



Youth and Violent Extremism: Towards a Psychological Angle of Radicalization and Dis-Engagement

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Abstract

Psychological health issues and mental disorders have been viewed as possible elucidation for radicalization relentlessly, and is the reason for important discourse amidst academic community. Although psychological or mental disorders as factors for joining extremist statuses can mostly be dismissed based on the data available (apart from some personality elements and mental disorders of individual nonconformists), this debate almost never centres on the psychological influences, for instance by factors such as harmful stress, as leading to radicalization processes, joining militant groups and for disengagement for youth. This manuscript provides an assessment in respect of the data available from various subject fields on mental health of youth who have not been protected from violent extremist beliefs or who have experienced a radicalization process. The manuscript discusses the meaning for professionals and possible ways to deal with and manage the risks that follow from these varied and difficult situations. It is asserted, that the psychological processes associated with radicalization have distressing and curative elements at the same time. That being the case, a psychological angle on this issue is necessary.

Keywords: Harmful Stress, Youth, Violent Extremism, Radicalization, Disengagement

Introduction

During the last ten years, studies in violent extremism has assembled indisputable evidence that radicalization leading to violent behaviour and extremism, similar to other forms of unusual and unruly behaviour, seem particularly appealing to the youth, both male and female: eventually, most individuals who join militant group are youthful, say, late teens and early20s (Silke, 2008). Certainly, extremists and the place, time, and circumstances that these occur vary greatly in respect of their beliefs and structure, including their topographical and background. Exhaustive studies of certain extremist contexts, nevertheless, have broadly accepted Silke's assertion, for instance (Christmann,

2012).

Another example is a study carried out in German to assess the sociodemographic backgrounds of 784 persons who joined a jihadist militant group in Iraq. The study found a mean age of 26.9 years with a range of 14 and 63 years. More than half, the sample was between 23 and 26 years and the next-biggest category was the 17-to-22-years (Hande, 2020). The authors were able to establish the commencement age of the radicalization process, the investigation indicates mean age of 23 with the initial and third biggest category being 19-22 (biggest) or age 18 and junior (third biggest).

Examining another violent extremist setting, a sample of thirty-six white sectarianists and race prejudices had a mean age of 19.8 years and 20 of the sample participants had previously been engaged in the setting for three additional years (Esholdt & Jørgensen, 2021). In yet a further study of U.S. conservative terrorist radicalization as well as enlistment, a sample of twenty previous white conservatists described a mean entrance age into the motion of 18 years (Simi et al., 2016).

According to the European political parties opposed to immigration, this situation remains true as well: It is absolutely clear that most of new enlists to the different political parties' category is male youth, lower ranks and very youthful (Merkl & Weinberg, 1997). For instance, an exploration of 1,400 police documentations on extreme *rightists'* offenders in Germany between 1990 and 1993 established that more than 80% of the examined culprits were twenty years of age or lower and above thirty-five percent were below eighteen (Freilich et al., 2019). Yet another investigator of 260 offenders of extreme violence in Germany between 1989 and 1996 established that 55 percent ranged between 18 and 20 years of age. Twenty percent of the offenders ranged between 15 and 17 years of age (Fisher, 2019).

Historical background and militant group techniques obviously matter immensely in respect of the prospects of appeal and enlistment among the youths and these examples give a clue of the phenomenon. Besides, it is firmly accepted, that many militant groups solicit enlistment from individuals who are youthful (Darden, 2019). They normally, do so with particularly tailored indoctrination, using committed basic communication mediums, for example social networks and the advancement of particular local products considered to be appealing to youthful audience, for examples fashion and dance.

