



Research Article

Terrorism New Wave: The Same Style but New Ways in the Context of Online Radicalization

Muhammad Asad Latif

Department of Islamic Studies, Islamia University Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur Pakistan

Email: rockybaba091@gmail.com



Orcid Id: <http://orcid.org/0009-0006-9378-9953>



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Abstract. Radicalization, which is influenced by social, cognitive, and economic variables, is the mental process that justifies violence or violent behavior. Since the invention of the Internet radical organizations have modified their tactics in order to fit the new environment. The Internet has evolved into more than simply a platform for extremist activity; it has also taken the place of the main operating environment and arena where political beliefs are developed, assaults are planned, and exceptional social movements start to take shape. Members of the group meet up online to discuss their religious beliefs and utilize these forums to broaden the scope of action at the individual and organizational levels in order to disseminate their political ideology, hire employees, and organize assaults. The conceptual framework, individual and group dynamic reasons of radicalization, metaphors for describing radicalization, radicalization driven by religion, internet radicalization, and case studies are highlighted in the current study.

Keywords: Dark-Web, Internet, Radicalization, Online Violence, ISIS

INTRODUCTION

Radicalization is a mental state (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou 2023, 17-19 ; Bhui and Bhugra, 2021) that supports extensive societal change and justifies violence and violent action as a result of psychological, social, cognitive, behavioral, and theological influences. (Ahmad and Zahoor, 2020) The internet has been utilized in recent years for a variety of purposes, such as propaganda production, attack preparation, and recruiting for extremist and terrorist organizations (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou 26 ; Rijal and Ilyas, 2017). The largest channels for the dissemination of radical beliefs and violent extremism are online platforms. Many young people with a propensity to get radicalized now find these platforms to be a perfect atmosphere where they may interact with violent and potentially extremist persons. Online radicalization is facilitated and spread by digital channels (McDonald et. , 2018). The internet's anonymity and ease of mass communication provide other options that provide radical organizations access to new audiences. People who use internet forums to seek information are unwittingly participating in the initial step of the radicalization process, particularly when it comes to theological problems. This study analyzes radicalism, concepts related to radicalism, the causes of radicalization, metaphors explaining the radicalization, the goals of radicalization, the causes of radicalization driven by religion, and online and offline radicalizing activities by using domestic and foreign literature for various cases (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou, 29). By developing a descriptive analysis of the notions of radicalism, extremism, and religious radicalism, this research seeks to explain the circumstances in which people and groups resort to radicalism. Document analysis is used in this study as a qualitative research approach.

Radical Thought and Related Ideas

The definition of radicalism is the same as that of fundamentalism in the English language. It is also used to designate a variety of groupings, including religious congregations, ethnic communities, and ideological groups. In the literature, violent revolutionary groups are defined as those that employ political violence as a strategy for enacting radical change. Today, radicalism is sometimes referred to as a sort of extremism, which is defined as disagreeing with or opposing the current values and ideas of society (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou, 39). Wintrobe (2006:207) categorizes extremism under three groups: first, those who have extreme aims but do not use extreme methods, organizations or individuals who have extreme goals but do not use extreme means, and thirdly, those who have traditional goals but use extreme means to achieve them. Wintrobe's first group includes what is now recognized as violent extremism, while the second category includes nonviolent extremism.

The idea of radicalization may be studied in relation to several topics of political science, sociology, psychology, and even history in international literature, despite

the fact that it appears to be primarily tied to the ideas of terrorism and security (Magnus, 2010). Radicalization has been described as a process where people become more inclined to hold extreme ideas and act in ways that make them feel anxious, angry, and emotionally unstable (Trip et al., 2019). Additionally, people's need for group approval, particularly among teens, and their willingness to engage in extreme behavior in order to fit in also contribute to this group's propensity to radicalize. Saiful Umam (2006) claims that a radical person not only endorses a concept or ideology but also believes in it. These are two distinct ideas in and of themselves. Because spreading the word about something means gaining more fans and allies. As a result, the radicalized person views terrorist activities as justified in order to incite the group's target audience and elicit a response from them. Sedgwick separates radicals into three distinct groups: those who oppose the current system and believe it to be unjust; those who wish to overturn the current system; and those who envision a utopia as a replacement for the current system.

