



HWA CHONG INSTITUTION (HIGH SCHOOL SECTION)

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Topic: Are American Youth Flocking to Terrorism Groups because of Isolation

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Declaration

I declare that this assignment is my own work and does not involve plagiarism or collusion. The sources of other people's work have been appropriately referenced, failing which I am willing to accept the necessary disciplinary action(s) to be taken against me.

Student's Signature :

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edison Chua', written in a cursive style.

Date of Submission: 15/08/2018

Abstract

This research paper aims to discover whether Isolation, due to psychological development of a youth is responsible for countless youth' decision to partake and join terrorism organization or are there any other factors we have to consider as well. Through research of various articles, literature and scholarly papers by various academics, this paper has obtained several key findings regarding youth' decision to turn to terrorism. This paper has discovered that while Isolation and alienation did have a role to play, it was not the sole factor. Instead, other factors, such as Financial Issues, Social Media and Propaganda can all be equally blamed for this issue.

1. Introduction

1.1 General Background:

Youth joining extremist and violence groups has been a trend for a long time. Dating back to the Children's Crusade and Hitler Youth Movement during the World War II. Seemingly, more and more American Youth are joining extremist groups such as ISIS, some of which are not Muslim or have any ties to the cause. They are known as 'foreign fighters', defined as non-citizens of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflicts. (Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., Hughes, S., Clifford, B., 2018)

The UN (Unknown) regards youth as people between the ages of 15 and 24 years old. The adolescent years are often regarded as years of drastic changes. According to Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, stages 5 and 6 can be applied. During these stages, youth experience an identity confusion, they will try to seek meaning for their existence and what they can do. They may also isolate or practice isolation from the rest, this might cause them to feel as though they do not fit in with the norm. This may lead to youth trying newer things to try and fit in and find a place where they can fit in and find companionships.

This makes it especially easy for terrorist groups to either exploit teenagers or isolate teenagers before exploiting them. Much like criminal gangs that offer a sense of family and belonging, ISIS offers disaffected teens a chance to join a group that gives them purpose and meaning – however misguided (Haq, 2014).

1.2 Rationale

This research seeks to find out if isolation, experienced during the adolescence years, is the reason for many to join terrorism groups, so as to raise awareness and shed light on the appeal of terrorism groups to youth. To eventually, provide more information on the topic

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is isolation? And how does it affect American youth?
2. What are terrorist groups doing to appeal to American youth?
3. What are the other factors that are driving youth to turn to terrorism?
4. How do Terrorist Groups exploit and manipulate youth?

1.4 Thesis Statement

Isolation, caused by psychological changes and the environment in which one grows up in, drives many youth to join terrorist groups

1.5 Scope of Research / Delimitation(s)

This research would be analysing how Social Isolation drives many youth to join or turn to terrorism groups. This research would be focusing on Middle Eastern Terrorism groups such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, a timeline from 2001 (9/11 Attacks) to present, analysing America's involvement in the fight of terrorism and the reasons behind youth turning to terrorism groups.

1.6 Significance of Research / Usefulness

With influential terrorism groups such as ISIS, starting to falter and lose power, it is a good time to understand how it was able to grow powerful in such a short time. One key factor was that it had fighters from all over the world that supported it in different ways, giving it the resources, it required to expand and gain power. One source of fighters is America, where youth are most vulnerable amongst Americans. As of 2018, there has been 64 identified American jihadist travellers, with an average age of 27 years old since 2011, with many more unreported. (Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., Hughes, S., Clifford, B., 2018) Adolescence years are known to be years of confusion and drastic changes to one's mindset and the shaping of one's belief and ideology. This paper seeks to find out if isolation is the main reason behind youth turning to isolation, and increase the awareness of this issue.