Militant settings persuade entry of entire families within the militant habitat. Relevant examples would be white who advocate or adhere to the supremacy of one group over others (Pitcavage, 2019) and the militant terror group Islamic State (Borum, 2004). In militant extremist settings, a variety of bringing up children and educating skills have been cultivated and are utilized to secure youths' timely assimilation into the group and its beliefs. Linking up with militant extremist settings while young certainly comes with substantial exposure for psychological and physiological health, for instance, through vulnerability to the settings of conflict, torture, ancestral disengagement, as a result of

captivity, or loss by death, alcohol and drug use or major environmental characteristics such as stringent parents, anxiety, resentment and range as a result of connection with group and beliefs, etc. Even though scientific reviews have widely investigated and discussed the role played by psychological issues and disorders as possibly paving the way for entry into terrorism (Zainab, 2020), scanty work has been conducted this far on the psychological influences on radicalization and affiliation, specifically of the youth. The scanty ones that exist, nonetheless, indicate undesirably crucial negative influences. Thus, this manuscript combines documentation from a variety of disciplines to analyse these likely influences on psychological and physiological wellness on youth by association in violent settings, and also the inference for practices. The focus on the current study is not on psychological issues as a possible pointer or threat of radicalization into extremism, even though some latest findings have indicated potential association of youth elements of danger such as unstable family, exploitation, conflicting emotions, such as resentment, low moods; youth behavioural problems, hostility, skiving and violence involvement as a self-management (Bubolz, 2017). It is therefore not the objective of this manuscript to help pick out those at possible danger of radicalization but instead come up with a structure for determining the psychological health influence of youth being brought up in an extremist setting or by being involved. It could be said here, that both the defining elements of association in extremism inherently contain important element of danger for physiological and psychological wellness, and that a major technique of radicalization processes is to put together persistent wounding and curative features to promote dedication and situatedness into the extremist setting.

This technique, it is suggested, has earnest eventuality for psychological wellness damage particularly for youthful persons and ought to be thought about as a form of abuse as it were. This discourse is on time, because the likelihood of a surge in the numbers is likely to put existing psychological wellness and programs to curb radicalization programs acute restriction. Nevertheless, this issue concerns both the extremist setting, and also radicalization broadly, as presented in this paper.

Youth Drivers towards Violent Extremism

What is so appealing towards militant groups and their beliefs for youth? Although it is outside the range of this manuscript to summarize the vast writings on radicalization processes and traces in general, some features that have been proposed as especially pertinent for youths ought to be brought out. Engagement in militant groups can occur in several ways and is commonly reliant on one's personal life. Four ways are normally seen: intentional, personal resolution to enlist; involvement, pursuit for involvement and progressive blending; cohort, engagement by intermediary with consciousness; and classic enlistment, recruitment by others without consciousness (Pauwels et al., 2014).

Militant groups frequently appear as especially appealing antagonistic or protest

movement to the conventional, for instance, attracting requirements for revolt opposed to the foundation or current power authorities. This can be possible by the use of particular youth friendly communication mediums, the likes of media websites, for example, (Badawy et al., 2017); and the administering relevant advocacy materials to the youth, the likes of dance (Torhild, 2021), skilful content creation, trend, local styles, recreation, plays and other appealing fun pursuits, and the list goes on. An example of this engagement master plan is the effort to use the media manifesto of popular apps, which are bestselling with youth for engagement. Plenty of popular application accounts then began expanding indoctrination material particularly tailored for the manifesto, using its accepted style, attractive poetry and the like which rapidly called up limelight and worries of selected engagement of youth.

The material of these engagement attempts might be tailored to attract youth particular subjects, for example gifting measures and experience to avoid apathy, (Snel et al., 2006), bearings and answers in respect of dissatisfaction with problems in society, comradeships, closeness and other attachments or romanticize and bafflement of violence to depict association as charming, (Snel et al., 2006) and so forth.

Such gifts might particularly draw the attention of the youth, when maturation is going through major overhaul most often ending in misery, fear and depression that make youth both prone to drug abuse and behavioural problems as a whole. This particular stage alteration might also elevate proneness to violent engagements, which commonly use feelings-based engagement master plans in the place of logical beliefs reasoning to elicit emotions such as fright, resentments, hostility or fury to activate definite reactions and depict it as the most efficient means to express those feelings and get aggressive at odds with the origin of grudges and irritation. It is also worth noting that violent settings not only engage based on harmful emotions but oftentimes also purposively try to inculcate dignity, esteem, delight and other philanthropic related emotions amid their likely recruits. But, the explanation of most elements of danger usually linked to engagement in militant groups, including the issue of age, has been considered to be shaky to a certain degree and should accordingly be viewed with care (Snel et al., 2006).

