



RESEARCH ARTICLE

UNDERSTANDING THE BASIS OF ISLAMIC RADICALISM: KNOWING WHAT MOTIVATE THEM TO DO WHAT THEY DO

CYRIACUS IKE ¹, AGARA TUNDE ², GERALD IYIAKAIMO ³

² Department of Political Science, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria;

³ Department of International Relations, Madonna University, Okija Campus, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

Islamic radicalism has emerged as a major subject of concern in global security and international relations discourse, yet its underlying motivations are often oversimplified or misunderstood. This study seeks to examine the foundational drivers of Islamic radicalism by analyzing the ideological, socio-economic, political, and psychological factors that contribute to radicalization processes. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the research explores how selective interpretations of religious texts, historical grievances, political marginalization, foreign intervention, and governance failures interact to shape radical ideologies and mobilize individuals toward extremist action. The study also considers the role of identity politics, perceived injustice, and social networks in reinforcing radical narratives. Through qualitative analysis of secondary literature, policy documents, and case studies, the research distinguishes between Islam as a religion and radical movements that instrumentalize religious symbols for political objectives. The findings provide a nuanced understanding of why individuals and groups adopt radical positions and engage in violence, thereby contributing to more effective counter-radicalization strategies and informed policy responses. Ultimately, the study emphasizes that Islamic radicalism is a complex phenomenon driven by multiple contextual factors rather than religious doctrine alone.

Keywords: Islam, radicalism, fundamentalism, terrorism,

Corresponding Author

Gerald Iyiakaimo

Email Address: iyiakaimogerald@gmail.com

Received: 26/5/2026; **Revised:** 30/6/2026; **Accepted:** 17/7/2026; **Published:** 20/7/2026



1.0. INTRODUCTION

Radicalism, whether religious or political, contains three notable elements or types of people, namely the extremists, zealots and fundamentalists. Ben-Dor and Pedahzur (2005), conceived fundamentalism as a movement that is radical in terms of its goals, extremist in terms of its methods and literalist in terms of its adherence to scripture, thereby, viewing fundamentalism a religious phenomenon. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics (2019) and Appleby (2003,) lent insight to the understanding of fundamentalism explaining it as an identifiable pattern of religious militancy in which self-styled believers attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity by outsiders, fortify the borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular structures and processes.

Morgan (2001) has opined that fundamentalism is more of a political movement with a political agenda and organized religion has always been about power and thus has always been political. But whether political or religious, fundamentalists' agenda are revealingly interchangeable. Kaplan (1992, p. 15) (citing Martin E. Marty 'Fundamentals of Fundamentalism'), has also argued that fundamentals refer to some distinctive, not necessarily unique, features of movements called fundamentalist. They need not be present in some way or measure in all movements, but they should be characteristic of most of them.

Scholars, however, agreed that the concept of fundamentalism that is now automatically associated with both political and religious movements was original to a Christian orthodox Protestant sect in the United States, who in the 20th century published series of pamphlets under the title *The Fundamentals* in response to a number of social problems of the time" (ter Haar 2003). Hence, members of this group willingly referred to themselves and accept the label of fundamentalists. Whereas, the original American Protestants have accepted this label, it has now become a catch-all reference label on other religious groups and movements as an appropriate way to understand the extremist tendency in these religious movements today. This is in spite of the fact that Asif and Anoop (2023), Ram-Prasad (2003), and Seneviratne (2003), have argued that what is regarded as Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalisms respectively is actually the result of cultural essentialism or ethno-nationalism than religious.

Although most literature tend to convey fundamentalism as a universal phenomenon, Ben-Dor and Pedahzur (2005) have pointed out that it will make more sense to accept fundamentalism as a phenomenon that while to some extent may be universal, but in reality, should be understood in terms of the concrete society, theology and culture in which it was born and which it plays an active role." This, nevertheless, does not disturb the academic attempts to understand fundamentalism by identifying or isolating the specific factors that constitute the phenomenon. Thus, on general terms, ter Haar (2004) attempted a summary of what may constitute fundamentalism to include; (1) A sense of restoration that accompany the drive to return to conservative values which may stimulate believers to attempt or contribute in building alternative structures (2) An attempt to create new identity at the expense of minority groups. (3) An obsession over moral concerns often adversely affecting women and weaker members of society. (4) A tendency to pursue these objectives through militancy. As Armstrong (2007, p. 4) had equally noted;