The September 11th attacks were a turning point in many other sectors and concepts, including terrorism and radicalization. Because some Muslims blame Islam and the Holy Quran for the acts of violence, this is the cause. When referencing these, radical Organizations profit when people believe that violence is essential, justified, and acceptable. supporters. However, 2012 was viewed as a breaking point in Kundnani's analysis of the works that are attributed to the radicalization idea. Due to the fact that prior to 2012, research primarily saw radicalization as a sort of cultural and psychological activity. When the literature following 2012 is taken into consideration, there is a growth in studies on these theological and socio-psychological processes, with the DAESH terrorist organization's rhetoric and operations dominating the global agenda. (Mark, 2004) Following this time, with the rise in membership in the terrorist group DAESH, study on movements with a religious motivation has steadily risen (Arun and Ben, 2018). Horgan suggested that a person's behavioral radicalization would raise the possibility that he would turn into a potential terrorist in his study on radicalization. He positioned the "how" question before the "why" question in the radicalization process because of this. Understanding this procedure helps people avoid becoming more radicalized and reduces the likelihood that radicalized people may turn violent. He asserts that cognitive radicalization is just one route to terrorism. The solutions to the issues of how individuals become radicalized, not why people do so, are what matter the most. The radicalization process, as Horgan highlights, culminates when it is strengthened by social identities and links motivated by personal goals and manifests in violent acts. In literature, studies on this topic are separated into two categories: individual reasons and social dynamics (Horgan and Kurt, 2010).

Radicalization: Individual and Group Dynamic Causes

It is clear that the primary arguments on the reasons of individual radicalization center on elements resulting from the person's unique or fundamental features and are influenced by the changes that have taken place in the person's life (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou, 60-63). One of them is the impact that mental and behavioral problems have on cognition and behavior. The psychopathological

component known as antisocial personality disorder is another one that is included under individual causes. Features like being unable to socialize, isolation, and anger are recognized among the key causes that drive people to radicalization when the association between antisocial personality disorders and radicalization is established. The assertion that all terrorists and others who support violent radicalization are affected by antisocial personality disorder is untrue, though (Crenshaw, 1990).

Radicalization appears to include both individual and social dynamics as contributing factors. Quintan Wiktorowicz is the author of the key works on this subject. In terms of his literary achievements, Wiktorowicz's holistic approach is significant since it addresses how a person's personality changes in relation to their social surroundings, particularly when they join terrorist groups with religious motivations. He claims that radicalization is a series of related, ongoing processes. Cognitive growth is the initial level. The midst of a personal crisis, cognitive enlargement occurs. For instance, someone who lost a relative, split up with his girlfriend, and had a financial downturn starts to doubt existence. This circumstance challenges preexisting ideals and ideas. After a catastrophe, messages or actions that would ordinarily seem nonsensical may seem rational and positive to the person. These messages could assist them in creating their new identity. As a result, radical messages have a good impact on the individual and create a connection between that person and the group based on a shared message. Now the group's messages are directing the individual. The following stage, according to Wiktorowicz, is characterized as a "religious quest." To address the issue, he has and to get relief from his angst, the person tries to create a religious meaning system for himself. He attempts to make use of his social surroundings, his family and friends, and wants to have a guide with all the resources he has in order to comprehend religion more thoroughly and to find answers to the problems in his mind. As a result, re-socialization takes place in this situation. Because he may also develop a relationship with the person he wishes to serve as his mentor. Wiktorowicz refers to this process as environmental adaptation. The person is now prepared to be guided by the group he is attached to throughout the following phase. He uses the group's ideologies and reality as a guide. In the last stage, the person switches from uniqueness to socialization, fully embracing the group philosophy and joining a violent extremist group. (Quintan, 2005) Studies on the topic have found that comprehending radicalization requires the use of the metaphors of a ladder and a pyramid.

Radicalization Explained Through the Ladder and Pyramid Metaphor

The ladder metaphor used by Fatahi Moghaddam to illustrate the radicalization process has become one of the most popular ideas in modern literature. According to Moghaddam, the process of joining a terrorist group may be compared to a six-story stairway that narrows upward, with each level describing a different mental process. People's conceptions of fairness and their sentiments of relative deprivation are located on the ground floor. The person who decides to become radicalized moves up the first rung of the ladder. People seek justice as the first step to addressing their issues. The person will occasionally identify institutions and people as the issue, or as the cause of injustice (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou,