Distress, Youth Development and Affiliation in Violent Settings

Encountering harmful stress or distress and their influence on youth development has evolved into a crucial focus of inquiry and concern for helping professionals. Unarguably, increasing capacity to distress is a common and sound part of maturing and the coping resources acquired while dealing with stress and checked by parental care and an enabling environment form a crucial component for a robust and fruitful life (Newman & Newman, 2016). Nonetheless, when stress gets out of control, acute and recurrent in a way that it ends in protracted strain, with inability to recover fully together with scarcity of support, encouragement, or affectivity, one can talk of distress, that is likely to lead to

harmful mental and physiological health consequences. Case in point of such stress in youth involve maltreatment, disregard, indigence, violence, family dysfunction, and lack of food including carers with substance abuse or psychological issues and unending every day stressors (Newman & Newman, 2016).

The forerunner of stress may be psychological trauma or misfortune in childhood, for instance death of parents, divorce or separation, growing up with violence, family malfunctioning, crime, abuse, (Mash & Wolfe, 2016). A good deal of the stressors is frequently present to a significant extent in violent settings. Earlier affiliates who have withdrawn from these settings have regularly reported a variety of push and pull components as major motivating components pushing their exit. Push components, described as the harmful social occurrences and situations that make it intolerable and unattractive to endure in the group, are more often than not distress with the group's master plans or behaviours, conflicts with group leadership or peers, discontent with one's assignment, being drained by lifestyle, mental and physiological strain, resentment with group's deception and ill-treatment (Mash & Wolfe, 2016). Many graphic recollections of these push components that ends in quitting an extremist setting and most often ending in pressure on psychological health is documented, for instance note about their sample of 13 Islamic State quitters, that their everyday life with the group was marked by barbaric practices, such as whippings, tormenting and guillotine. Quitters were the effect of submission to severe atrocity, distaste, observations of deceit, a complete inconsistency between what is said and what is done by Islamic State.

Affiliation to such groups impulsively results in the likelihood to live in strife ridden zones and areas of conflict, be denied of basic essentials such as food, water, primary healthcare and protection, basic education and cultural surroundings, fear of death of self and or close family relatives and colleagues. Moreover, many militant groups have developed their own ways of raising their children to prepare them for their future roles to align with the group's objectives and beliefs. Among the most complex brainwash processes for the youth by militant groups was advanced and used by Israel State, which involved a model of six steps model embracing the personal components of attraction, instructing, choosing, dominating, narrowing down and positioning (Mash & Wolfe, 2016). For instance, the domination step involves bodily and mental harassment, a reality that the Israel State has authenticated by producing different promotion videos showing youth taking part in or administering warlike exercises and capital punishments. Appiah (2022) for example talks about three different types of socializing children; diehard (exceedingly flawed, militant), reputable (maintaining conventional status quo to conceal prejudiced parenting) and collectivist (acculturation). When children put through these socialization manners, are not raised with roughness to harass them into becoming warlike, they even so might be raised with emotions of utmost resentment and fear towards group foreigners and other rivals (Appiah, 2022). This consecutively raises potential for discord

in the future and psychological trauma when in interaction with those foreign to the group, for instance, in school or work milieu in spite of that, it is essential to draw attention to the affiliation of parents in a violent setting not spontaneously indicating harmful and risky manner of raising children. Children specialists must rely on each according to the facts of the particular situation of how much parents truly use setting-specific styles or effort to instil a belief-conform development of their children. What is more, extremist beliefs have many compound components with differing likely influences on a youth and growing brain. Consequently, the real aftereffect for child danger need to be evaluated for example solitude, bodily and affect neglect, exploitation and ill-treatment. To summarise, the existing data compellingly leads to the belief that affiliation in terrorist settings is a distressful and strenuous effort and leads to a high possibility of clashing with several likely bodily and mentally shocking factors.

