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria. So far, a total of 76 people from Latin America (23 from Argentina, 50 from Trinidad and Tobago and 3 from Brazil) are believed to have traveled to ISIS territory, compared to 195 from Oceania

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and 330 from North America.⁵ If these numbers are true, they clearly indicate that Latin American foreign fighters only constitute less than 0.003 of total population.

Of course, this number alone may not indicate that there may be less danger, but it shows that there is a rare interest to join ISIS among Latino Muslims. How one can explain these phenomena? When we look at the recruitment strategy of ISIS, social media comes as a surprisingly first way of attracting young people to its ideology. Latin American Muslims are extremely well connected to social media, through which many of them do not only learn about Islam, but also feel close to Arabic or Middle Eastern culture.⁶ Yet, the strong presence of Latino Muslims in online spaces did not yield success in attracting Latinos to ISIS via these channels. Are Latino Muslims immune from ISIS’s attractiveness? What keeps them away from ISIS’s social media messages and recruitment strategies? This article argues that this can only be explained with the nature of the socio-political context in which the young and social media addicted Latino Muslims live (Figure 1).

Who Are Latino Muslims? Beyond *Los Turcos*

Latin America has no more than 1% Muslims in its total population.⁷ Out of 625 million in the continent, many believe that there are only 6 million Muslims. If one divides this number, traditionally Arab populations, which originated from the Middle East—popularly called *Los Turcos*—are in the majority. Perhaps only 30–40% of the Latino Muslims are converts.⁸ Arab community in Latin America has very well integrated into the economic and social life, and are mostly engaged in business, as compared to Muslims in Europe and the United States. They feel pretty at home in the continent because they can live their religion freely without any state intervention. They also participate in the civic life and engage in trade and commerce that makes them feel part of the larger society. Of course, as Palestinians, Lebanese and Syrians they continue to feel some sort of attachment to their homeland; however, this mostly does not amount to more than an emotional belonging. Many of them, due to distance from their homeland, are

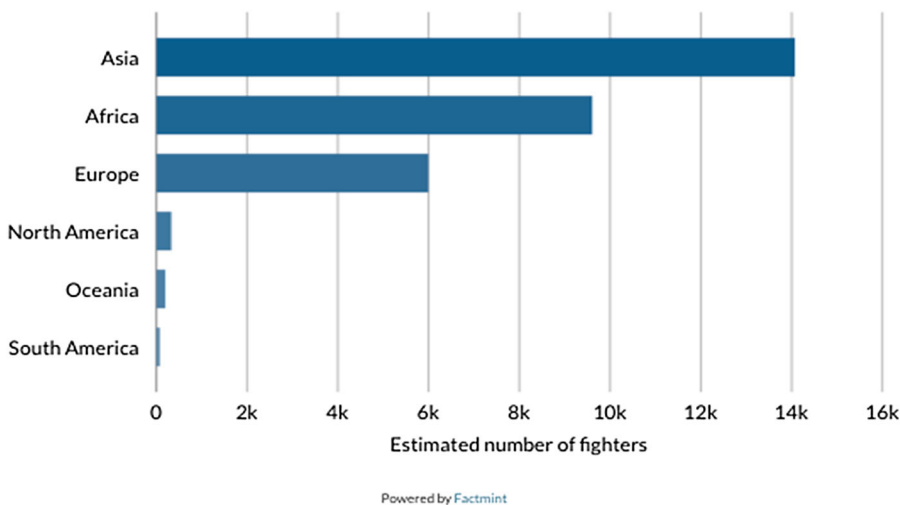


Figure 1. Estimated number of foreign fighters by continent. Source: Ashley Kirk, “Iraq and Syria: How many foreign fighters are fighting for Isil?”, *The Telegraph*. 24 March, 2016.

already disconnected from the reality of their original country. Marriage and social integration made them more involved in life in the continent than in their respective and distant homelands. Therefore, while they continue to carry cultural influences of their country of origin, they are far away from the political reality—and even sometimes the sentiment of their original homeland.

