

SECURITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

THE ROAD TO VIOLENCE – THE OPPRESSION THEORY AND THE ISLAMIC STATE PROPAGANDA

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Abstract:

Violent islamist radicalization continues to be a factor of insecurity and social instability. Starting from the theoretical framework offered by the theory of oppression and F. M. Moghaddam's radicalization model, the purpose of this paper is to highlight the role the main elements of this theory can have in the propaganda of the terrorist organization Islamic State and in the relationship between it and the radicalization processes. More specifically, within the research carried out, we undertook a content analysis based on the thematic coding employing codes and sub-codes resulting from the theoretical framework. These codes were applied on the publications of the Islamic State, Rumiyah, (issues 3-4/2016, 5-7/2017) and Voice of Khurasan (VoK) (issues 16/2022, 21/2022, 23/2023, 29/2023, 30/2023). The main findings of the research highlighted the fact that: 1) perceived oppression has an effect on violent disinhibition, 2) there is a similarity between the constituent elements of the theory of oppression and the constituent elements on the basis of which propaganda and the IS message are created. This similarity is highlighted in the use of specific terms (found in the sub-codes used for content analysis), promoted in Rumiyah and VoK to describe those considered enemies, but also in the way the attackers committed terrorist actions, using the most brutal forms of violence against perceived oppressors.

Keywords: radicalization, propaganda, oppression, Rumiyah, Voice of Khurasan.

Introduction

Violent extremist radicalization is a phenomenon that has multiple manifestations, all with a major impact on security. The radicalisation process is complex, unpredictable and takes place in different environments, both offline and online. Feelings, experiences,

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beliefs perceived and interpreted subjectively can often represent the first steps on the path to terrorist actions. One of the elements whose perception can be influenced in an erroneous way so as to generate involvement in violent actions is the feeling of injustice, oppression, of deprivation of rights compared to other people.

The objective of this research is to analyse the publications of the terrorist organization Islamic State (IS), *Rumiyah*, (issues 3-4/2016, 5-7/2017), *Voice of Khurasan* (no. 16/2022, 21/2022, 23/2023, 29/2023, 30/2023) to determine to what extent the theory of oppression can explain how the terrorist group triggers and fuels radicalization processes.

Methodologically, we will use content analysis based on thematic coding. Thus, starting from the theory of oppression we have extracted a series of concepts that were the basis of the content analysis of the magazines presented above, forming the thematic codes and sub-codes. We chose oppression theory for this analysis because real or perceived oppression represents both one of the factors that can determine or precipitate the radicalization process (Moyano & Trujillo, 2018) and an element of violent disinhibition (Berkowitz, 1989).

The content of the articles in the journals was coded with the help of the MAXQDA program. The resulting analysis focuses on the frequency of the defined codes and on their overlap within the analysed publications.

Oppression Theory

In the literature, oppression is often defined as a domination, a subjugation, an inhuman, degrading treatment of a group, of socially, economically, culturally, politically, etc. asymmetrical power held over a group or individual, often accompanied by threats or violence (Dalrymple & Burke, 2006; Van Soest, 2008; Marseille & Kulis, 2009; Ayyazian, 1995). Oppression has been going on throughout human history in its many forms: economic, political, racial, ethnic, sexual, social, or even in the form of violence, abuse or neglect. The key elements of the concept of oppression are the dominant group that is privileged, the disadvantaged element/group, and the notion of power.

In specialized studies, a series of characteristics of oppression have been highlighted, such as: offering power and advantages to some and denying it to others; producing a form of physical or psychological harm; being maintained by ideology and violence; limiting the freedom of choice of a group/individual in relation to other groups, other individuals in society; implying a constraint, a feeling of humiliation, perceived or real marginalization (Victoroff, 2005; D. Van Soest, 2008; Kruglanski et al., 2013; Webber et al., 2018; Lobato, R. M., Moya, M., Moyano, M., & Trujillo, H. M. 2018).