1.7 Limitations(s)

For this paper, we will be focusing on the middle eastern terrorism groups, such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda as they both have strong ties to one another. However, ISIS was only officially formed back in 2013, after it broke away from Al-Qaeda. (Beauchamp, 2015). This means that there is only a small period of 5 years to analyse. The issue of foreign fights came to light back in 2014, when ISIS released propaganda videos, featuring western fighters. Erikson's theory is also built based off his own perception and understanding of certain issues. Different cultures may have different perception of development. Erikson's Theory gives us an insight into each stage of a human's development, however, it does not explain how the development occurs. It will be challenging to apply this theory to all the cultures and every single human being on earth as psychological development is very subjective.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Terrorism

2.1.1 America and Terrorism

Beverly Gage (2011) notes that almost a decade after 9/11, an event that shook not only America but also the world, it is still hard to define what terrorism is, how it began and what are its impacts. There is also little consensus as to how to address it. The U.S. government allegedly treats terrorism primarily as an external threat and therefore prefers military action such as the invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq to thwart terrorists before they can reach U.S. shores (O'Brien 2016, 200). The terrorism group, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also known as ISIS, has taken the world by storm and is very much at the centre of attention. The reason for their sudden rise is due to their usage of Social Media, online platforms that allow them to share and create content such as Twitter and Reddit, allowing it to create a new identity and rise above Al-Qaeda. (Mohamedou 2018, 125) This allows ISIS to reach out and connect with the younger generations, leaving many vulnerable. After President Bush's largely-failed campaign against terrorism, known as the War on Terror, ISIS unexpectedly started to gain supporters in countries such as United States of America and various countries in Europe. Many were not put off by the violence the group used but instead found it as a way to visit violence in their own societies. Al-Qaeda started opening 'franchises' overseas and decentralised their operations. (Feaver, 2017) This caused many to think it was a post-Al-Qaeda period, but the strategy paid off, leading to a rise in self-radicalisation and lone wolf

attacks. This also allowed terrorist groups to start recruiting fighters from overseas, as they have an increasing presence.

In a research done by Meleagrou-Hitchens, Hug Hughes & Clifford in 2018, they interviewed 64 jihadist travellers from America. The average age at the time of travel was around 27 years old. At least 70.4% were US Citizens or legal permanent residents. Upon arrival in Syria, 82.8% joined ISIS, while the remaining joined other jihadist groups

2.2 Factors driving Youth

2.2.1 Psychology

Rubin and Mills (quoted in Bowker, Bukowski, Zargarpour, Hoza) were the first to consider the multidimensionality of the isolation construct. They identified two forms of isolated behaviour.

1st Form: Active Isolation

It refers to a child's isolation from the group or has been unable to successfully enter the group. Rubin and Mills suggest that this type of isolation would be associated with aggression and rejection by peers.

2nd Form: Passive Withdrawal

It refers to a child's isolation from the group as a function of the child's social shyness, anxiety, or extreme social sensitivity. Rubin and Mills stated that this latter form of isolation, coupled with negative self-perceptions, places a child at risk for the development of later internalizing difficulties.

My research will focus more on the 2nd Form: Passive Withdrawal. Passive Withdrawal is similar and in line to stages 5 and 6 of Erikson's Psychosocial Theory. The usage of Passive Withdrawal can help us understand Erikson's Psychosocial Theory more clearly.

Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Approximate Age	Psycho Social Crisis
Infant - 18 months	Trust vs. Mistrust
18 months - 3 years	Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt
3 - 5 years	Initiative vs. Guilt
5 - 13 years	Industry vs. Inferiority
13 - 21 years	Identity vs. Role Confusion
21 - 39 years	Intimacy vs. Isolation
40 - 65 years	Generativity vs. Stagnation
65 and older	Ego Integrity vs. Despair

(C) The Psychology Notes Headquarter - <http://www.PsychologyNotesHQ.com>

(The Psychological Notes HQ, 2017)

(Taubenheim 1996, 518) remarks that based off Erikson's Theory, adolescent faces conflict over their identity, wanting to know where in society do they fit in, this is a part of the journey many undertake as they grow older. They find resolution in identifying and integrating values learnt to form a clear identity. Adolescent may also switch their loyalty from family to the peer group, they will try to win approval from their peer groups. It is during this time that adolescents start to idolize others. This makes youth extremely vulnerable to radicalisation as they may accept the values taught by the extremist interpretation of the Islamic faith many terrorism groups uphold. According to Erikson's Theory, all of these are part of human nature, however, it may differ from each individual.