What Latino converts to Islam face is not very different from *Los Turcos*.⁹ They have no real connection with the Middle East or Islamist ideology. Their inclination toward the Muslim world is merely cultural and emotional rather than of political interest. Despite their young ages, usually between 18 and 24 years old, many of them have no further education than a bachelor's degree. Only few speak other languages, besides Spanish, to connect to the outside world. Although they all intend to learn Arabic at one stage in their life, their success in speaking and understanding Arabic perfectly is rare.

There has been no momentum among Latino Muslims to join ISIS. And this is probably associated with a certain type of identity construction in Latino Muslim community. They tend to be specifically attached to their language and culture, more than anything else, which limits the exposure to foreign proselytism. This can be observed clearly among Latino Muslims. For example, countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt have taken some converts mostly with full-scholarship to study Islam; most of them return to the continent with a total disappointment.¹⁰ Their illusion of Islam and Arabic culture is scattered with their experiences, as they come to understand that Arabic culture is much more dominating and organizing the life than religion itself. Therefore, some Latinos who study Islam in Muslim countries sometimes become less religious than before upon their return to their countries; while others try to look for a different interpretation and understanding of Islam in Latino context.¹¹

Perceptions of Latino Converts on the Middle East

As mentioned above Latino converts are young and their main source of information about Islam is the Internet and social media.¹² Despite the fact that this may make them an easy pray for ISIS, the terrorist group so far could not penetrate their minds nor have any popularity among the Latino Muslims. What can explain this?

This can partly be understood by their perception of the Middle East. In their minds, the Middle East still means a rich husband for girls, luxury life and travel to Dubai to see attractive Arabic culture. At political level, they may know a little about the issue of Palestine and Israel; but not much about other complex problems of the region. As their conceptions have mostly been based on cultural and social themes, it is not surprising that they see the Middle East from a totally different perspective than others do.

The other element that shapes their perception of Muslims and the Middle East are *Los Turcos* in the continent. Their interaction with them in the mosques and social life as friends, and brothers and sisters in Islam, show them a peaceful, sometimes pacifist image of Arabs and Muslims. Indeed, one can come across hardly any conversation among them about political issues. Therefore, this real life experiences along with only cultural approach to the Middle East makes Latino converts mostly out of touch from the reality in the Middle East.

It is also important to note here that there are few Latino Muslims who study the Middle Eastern culture and society in an academic context. Interestingly enough, those who usually show interest in the Middle Eastern politics are usually non-Muslims. The lack of real interest from Latino Muslims continues to sustain their

emotional and romantic approach toward the Middle East, rather than examining the stereotypes and creating a balanced understating of Islam in Latin American context.

Online Community and Romanticism

The meaning of romanticism and love in Latin culture is well known. Latino Muslims are no exception. It should also be noted that there is an extremely salient romanticism about Islam among Latino Muslims. This has been fed, produced and re-produced over time and now mostly through Internet and social media. Perhaps, Latino converts are one of the very well connected Muslims to virtual world than in any other place in the world. For them, Internet is larger than life, a place for socialization, information, friendship and most importantly feeling part of the larger Islamic community. Considering that there are not many available books about Islam in Spanish, online forums, Facebook groups and Internet forums are the main source of socialization, debates and gathering knowledge. Coupled with the laziness of modern era, perhaps online world is the only and easy way to turn to whenever they face a problem.¹³

The majority of young people entering Islam are partly through Arabic culture that has also its attraction of romance, exoticism and charm. Perhaps with the influence of this, most of the young Latino Muslims are seeing Internet a place for finding an exotic and romantic husband; or opening a new chapter in their life as a way of leaving all—mostly economic—difficulties behind.¹⁴

With this heavily virtual life, Latino converts can easily be defined as an online community. Although they gather for praying and other activities in mosques in almost every major city, this does not lead to a much better intra-community communication among Muslims. The fact that opportunities to spend time together are mostly limited, as many of them come to mosque only for Friday prayers, it results in a more virtual type of relationship, especially among young Latino Muslims. Despite heavy use of social space, ISIS has no place in Latin America. One should also note here that as the Latino culture is very dominant and all comprehensive in nature, none of the converts could easily transform herself/himself totally to reach a level at which they could reject their own cultural influences. This further makes them more difficult to be targeted as prey for any ISIS infiltration into Latin America.