The theory of oppression refers to the oppression felt at the individual or group level, which can determine violent behaviours and attitudes (Victoroff, 2005). Most of the time, it is not about objective oppression, but about relative deprivation, the perception of the individual or group on oppression, injustice, which can be different from one person to another. R. Gurr (2015) defines relative deprivation¹ as the discrepancy between a person's perception of an expectation of him/herself (what (s)he expects to receive) versus reality (what (s)he receives). The individual's inability to get what they feel is justified for them triggers feelings of frustration that facilitate the onset of violent behaviour. Thus, the greater the intensity of the deprivation, the greater the magnitude of the violence. Basically, there is a rift between the individual's hope about an aspect considered to be important for him or her and the existing reality, giving rise to feelings such as frustration, dissatisfaction, etc. (Omer Taspinar, 2009). Individuals who develop these feelings will turn to visions, beliefs, ideologies that promote a solution to the elements which cause this feeling of relative deprivation, even if the solution is violent.

According to F. M. Moghaddam's model of violent radicalization, the perception of injustice and oppression are cognitive factors of radicalization. Thus, when the individual considers or is made to believe that the group to which (s)he belongs does not benefit from the same advantages as other groups and categories or is not treated equally, fairly, (s)he can be more receptive to messages of radicalization, from a cognitive point of view. The perception of deprivation and injustice can

¹ Which is different from the absolute one which refers to the lack of the necessary means to survive.

be determined by several factors such as economic, political, social, security, threats to collective or personal identity, etc. (Taylor, 2003). One of the central elements of radical propaganda, both Islamist and far-right, is identity and the perception of the threat to it. The perception that globalization, westernization, the “good copy problem”² (Moghaddam & Solliday, 1991) are elements that undermine the traditional values of life and accentuate the feeling that one’s own identity is threatened.

Within the literature, an important distinction is highlighted between selfish deprivation (“egoistic deprivation”) when a person feels deprived of certain aspects because of his position within a group and fraternal deprivation (“fraternal deprivation”) which determines feelings of deprivation felt as a result of the position of the group to which an individual belongs in relation to other groups (Runciman, 1966; Martin, Brickman, & Murray, 1984). R. Gurr (1970) argues that fraternal deprivation is more likely to be felt at the level of a group when its members perceive that they are deprived of achieving the goal they are aiming for and the benefits they deserve while other groups benefit from them. Guimond & Dube’-Simard (1983) suggest that fraternal deprivation compared to selfish deprivation is a better predictor of feelings of discontent within minority communities or groups, generating collective action.

The field of psychology highlights the hypothesis that relative deprivation (which focuses on the individual in relation to the reference groups/community/environment) can trigger violent, collective actions, even for people who are not personally disadvantaged, but who act on behalf of the group (Runciman, 1961, 1966; Koomen & Fränkel, 1992; Tiraboschi & Maass, 1998).

F. M. Moghaddam in his staircase model of radicalization argues that each rung of the ladder highlights a behaviour characterized by a series of particular psychological processes that individuals who go through a process of radicalization experience. The first level of the ladder is where most individuals are, with emphasis on the perceptions of fairness and the feelings of relative deprivation, injustice, frustration, shame perceived by these individuals.

² The very best that someone can achieve is to be a good copy of someone or something propagated as perfect or ideal.

The people who want to identify solutions and ways to improve the feeling of deprivation, dissatisfaction they feel will rise to the first level. According to Moghaddam, the individuals who continue to climb to the upper floors are those who do not identify solutions to the forms of deprivation they experience. Once they reach the second rung of the ladder, individuals experience feelings of frustration and anger, and there is the possibility of transforming these feelings into the desire for aggression directed at a culprit, a perceived enemy.

The most important transformation takes place at the level of those who access the third step of Moghaddam's model by showing a moral commitment to the vision, purpose and way of achieving it by joining terrorist organizations and perceiving the use of violence as a justified strategy in the fight they are waging (Moghaddam, 2005). At the fourth level, the perception of good and evil and the legitimacy of the actions carried out by the terrorist organization they support is consolidated. The last stage is that of committing the terrorist act.