The harmful influences of subjection to such harmful stress during the youthful period gets deeply implanted in the child's psychic, with an astounding scope of long-term impacts on mental, affect, and actions" (Giudice, 2014). Harmful stress may change the mind development of youngsters particularly in some systems (Kamsu, 2020). Observable influences, for instance elevate alcohol abuse, violence, low functioning, feelings and behavior, inability to coping, inability to manage stress and brainsickness, may show up after a substantial delay, for instance, through the developmental process of youth or another critical period of "at-risk". Consequently, this might prove resultant for detection and medication because waiting may give a feeling of being safer than one really is. In a nutshell, harmful stress is a central cause of psychological issues (Giudice, 2014). Prolonged exposure to distress in childhood is also associated with elevated risk of substance abuse in later years. A rationalization for this might be that the drug reward pathway is basically the same response nervous system activates through distress reactions. In fact, several violent settings have also been established to be all-encompassing of drug use.

Several militant groups for instance are well known for prolonged alcohol and drugs consumption, in part as a means to manage societal shame and stabilise the important mental conflict felt by their affiliates (Giudice, 2014). Although terrorist groups founded on religious beliefs that have prohibited the use of drugs, such as Al-Shabaab, can be exposed to enormous use of drugs. In the event of Israel State, for instance chemical substances have been used broadly by the members as a combat zone boost to elevate the hostility and endurance of its combatants. The affiliates also suggest to have been engaged in manufacturing and dispensing the drug as another source of income. Through the important sectoral losses of the group from 2018 through to 2019, the drug was so widely used that it was labelled the "Jihadi Pill", with important results for fighting against terrorism and disengagement (Giudice, 2014). One notable issue through this progressive assortment of elements of danger is, that drug abuse by youth is certainly strongly

associated to aggression and non-aggressive lawlessness later in life, besides the absence of a surrounding setting enthusiastically inspiring violence. But still in the absence of the setting of particular drugs abuse and dependency, the psychological processes basic to radicalization mechanism and the ensuing dedication to the group and its origin can have withdrawal physical consequences when trying to exit the milieu (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022). Vulnerability to the harmful influence of stress, nevertheless, depends on personal level psychosocial harmful factors and the availability of shielding factors and flexibility (Blazer, 2015). Paradoxically, however, some of the shielding factors named in writings, such as beliefs, divinity, social and sense of belonging, are especially strong elements of many militant groups' inducements for those enlisted and affiliates.

In consequence, this manuscript advocate that radicalization procedures elevate dedication to a violent setting through embracing of conscious, traumatic stressors and healing elements on the side of the extreme setting. The educational writings provide at least three theoretical interpretations for the harmful impacts of stress. In my way of thinking, and important in psychology, there is the poor ability to manage emotional responses model, which assigns defective outcomes to the extended arousal of the stress reaction structure creating cumulative effects of physiological stress response interfering with the process of development (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022). On the flip side, even so, a compatible model influenced by developmental psychology has also been proposed, which hypothesizes that initial stress rarely damages or imbalance youth developmental courses, but instead directs them toward behavioural plans of action that have attested physiologically flexible in sever or inconsistent state. Considering this, defective attributes the likes of apprehension, violence, and thoughtlessness as results of stress vulnerability are comprehensible as life sustenance for adverse and inconsistent settings.

The final model, the blended life history view, endeavour to considerably put together the two earlier explanations based on life history scheme, capability allotment decisions conveyed through the advancement of a logical, blend connections of mental and behavioural character (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022). The model argues that stress vulnerability in early years might allude to the youth developing brain that time ahead will be dictated by risk and inconsistency. Further concerning behavioural patterns, rapid strategies, having components such as hostility, approval seeking, hasty, apprehension and low moods, could be the result. Additionally, taking account of this model in respect of the obstruction influence of stress vulnerability have identified the likely significance of extrinsic and Intrinsic consistent adjustable responses.

Trauma-Psychological View on Violence, Radicalization and Mental Health Influence on Youth

The vast writings on violence and radicalization processes has been documented

by many authors, for instance (Dalgaard-Nielsen, De Coensel, & Horgan, 2017). Nonetheless, as a jumping-off point for discourse on violence radicalization mechanisms from a trauma-psychological viewpoint, Koeler (2020) evaluation in respect of scientific support for capacity for the occurrence offers an exemplary, basis and incorporates different components extending over stress, trauma psychology and drug dependence. The synthesized study particularly identified hardy and not so hardy scientific confirmation for, along with the influence of harmful life occurrences, impacts of ambiguity, elevated anxiety, hostility and thoughtlessness and the role of harmful emotions like resentment and spite as motivating factors of being radicalized. More significant features with inconspicuous link to stress and trauma recorded by Koeler (2020) are the absence of a general mental illness, the significance of inspirational processes instead of logical choice computation, a move in collective identity, small group behaviours, spiritual values and a mentality of absolutism, dictatorial and fanaticism.