Using the two structures to look at the psychology of youth can help us further understand. Passive Withdrawal could lead to a lower self-esteem and a lack of confidence. Also, the youth start to have difficulty understanding the world around them and try to seek answers. In line with the fifth stage of Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, youth may feel that they do not have the skills or ability to fit in with their peers and feel that they need to find a place in which they can develop and improve themselves. All of this relates to the sixth stage of Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, studies have shown that those who lack self-esteem are likely to suffer from social isolation and depression (Cherry, 2017)

2.2.2 Propaganda and Social Media

The Internet provides a relatively unregulated and unrestricted place where terrorists can craft and disseminate propaganda through seemingly limitless numbers of websites and social media platforms, tailoring their pitch so as to target thousands of potential new recruits to join their organization and further their cause. (Lieberman, 2017) ISIS has a diverse mix of themes and motivation to help themselves recruit new fighters. One common theme is radicalization and mobilization. ISIS had begun publishing an online, English-language magazine, Dabiq, in 2014. The Dabiq reports on the group's activities and often reassures readers that ISIS is indeed an actual state that has social services and infrastructure. All of these helps present ISIS as a secure place and makes it more appealing. Apart from the publications, ISIS also publish guides and handbook that provides instructions on various methods to get to Turkey and then Syria and even suggests assessing your own personality before joining ISIS. (Bergen, P., Schuster, C. & Sterman, D 2015). Dabiq claims that those who lives outside of ISIS' purview are slaves to work hours and wages. The motivation for people to join violent extremist groups in Syria and Iraq remains more personal than political. ISIS propaganda appeals to those who seek a new beginning rather than revenge for past acts. A search for belonging, purpose, adventure, and friendship, appear to remain the main reasons for people to join the Islamic State. (UN Counter-Terrorism Centre 2017, 18) By skilfully using Dabiq, ISIS emphasises on how engagement with them on their next 'grand project' promises excitement, status, material and even sexual rewards. ISIS also makes use of religion, promising potential recruits that their effort will be repaid in their next life. (Ramakrishna & Neubronner, 2017)

2.2.3 Networks and Clusters

Meleagron-Hitchens, A, Hughes, S. & Clifford, B. (2018) notes that majority of known American travellers did not make the journey to Syria alone. Instead, the formed groups of individuals who worked with others to plan and execute their eventual departure. For many American travellers, their best chance to reach jihadist-held territory was to build strength in numbers. The two most common type of networks comprises of specific family or tight-knit friend groups that travel alongside one another or support the jihadist cause in a variety of ways. One state where this is a

prominent issue is Minnesota. Nearly one-quarter of successful and unsuccessful U.S. travellers came from Minnesota. Those who had travelled or had planned to travel to Syria, were in contact with another who had already travelled there or was tempted to. There are also established ways of traveling to Syria, undetected by authorities. Then – U.S. Attorney Luger described this recruiting strategy as a “peer-to-peer, brother-to-brother” approach, where existing ISIS fighters, call on their close friends and family members to come and join them in Syria.