The terrorist organization Islamic State (IS) has speculated on this aspect in the propaganda narratives of the analysed publications, emphasizing the categorical, radical division between the members of the organization, those who join it, and all those who oppose IS, through a clear delimitation of "us versus them": "they are the head of every tribulation and the reason for every calamity" (Rumiyah no. 3, p. 6). This dichotomy of "good and evil" justifies the feeling of hatred and blame for the targets, in this case Western states, considered to be the greatest enemy of IS, and encourages revenge through violent actions carried out in the name of the organization, subsumed to its goal of creating an ideal society.

According to the analysis of F. M. Moghaddam's staircase model of radicalization, it results that the intensity with which individuals feel, perceive the injustice, the inequity of the society in which they live towards their own person determines the degree of involvement in violent actions. The higher the individual is on the ladder, the more likely they are to resort to violence to achieve the intended goal. By extension, the more individuals feel disconnected from the society in which they live because of the perception they have of it, considering it the main source of the injustices to which they are subjected, the more their

radical violent attitudes are justified and fuelled. IS, through its narratives, maintains this feeling of rejection and injustice active, in order to generate violent behaviours and attitudes among the members of the organization towards Western society in particular.

Injustice, perceived dissatisfaction both at the individual and group level are highlighted as factors of violent, terrorist actions, one of the most common motivations being the desire for revenge (Crenshaw, 1992; Ross, 1999, Doosje et al. 2013). According to a study using interviews, conducted in 14 Muslim states, a threat to religion, in this case Islam, is a predictor of involvement in terrorist actions (Fair, C. Christine, and Bryan Shepherd, 2006; Tamara Kharroub, 2015). Also, oppression, discrimination (perceived or real) against one's own group leads to a much deeper identification and attachment to the group, the community promoted as a victim (Krueger, 2008).

According to research carried out after September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, there is a causal relationship between the effect of social exclusion, marginalization, discrimination and oppression experienced, perceived by minority groups, especially Muslims, and the connection with violent actions. Thus, individuals who feel this oppression real or perceived will be more prone to radical intentions, manifesting a higher degree of disinhibition towards violent actions and an orientation towards extremist groups (Shavit, 2014; Victoroff et al., 2012; Moyano & Trujillo, 2014).

Also, the literature highlights the fact that the binder between oppression and disinhibition from violent actions is an ideology that identifies the cause and the enemy of the group, legitimizing the use of violence against the one considered oppressor (Trujillo & Moyano, 2018; Victoroff, 2009)

Content analysis based on identified code and sub-codes

Given the above, the main code resulting from the theory of oppression is "oppression". The main theme of oppression in IS rhetoric is that of the West's oppression of Muslims), and the subcodes are "revenge", "militant mobilization" and "violence" as response mechanisms to the oppression perceived by vulnerable groups. For each subcode,

a series of words and textual expressions have been identified whose occurrence has been measured, and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Occurrences for the subcodes related to the theory of oppression
(Source: author's idea)

OPPRESSION	
MILITARY MOBILIZATION	
OPPRESSION\ MILITARY MOBILIZATION \ fight	169
OPPRESSION\ MILITARY MOBILIZATION \ jihad	230
OPPRESSION\ VIOLENCE	
OPPRESSION\ VIOLENCE\ enemy/enemies	249
OPPRESSION\ VIOLENCE\ KILL	257
OPPRESSION\ REVENGE	
OPPRESSION\ REVENGE\ shirk	120
OPPRESSION\ REVENGE\ infidels	161
OPPRESSION\ REVENGE\ apostates	63
OPPRESSION\ REVENGE\ pig/dog/apes	11
OPPRESSION\ REVENGE\ disbelievers	69
OPPRESSION\ REVENGE\ mushrikin	108
OPPRESSION\ REVENGE\ kuffar/kufr	320

The sub-code “revenge” is found in the following words: “kuffar,” “apostates,” “shirk,” “mushrikin,” “disbelievers,” “infidels,” “pig/dog/apes.” In the case of this subcode, we have identified a series of words that refer to the broad category of infidel enemies, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, which we will analyse grouped, according to the specificities of use. We

mention that the meaning of the terms kuffar (kufr), shirk, mushrikeen, disbeliever, infidel, depends on the meaning given by the author, as each word can have the meaning of the other. For example, kufr and shirk can have the same meaning, respectively disbelief in divinity, but at the same time, they can be used separately, with shirk referring to idol worship even if the person in question recognizes Allah. Thus, these words can also borrow the meaning of the others, but in general, within the analysed publications, these terms refer to the enemies of IS represented by all those who oppose the cause of the terrorist organization.