This paper suggests that a crucial psychological process of violent radicalization, especially for youth, necessitates the ceaseless conscious and instinctive formation of trauma and stress, either through setting a particular socialization strategy for instance rigid parenting, harassment or difficult settings, such as living in conflict zones, parental divorce that call forth behavioural reactions such as increased irritation, misery, thoughtlessness and other schemes. The reactions are especially useful for violent settings, which attempt to direct those harmful emotions and actions against the beliefs defined foe, for example administration or religious competitors, minority groups and into community or personal behaviours. Additionally, for conscious and unconscious stress formation, extremist beliefs commonly also consists traumatic components, such as manifestation of human existence dangers, humiliation of the foe as aftereffect for not complying (Koeler, 2020). Concurrently, psychological and physical dedication to the violent setting is elevated through the side by side provision of curative and safeguarding factors that are put up as setting-specific, for instance, strong friendly community and acceptance, sacred, collective identity, enabled, social assistance and so forth. For being in accordance with the setting and belief concrete approach and objectives, spiritual benefit for example, getting to heaven and stories of being saved are provided by many militant groups, for example, Rottweiler (2022).

Militant groups normally combine both, the harmful damaging and the constructive salvation dimension, in their publicity stories and milieu products to form dissimilar communities in which the person might be mentally captured. As a result, it is maintained here, the person is maintained in constant change mentally and ambiguity between emotional conditions such as resentment, aversion, fright, misery or discontent on the one hand and constructive, apparent curative affect such as acceptance, bliss, gladness, enablement offered through dedication to the group on the other hand. Subsequently, individuals going through such a procedure become both deeply dedicated and adjust their

behaviour to the community ethics and aims. Along with violence and also grow a psychological attachment on the threesome relationship between self, the extremist setting and the surrounding conventional setting (Koeler, 2020). Surprisingly, that very social setting accountable for this exceptional focus of stress with regard to the developing brain and character of youth trainee is viewed as the only fix and refuge to the balance bundle experienced deliberately and unintentionally subsequently.

Examining the known continuing influences of harmful stress vulnerability among the youth, the likely physiological harm and alteration of life blueprint towards fiercer and unfeasible choices through affiliation in violent settings can have enduring destructive aftereffect. Notably, the mental process of violent radicalization alone is potentially based on ongoing formation of harmful stress and alleged curative provision through ceaseless dedication to the group and setting. This happens along with setting-specific danger such as attack and loss of life, chemical abuse or atrocity. In the perspective exhibited here, the violent radicalization procedure involving youth actually electrifies the stress reaction system to drive trainees to excessive behaviour. The extremist settings are prepared to provide what the youth electrified in this way might look for, activity, escapade, a medium for their strong aversion and combative, alcohol and substance besides togetherness, social acceptance and pro-social, to give an idea. This method contains crucial possibility for psychological health harm particularly for youth and ought to be considered as a type of child mistreatment by its very nature.

Implications for Practice

Examining violent radicalization of youth through the trauma-psychological angle markedly enhances the function of psychological health and trauma healing for curbing violent extremism and mind change. Fortunately, this has been acknowledged recently, ending in an ongoing enhancement of awareness among practitioners, for example, (Campelo et al., 2018). Most consequential deradicalization interventions now incorporate psychological elements as a main component. In addition, the significance of psychological professionals, such as counselling psychologists, for minimising exposures and elevating psychological wellness of violent convicts has been identified. Psychological trauma and harmful stress inquiries also adds further scientific weight to those deradicalization interventions focusing on family comfort and philanthropic networks, which have opened out all over the globe in recent past and have become a foundation of many blueprints (Campelo et al., 2018). In actual fact, the most significant supportive and cushioning factors in respect of harmful stress from possible harm for youth are picked out in very supportive families (Weinstein et al., 2006) and therefore those programs whose centre of attention is family communication, such as multifaceted family counselling, (Liddle et al., 2009), are advocated. Be that as it may, as may be argued, the most crippling hindrances to providing sufficient psychological services to suffering youth and their folks are

accessibility and the intervention setting.

