

DAESH, Islamophobia and Relative Deprivation

In our current day and age, academic literature and research currently presents a diverse set of factors in regards to 'extremism' and 'radicalization' but employs these two concepts mostly taking Islam into context, especially with no knowledge of its holy scriptures or commentaries. On the other hand, looking at the latest incidents taking place in Europe, especially those in the Netherlands, would we have to think differently in regards to the push factors? Especially those regarding 'foreign fighters? Why are Islamophobia and Xenophobia not deliberated as much as other factors present such as 'radicalization in prisons' and the presence of 'online radicalization'? Finally, are the Islamophobic policies such as the headscarf ban in France pushing youth towards radical organization such as DAESH for means of revenge as a result of relative deprivation of one's rights and freedoms?

The Islamic State of Iraq and Sham, also known as DAESH is an 'extremist (group) claiming affiliation with Islam' [1] (ECAI) and is involved in terrorist activities throughout the Middle East, Europe and parts of Africa. The group uses distortions of primary sources of Islam such as the Holy Quran and Hadeeth (sayings of the Prophet) according to their own extremist ideologies. Through written accounts taken from ISIS defectors, we can see that ISIS takes Quranic verses out of historical and social context according to their own needs. What should be highlighted here is ideology the group shares is not part of mainstream Sunni Islam. It uses slick propaganda material, distributing it on social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr, and also uses encrypted chat groups like those on Telegram to spread its propaganda.

Throughout the history of terrorism, DAESH is known to be attracting the most foreign fighters from Europe and other parts of the globe including Asia and Africa. With a group this extreme and vicious, what could be the motivational factors for youth to be joining these organizations? What could social dynamics lay a foundation for such recruitment to take place? Western academic literature in this sense could be said to be turning a blind eye to some factors, such as Islamophobia and Xenophobia within Europe.

Anti-Islamic permits for inequality and grievances to come about. As the social and political gap between two societies or groups become wider, this generates frustration and then leads to anger, aggression, and violence coming about. Conflict resolution theorist such Sayles and Runciman demonstrate that when goal-directed behavior is obstructed, frustration comes about. Aggression then utilized to reduce frustration. On the other hand, relative deprivation is when frustration and grievances follow a comparison of what one receives as an individual and what others receive in society. So what does this lead to? This allows for 1) an establishment of collective identity among the grieved 2) the association of the existing order with a sense of discomfort 3) utility of collective action and also normative defenses for collective action.

The tragic events of 9/11 and the rising of Islamophobia throughout the United States and Europe has traumatized youth and made a road for them in joining extremist organizations. Youth joining extremist organizations have lived the trauma of 9/11, and also Islamophobic rhetoric currently coming about again as the extreme right finds a place in European political discourse. Islamophobic rhetoric has bred extremism within the Middle East.

Anti-Islamic rhetoric and discourse by means of extremist right politicians such as Geert Wilders have affected European policy. Fundamental religious principles have been banned through this discourse present. An example of this could be the controversial headscarf ban within classrooms in France. The EU court has also allowed for justification for private firms to bar a female employee from wearing a headscarf, as all these Islamophobic acts are conducted in the name of laicism.

Such political action has allowed for a sociological 'crack' to form within European society. It has formed deprivation of religious freedom among Muslims and has widened the gap between Muslims and others within society. It has also given a reason for Muslim's to be seen as the 'other'.

The modern academic literature demonstrates that a primary reason as to why civilians become rebels, or terrorists is resulted by deprivation of one's rights and the feeling of being the 'other' within society. Such political actions have fed into DAESH propaganda and allow for young Muslims to be radicalized much

easily. DAESH recruitment propaganda has fed from the sociological gaps made by Islamophobic political discourse and has based its recruitment upon the following:

- A response to the call of DAESH leader Abu Bakir Al-Baghdadi, urging Muslims from all over the world to fulfill their religious duty of 'migration' and become apart of an 'Islamic State' instead of being the 'other' in countries where ISIS recruits used live in.
- The chance to build a state and have respect for women in contrast to 'Western society which has no respect for (Muslim) women' (most likely referring to the headscarf bans stated earlier in the article)
- The Muslim society (ummah) is under attack globally and needs to be defended
- There is a reward of being a part of an 'Islamic State' and living honorably in this world, and gaining paradise for the next.
- Feelings of alienation, racism, xenophobia and negative attitudes towards Muslim attitudes and the urge to practice religion in a more favorable and complaisant environment.

In conclusion, Islamophobic discourse and action within Western policies have allowed for relative deprivation to take place among youth allowing for extremist charismatic leaders such as Fadel Kassem; currently being one of the primary recruiters for DEASH in Belgium, to come about and thus feeding into the propaganda of extremist violent organizations such as DAESH and others, opening way for foreign fighters to go to geographic locations present in conflict such as the Middle East.

[1] This new definition was proposed in Issue 10 of the Defence Against Terrorism Review (DATR) and will be used from here onwards. (http://www.tmmm.tsk.tr/publication/datr/volume10/01-Editors_Note.pdf)