In this article we have chosen to analyse together the terms “kuffar (kufr)”, “disbelievers” and “infidels” because they are used in the same sense, respectively “shirk” and “mushrikin” because there are a number of delimitations within IS publications according to which these words refer to those who worship idols.

The sub-code “revenge” and associated terms are exemplified in the following contexts: “Islam has always been at war with the mushrikeen (polytheists) and will continue this war until the Day of Judgement, so the notion that we will stop fighting this never ending war with the kuffar is purely mythical much like leprechauns and unicorns!”; “And likewise is what we see today in these current rounds of the mujahidin’s war with all the nations of shirk and kufr at the head of which are the Crusader nations of the West”; “By the will of Allah there will be no security or peace to any disbeliever until you worship Allah alone. By Allah we will turn your streets in pools of blood”; “Turn the disbelievers’ night into day, bring destruction to their homes, and make their blood flow like rivers”; “Muslims of the whole world to defend them and fight against the infidels”.

“Kuffar”, “disbelievers” and “infidels” refer to those accused of unbelief, considered to be “infidels,” regardless of whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. Kuffar is the plural of the term kafir in Arabic that derives from the word kufr (disbelief), used to describe those who deny or hide the authority or teachings of Allah (deny the indisputable rules of Islam such as the obligation of prayer, fasting, etc., insult aspects related to divinity, etc.). In IS propaganda, Muslims are only those who accept and follow the ideological approach of the organization, all other Muslims are considered opponents, enemies of the terrorist group in question.

In the texts analysed, the terms are used to highlight both Westerners and Muslims who do not believe in the doctrine of the IS organization, labelling them as infidels and legitimizing violence against them. The prevailing message is to fight and punish with death all those who persecute, torture Muslims, who believe in democracy and apply secular laws, or who have rallied with Westerners and democratic states. The promotion of violence against those who are perceived as “kuffar”, “infidels”, “disbelievers” etc. is done in a brutal, repetitive manner (“burned them”, “smash their body with a vehicle”, “destroy their home”, “make their blood flow like rivers”).

Also within the “revenge” sub-code, the terms “shirk” and “mushrik” were identified, for example the following contexts were selected: “Jihad for Allah’s cause in order to purge the earth from the filth of shirk and its people”; “Our main focus, however, is to wage war against the manifestations of shirk and bidah, including Sufism, sorcery, soothsaying, and grave worship”; “And Allah’s command (...) that their wounds must not stop them from increasing their pursuit of the mushrikin and their endeavour to fight them, kill them, and seize their land and wealth, as in His statement.”

The term “shirk” (which in Arabic means to associate with someone or something) in Islam refers to polytheism, idolatry, representing those who worship, offer sacrifices or swear to anything or deity other than Allah (such as idols, saints, the dead, etc.) or consider them equal to it. Over time, “shirk’ has expanded its meaning by becoming a synonym or equivalent to “kuffar,” rejecting any belief or practice that is not consistent with a certain religious current, in this case the one promoted by IS. “Mushrikin” also refers to polytheism, one who believes in or practices polytheism and idolatry, worshipping other deities instead of or alongside Allah. In the analysed texts, both Western states and all others that do not obey the laws of Allah are considered to be “shirk’, promoting the idea that everyone deserves to be annihilated by fighting to the point of sacrifice.

The next term associated with the revenge subcode is “apostates”, for example the following examples have been selected: “We say to those miserable, stubborn, disbelieving, apostates who wage war against the

mujahidin today”; “In democracy, the evil-doing disbelievers and apostates exercise the right to mock Islam and Muslims”.