Apolitical Muslims—and Sufism

Depending on from which point of view you look at, the biggest advantage or disadvantage of new converts to Islam in Latin America are that they are extremely apolitical. Thus, after converting to Islam they face the danger of disconnecting from the political and social realities of their own countries.¹⁵ That is because most of the converts enter an emotional period in their sensibilities where as if they live in a different world now, mostly interacting with only Muslim converts and sharing time with them. Unless something touches them directly, they show little interest in political and economic issues in their own countries. Therefore, arguing that Latino Muslim converts are perhaps the most apolitical ones among all Latinos is not an exaggeration. This apolitical way of looking at the world remains the biggest obstacle for any politically motivated radical group that intends to penetrate their world. Therefore, the extremely low participation from Latin America in ISIS groups may not be explained only by geographical distance, but rather, it may be explained by their apolitical stance.

There is another aspect that keeps Latino converts away from radicalization and that is their inclination toward the Sufi tradition. In Islam, Sufi tradition refers to love of humanity, peaceful co-existence and a soft interpretation of Islam as a way of living. Sufism in Latin America has a long history of presence. For example, Yakzan Hugo Valdez of Argentina, before his death in 1993, was a charismatic *sheikh* of Sufi Order International and was initiated by Pir Vilayet Inayat from India and the US and of the Mevlevi Order initiated by Suleyman Hayati Dede from Konya, Turkey.¹⁶ Sufis are generally considered to have apolitical interpretation of Islam in daily life. This also contributes to apolitical stance of Latino Muslims toward the Middle East and the Islamic world.

The Politics of Latin American Countries Toward the Middle East

Latin American countries have not been drawn into conflict with al-Qaeda or ISIS for a variety of reasons, most particularly their non-membership in the Western military alliances that have been directly involved. Many Latin American governments are sympathetic to Palestinian cause and they feel certain uneasiness with the policies of Israel in the Middle East.¹⁷ Similarly, anti-Americanism or anti-Westernism has always had a resonance in Latin America since the Second World War. The American support to military *coup d'états*; repressive regimes and other policies toward the Continent has never made the US a credible partner. Opposition movements from radical to socialist left in the continent calumniated their politics mostly based on rejecting American policies. Anti-American approach in Latin America has created a common ground with the opposition groups in the Middle East. Therefore, radical groups from the Middle East did not even see Latin American governments as a natural enemy to attack.

As a result of this existing image of Latin America in the Middle East, radical groups such as Al Qaeda/ISIS are not likely to target Latin America, but rather attack powerful political centers in the world, including old colonial powers whose policies of intervention in the Middle East have caused resentment in radical elements of these societies. As Latin American countries have not engaged in that type of intervention, there is also less interest from these radical groups to plan activities in the Continent.

Visible *But* an Integrated and Inseparable Community

As mentioned, some researchers claimed that there are up to 6000 foreign fighters among the ranks of ISIS in European countries.¹⁸ Similar numbers show that wherever there are issues of negative approach to immigrants, the number of participants among ISIS is higher. Indeed many immigrants feel second-class citizens in Europe and face Islamophobic reactions from their own society. This in turn creates a feeling of self-alienation from the country where they live, and pushes them to find different alternatives in their lives. In this context, immigrants in Europe can be easily captured by the powerful and “attractive” discourse of ISIS. This is in general the overall story of foreign fighters from Europe.¹⁹

In Latin America, there is no exclusive social and political environment that pushes Latino Muslims toward ISIS. Arab Muslims in Latin America feel much safer in Latin America than in their home countries in the Middle East under dictatorial and exclusivist governments. Latino converts share much more communality with non-Muslim Latinos than with Muslim immigrants in Europe.

