

PAPER

SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES OF ADOLESCENTS GIRLS' TENDENCY TOWARD FANATICISM

Sobirova Sojidaxon^{1,*}

¹PhD student of the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

* sojidaxonsobirova@gmail.com

Abstract

This article explores the psychological significance of radicalism, specifically focusing on the developmental stage of adolescence and its inherent crisis states. It examines the distinct psychology of adolescent girls, analyzing their susceptibility to extremist ideologies along with the underlying motives, causes, and root triggers of such tendencies. Furthermore, the study investigates the social dynamics of adolescent girls and provides practical recommendations that can be implemented within interpersonal relationships and the educational process.

Key words: interpersonal relationships, phenomenon of fanaticism, emotional bonding, social validation, extremist ideologies, moral outrage, psychological void, deviant behaviors, social isolation.

Kirish

The increasing number and worsening severity of economic, social, political, national, psychological, ecological, and medical problems in today's global community demand correct ideological perspectives, critical attitudes, and healthy thinking from people living in various regions. This is driven, on one hand, by the continuous exchange of information across global networks and, on the other hand, by the ever-increasing interconnectedness of nations.

Consequently, issues arising from fanaticism, extremism, terrorism, dogmatism, and other

distorted religious approaches are becoming central problems on the global agenda. Specifically, various manifestations of fanaticism are emerging in social life, interpersonal relationships, small groups, and within the context of solving contemporary global challenges. In such a situation, a profound understanding of the concept of religion and its true essence, as well as its correct dissemination into the public consciousness, remains a primary concern. Furthermore, the necessity of studying the phenomenon of fanaticism from a scientific and psychological perspective throughout all stages of social development and societal life has never lost its relevance. This can be attributed, on one

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hand, to the psychological changes occurring in individuals due to ongoing global events. On the other hand, it is reflected in the expanding scope of this phenomenon within society. This highlights how complex and multifaceted fanaticism truly is, further increasing the significance of its research.

The role of this subject is also highly prominent in general psychology, social psychology, the social psychology of personality, and other branches of psychological science. This is because serious changes occur in the consciousness, behavior, thinking, and emotional sphere of an individual prone to fanaticism. These changes manifest in their relationship with society and other individuals. Gradually, the impact of these changes may also be reflected within the social groups to which the individual belongs. This is especially reflected in social groups involving adolescents. The distinctive hallmark of adolescence lies in its transitional nature: the individual is no longer a child, having moved beyond the phase of absolute irresponsibility and the immediate gratification of desires. However, they are not yet a fully-fledged adult, as the burdens of professional life, fiscal obligations, and familial leadership have yet to be assumed. Physically, they have outgrown childhood but have not yet attained full biological maturity. This in-between state frequently precipitates a crisis centered around the need for group affiliation and a sense of belonging.

Consequently, this developmental ambiguity renders adolescents more susceptible to deviant behaviors and radicalism, as they may adopt attitudes that contravene social norms in their pursuit of identity and belonging. However, adolescent girls integrate into society through a distinct framework of predispositions, needs, and motivations that differ significantly from those of their male counterparts. Their social entry is often characterized by a different set of psychological orientations and aspirational drives. While boys may prioritize autonomy and hierarchical status, girls frequently exhibit a greater emphasis on relational interconnectedness, emotional resonance, and the search for social validation within their communal structures.

The susceptibility of adolescent girls to radicalization and extremist ideologies is often rooted in a complex interplay of psychological vulnerability and the search for social validation.

During this developmental stage, the intense need for a “sense of belonging” and an identifiable “purpose” makes them particularly receptive to narratives that offer absolute moral clarity and a structured identity. Radical groups often exploit these emotional voids by providing a pseudo-empowering environment that contrasts with the perceived constraints of their traditional social roles. *The Search for Relational Belonging: Adolescent girls possess a heightened drive for “relational interconnectedness.”* Radical groups often exploit this by offering a “surrogate family” or a sisterhood that promises unconditional acceptance, filling the emotional void left by social isolation or family dysfunction. *The Quest for Agency and Empowerment: In many traditional contexts, girls feel restricted by societal expectations.*

Extremist ideologies can paradoxically present themselves as a form of pseudo-empowerment, giving these girls a perceived sense of agency and a significant role in a “grand cause” that transcends their daily limitations. *Ideological Romanticism: There is often an element of “romanticized sacrifice.”* The motive to serve a higher moral or spiritual authority provides a sense of profound meaning and identity, which is particularly appealing during the “identity and role confusion” stage of adolescence. Drawing from Erik Erikson’s stages of development, the primary task of a teenager is to move from identity and role confusion.

1. The looking glass self: Girls in this stage are prone to the : “looking glass self” phenomenon—building their identity based on how they believe others perceive them.

2. The appeal of absolutism: radical ideologies provide binary clarity (Right vs. Wrong, Us vs. Them). This eliminates the exhausting anxiety of navigating the nuanced, often critical social landscape of high school and social media.

Emotional Resilience and moral outrage: Girls are often more sensitive to perceived social injustices. Radical narratives tap into this empathy, transforming moral outrage into a motive for extremist affiliation by framing the group as the only “righteous” solution to global or local suffering.

In other hand, interpersonal relationships with family and peers function as primary regulators

of the emotional bonding systems in adolescent girls, directly influencing the neural reward centers associated with emotional gratification. When these fundamental needs for connection remain unfulfilled within the primary social circle, a psychological void is created. Consequently, as a compensatory mechanism, adolescents begin to seek alternative social affiliations or out-groups to secure the validation and emotional equilibrium that their immediate environment failed to provide. While the search for identity is universal among adolescents, girls are uniquely driven by a profound need for relational interconnectedness and emotional resonance. When traditional structures such as the family or the school fail to provide a sense of agency or social validation, a psychological void is created. Extremist ideologies effectively exploit this void by offering a “surrogate sisterhood” and a romanticized sense of purpose that promises to transform moral outrage into meaningful action.

Schools should transition from being mere information providers to becoming “identity laboratories”: critical media literacy – implement curricula that teach students to deconstruct online narratives. This includes identifying “love-bombing” techniques and recognizing how algorithms create echo chambers; structured activism: Since adolescent girls often have a high drive for social justice, schools should provide legitimate outlets for moral outrage. This could include student-led debate clubs on global ethics, or community service projects that provide a sense of “real-world” agency; the safe harbor concept: counselors should be trained to recognize social isolation not just as a bullying issue, but as a radicalization risk.

To conclude, educational systems must offer legitimate pathways for adolescent girls to engage with social justice and global issues, satisfying their need for empowerment without resorting to radical frameworks. Families and educators should prioritize the creation of “safe harbors” where adolescent girls feel heard and validated, reducing the craving for external validation from deviant groups. Promoting ideological literacy and critical attitudes toward global information streams can help adolescents navigate the “identity and role confusion” stage without falling prey to dogmatic absolutes.

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