99-103). The person chooses the second option as a result of this definition. Now, disappointment and rage rule. By labeling the participants at a lower stage as adversaries, the individual develops resentment against a specific target. After taking the third stage, the person begins to believe that using fear to change institutions and individuals is a noble goal. He develops a moral commitment to the group's principles and sees violence as unquestionably justified. The individual now only views the world from the two separate viewpoints of us and them in the following phase, the fourth step. This viewpoint demonstrates that he has turned into an active militant. As a result, the person who has achieved the fifth step, the last level, and is an active militant, is now free to carry out any type of heinous terrorist attack. By this time, the person has developed into an adjutant who has little sympathy for the victims and is prepared to report for duty. (Moghaddam, 2005)

Understanding the causes of terrorism is the goal of McCauley and Moskaleiko's pyramid metaphor. He tried to justify intergroup violence by attempting to explain the shift in attitudes, feelings, and actions that occurs when a group is defended. McCauley and Moskaleiko contend that radicalization of people at all levels—individuals, groups, and masses—occurs through many methods. Although Moskaleiko and McCauley's initial study concentrated on the radicalization process, a subsequent significant study identified two pyramids: the pyramid of thinking and the pyramid of action. There are three layers to the thinking pyramid. Neutrals are at the bottom, sympathizers are in the center, and justificationists are at the top, viewing violence as a moral obligation in the context of political motives. At the base of the pyramid, the neutrals are those who do not believe that political factors play a role in events. Pro-violent attitudes predominate, and radicalization rises as one moves upward. On the other side, there are apathetic individuals at the base of this pyramid and activists who act by pursuing their objectives through legitimate political channels. Terrorists, who target civilians for their aims, are at the top of the pyramid, above them are radicals who commit illegal crimes. (Clark and Moskaleiko, 2008) Radicalization is the process of indoctrinating people to carry out violent acts against major socially symbolic targets. Through this process, the person develops the psychological drive to give up his own interests in order to further those of the group to which he belongs (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou, 144).

In-person encounters with Omar Al-Hamimi, Coleen Larose, and Hasan's Online Radicalization Case

It has come to light that extremist groups' strategies for gathering members in person were centralized on internet platforms. There was a clear correlation between the two, and these outside political actions sped up the internet brainwashing process. Radical groups prefer the Internet because it can be accessed by a wide number of people from various backgrounds, groups, races, and genders (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou, 159). Online communities that make it simple for like-minded people to connect on all sides promote engagement inside these communities and start a radicalization process that is difficult to stop. According to Weinmann, extremist organizations, particularly those engaged in terrorism, have begun to use

the internet as a tool. Since the internet is an anonymous platform, it is frequently used to conduct psychological warfare, create and spread propaganda, steal sensitive information, raise money and gather resources, mobilize supporters by easily accessing human resources, network with other like-minded organizations, share logistics information, plan and coordinate attacks, and engage in a wide range of other activities. Below is a description of how Omar Al-Hamimi and Coleen Larose were radicalized (163).

Hamimi, who was born in Alabama in 1984, has a Muslim father and a Christian mother. Hamimi was a pretty typical middle-class youngster who was reared as a Christian Baptist, despite the fact that interracial and interfaith marriages are uncommon in his area. Hamimi was a successful and well-liked high school student who often attended church and other religious events with his mother. He envisioned himself as a real American in American culture and wanted to be a doctor or engineer. He was a little boy who was content with his family and friends. For a while, Hamimi started to cope with the challenges of having family in Syria. He was compelled to examine his father's faith because of this. Due to the struggles of his family in Syria, he began researching the faith of Islam when he was 17 years old, encountered Islam, and then began corresponding with his relatives in Syria. Hamimi's father wasn't very pious or harsh. He was a parent who put his career and education first. Hamimi connected with his father's family members who were detained in Syria for joining the Muslim Brotherhood. When Hamimi started talking to them, a discussion was being planned at school. He supported Muslims in this student-organized discussion, in contrast to the other pupils. He made an effort at this time to understand the ins and outs of Islam via books and the internet. It is known that during his senior year of high school, Hamimi developed an Islamist persona and converted to Islam. During this time, he developed a desire to travel to Syria to see his relatives for the first time and started to perceive himself as an Islamic soul. His father's construction of an Alabama mosque and his conversion to Islam happened at the same time. However, his father never questioned the jihadism of his son, who converted to Islam. He occasionally encouraged his son's studies on Salafism and occasionally disregarded it. In the course of these studies, Hamimi strengthened his understanding of Salafism and jihad. After a while, Hamimi's friends who frequented the mosque and the individuals he interacted with shifted to becoming immigrants with extremist ideologies (165).