Fundamentalism represents a rebellion against the secularist ethos of modernity. Wherever a Western-style society has established itself, a fundamentalist movement has developed alongside it. Fundamentalism is, therefore, a part of the modern scene. Although fundamentalists often claim that



they are returning to a golden age of the past, these movements could have taken root in no time other than our own. Fundamentalists believe that they are under threat. Every fundamentalist movement – in Judaism, Christianity and Islam – is convinced that modern, secular society is trying to wipe out the true faith and religious values. Fundamentalists believe that they are fighting for survival and when people feel their backs are to the wall, they often lash out violently.

However, further reviews of literature indicate that they are broad characteristics that fundamentalist groups share. Firstly, they tend to be reactive in character, often adapting new methods, techniques and strategies as counter response to the influence of secularity perceived to be erosive of their fundamental religious teaching. Secondly, they are selective rather than ardent followers of the creeds they claim espouse. Only adopting the teachings and practices deem necessary in their fight against the secular system (Almond et al, 2003). Thirdly, they view the world in strict dichotomous and Manichaeian terms that is, that is either black or white; *dar al Islam* (the house of peace) and *dar al Harb* (the house of war). This belief system forms the ample justification for their use of violence as a righteous course of action and explains the rhetoric common in the vocabulary of such demagogues, denigrating and dehumanising their victims in terms such as ‘infidels,’ ‘dogs,’ ‘children of satan,’.

Furthermore, as Almond et al (2003) noted, all religious fundamentalist regard the contents of their holy texts as sacred, infallible and an incontestable final authority within the scope of application. Thus, any attempts at subjecting these beliefs to scientific interpretations or any modern form of hermeneutical criticism always invoke stiff resistance and termed blasphemous. Additionally, religious fundamentalists construe human history in strict messianic terms using important historical epochs mapping important landmarks within their religion as counterpoints to general secular dating systems. In this regard, Weinberg and Pedahzur (2005) belief in most fundamentalist groups of that human history would come to a sudden catastrophic end with the ultimate triumph of the good over evil, usually in the not-too-distant future and that this end will be brought about by the intervention of a divine force, the Messiah, Saviour, Mahdi or Hidden Imam. Moreover, Agara and Dike (2026, p27.), argued that:

Virtually all fundamentalists are isolationists, preferring to distance themselves from the corrupt secular world. This separation may be by physical exclusion, living in communes, caves, monasteries or other form of enclaves, or symbolic by the way they dress or wearing special clothing which denote them as belong to a particular sect distinct from others or by adopting peculiar behavioural pattern and religious practices that set them apart. In either way, fundamentalists separate themselves from the rest of the populace and even from others who may share similar beliefs like them but are seen as already tainted by secularity of the world (Agara and Dike (2026: 27).

Agara and Dike (2026, p27.), further argued that:

Fundamentalists are very vocal and rigid in their views about the sexuality, procreation and the status of women in the community. This is in addition to the formal limitation on the involvement of women in public life, freedom of movement and their legal rights.

Finally, the authoritarian disposition of fundamentalist organisations is explained by their rejection of democratic values, with leadership drawing from not easily attainable religious and charismatic bases rather than rational legal sources. Mark (2020), therefore, furnished a political perspective to



fundamentalism by terming the belief amongst political extremists of having one correct answer to all question as monist. This is based on the fact that religious fundamentalists and political extremists certain core belief but a tendency to close minded with regard to opposing views.

Having derived what fundamentalism is, we now turn to explain the similarity between it and some other related concepts such as zealot and extremism. Canetti-Nisim (2005, p. 40) has defined political extremism “not in terms of ideologies, party platforms, political agenda or movements as we tend to do in political analyses (Mudde 2000), [but rather] through the prism of a set of beliefs that express support for less liberal-democratic values, norms and attitudes.” This anti-democratic value systems and views may later become a manifest behavioural pattern, or an incentive or a mechanism that motivates or fuels sporadic violent actions. The religious alternate are therefore fundamentals because they tend to take their religious beliefs to the extreme.

