

Reviewing and Comparing the Role of Social Development Indices in Tendency toward Radical Islam in Central Asia

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Abstract

The purpose of the research:

The aim of this research is to review and compare the indices of social development and tendency towards Radical Islam in Central Asia (a case study of ISIS or DAESH as a terrorist group).

Statement of the problem:

Social and cultural development within the framework of local and national values lead to self-esteem within the society and this process plays an important role in formation of social and cultural identity within the society. However, lack of attention to cultural and social developments as well as shortcomings of political and economic developments in Central Asian countries after the collapse of Soviet Union, which faced with a power vacuum, have been shaped in a variety of different ways; therefore this has led to the situation in which people resorted to their own historical and cultural identities. Lack of social and cultural developments affected the tendency towards Radical Islam in Central Asia. This process led to the situation that undermined the concept of nation-state and accelerated the appearance of radicalism and fundamentalism phenomena. On the other hand, Central Asian countries which have faced extensive social and cultural problems, have moved towards ethnic and nationalistic identities and with regard to the extensive social and cultural problems in the region, the process of identity-building has not been consistent with national and cultural values of the region and has moved it towards religious radicalism. Therefore, when nationalism couldn't fill the intellectual gap in Central Asia, radical Islamic

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groups were able to attract people by using powerful advertising methods and public deceptions to persuade them that they are able to improve the quality of their lives.

The importance of this subject is laid in the following issues. First, the countries of the region are able to control this situation by trying to improve social development projects. Second, getting familiar with the plans of radical groups leads the countries of the region towards adopting appropriate measures and strategies. According to the above-mentioned subjects, the present research tries to explain the social development indices and the tendency of the region's citizen toward religious radicalism, especially DAESH terrorist group, by using sociological and socio-political approaches. Therefore, the main question of the research is that is there any difference between social development indices of the five commonwealth states - Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kirghizstan, and Tajikistan - and their tendency toward religious radicalism?

Research question:

Is there any difference between social development indices and tendency toward radical Islam in Central Asia? (Case study: DAESH)

Research hypothesis:

In order to answer the research question, one hypothesis is mentioned: there is a significant difference between social development indices of the Central Asian States from which DAESH recruited its members.

Research methodology:

The method of the present research is descriptive and correlative. The research data have been collected through quantitative methods and secondary analysis; the information was gathered from the economic development indices at the website of the Institute of International Studies which is based in Finland (2015).

Research findings:

The findings of this research indicate that from the five countries that have been studied, Kirghizstan with 7.1 percent, Tajikistan with 13.6 percent, Kazakhstan with 17.9 percent, Turkmenistan with 25.7 percent and Uzbekistan with 35.7 percent have recruited the lowest and highest warriors from DAESH respectively. In addition, according to inferential analysis, the findings of the research show that there is a significant difference between the social development indices of the countries from which DAESH recruited its members. The error level of this analysis was 0.01.

Furthermore, there is a significant difference between social development indices - such as social progress, health costs, net immigration, globalization,

and educational costs - within the five Central Asian countries from which DAESH recruited its members; error level of this analysis was also 0.01.

Therefore, according to the theoretical and empirical analyses of this research, we can say that after the collapse of communist ideology, internationalism and the national politics could not manage the plural Muslim societies in the region. Uneven development within the commonwealth countries - in different cultural, social, political, and economic aspects - reflected itself after the collapse of the Soviet Union and therefore the developmental weaknesses could not meet citizen needs. Meanwhile, due to the low level of social progress indices - such as providing basic needs, access to health and welfare, access to opportunities, and costs of education, health and treatment - the citizens of Central Asian countries have immigrated to other countries, especially Russia. This issue, accompanied by the situation created by free market and the expansion of globalization, has led to a bigger gap within these societies. In this connection, Islamic ideology which unites people regardless of their ethnic identities has been welcomed by many people in these countries. Therefore, the economic and social situations in the region, the inability of governments to solve the economic and social problems and also severe repressions, have led to the improvement of radicalism. This has created a condition in which religious extremist groups have been able to recruit its members from the discriminated populations.

Keywords: Central Asia, DAESH, Development, Globalization, Immigration, Kirghizstan, Radical Islam, Social Development Indices, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.