Typically, apostasy in Islam refers to a Muslim’s abandonment of Islam by word, deed, or thought. This includes not only explicitly renouncing the Islamic faith by converting to another religion or abandoning the religion, but also blasphemy or heresy committed by those who consider themselves Muslims (such as denying, insulting Allah, throwing the Qur’an in a filthy place, etc.). In the IS publications analysed, the term “apostates” is attributed to Muslims of Turkish origin “the two Turkish apostates”, to Shiite Muslims “killing and injuring more than 200 Rafidi apostates among them Iranians and after exhausting their ammunition they detonated their explosive belts on the apostates one after another, killing and injuring more than 60 of them”, to representatives of the Sufi current of Islam.

The analysis carried out highlights the fact that the use of these terms is random, there is no well-defined, delimited structure to be able to highlight a clear category of those called “kuffar”, “apostes” or “disbelievers”. The emphasis in the context of the use of these terms is that they are the enemies of the IS organization and of true Muslims and must be punished with violence, which is also true in the context of the other terms used and presented above.

The subcode “revenge” is also associated with the following terms “pigs”, “dogs”, “apes” exemplified by the following examples: “Sisters is showing the world the true nature and the true face of the Jewish, apes and pigs”; “Kafir soldier has come to you while his blood is vile like that of a dog. Burn them with the fire of your wrath, and take revenge”.

The rhetoric of the terrorist organization, IS, directs accusations at people portrayed as guilty, invoking the atrocities and injustices committed by them and denigrates, depersonalizes, dehumanizes, denies their human quality, using harsh language against them, calling them animals such as “pigs”, “monkeys”, “dogs” or demonizing them.

These techniques lead to the removal of individuals’ psychological barriers to violent actions by justifying and legitimizing them. The denigration of enemies gives IS and those who engage in the fight alongside the organization an aura of mysticism and heroism, (they portray themselves as defenders of justice, who fight against the cruelty

of the oppressors), of being the saviours of true Muslims who justify violent actions and turn them into a form of revenge.

All these subcodes “kuffar”, “infidel”, “shirk”, “mushrikin”, “dog”, “pig”, “apes” refer to the enemies of the IS organization, which if we were to code them with the term “enemy (enemies)” would represent as a frequency the fourth most used code, after “mujahideen”, “kuffar” and “kill”.

The sub-code “militant mobilization” is represented by “fight” and “jihad” exemplified by: “It is obligatory upon you to fight those who opposed the truth, denied the Shari’ah of Islam, and prepared to fight you”; “You will fight with the Jews till some of them will hide behind stones. Stones will (betray them) saying, ‘O ‘Abdullah! There is a Jew hiding behind me; so, kill him”.

The term “fight” is used by IS to mobilize Muslims to take a stand against infidels. “Fight” is associated with divinity to emphasize the noble cause that those involved in the fight will fight for. It is also associated with those who represent the enemy IS to establish very clearly who the mujahideen are going against, and it is also associated with continuing to fight against the enemies either until all of them are destroyed or until the word and law of Allah are the ones that dominate the world.

The constant use of the term “fight” in IS propaganda implies that joining the organization’s fight is an opportunity to fight back against those considered guilty of the injustices felt in society, a way to challenge the discrimination or inequities felt, as the guilty ones are among the enemies. Thus, the individual can develop the feeling of contentment that (s)he is not the only one fighting against oppression and injustice, thus being part of a larger conflict.

Also, the repetition of the term “fight” can create, for those who follow IS propaganda, the feeling that they are called to fight alongside the other “Muslim brotherhood”, thus presenting potential recruits with a purpose, of meaning in search of which perhaps some of them were. At the same time, the term “fight” can generate a buzz for those looking for adventure, adrenaline, and make them feel enthusiasm that they are taking part in a great goal, represented by the creation of a single Islamic state and a utopian society.

The second term associated with the subcode “militant mobilization” is “jihad”, represented by the following examples: “Paradise becomes obligatory on arrows; standing in the battle for an hour is better than sixty years of worship; one conquest is better than fifty times performing hajj, spending a few minutes in the field of jihad is better than standing in the night prayer”; “jihad for the cause of Allah is an obligation”.