In Latin America, today both the immigrants from the Middle East and their descendants are not only fully integrated into the society and culture, but also they are promi-

ment in Latin culture. Examples of these are many. The most successful *turcos* include a long list of people famous throughout not only their countries and the region but also the world. In entertainment, actress Salma Hayek and the superstar singer Shakira are recognized throughout the world; while the Mexican businessman Carlos Slim Helu has the distinction of being the richest person alive. A number of people of Arab descent have held the presidency in their countries, including Carlos Menem in Argentina, Abdala Bucaram in Ecuador and Carlos Roberto Flores in the Honduras, to mention only a few.²⁰ Although *los turcos* maintain a sense of ethnic identity in varying degrees with their ancestral places of origin, they are also very much citizens of the country their parents and grandparents immigrated to in Latin America. In that sense, Muslims in Latin America are adding, not idling in their societies. For example, Ecuador would not be the same without the people of Arab descent. They are a tiny minority but their roles in politics, economy and culture are immense. Their last names, such as Bucaram, Turbay, Menem, etc, have become so normal in the country that people do not even regard them foreign compared to Spanish surnames. One can even come across women wearing the *hijab* in major cities of the continent or other type of Islamic dress, but so far there is almost zero radicalism observed.²¹

These are the elements that still prevent Latinos from joining ISIS. Unless there is a clear policy change on the part of Latin American governments toward excluding and ostracizing Muslims in respective countries, Muslims in Latin America will continue to feel part of the society. Thus, while looking for signs of presence of ISIS in Latin America, experts and politicians must be careful not to stoke fear and thus create a discourse on defaming Muslims in Latin America as possibly vulnerable to ISIS.

Why Much Talk About ISIS Threat in Latin America?

Although there is very little imminent danger of ISIS in Latin America, there is still increasing talk about the potential threat of ISIS. If one reads the newspapers and opinions of security experts in Latin America, the tone of their voice expresses more of a concern than reality, while some openly claim the existence, and even imminent threat, of ISIS in the continent.²² In November 2015, ISIS threatened 60 countries for being part of an anti-ISIS coalition. Among the list of countries, there was only one Latin American country, Mexico. Whether it was the true intent on the part of ISIS to threaten Mexico, or they just placed Mexican flag among the indicated countries due to incorrect information, no one knows. However, it has alerted Mexicans for a while and there has been talk about possible danger of Mexican border being used by ISIS to infiltrate into the US.²³

After this news spread, investigators tried to find ISIS cells in Mexico, but so far there has not been a single ISIS cell discovered. Indeed, the talk about ISIS threat on Mexico-US border has made life more difficult for Latinos in the US, considering the anti-immigration rhetoric of the US President, Donald Trump.²⁴

Although some security experts in Latin America and Mexico keep claiming that ISIS may be present at the US-Mexico border, this is far from reality until now. Indeed, such a discourse is dangerous for Latinos. There is little evidence or intelligence to support the idea that ISIS is actually operating in Mexico or that loyalists are infiltrating the southern border. More likely, statistically speaking, if ISIS is successful in entering the US, it will come through international air travel, not through the US-Mexico border; and let us not forget the vast border to the north that affords a number of entry points.

Spearlt, a professor of law at Texas Southern University, in Houston, Texas, argues:

... [t]he claims that ISIS is in Mexico, then, effectively cast Latinos as potential communities for engagement ... Ultimately, if the American public buys into these claims, it will only add to the discrimination of Latinos. It will tie the plight of Muslims to Mexicans, and categorically implicate Latinos in the War on Terror; it will also become a license for greater brutality at the border. If the story is bought, regardless of its truth, Latinos will face increasing entanglement in the criminal justice system and increasing status as second-class citizens.²⁵

Since the attack on American soil on September 11, 2001, some right-wing and sensationalist media along with conservative US politicians have been warning of the presence of Al-Qaeda cells in Latin American countries.²⁶ Many media outlets continued arguing that South American drugs gangs are providing millions of pounds of funding for al-Qaeda terrorists by paying them to ensure the safe passage of cocaine across North Africa and toward Europe,²⁷ without any evidence. These op-eds and warning was a result of the mushrooming industry of “terrorism experts” in the aftermath of 9/11. Most of the so-called experts on Al-Qaeda terrorism in Latin America were either alarmed by the much-talked about Hezbollah activities in various countries in the continent²⁸ or were talking only about a possibility, rather than a reality.