The term Zealots is associated to a millennial Jewish sect whose militants used *sicarri*; a form of dagger to execute those considered their enemies (Rapoport 1985, pp. 660-72). As Hoffman (2006, p. 88) has noted, the zealots were ruthless assassins who slit the throat of a Roman legionnaire or of a Jewish citizen who had been judged by the group guilty of betrayal, apostasy or both. They believed themselves to be living in the ‘end times’ and hoped that their action would triggered a prophetic repression by the Jews and Romans, thereby, hastening the coming of the ‘end time’. Thus, as Ben-Dor & Pedahzur (2005, p. 81) have noted, “extremism and radicalism normally refer to degrees of intensity in commitment to ideologies and the willingness to make sacrifice and remain faithful to that which appears to be worthy of belief.” This is, the character that gives religion the coloration that breeds a community of cultural prejudice, a dogmatic attitude and a value construct that create the indices upon which entire life’s sphere is given expression (Ike, 2013.)

A similarity and unity of purpose runs through zealots, religious extremists and fundamentalists in the sense that they see themselves as constituting a movement of religious radicalism, revitalisation and renewal, proclaiming a loyalty to sacred texts and to the goal of creating a truly religious state. As Beit-Hallahmi (2005, p. 28) has noted, the ideological complex of fundamentalism includes the rejection of modernity, not necessarily of modern technology, but of the ideals of individualism, individual rights, voluntarism, pluralism and the equality of women. They all share a political vision in the sense of a messianic or apocalyptic dream which includes the idea of political domination of a state (or the world) by its membership (Beit-Hallahmi, 1998).

2.0. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

What is Terrorism?

Although defining and conceptualising terrorism may be an essential first step in understanding what it is really, the number of existing academic and policy literature (and the number is still increasing) on it makes it difficult to understand and conceptualise what it really is. Thus, the concept suffers from a definitional deficit, not that there are non but rather there are myriads. Concerned state governments in their various efforts to address this issue have further lend confusion and confounded the definitional problem with confusing and often contradictory statements and policies. Nevertheless, defining the problem is an essential first step in the accumulation of statistical data (of which there are many). Definitions impact not only the manner data is collected and collated; they have immense effect on threat perceptions and policies that can be developed to counter it.



However, while the definitional polemics may continue (hopefully not indefinitely), it is generally agreed that they are three basic components of terrorism: the terrorist, his victim and the act itself. The terrorist perpetuates an act of terror against his victim. Thus, fear is used as a means of communicating their intents and achieves an expected response from their target or targets. Terrorism represents a kind of political aggression that is neither a philosophy nor a political movement but rather a political strategy that has been used through history by both state and sub-state actors to pursue various political causes. Wilkinson (2004/05) highlighted five major discernable characteristics of this form of political violence. It is premeditated in nature and aims to create an extreme climate of fear. Secondly, terror is directed at a wider audience beyond their immediate targets. Thirdly, its targets include symbolic and random targets including civilian casualties. Fourth, their acts of violence are seen as extra-normal, breach of social norm and draw a sense of outrage within society. Finally, they use the act of terror to influence political behaviour, force concession to demands or give vent to anger, in order to undermine institutions, governments and other designated opponents.

As a broad concept that defies a single definition, its understanding can be further enhanced if it is broken down to manageable categories to aid research and analysis. Indeed, there are distinctions between state and factional terrorism. There are many scholarly works on state terrorism (Arendt 1967, Friedrich & Brzezinski 1956, Lopez & Stohl 1986, Stohl & Lopez 1984), mass terror war crimes and that have been committed by regimes. Once a regime assumes state terrorism as a means, they tend to spiral into more acts of state terrorism against their citizens and those supposed to be their adversaries.

Another important distinction that can be made is between international terrorism, involving the citizens of more than one state or that transcends across national borders, and domestic terrorism whose activities are contained or limited to the borders of a specific state. However, when an internal domestic terrorism becomes protracted, it eventually tends to acquire an international dimension. Another way to differentiate is to classify them according to what motivates their actions: those driven by nationalism, separatism, racism, vigilantism, ultra-left ideology, religious fundamentalism, millennialism and advocacy such as human rights campaign, antiabortion etc.