Needless to say, psychological services should be accessible to youth and their folks at the earliest possible moment if required but the harmful influence of less than flawless conditions, for instance in conflict zone, has hardly ever been addressed (Liddle et al., 2009). Indeed, in many native land, psychological services for youth and their folks are at their maximum with vague financial backing for those exiting from violent settings. In addition, backing measures for those openly alleged culpable, unsafe or unwanted are consistently a political difficulty blocking the accessibility of required interventions. This may be complex more so due to litigations, confinement or auditing by the jurisdiction. There is compelling evidence that the general setting in which any kind of psychological service is an essential consideration when attempting to guarantee its accomplishment. The setting reported here for an effective intervention setting for instance, solid and sufficient financial backing, enough competent psychological service providers, popular support for these interventions appear thus especially challenging in the area of curbing violence.

Inaccessible interventions whatsoever or not in the required quality or quantity of course elevates the likelihood of lengthened and elevated harm to the society as a whole far off the anticipation of violent activities, including crime, alcohol and drugs and aggressive behaviour of traumatized persons. Harmful attitudes against those persons in the population might increase vicarious trauma and exploitation. Looking at this issue at any rate in part through child welfare subject matter might provide a feasible breakthrough, considering most countries have legal duty to protect children and corresponding basic structures, and accountable institutions too. In fact, a number of legal actions against western nations have ended in the court authorized commitment of those nations to bring back Israel State youth and expedite their recovery for instance. Tailor made Trauma vulnerability interventions are also currently not discussed in depth among professionals and investigators. Looking at radicalization and assignment of youth as a type of harmful stress-imposed trauma might pioneer entirely fresh types and approaches of early and modern intercession and deterrent against violence. Utterly necessary for those specifically designed trauma intercessions is deep comprehension and awareness in respect of indigenous, social and belief setting among other things, the trauma-psychological view. Different violent settings and beliefs might influence youth otherwise in respect to their communal and indigenous context. In addition, a clear difference between youth and young adults needs to be made by intervention professionals.

Many intervention approaches will be pertinent for young adults and youth similarly, but distinctions based on harm and exposure factors, encompassing for instance, pre-existing attachments, occurrence of psychological injury and developmental states, the likes of hearing loss, must be acknowledged and incorporated into the intervention. Further dimensions to consider for an intervention are the age of initial exposure, span of time, sex and the nature of the curative setting provided to them. In addition, it ought to be brought

out that important lawful and guidance structure generally change with age, though the origin of psychological issues might be linked, for instance to maturing in a violent setting. Professionals will be obligated to expound on what has been going on all along prior to, in the course of and ensuing the intervention as well as what will be different in adult life.

Normally, different forms and narrower services are accessible for adults. Professionals require to be mindful of such implications and difficulties to decide on the psychological competence regarding trauma and the multiculturally correct way to keep away from opposition and increase conformity. Trauma mental intercession against radicalization to violence and associated harmful stress demand multi-faceted avenues. This prompts a crucial issue, which is professional development of professionals. Such development of psychological providers in deradicalization approaches, along with the professional development of deradicalization providers regarding the foundation of trauma first, is not adequately developed. Regrettably, this particular field of study is still at its origin (Kurtenbach, 2019). That is to say, that this is even more difficult as all the accessible prove brought out here pins down a substantial risk of postponed and perhaps enduring influence of traumatic radicalization to violence of youth extending out into crime, alcohol, drug abuse and dependence as well as poor psychological and physiological wellbeing. For that reason, it is crucial to both continue research on the role of psychological issues on radicalization, that is, the entry procedures, and also for exit procedures to ensure the most efficient and viable enduring recovery and reinsertion of those matured in or socially interacted in violent settings.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest of any sort, financial or non- financial in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Ethical Statement

I will conduct myself with integrity, fidelity, and honesty. I will openly take responsibility for my actions, and only make agreements, which I intend to keep. I will not intentionally engage in or participate in any form of malicious harm to my participants.

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Data supporting the results reported herein can be found in the manuscript itself.

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