Today, a similar sensational media discourse is on the air about the recruitment activities of ISIS in Latin America. Major media outlets claim that ISIL (Islamic Stat of Iraq and Levant) cells are operating on the US-Mexico border or collaborating with Latin American criminal organizations.²⁹ Indeed, this is just a repeat of what has already happened in the early 2000s with al-Qaeda; the alleged Iranian/Hezbollah infiltration in the US through Latin America; or the narrative around the Triple Frontier as a center of logistics operations for Islamic extremists. As argued by Di Ricco and Al-Sishani in their separate works, in all cases, no solid proof of direct terrorist activities in the region was ever produced.³⁰

Since ISIS’s emergence, local and international media amplified the threat for the region, often without verifiable information. For example, Bastian Alexis Vasquez, *alias* Abu Safiyya, from Chile, was the first to show up in an ISIL propaganda video. Addressing the camera in English, he announced the fall of the century-old Sykes-Picot borders between Syria and Iraq. Quickly labeled as one of the first Latino contributors to ISIS, Abu Safiyya was instead totally disconnected from his homeland, which he left in 2001 for Norway, where he converted and was radicalized.³¹

Similarly, SOUTHCOM Commander Admiral Kurt Tidd told reporters on March 10, 2016, that “between 100 [and] 150” individuals from Latin America and the Caribbean who have traveled to join ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Perhaps, knowing the lack of evidence for such a claim, a SOUTHCOM spokesperson Jose Ruiz rushed to explain to the media that these numbers refer to the

... estimated number of foreign terrorist fighters our experts assess have traveled or attempted to travel to conflict zones in the Middle East to support or fight on behalf of Sunni Extremist groups in that region, mainly ISIL but others as well.³²

The New York times ran a story on the hot spot on ISIS recruitment in Trinidad and Tobago on February 2017, and estimated that one can talk “about 15 or 20 of the Islamic State recruits” from this country.³³ Yet the story was presented in a manner as

if many of the 100,000 Muslims who live in this country, constituting only 5% of the entire Trinidad and Tobago population, have an intention to join ISIS.

Despite these above-mentioned sensational and baseless allegations about ISIS threat in the continent, as of now, Latin America presents a very low danger for any type of terrorist attack such as those that took place in Europe and the United States—and perhaps it is the safest continent with regard to ISIS. However, these claims in the media may only serve to harm the safety of Muslims in the continent and create an environment where people see them as a potential danger. So far none of the Latin American countries have taken these claims seriously to prosecute Muslims, nor put them under surveillance or observation. It is likely to be so unless these allegations are proven by facts or by occurrence of terrorist attack anywhere in the continent.

Conclusion

Latino Muslims have always been subject to bearing indirect repercussions of what happens in the Middle East. While some of them still enjoy family, language and cultural connection with the Middle East, from where their ancestors immigrated to the continent, today there is a growing Latino Muslim community without any connection to the region except their religious beliefs. These newly emerging, young and apolitical Muslims have a different way of approaching Islam. They tend not to put “politics” at the center of their perspective and analysis of the issues both in their own countries and the Middle East. Their main interest in the Middle East is spiritual, romantic and sometimes confusing; however, far from violence. ISIS is known better for using online recruitment strategies to attract young people to their cause, especially in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Latino Muslims use online spaces extensively, such as Facebook and other social media forums; however, there is no indication that they are being attracted by the demagoguery of ISIS.

Even though we do not know whether there is one or not, this should not be attributed to the failure of ISIS’ strategy toward Latino Muslims; rather it is a natural result of the lack of interest among Latino Muslims in political discourses, such as the one engaged in by ISIS. Given this reality, there is increasing media campaign about ISIS activities in Latin America in many conservative outlets. This itself is only serving the very aim of ISIS, which creates an environment where ISIS propaganda gets disseminated without its presence in the continent.