The term jihad, called the sixth pillar of Islam, represents a struggle, a special effort that refers mainly to the human struggle, to the obligation of every Muslim to follow and realize the divine will (to have a virtuous life, to expand the Muslim community through preaching, education, example etc.), while also having the connotation and obligation to defend Islam from aggression. Over time, this word has been interpreted and used with different meanings so that, in the 20th century, the term “jihad” was used by terrorist movements to legitimize their cause and motivate their sympathizers in the fight against those considered unbelievers.

Although jihad does not explicitly call for the use of violence, the theme of jihad promoted by IS in its publications is mostly intended for the violent meaning of the term, being a perpetual exhortation addressed to the readers of these publications to fight against enemies, being practically a militant mobilization approach.

Most of the time, jihad is presented in a brutal manner, which depicts how it is or should be carried out against enemies “take a knife and cut the throats of unbelievers; burn their houses, poison their food; turn their joy into sadness.” Words and phrases such as “crushing”, “bloodbath”, “carnage”, and “destruction” are often used and repeated in the analysed publications to refer to the way of punishing enemies by jihad, describing the theme of the action fantasy of militancy.

In the analysed materials, jihad is presented as a glorious, honourable, noble gesture of those who fight alongside IS, something that should be normal for every Muslim. IS propaganda joins together two antithetical concepts, violence, expressed through jihad, and divinity. This association encourages individuals to join the cause of the organization by legitimizing its violent actions and bringing to the fore the support offered by the divine in this fight against the infidels.

We have chosen to analyse together the terms “jihad” and “fight” because, although the two concepts promote violence directed at the

same type of enemy, in fact a fine line can be distinguished by which the term “fight” can refer to an action of personal mobilization, directed directly at each of those targeted to be recruited by IS (“is obligatory upon you to fight”, “you will fight with the Jews”) and a broader line, of a group, of a community that fights, revealed by the term “jihad”.

Studies in the field of psychology highlight the fact that individuals tend to feel less guilty about their actions when they are carried out on behalf of a group, thus, the actor mitigates the guilt felt by considering that the act was done based on a warrant, an order.

The themes present in the analysed publications suggest a supreme vision of the world promoted by IS: a continuous, dichotomous struggle between the representatives of good, considered to be members of the terrorist organization, and its enemies. Through its propaganda, IS portrays the world as divided into extremities: black and white, good and evil, believers and non-believers, good, faith being represented by IS and its supporters, and evil, non-believers by all others who do not respect and do not rally to their vision, faith and desire.

By repetitively using terms such as “kuffar”, “disbelievers”, “infidels” as well as those that urge to take a violent stance such as “fight”, “kill”, “jihad”, the terrorist organization justifies the need and emergence of adopting violent actions against those who represent evil.

The next sub-code, “violence” is represented by “kill”, for example the following paragraphs have been selected: “Then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush”; “O zealous soldiers of tawhid everywhere, dedicate yourselves to killing those evil scholars and callers of fitnah everywhere who harm the religion of Allah”.

The sub-code “kill” refers to the idea of acting violently against what is considered an enemy of IS, being explained in detail in the analysed magazines the way in which any mujahideen can get involved in the fight to promote the interests and values of IS. Thus, the brutal persecution and destruction of those who pose a threat to the organization becomes a virtuous act of self-defence (Sageman, 2008, USAID, 2009). The sub-code “kill” is the third most frequent in the analysed materials, representing the concrete manifestations of the jihad discussed above. These actions are portrayed as noble and important in the fight against evil, embodied by unbelievers, by women and children,

by polytheists, by any category that does not respect the ideology of IS and is perceived as different, distinct from their community. The message promoted by IS is that violent actions must not stop until the final victory is achieved, when an Islamic state designed according to ISIS's vision will be created that will reign over the entire world.