As he encountered individuals with extremist viewpoints, Hamimi, who no longer spends much time with his father, began to separate from his non-Muslim acquaintances. This disassociation showed both physically and emotionally. He has since begun to dress in traditional Muslim garb. Hamimi sought to convert his Christian pals by describing Islam to them. This development was viewed as a theological problem by Hamimi's family. But for a while, his mother attempted to teach him about Jesus and bring him back to Christianity. Hamimi was influenced by his new social surroundings, although he remained a practicing Muslim. His family was unaware of his purpose for being radicalized, which is growing every day. Hamimi's relationships with his family and friends got worse as time went on, and he frequently got into altercations. Due to their disagreements, his father once

sent him away, which caused him to become hostile to him for a while. Hamimi began attending the University of Alabama after his family made it feasible for him to do so. It is clear that his radicalization persisted during his time in college. Here, he rose to the position of Muslim Students Union president and acquired authority. Hamimi began to believe that he would soon be named the leader of the Al Shabab group as his self-confidence grew. Hamimi now views terrorist acts as commonplace and uses a growing amount of Salafism in his arguments with his friends, family, and professors. Hamimi participated in several conversations and discussed Salafism and jihadism in these forums, where he mostly spent his time. Together with his Afghan buddies, he frequented a bookshop where they had regular meetings. After some time, he joined the Al Shabb organization and began to oversee the group's social media operations. Within the group, he rose to social media fame for creating his own YouTube videos and giving talks outlining the purposes of jihad. He planned an assassination and even posted images of the first victim's injuries and wounds on his Twitter page. Later, another intra-organizational killing claimed his life. (Mastors and Siers, 2014)

Coleen LaRose, a 23-year-old American who was radicalized online, does not, however, have any prior understanding of Islam. Her radicalization occurred online, over the internet, rather than in mosques, classes, or religious gatherings. LaRose, who adopted the name Fatma, started using the websites she frequented to look for a spouse for herself. On the internet, she adopted a new persona and began acting differently from how she normally would. Through this identification, Fatma is radicalized, yet she pursues a personal goal rather than one associated with a group or religion. Some radical-minded males were interested in Fatma when she uploaded pictures of herself wearing a headscarf on her internet accounts. As she gained attention, Fatma, who enjoyed the process of communication and engagement, continued to utilize these websites with growing zeal, and under the influence of her friends there, she converted to Islam. She continued to search for a companion online while studying Islam. Fatma absorbed the radical beliefs of the guys she encountered online, accepted their ideology, and grew further radicalized through these people as this process developed. She assumed the fake persona she established and internalized it. She eventually created a YouTube channel for herself and began posting videos there. In these films, she began to discuss Palestine, the need for jihad, and rhetoric in favor of jihad (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou, 188). She used the internet to interact with individuals in Asia and Europe and label non-Muslims as infidels. In addition, she posted films and made remarks about the murder of non-Muslims. There was no more word from her after she was taken into custody in an operation that was carried out as a result of these videos. Ironically, Fatma was affected by and internalized the attitudes of the guys she initially started talking to online in order to find a mate. As a result, the brainwashing process was finished quickly and spontaneously. Later, she began using social media to share her ideological viewpoints with others and created pro-Jihad videos. (Halverson and Amy, 2012) In this regard they also promoted video games (Al-Ravi, 2016) based on violence as figure 1 or 2 are indicating:

Figure 1: The Grand theft auto game duplicate for kids and adults



Figure 2: The ISIS Game Introduction Video Source (Nujum u Misriah, 2023)

A screenshot of a YouTube video player. The video content shows a character in a white car with a black flag. The video player interface includes a play button, a progress bar at 0:29 / 3:21, and a 'Subscribe' button for the channel 'نجوم مصرية' (Nujum Misriah) with 54.8K subscribers. The video title is 'تقرير عن لعبة صليل الصوارم لجيش الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام' (Report on the game 'Crucifixion' of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria). The video description is 'ويبدأ "برومو" اللعبة الذي نشر قبل أيام على موقع يوتيوب، بتوجيه رسالة تحذيرية، ورد فيها: "العابكم التي تصدرونها، نحن نمارس نفس هذه الأفعال المتواجدة في ساحات القتال"،' (It starts with a "promo" for the game, which was published a few days ago on YouTube, with a warning message, which says: "The games you are selling, we practice these actions that are present in the battlefields").