A tidier way is to distinguish between religious motivated terrorism and terrorist acts aimed at achieving some political goals. Although, both deploy the use of violence in their modes of operation, there differ in certain respects. For an act of terror to be considered politically motivated, it must be seen to challenge the state without affecting the private rights of innocent actors (Kittrie, 1981). When juxtaposed together, it becomes apparent that while political terrorism often seek resolution of their desired cause within their lifetime, religious terrorism pursues a cause that outlive their lifetime based on the belief that their reward is in eternity. Similarly, religious terrorism does not choose their targets for their military value but rather for the purpose affecting public consciousness in a brutal manner. Furthermore, they often recourse to a 'god' in justification for their actions as 'religious' and creates the perfect excuse to demonize their opponents.

As Juergensmeyer (2004) had noted, that this perception is aimed to ennoble their course of action, drawing participants to their notion of sacred war. The effect of this he argues is not in politicising religion. These divine notion terror participants assign to their course as a battle between good and evil and the expectation of divine reward help in ruling out the possibility of reservation or



compromise to duty. To them, laws of society are subordinate to the higher authority they answer to. In the final analysis, religious terrorism offers a sense of redemption and dignity to its members. This explains the willingness men who are often alienated from society to find meaning from such organisation (Agara and Ogwola, 2014).

We contend however, that at least six major conditions must be met for any definition of terrorism to be considered acceptable, including: the use physical violence and or threat of violence, the existence of an organised group, the goal to achieve a set political objective, the deployment of violent antics beyond their immediate targets to extensive collateral damages; government can either be a perpetrator or target of terrorism; as a form insurgency, it is favoured by the weak (Lutz & Lutz 2008, p. 9). Thus, Sinai (2010/2011, p.3) proposes a comprehensive view of terrorism as;

- - - a tactic of warfare involving premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated by sub-national groups or clandestine agents against any citizen of a state, whether civilian or military, to influence, coerce, and if possible, cause mass casualties and physical destruction upon their targets. Unlike guerrilla forces, terrorist groups are less capable of overthrowing their adversaries' government than of inflicting discriminate or indiscriminate destruction that they hope will coerce them to change policy.

Pillars of Islamic Radicalism/Fundamentalism

Islamic fundamentalism has been brewed through four generations of writers/philosophers and distilled from their writings before finally produce what we have now. The crux of our argument is that present day Islamic fundamentalism, the terrorism it birthed and the suicide bombings it opted for as a preferred weapon of choice are responses to the teachings and messages of these major proselytes, agitators and encouragers of jihad. What we have tried to do in this section is to synthesized the various writings by the radical preachers and writers highlighted above into key concepts that act as motivators and motivating influences for their activities.

In understanding these concepts, note must be made of the fact that Muhammad taught that deceit is a powerful strategy of war alongside of great strategic thinkers such as Sun Tzu, Machiavelli and perhaps the most prominent of them all; Clausewitz. Al Zawahiri has also elaborated on the art of deception as a strategy in war (Gabriel 2006. See Section 4, chapters 12 & 13) and this had been an added guide to present day terrorist tactics. Let's examine briefly the five pillars as these provide impetus and motivation to fundamentalist. This is terrorists' war and strategy.

Pillar One: No Law but Islamic Law:

This is one point that separates the radicals from all other Muslims; the insistence for governments to implement Islamic law (*sharia*), the basis for the condemnation of all secular governments and the need to call for a jihad. The power which Islamic law exerts on its adherents can only be appreciated if adequate notice is taken of the fact that Islam, as far back as the time of Mohammed, developed a strong interface between it and the state with Mohammed assuming the headship of both, thereby uniting them under one inseparable authority. As Lewis (2003, p. 7) has noted, "religious truth and political power were indissolubly associated: the first sanctified the second, the second sustained the first." While the idea of a nation based on religion may seem anachronistic, it is not so to Islam and its adherents. This is what make Islamic fundamentalism quite different from other religions and these differences are quite substantial.



For a radical fundamentalist, there is no middle-road or negotiation concerning Islamic law, but rather opt for death, if necessary, to fulfil every single word of the law. The answer to the question – Why? – is simply to prove to Allah, his prophet and convince themselves and the rest of the society that they are truly the followers of the prophet. Their sincerity must not be in doubt nor questioned, they are not ready and never willing to lose their eternity by compromising the law which would have made them apostates; worse than an infidel (a non-believer). They see themselves as the only group that upholds the truth in a world filled with infidels, and no better way to show this than by doing what they do, or by showing willingness to do what is necessary and needed to be done.