NOTES

1. Massimo Di Ricco, “Don’t Look for Latin American Jihadis – Yet”, *Al Jazeera*, 19 April 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/03/don-jihadi-jose-150330072341180.html> (accessed 20 April 2017).
2. The Soufan Group, *Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq*, December 2015, p. http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf (accessed 25 May 2017).
3. *Ibid.*, p. 4. Depending on the sources one takes, the number may vary on the number of the total European foreign terrorist fighters. For example, according to International Center for Counter Terrorism, ICCT of Netherland, European foreign terrorist fighters are estimated between 3922 and 4294. See Bibi Van Ginkel and Eva Entenmann, eds., “The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies”, *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague*, Vol. 7, No 2, 2016, p. 4.
4. The Soufan Group, *Foreign Fighters*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 7–9.

6. An interesting research on their social media presence and connection with wider Muslim world, see Diana Carolina Zuniga Gomez, *Latino Muslims Communities Online Presence: Sense of Virtual Community in Facebook Spaces*, MA Thesis, Eskisehir: Anadolu University, 2016.
7. “Arabes y musulmanes en América Latina” *BBC Mundo*, 15 March 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/specials/newsid_4294000/4294241.stm (accessed 8 September 2016).
8. This is the estimation of Sheikhs of various mosques in various countries.
9. ‘Los Turcos’ was the name given to Arab immigrants from the Levant, many of whom arrived on Turkish passports after the First World War to Latin America.
10. This is based on personal observation and communication with Latino converts in Colombia in 2016.
11. That is why some of the Muslim Latino converts, after returning to their own countries from the Muslim countries, try to put a distance between themselves and Islam. This does not mean that they are leaving Islam, however, they return with a total shock that it takes them to handle it. What perhaps is the main reason for this is that Latino Muslims usually confuse religion with culture. They mostly think that Muslim countries live in the same way as Islam asked for, without even thinking that each Muslim country has its own strong culture and with that comes an interpretation of Islam in social life.
12. Diana Carolina Zuniga Gomez, *Latino Muslims Communities*, *op. cit.*,
13. *Ibid.*
14. Personal conversation with Latino Muslims who have shared their personal stories honestly.
15. Personal conversation with Latino converts.
16. For more on Yakzan Hugo Valdez, see http://remembrance.sufipaths.net/?page_id=1025 (accessed 1 March 2017).
17. For a comprehensive study on Latin American countries foreign policy toward the Middle East, see Marta Tawil Kuri (Ed), *Latin American Foreign Policies towards the Middle East: Actors, Contexts, and Trends*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
18. See Ashley Kirk, “Iraq and Syria: How Many Foreign Fighters are Fighting for Isil?”, *The Telegraph*, 24 March 2016.
19. For more on this issue see, Tuncay Kardas and Omer Behram Ozdemir, *The Making of European Foreign Fighters*, Ankara: SETA Analysis, No 11, October 2014; Necati Anaz, Omer Aslan and Mehmet Ozkan, “Turkish Foreign Terrorist Fighters and the Emergence of a New Kind of Radicalization”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2016, pp. 618–642.
20. Aaron Moore and Kent Mathewson, “Latin America’s *Los Turcos*: Geographic Aspects of Levantine and Maghreb Diasporas”, *Nóesis: Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades*, Vol. 22, No. 43, 2013, pp. 290–308.
21. There is no comprehensive study on this, however, judging from several countries, there is almost no discrimination in the continent on being Muslim. Argentina, for example, is home to one of the Latin America’s largest Muslim communities in the continent and there is no such an incident reported. See Vincent Lofaso, *Argentina’s Muslim Minority*, Council of Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), 13 December 2016, <http://www.coha.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ArgentinasMuslimMinorityArticle-1.pdf> (accessed 16 April 2017).
22. As it is not a surprise, FOX News television channel in U.S. is reporting on this issue in an alarming style. See, Jason Kopp, “As Islamic Extremism Grows in Latin America, Some Want Trump to Take Action”, *Fox News*, 31 March 2017, <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/03/31/as-islamic-extremist-grows-in-latin-america-some-want-trump-to-take-action.html> Accessed on 16/04/2107; and “Spain Says ISIS Raising Funds in Latin America to Attack Us: Islamic Terrorists are Collecting Money in Latin America to Attack the United States”, *InfoWars*, 29 December 2016, <https://www.infowars.com/breaking-spain-says-isis-raising-funds-in-latin-america-to-attack-us/> (accessed 16 April 2017).
23. See Michael S. Schmidt, “U.S. Pushes Back Against Warnings That ISIS Plans to Enter From Mexico”, *The New York Times*, 15 September 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/16/us/us-pushes-back-against-warnings-that-isis-plans-to-enter-from-mexico.html?_r=0 (accessed 25 April 2017); and Leo Hohmann, “Islamic Terror Cells Shift from Mideast to U.S.-Mexican Border”, *WND*, 1 May 2017, <http://www.wnd.com/2017/01/islamic-terror-cells-shift-from-mideast-to-u-s-mexican-border/> (accessed 20 June 2017).
24. If considered together with the policy of building wall on the border, the claims that ISIS will attack the US by using US-Mexico border is just playing into the hands of Donald Trump’s discourse and creating a double fear concerning the border.