Till day this video got the 89k views and young generations and kids are watching this as Entertainment. Middle East process of radicalization were to be mentioned, Hasan, who was raised in the Middle East, was taught his religion using the Salafi technique (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou, 203). He started learning about radical Islam in the mid-1990s, when the internet was widely used, via his friends and tight group. He chooses to join a radical movement. He makes the decision to travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the middle of the 1990s, at a time when the country was still embroiled in war. seeing countless killings of civilians in Bosnia.¹ Hasan uses the following phrases to characterize the radicalization process after his return: After all the events one has seen, one does not want to go back to normal life. One feel cut off from social life after having so many near-death encounters. People's lives and discussions now seem pointless to me, and I could see that they had no plans beyond their daily routines. Over time, I started to imagine myself as the people's anticipated chosen leader (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou, 245).

In terms of Hasan's online radicalization, he began to monitor it on the platforms there after seeing the power of the internet in the process. He began translating violent and extremist materials into English on the Internet and submitting them to extremist websites. Hasan has studied the usage of online video over time to get around the difficulties in fostering radicalization since he is aware of how important the internet is. Finally, following his return from Bosnia, Hasan gained a reputation as a respectable preacher, employer, and benefactor. Hasan continues his terrorist efforts before leaving the nation by doing 12 years of active duty. (Behr et al., 2013)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The editors attempt to highlight the distinctions between radicalization in online and face-to-face forums, as well as its causes and progression. The fact that radicalization has several levels and causes is the most notable problem in this situation. Depending on the individual's political beliefs, socioeconomic situation, and level of education, radicalization processes might vary. This process occurs over a lengthy period of time in some people while it occurs more quickly and subtly in others. However, some circumstances, including personal victimization, social marginalization, a sense of not belonging to the community, and a lack of self-expression, might have an impact on one's propensity to become radicalized (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou, 277). On the other side, some view radicalism as a remedy in failing state models with insufficient social integration. Additionally, the Middle Eastern authoritarian governments have developed into a source of rising religious radicalism. As a result, people perceive joining radical organizations and embracing their beliefs as the only way out of problems caused by the absence of functioning institutions, such as disruptions in public services, bribery, theft, discrimination in official institutions, and breaches of human rights. Radical organizations now have a new area of attack because of the widespread usage of the Internet.

These organizations have begun to gather members and have prepared assaults not just in the Middle East but also in many other regions of the world. Radical organizations' operational areas are shifting more toward internet platforms. The Internet is now the principal arena and operational environment where political ideology are made actual, assaults are organized, and remarkable social movements start to grow. It is no longer merely a portion of the spectrum of extremist activity. It has been shown that the majority of people who interacted with and spent time in these settings were unable to voice opposition to radical viewpoints. These people didn't consider other viewpoints; instead, they adhered to concepts that supported and were founded on their present convictions.

Furthermore, religious converts were more likely to become radicalized on an individual basis. It's vital to remember that face-to-face radicalization takes longer than radicalization that occurs online. Today, it is evident that internet radicalization has displaced face-to-face radicalization. It is simpler for a person's relatives or friends to detect radicalization, as it was in Hamimi's case. The person reflects on the process he goes through in many ways to others around him. Conversely, with online radicalization, like in the case of Coleen Larose, the person quickly gets radicalized by forcing their beliefs on online environments through the individuals they communicate with (McNeil-Willson and Triandafyllidou, 281). In Hamimi's instance, radicalization also lasts a lot longer than it does in situations of internet radicalization. Through the four years of high school and university, it keeps rising. Although Coleen Larose is exposed to violence and extremism when surfing online platforms and normalizes it, the process is simpler to detect by family, friends, and teachers and is easier to avoid. Her relatives and friends have little chance to observe her rapid radicalization since it happens so quickly.

This instance really gives us a great example of how quickly radicalization happens in online forums. Since Coleen Larose is acting independently of anyone outside of her, she is radicalizing herself. She joined these websites for the first time in an effort to date, maybe out of loneliness. As a result, people might become lost in unintentionally utilized web sites, let alone fail to locate what they're looking for. However, in Hamimi's instance, face-to-face radicalization began offline with actual interactions from the social context, but was strengthened online, and he joined the group. In Hasan's instance, he recognized the internet's role in the radicalization process and started to follow it on its many channels. He translated violent and extremist remarks from many languages into English using the internet, then published them to extremist websites. He uses web video to further the radicalization process.

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