Pillar Two: Infidels are all around

The Islamic religious radical sees himself as being surrounded by infidels who are not only hostile to the him and his message of peace (after all Islam means peace), but must be made to accept this by all means. All the above writers repeatedly insisted that nearly all societies are infidel, even including some that are Muslims. Hence, their writings elaborated on three themes – denying Islamic law makes one an infidel, accepting or practising some selected part of Islam while refusing other parts, makes one an infidel, and infidel governments must be destroyed. One of the fiery writers whose writing had been generally acclaimed by radical Muslims as inspiring what can be referred to as the ideology of radicalism is Qutb (1964) who had used the term – *jahiliyyah* – to refer to all societies that existed in ignorance of Allah. According to him;

Ajahilisociety is one which does not dedicate itself to submission to God alone, in its beliefs and ideas in its observances of worship and in its legal regulations. By this definition, all the societies existing in the world today qualify as *jahili*. World governments and societies have been divided into two according to radical Muslims scholars. These are the House of Peace (*Dar al Islam*) and the House of War (*Dar al Harb*). Although these two terms do not come from either the Qur'an or the Hadiths, they are nevertheless used by early scholars to describe societies or an environment where a Muslim may live peacefully. *Dar al Harb* refers to an apostate government or society against which a jihad may be waged whereas *Dar al Islam* refers to a government or society patterned after the law (*Sharia*) (Lewis, 2003).

Contentions are rife as to what society exactly qualifies as *Dar al Islam* or *Dar al Harb*. Some scholars have interpreted *Dar al Islam* as any society where Islam could be practised freely. However, other radical scholars have disqualified this by saying that *Dar al Harb* is any society not ruled by Islam and practising Islamic laws. As Qutb (1964) had explicitly stated and which radical Muslims have accepted,

Dar al Islam is that place where the Islamic state is established and the *sharia* is the authority and God's limits are observed and where all the Muslims administer the affairs of the state with mutual consultation [whereas] the rest of the world is the home of hostility (*Dar al Harb*). A Muslim can have only two possible relations with *Dar al Harb*: peace with a contractual agreement or war. A country with which there is a treaty will not be considered the home of Islam.

In view of this, all committed Muslims [radicals, fundamentalists and extremists] will only have one defining characteristic – their faith. All other identities not based on faith is irrelevant, including lineage, race, nationality and family. As Qutb (1964) has put it;



A Muslim has no country except that part of the earth where the sharia of God is established ..., a Muslim has no nationality except his belief ..., a Muslim has no relatives except those who share the belief in God

Pillar Three: Islam Must Rule

This answers the question – why are Muslims killing Muslims – especially when we hear the news of suicide bombings of mosques and fellow Muslims. The answer is that radical Muslims want a return to history, a Caliphate to have authority over the entire world. The radicals see the establishment of the caliphate as a matter of submission to Allah because, to them, Islam is not merely a system of belief, it is a way of life that must take shape as a system of authority on earth just as it did during the life of Muhammad. In other words, Islam is a religion and a state fused together into one (Lewis 2003). Qutb's (1964) contribution to the radicals' ideology is that all societies must be destroyed because;

Other societies [will] not give it [Islam] any opportunity to organise its followers according to its own method, and hence it is the duty of Islam to annihilate all such systems, as they are obstacles in the way of universal freedom. Only in this manner can the way of life be wholly dedicated to God.

As Mawdudi (2005) has bluntly puts it,

Islam wishes to destroy all states and governments anywhere on the face of the earth which are opposed to the ideology and programme of Islam regardless of the country or the nation which rules it

Thus, to all committed radicals fighting for his faith, the caliphate means everything and nationality means nothing. The constitution guiding them is the Qur'an to which they all answer to. Hacker (1976) has offered three categories of persons who commit terrorism and these are "crazies, criminals and crusaders." According to him, the 'crazies' "are emotionally disturbed individuals who are driven to commit terrorism by reasons of their own that often do not make sense to anybody else." The 'criminals' "perform terrorist acts for more easily understood reasons: personal gains." These transgressed the law of the society being in full control of their faculties and senses and both their motives and goals for doing so can be clearly understood by everybody even though it is deplorable to us. The 'crusaders' commit terrorist acts because they "seek not personal gain, but prestige and power for a collective cause." Like the 'crazies' their reasons for doing this are often unclear both to themselves and others, their ultimate goals are even frequently less understandable. They commit these acts because they believe that they are serving a higher cause.