2.2.4 Social Economic Status

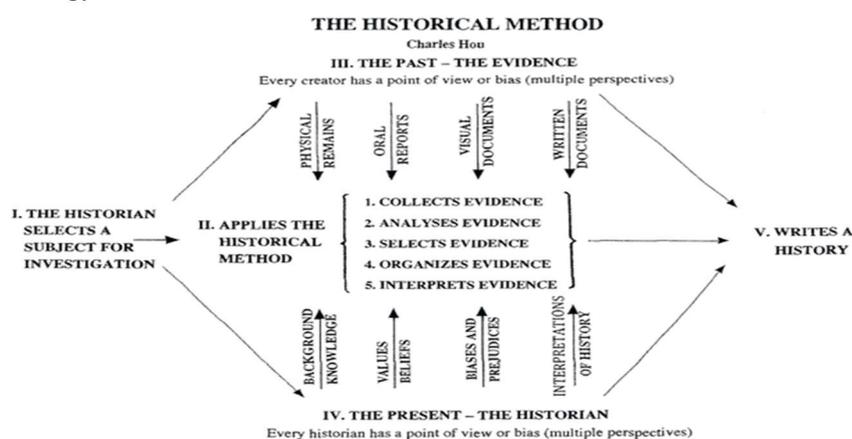
Graff (2010) notes that research on poverty and terrorism has grown into a cottage industry since 9/11, but much of it claims there is no connection between the two. Some studies of economic and demographic conditions – such as income per capita, gross domestic product (GDP) growth, unemployment rates, and income inequality – and their relationships to terrorist attacks go so far as to treat the link between poverty and terrorism as a “myth”, to paraphrase one recent headline. In the view of former Princeton economist Alan Krueger, now U.S. assistant secretary of the treasury for economic policy, “There is little reason for optimism that a reduction in poverty or increase in educational attainment will lead to meaningful reduction in the amount of international terrorism.” This settlement is widely echoed in both academic and journalist circles. Like Krueger, Al Qaeda specialist and television journalist Peter Bergen argues that economic deprivation inspires neither political nor terrorist violence.

2.3 Case Studies

Case No.	Description	Factors
1	Raihan’s family originated from Bangladesh but moved to Ohio in 2000. He had good grades and played computer games with his friends. But in 2013, he fell into a deep depression. He sought help from his sister, a devout Muslim. He then embraced Islam, proclaimed himself cured. Two months later, there were reports from ISIS documents that he entered Syria at Tel Abyad with Khan and was then killed in Syria. (Richard Engel, Ben Plessner, Tracy Connor and Jon Schuppe, 2016)	Isolation
2	Mohamed Khweis fled his home in the United States in 2015 and headed to ISIS, he was curious about the life there. He was intrigued after seeing many people around the world leaving their homes and heading to that state. He was misled by what he had read online and expected the place to be interesting. He expected to be at the front lines, fighting the war, leaving a ‘glamorous and exciting life’, but he ended up running errands for the group. (Berman 2018)	Propaganda
3	Ahmed left Minnesota to travel to London in 2014. He made his decision to travel to Syria in the winter of 2013. Many of his friends did not have clear knowledge about his decision but had heard rumours. However, in January 2014, he started to post photos on his Facebook, standing under a black flag, with a Quran in one hand and an AK-47 in the other.	“Peer-to-Peer, Brother-to-Brother”
4	Shortly after this, Douglas McCain, a highschool graduate and basketball-loving kid from the Midwest, contacted Ahmed about travelling to Syria and joining Ahmed. Ahmed assisted McCain and helped him get to Syria. (Meleagrou-Hitchens, Hughes & Clifford, 2018). His radicalisation	“Peer-to-Peer, Brother-to-Brother”

	surprised his family and friends, many of whom stated that he was an ordinary guy like everyone else	
5	Muhammad Dakhalla, known as Moe, was 22 when he started dating Jaelyn Young, 20. They were both academically-students, with Moe being accepted into University for Psychology and Jaelyn studying chemistry. After they started dating in November 2014, she converted to Islam. Both of them had wed in an Islamic ceremony. They both grew increasingly interested in life under ISIS rule. They reportedly began asking their recruiters more questions as they were planning their trip. Upon investigation, it is reported that the couple were radicalized through the various propaganda videos they saw online. They were also involved in an extremist online community which exposed them to extreme beliefs. (Green, 2017)	Propaganda

3. Methodology



(Charles Hou, Unknown)

I will be using the Historical Method to analyse my research and findings. I will be reviewing past articles and literature by academics and experts in this field. This allows me to understand the various standpoints and views of this issue, allow me to expand on the factors on which I can base my research on. I will be looking through news articles and official documents from the United States of America and its federal agencies to obtain the relevant data and case studies of previous youth who have turned to terrorism groups. I will then categorise all of my evidences and literature review. All of these will help me determine the most important factor (s) leading to youth joining terrorism groups and draw a sound conclusion.

