

How do peer groups, society, and the media contribute to the radicalization of individuals who commit political assassinations?

Introduction

Purpose of Study: To explore how social forces influence individuals toward political violence

- *Radicalization* – The action or process of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues.
- *Political assassination* – Targeted killings of political leaders, activists, or public figures, often motivated by ideological, political, or social reasons.
- *Historical examples of political assassinations*
 - o James A. Garfield (20th U.S. president)
 - o Isoroku Yamamoto (Japan's commander-in-chief of combined fleet in WW2)
 - o John F. Kennedy (35th president of the U.S.)
 - o Henry IV of France (King of France, 1610)

Objectives

- Examine the role of peer groups in influencing radical behavior
- To analyze societal factors that create fertile ground for radicalization
- To investigate how media (mainstream and social) amplifies or influences radical ideologies

Literature Review

Social Identity Theory – A framework explaining how our self-concept and self-esteem are partly derived from the social groups we belong to.

Social Learning Theory – A psychological perspective developed by Albert Bandura that states people learn through observation, imitation, and modeling of others within a societal context.

Agenda-Setting Theory – The idea that the media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about. By selecting and giving prominence to certain topics, the media influences what the public perceives as important.

Framing Theory – A communication concept explaining how the presentation of information influences how people perceive and interpret it. By selecting certain aspects of a story while downplaying others, communicators like journalists and politicians shape public opinion, attitudes, and even policy decisions.

Echo Chambers – An environment in which a person encounters only beliefs or opinions that coincide with their own, so that their existing views are not considered.

Strain Theory – A sociological perspective suggesting that individuals may engage in deviant behavior when they experience a disconnect between culturally accepted goals and the legitimate means to achieve them.

NYPD 4-stage radicalization model

Stage 1 – Pre-radicalization

- o The period before an individual is exposed to radical ideology
- o May involve personal struggles, feelings disenfranchisement, or personal crisis

Stage 2 – Self-Identification

- o The individual begins to explore and adopt the tenets of a radical ideology and affiliate with its proponents.
- o This stage involves the person accepting radical ideas identifying with the group

Stage 3 – Indoctrination

- o This is an intensification phase where the individual's beliefs become stronger.
- o They develop greater commitment to the ideas and the collective group of like-minded individuals.

Step 4 - Jihadization

- o The final stage involves the commitment to taking violent action.
- o The model defines this as the stage when individuals engage in terrorist acts