However, the radicals are not crazy. They are intelligent, logical people who are following the teachings of their faith and as enumerated by the teachings and writings of people they reverent and believed in. Thus far, we have been able to establish their mind-set; that they believed that there can be no law but Islamic law, they are surrounded by infidels and the caliphate must be restored if Muslims are to be free to practise their faith. Given these therefore, the next logical step towards realising their goal is if there is no peaceful war, then war is the next option. Jihad is then justified.

Pillar Four: Jihad is the Only Way to Win

Certainly, the radical Muslim is a fundamentalist who wants to practise Islam according to the tenets of Islam as left behind by the prophets. One of these tenets is jihad which had been erroneously



interpreted or understood. A fundamental mistake, error and misunderstanding made by most Muslims is to view jihad as a holistic concept. But as Qutb (1964) had state, jihad was revealed in stages, lamenting that those who do not know “speak clumsily and mix up the various stages. They regard every verse of the Qur’an as if it were the final principle of this religion”.

A principle of Qur’anic interpretation not usually followed in this regard is known as *nasikh*. *Nasikh* actually means that the revelation in the Qur’an is progressive. Put differently, this implied that when there is a contradiction, newer revelations cancel out, or abrogate older revelations. For instance, the former direction for prayer was originally Jerusalem, and then changed to Mecca. In the same way, earlier revelation about jihad eschewed tolerance (Surah 2:109, Ali translation) which was later abrogated by a newer revelation known as the “verse of the sword” (Surah 9:5, Shakir translation).

It should be noted that although 60% of the Qur’an is related to the concept of jihad (Gabriel 2006), it is still a highly contested concept as to its practise among Muslims generally – between moderates and radicals. For instance, moderate Muslims have always challenged the notion that jihad is a physical fight; they often say that the highest meaning of jihad is a spiritual struggle within oneself to follow the teachings of Islam. The moderates, following the teaching of Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, have divided jihad into three categories – the jihad of the soul, the jihad against Satan, and lastly, the jihad against the infidels and hypocrites. They argued that the jihad for the soul and against Satan surpassed any other jihad and must be completed before starting on the final phase against infidels and hypocrites. To this, Faraj (1991) had responded as a show “of total ignorance and/or total cowardice ... [as] all three of these categories go hand in hand in a straight line”.

In addition to refuting the views of moderate Muslims about jihad, radical Muslims are known to have clarified their beliefs about how to practise jihad. Three of the most important will suffice mentioning here.

The first is that jihad is an individual duty, not a corporate one. The crux of the radicals’ argument is that if jihad was a corporate duty, then not all Muslims would be required to participate or undertake it. Rather, they argued that jihad is an individual duty just the same as fasting, prayer and giving of alms are required duties to be performed by all Muslims and do not require permission by anybody before performing them.

The second is that war is for politics, not for preaching the faith. As Qutb (1964) had emphatically stated and in conjunction with Surah 2:256 that “there is no compulsion in religion”, jihad is to be used to overthrow governments and not for preaching Islam which is used to make a convert. This is contrary to many opinions that the goal of jihad is to make converts of non-Muslims. Qutb has explained this confusion and complained that Muslims confused the purpose of jihad with the invitation to accept Islam. For him, these are two separate principles – the purpose of jihad is to change systems, institutions and governments by force and to bring both Muslims and non-Muslims under Islamic law. In contrast, the invitation to accept Islam is voluntary.

The third is where to fight. To understand this, we need to equally understand that Islamic thought makes a distinction between “near” enemy and “far” enemy. Initially, the apostate Muslim governments not practising sharia were seen as the near enemy and this led to the spate of



assassinations of people associated with these governments. However, there was need for a change of tactics when these were not producing the results envisaged; which were changes in the governments. The coming of al-Qaeda with Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri at the helm of leadership led to a change of tactics, targets and a way of causing trouble and discrediting the government by attacking tourists and hurting the tourist industry. Even at that, the expected change in government was not forthcoming and a new strategy led to a redefinition of the far enemy. The far enemy is now the power behind the secular Muslim states that had been giving support and had made it difficult for the change to occur. This far enemy is the U.S. and its allies, thus, began attacks on U.S. interests overseas and everywhere possible.