4. Discussion

4.1 The “Pull” Factors

4.1.1 The Evolution of the Face of Terrorism Groups

Over the past decade, terrorist organisations such as ISIS, have managed to change the world’s impressions of it. It has managed to paint itself in a different light from what others have perceived Terrorist Groups to be decades ago. ISIS is portraying its caliphate as a utopian political project, offering youth the promise of an adventure. (Mullens, 2015) One of the main points that ISIS constantly tries to push out is the idea of a “Islamic Utopia”. (Andhika Prajuli, Wendy, 2017) Aaron Zelin, a Richard Borow Fellow at the Washinton Institute for Near East Policy, looked at ISIS media releases between April 18 and April 24 2015. He found 32 media releases that depict fantastical ideas around the

government, hisba (moral policing and the promotion of the caliphate). Furthermore, ISIS is starting to run its territory much like many other socialist societies, offering free healthcare and housing to those who join them. This even applies to the creature comforts, with recruits posting on their blogs about the free soap, food and shampoo. All of these makes life in the caliphate seem appealing. Reported by blogs of ISIS recruits as well as Dabiq, ISIS claims to have solutions to all the worlds issue, one example being racial discrimination that numerous women have to deal with. ISIS promise women recruits of equal rights and opportunities, allowing them to fight and serve alongside men, receiving equal treatment. However, in reality, the women are often sold in auctions, kept in domestic isolation and used as slaves. (Bryson, 2016) ISIS has presented itself as a modern society with high standards of living that seems far superior to those in the west. This allows ISIS to become an alternative society to live in for many youth who have found themselves suppressed by the western society. While in reality, the living conditions in the ISIS caliphate may be terrible, the fact is that, ISIS is preventing the world from realising it. They seem to offer the perfect life, while incorporating a sense of adventure which many youth find appealing.

ISIS has been encouraging its sympathisers to launch their own attacks to show their support to the caliphate. They provide the resources needed through social media and their own magazine. (Beauchamp, 2016). These attacks are often ineffective but sends a message to the rest of the world. The attacks are much harder to prevent due to its nature. Government agencies are unable to track every individual person in their country. The lone wolf attacks represent the large influence of ISIS over the world and serves as advertising for ISIS. It makes the group seem like it has more reach then it actually does. This paints ISIS as a very strong group while hiding their losses back home in Iraq and Syria. ISIS has changed the mindset of terrorism, it understands what Al-Qaeda did not, limited terrorism can create a havoc. Terrorism isn't about how many you kill, but it is about how many you can scare off. This has changed the mindset of terrorism, from before it was large-scale organised attacks to what it is today, multiple small attacks that create chaos everywhere. This boosts ISIS' image and reputation around the world.

4.1.2 Terrorism Groups and Social Media

Propaganda has been a key tool in many wars. It allows one to try and manipulate their audience to their own benefit, or to their opponents' disadvantage. Propaganda used during times of conflict are often known as "War Propaganda" and has been around since the beginning of World War 1. What makes it so different in this case is how ISIS utilise the broad social media network to spread their propaganda. The effect can be clearly seen in today's society. In a terrorism attack that took place in Manhattan, Sayfullo Saipov was discovered to have 90 ISIS propaganda videos. He followed the exact instructions that ISIS had put out in its social media channels before, showing that such propaganda is not only effective in convincing people to take action but also teaches them how to do it properly. (Patrikarakos, 2017). Approximately 88% of Americans, aged 18-24, use at least one social media network. With social media sites having such a large number of users, ISIS is able to capitalize on this and spread its propaganda to larger group of people. On Twitter alone, the tweets produced by Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC)'s Digital Outreach Team compared to those produced by ISIS and its followers was a ratio of 1 to 99. This emphasises ISIS capabilities to tap into various resources and out-gun government agencies, communicating vast amount of information to potential recruits as well as current fighters. (Patrikarakos, 2017).