25. Spearlt, "ISIS, Latinos & the Brunt of Border Politics", *The Huffington Post*, 10 October 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/spearlt/isis-latinos-the-brunt-of_b_5956094.html (accessed 20 June 2017).
26. Muslims in Latin America have sometimes been subject to Western media's biased and faulty inferences as a result of global trend. For a study on Argentina, see Fatima Rajina, "Islam in Argentina: Deconstructing the Biases", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 36, No. 3, 2016, pp. 399–412.
27. For example see, "South American Drug Gangs Funding al-Qaeda Terrorists", *The Telegraph*, 29 December 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/southamerica/colombia/8230134/South-American-drug-gangs-funding-al-Qaeda-terrorists.html> (accessed 25 June 2017).
28. Since the 1994 bombing in Buenos Aires, there is a growing talk about Hezbollah activities in Latin America. Although many of the literature tend to treat Hezbollah activities in the continent as a separate terrorist group activity, this is not really correct. Hezbollah activities in Latin America should always be contextualized in a general Iranian foreign policy toward Latin America. Only then, one can make a meaningful analysis of where and what types of activities have been pursued by Hezbollah in the continent and, for what aim. For Hezbollah activities in Latin America, see Paulo Botta, *La doble cara de Hezbollah en América Latina*, CEMOC, 2010, pp. 3–4. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/121126/2010_07_LaDobleCara.pdf (accessed 20 June 2017). (20 Ocak 2017); and Matthew Levitt, "Iranian and Hizbollah Operations in South America: Then and Now", *PRISM*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 2015, pp. 119–132.
29. See Michael S. Schmidt, "U.S. Pushes Back Against Warnings That ISIS Plans to Enter From Mexico", *The New York Times*, 15 September 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/16/us/us-pushes-back-against-warnings-that-isis-plans-to-enter-from-mexico.html?_r=0. (accessed 18 April 2017).
30. See Massimo Di Ricco, "Don't look for Latin American jihadis – yet", *Al Jazeera*, 19 April 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/03/don-jihadi-jose-150330072341180.html> (accessed 18 April 2017); and Murad Batal Al-Shishani, "Is al-Qaeda Seeking Allies in Latin America?", *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 5, No. 37, 2008, <https://jamestown.org/program/is-al-qaeda-seeking-allies-in-latin-america/> (Accessed 18 April 2017).
31. Leonardo Pedraza, "Combatientes Latinoamericanos En Isis: Los Yihadistas Exóticos", 28 June, 2015, <https://temporadasoez.com/2015/06/28/combatientes-latinoamericanos-en-isis-los-yihadistas-exoticos/> (accessed 30 May 2017).
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