Pillar Four: Faith is the Reason: An easier way to understand the mind of Muslim radicals (if this is ever possible) is to accept that their foremost motivation is faith. This may seem ridiculous to a western-oriented secular analyst to comprehend that religion and governance are not two different sides of a coin but rather, are intertwined as the same side of a coin. Therefore, the failure to comprehend that a man is acting solely on the basis of his religious conviction and faith may be anachronistic to such an analyst, hence the failure to understand the motivation behind why they do what they do. Political analysts must accept that the reason and justification for their action is simply the faith factor. Dr Sariah (1973), quoting Surah 5:44, (Ali Translation), had stated emphatically that the secret of success of the first Muslims was faith in Allah. He wrote that faith gives one the will to act, even if it means disobeying the president, a minister, an officer, or even a regular policeman on the street. A sign of faithlessness is not following the commands of Allah. Or put differently, the evidence of faith in Allah is willingness to obey at any cost.

Two things are principal to faith. The first is fate. Islam teaches that Allah controls everyone's fate; whether a person's experiences good or evil and a person's hour of death (Surah 3:145). Hence, the radicals' disdain of death, death to them is nothing because it is all under the control of Allah. Sariah (1973) message is very clear about this; failure to follow Allah's command to fight jihad is tantamount to not believing in Allah's control of fate and this makes the Muslim an apostate. The second principal thing to faith is judgment. As Sariah (1973) explained, if you believe in judgment, you will obey Allah's command. Fear of the last day or judgment is, therefore, an excellent motivation for following Allah's will and should be the focus of Islamic teaching.

According to Islamic theology, (and not necessarily unique to it alone), judgment is followed by either "eternal fire" (accompanied by slashing of the person's flesh with metal knives, scorching him with flames all over his sensitive parts, where he had to eat his own flesh and drink his own urine and other similar methods, (Sariah 1973)) or "eternal bliss". The only thing that can save a man from the horrors of "eternal fire" is martyrdom, which is the reassurance that the ultimate sacrifice will receive the ultimate reward. In both the Qur'an (Surah 3:169-171) and the hadiths, the place of the martyrs in paradise is so widely accepted that the radicals do not view death as defeat.

To the radicals, death is never viewed as defeat. Qutb (1964) had reassured his followers that they would eventually triumph because they are believers (Surah 3:139). Although, as he had stated, this triumph may or may not be in this world, nevertheless, the death of a Muslim fighter is an act of nobility all should aspire for, a martyrdom that guarantees the greatest of rewards – the pleasure of Allah. Summarily, economic, political and racial motives – all – are inferior to the Muslim's most important goal – defending and restoring Islam fundamentals.



5.0. CONCLUSION

We conclude by noting that all religions have their radicals, extremists and fundamentalists who will want a restoration and acceptance of their form of morality world-wide, the major difference is in their scriptures. While the other religions may not be forming terrorists' cells, bombing civilians and carrying out suicide bombings as part of their proselytising, the Islamic fundamentalists and the Qur'an calls for a completely different lifestyle as propagated and strongly influenced either in speeches or writings by the Islamic scholars and agitators. In short, the essential difference between Islam and the other religions are the founders, evangelists, prisoners and aristocrats. The influence

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that no conflict of interest exist in this manuscript.

REFERENCES

- Agara, Tunde and Ogwola, I.R. (2014). Of Zealots, extremists and fundamentalists: Religious opposition to Modern state system. *African Journal of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(1).
- Agara, T., & Dike, A. I. (2026). the tenets of terror: an analysis of the intellectuals behind the ideology of jihad and the rise of islamic militancy. *Ayden International Journal of Law, Political Science, and Administration*, 14(1), 21–37. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19482617>
- Almond, G., Appleby, R.S. and Sivan, E. (2003), *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms around the World*. Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Appleby, R.S. (2004), Religions, Human Rights and Social Change, in Gerrie ter Haar and James J. Busuttill (eds), *The Freedom to Do God's Will: Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change*. London, Routledge
- Armstrong, K. (2007). Ghosts of our Past, in Badey, Thomas J. (ed.) *Violence and Terrorism*, (07/08)10th ed. Dubuque, McGraw Hill Contemporary Learning Series.
- Arendt, H. (1967). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. London, Allen & Unwin.
- Ben-Dor, G. and Pedahzur, A. (2005), The Uniqueness of Islamic Fundamentalism and the Fourth Wave of International Terrorism, in Leonard Weinberg and Ami Pedahzur (eds), *Religious Fundamentalism and Political Extremism*. London, Frank Cass.
- Beit-Hallahmi, B. (2005), The Return of Martyrdom: Honour, Death and Immortality, in Leonard Weinberg and Ami Pedahzur(eds), *Religious Fundamentalism and Political Extremism*. London, Frank Cass.
- Beit-Hallahmi, B. (1998), *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Active New Religions*, New York, Rosen Publishing.
- Canetti-Nisim, D. (2005), Two Religious Meaning Systems, One Political Belief System: Religiosity, Alternative Religiosity and Political Extremism, in Leonard Weinberg and Ami Pedahzur(eds), *Religious Fundamentalism and Political Extremism*. London, Frank Cass.
- Faraj, A. S. (1991). *The Abandoned Duty*, (Translation into English by Habib Srouji, 1981). Also, in Ahmed, R. S. *The Armed Prophet*. London, Riad El-Rayyes Books