Another concern apart from the spreading of propaganda messages is the ease of communications. Social Media has allowed fighters within the ISIS caliphate communicate and interact with recruits from all over the world. Instructions are often passed through this means. Recruits are often told to

search for a specific hashtag on certain Social Media pages to get in contact. Telegram, an encrypted messaging app, has also been used as a tool of communication by ISIS. This allows ISIS to provide the resources needed to get potential recruits into the caliphate. FBI reported to Congress that no terrorist organization was more “successful at drawing people into its message” online and through social media than ISIS. (Stampler, 2017). ISIS has managed to successfully established a global network of communication through Social Media sites, while also effectively using them to not only spread various propaganda but also changing the face of terrorism. More and more youth are being exposed to such propaganda, which may brainwash or radicalize them, earning ISIS their support.

4.2 The “Push” Factors

4.2.1 Youth and Psychology

Mental health of a person is often looked over when discussing reasons as to why people turn to terrorism. It affects one’s decision making procedure, and the way which one assesses a situation. Cottee (2015) noted in his article that it requires conducive social conditions rather than monstrous people to produce atrocious deeds. Few would question the essential point that violence, however, personalized or idiosyncratic its expression, is primarily rooted in historical structures or social relationships, not individuals, still less their “pathological” mindsets. Mental health is often overlooked as a reason for certain extremist acts by individuals, allowing the issue to worsen. As mentioned in Erikson’s Theory, it is during adolescence that youth will seek to carve an identity out for themselves. This can be done through rebellion, idolizing and cliquish exclusion. (Bellows, 2016) When American youth join terrorism groups, its is a form of rebellion, against social norms as well as western ideals. Furthermore, terrorism groups pitch themselves against the Western Imperialism which will appeal to the youth’ ‘rebel’ attitude. Idolizing is beneficial to a youth, only when he or she idolize the right person. Some youth may be confused about their thoughts and start idolizing radicals or extremist acts as heroism acts. They start identifying with the ideals of the extremist groups. They will try to become like that person, or represent those values, leading to their quest to partake in terrorism groups. Last but not least, youth often try to satisfy their egos by joining cliques, which not only gives them a sense of security but also elevate their status so that they will feel superior to others. By joining a terrorism group such as ISIS as an American, they will be part of the white minority that exist in the groups, which will give them a sense of exclusivity. At the same time, they will redefine their identity by shaping it around those that are around them and also, exclude those who they find different, practicing isolation. This are the factors that terrorism groups such as ISIS are able to offer to many American youth that are not easily identified on paper. ISIS manages to do this by having a united and common mentality, a “us-versus-them” attitude among their recruits ISIS exploits the growing mind of a youth to help their recruitment, and youth easily fall for trap.

In addition, some supporters have been labelled as “wannabe jihadis”. (Malik, 2015) These group of people have the largest thirst for identity. They are estranged from the Muslim communities as they are deemed too western. However, instead of going down the mainstream forms of Islam, attending praying sessions etc, they turn to the internet and ironically cut themselves from the traditional community institutions they see themselves belonging to. Through the internet, they see to discover their ‘faith’ through virtual communities. Cut off from the outside world, they turn to such online communities to escape the isolation and seek unique identities. One major step of radicalisation is the act of cutting off from the outside world, or Isolation. It is easy for these wannabe jihadis to commit acts of extremism and to take part in such violent acts as part of an existential struggle between Islam and the west. The existential crisis they face results in the development of extremist views.

Isolation brings about negative impacts to the mind. It can lead to a self-defeating sense of hopelessness and helplessness that can perpetuate isolation. (Kennedy, 2015) Family time these days no longer consist of playing board games or movie night, instead it consists of people spread about the house, each on his own device, reading Tweets. Everyone dodges real interaction for social interaction. This has two negative impacts, one impacts the individual while one impacts the society. When one spends more time alone, he starts to crave interaction, any form he is able to find. His behavior becomes much more violent and aggressive, which can help the construction of extremist thoughts and views. On another note, the isolation means that nowadays, people become less familiar with one another. With the reduction in interaction, people start to know each other lesser and only on a superficial level. The lack of interaction and understanding makes it harder for family members and friends to spot any irregularities with a person's behavior which might suggest radicalization. The lack of interaction with close family members or friends, also produces negative thoughts, where one can start to believe he has no one to support or listen to him. This makes him crave for more social interaction and he will head to where he feels he will be able to find it. All of the signs of radicalization fall under the radar and the youth eventually becomes a fighter for ISIS.