Rumiyah, has a section is dedicated to "battlefield updates", where reports of IS activity in conflict areas where the organization is active are presented, detailing the fight that the members of the organization wage with those considered to be enemies as heroic and victorious.

Although the success of the terrorist propaganda of IS terrorist organization carried out through the two publications analysed and the way in which it influenced the radicalization process of the attackers in recent years cannot be measured or determined precisely, the way in which the terrorist actions were carried out and the language used by the attackers in the videos or manifestos published prior to the attacks denote a similarity. This similarity is highlighted both in the use of specific terms (highlighted in the sub-codes used in the analysis), promoted in Rumiyah and VoK to describe those considered enemies, but also in the way they committed terrorist attacks, using the most brutal forms of violence against those perceived as oppressors.

One of the most recent examples is that of the posts of the January 2025 bomber in New Orleans, USA. On January 1, 2025, Shamsud-Din Jabbar, an American citizen converted to Islam, committed a terrorist attack. He drove a rented van, on whose trailer was an IS flag, into the crowd at an intersection. Subsequently, the attacker opened fire on the crowd and law enforcement. According to FBI statements, Shamsud-Din Jabbar was inspired in committing the terrorist attack by IS propaganda, posting on social networks, on his way to New Orleans, five videos in which he expressed his desire to kill and his support for the terrorist organization. In one of the videos, the attacker states that he initially wanted to kill his family and loved ones, but he considered that the media headlines would not emphasize the "war between the believers and the disbelievers".

Also, on August 23, 2024 in Solingen, Germany, Syrian citizen Issa al Hassan stabbed 11 people with a knife, as a result of IS' constant call to kill those considered unbelievers. In a video posted by IS on social

networks, two days after the attack was committed, the attacker holds a knife in his hand and swears allegiance to the terrorist organization. In the same material, the man claims that the attack was committed as an act of revenge for the murder of Muslims in Syria, Bosnia, Iraq and Palestine carried out with “the support of the Zionists”. According to the statements of the officials who carried out the investigation, the suspect said that he intended to kill as many unbelievers as possible (Jennifer Rankin, 2024, *The Guardian*).

Both the incident in New Orleans and the one in Solingen follow a pattern seen in previous attacks in the West, such as those in 2016, in Nice, France, respectively at the Christmas Market in Berlin in the same year and the 2017 attack on London Bridge. In each case, the individuals were motivated by the Islamic State’s call to action, using available means – vehicles, knives or firearms, using in the posts prior to the commission of theoretical actions, phrases similar to those used by IS in promotional materials to characterize the enemies.

Conclusions

The success of the IS terrorist organization has largely depended on its ability to promote a narrative that resonates with the reality of the experiences that potential recruits face within Western societies. Thus, the propaganda carried out through Rumiya and VoK publications instrumentalizes the feelings of marginalization, oppression, persecution, and injustice that they experience. The key in which IS, through its propaganda, has been able to emphasize these experiences that each individual at some point perceives (even if they are not real) is an important part of the motivational framework and the success that the terrorist organization has had in recruiting new followers. Highlighting, visualizing and constantly and obsessively promoting the injustice to which Muslims are subjected are mechanisms that can initiate or accentuate radicalization processes.

In the propaganda materials analysed, the constituent elements of the theory of oppression are undeniably highlighted, namely: the oppressive enemy, the unjust treatment to which Muslims are subjected in relation to Western practices and the need to use violence as the only way to stop injustice.

The analysed materials actively create and maintain the feeling of rejection and injustice that certain individuals may feel within the societies of origin, fuelling, on the one hand, their desire to belong and, on the other hand, the desire for revenge directed against those considered responsible for oppressive, unjust actions. Thus, IS creates a mechanism that attracts new followers and that can generate violent behaviours and attitudes directed against those portrayed as enemies.

The constant and obsessive propaganda carried out by IS based on the idea that there is an enemy that suppresses the needs, identity, lives of Muslims, subjecting them to differentiated, inhuman treatment, marginalizing and excluding them, leads both to the creation and constant feeding of the desire to retaliate, and to the mobilization to destroy this enemy through the use of the most grotesque forms of violence.

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