- Friedrich, C. J. & Brzezinski S. K. (1956). *Totalitarian dictatorship and autocracy*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press
- Gabriel, M. A. (2006). *Journey into the mind of an Islamic Terrorist*. Florida, FrontLine Press.
- Hacker, F. J. (1976). *Crusaders, criminals, trazines: Terror and terrorism in Our Time*. New York.
- Hoffman, B. (2006). *Inside terrorism*. New York, Columbia Univ. Press,
- Juergensmeyer, M. (2004). Holy orders: Religious opposition to modern states. *Harvard International Review*. Winter.
- Kittrie, N.N. (1981). Patriots and Terrorists: Reconciling Human Rights with World Order. *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, (13, 2), Spring.
- Lewis, B. (2003). *The Crisis of Islam: Holy wars and unholy terror*. New York, Modern Library
- Lipset, S. and Raab, E. (1970), *The Politics of Unreason*, New York, Harper Torchbooks
- Lopez, G. A. & Stohl, M. (eds.), (1986). *Government violence and repression*. New York, Greenwood Press.
- Lutz, J.M. and Lutz, B.J. (2008). *Global terrorism*. 2nd ed. London, Routledge.
- Morgan, R. (2001), *The Demon Lover: The Roots of Terrorism*. New York, Washington Square Press.
- Mudde, C. (2000), *The ideology of the extreme right*, Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press.
- Mawdudi, S. A. ala (2005). *Jihad in Islam*. Lahore, Pakistan; Islamic Publications
- Qutb, S. (1964). *Milestones Along the Road*. Delhi, India, MarkaziMaktaba Islami
- Ram-Prasad, C. (2004), Being Hindu and/or Governing India? Religion, Social Change and the State, in Gerrie ter Haar and James J. Busuttil (eds), *The Freedom to Do God's Will: Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change*. London, Routledge
- Rapoport, D. (1985), Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions. *American Political Science Review* 78/3
- Sariah, S. (1973). *The Message of Faith*, (Translation into English by Habib Srouji, 1981). Also, in Ahmed, R. S. *The Armed Prophet*. London, Riad El-Rayyes Books.
- Seneviratne, H.L. (2004), The Monk's New Robes: Buddhist Fundamentalism and Social Change, in Gerrie ter Haar and James J. Busuttil (eds), *The Freedom to Do God's Will: Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change*. London, Routledge
- Sinai, J. (2010/2011). How to Define Terrorism. In Badey, T. *Violence and Terrorism 10/11*, 12th ed. Boston, McGraw Hill Higher Education.
- Stohl, M. & Lopez, G. A. (eds.), (1984). *The State as Terrorist*. Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press.
- ter Haar, G. (2004), Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change: A Comparative Inquiry, in Gerrie ter Haar and James J. Busuttil (eds), *The Freedom to Do God's Will: Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change*. London, Routledge
- Weinberg, L. and Pedahzur, A. (2005), Introduction, in Leonard Weinberg and Ami Pedahzur (eds), *Religious Fundamentalism and Political Extremism*. London, Frank Cass.
- Wilkinson, P. (2004/05). Current and Future Trends in Domestic and International Terrorism: Implications for Democratic Government and the International Community. In Badey, Thomas J. (ed.), *Violence and Terrorism*, 7th ed. Connecticut, McGraw-Hill/Dushkin