4.2.2 Financial Status

Policymakers has shown a tendency to name poverty as a primary motivation for terrorist acts. For example, in the remarks made after a meeting with the Vatican's Secretary of State in 2014, John Kerry declared, "We have a huge common interest in dealing with this issue of poverty, which in many cases is the root cause of terrorism or even the root cause of the disenfranchisement of millions of people on this planet." (Sterman, 2015) While former President of the US, declared, "We fight against poverty, because hope is an answer to terror." (Krueger & Maleckova, 2002) Sterman notes that while studies have found no link between poverty and terrorism, the studies have their limits. Some Americans who are involved in terrorism come from affluent backgrounds, one example being Anwar Awlaki. However, American Somalis – 82 percent of whom live near or below the poverty line according to a 2008 Census Bureau study – are the source of largest groups travelling to fight alongside the jihadist groups. According to Weli, youth are joining terrorism groups as they see it as the only way out of poverty. Many immigrants travel to the United States of America, in the search for a better life. However, some may have difficulties finding a new job due to various factors, and thus, unable to find a mean to support himself and his family financially. In a survey done by MoveHub, the USA ranks 15th for the most expensive country to live in. (Martin, 2017) The high cost of living in the USA result in youth turning to less than ideal means to support themselves financially.

However, a review of evidences provides little reason for optimism that a reduction in poverty or an increase in educational attainment would, by themselves, meaningfully reduce international terrorism, let alone domestic terrorism. Instead of viewing terrorism as a direct result of lack of job opportunities or lack of education amongst the youth, it should be seen to be a result of the underlying political views and ideologies by many. An observation by a planner for Islamic Jihad about the suicide bombers was that none of them were uneducated fellows or desperately poor. Many were middle class and held paying jobs. These suicide bombers were not motivated by the prospect of money but were motivated by their own mentality and goals. They are fuelled by a hatred towards the common goal that resulted in them making that decision. Ultimately, financial status does not affect the youth's decision to join terrorism groups. To many, the money is an added incentive that made them more reaffirmed about their life choices.

5. Conclusion

While ISIS is slowly losing territory in Iraq and Syria, and to many, one foot in its grave, we must always remember how it got created, a spawn off one of the largest terrorist groups in history – Al Qaeda. Thus, it is important that we prevent the rise of yet another terrorist group, spawned off ISIS.

ISIS has managed to successfully expand its ‘web’, increasing its influence and presence all over the world, through the usage of Social Media, its own magazine - Dabiq, and the traditional physical human network. It is able to reach out to a larger range of audience, while also emphasizing the point of their messages. At the same time, the messages sent by ISIS struck a chord with many teens. They present themselves as a united front, providing youth with a sense of security, friendship and identity during one of the most trying periods of one’s life.

Psychological changes during the Adolescence period can lead to certain undesirable scenarios, and as we have researched – Isolation. Isolation makes the youth extremely vulnerable, and their quest to define themselves and solve their existential crisis has led to them being manipulated and exploited by ISIS. It is also noted that not all youth who face isolation, end up in terrorism groups. The key determining factor is simply the way in which youth choose to tackle the issue. Isolation is an innate process, but youth may choose to confide with others and express their problems to each other. The ones who chose to remain alone, are the ones most vulnerable. Youth will ultimately struggle during this point in their lives as they try to cope with such major changes.

In conclusion, ISIS has managed to exploit youth and use propaganda to convince youth to join them. However, it must be noted that it was the psychological changes which the youth faced which made them more vulnerable. Hence, it cannot be clearly determined who had a larger role in the issue discussed. At the same time, both factors, Propaganda and Psychology cannot solely be blamed. Both factors, worked hand in hand with one another and ultimately allowed ISIS to achieve success in their recruitment of youth.

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