The Citizen Challenging the State: Islamic State and the Recruitment of Foreign Fighters

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To Aaron.

A source of support, strength and sanity.

Abstract

This thesis critically examines the role of the Islamic State's foreign fighter. It argues that the projection in propaganda of reflexive, foreign fighters and migrants operates as a recruitment device. This evidence challenges current assumptions of foreign fighters, who are often tautologically confined to "religious ideological" motivations in a group pre-determined as religiously ideological. It reveals that the Islamic State is acutely aware of its salience as a competitive political actor, attempting to provoke a sense of political agency through an articulation of the fragile conditions in the citizen-state relationship.

This thesis is organised around three articles. The introduction contextualises the relevance of the Islamic State, followed by a literature review. Article one is a conceptual article, entitled "Articulating Political Agency: Foreign Fighters and the Dynamics of Authority". It critically evaluates the ideological categorisation of the Islamic State and its foreign fighters before presenting an alternative consideration of membership through authority recognition. Article two, entitled, "'Now is the Time to Wake up': Islamic State Narratives of Political Awareness", applies an innovative, blended methodology to foreign fighter recruitment material. It proves that narratives of political awareness in citizen-state relations scaffold religious themes. The final article is entitled, "Sexual Suppression and Political Agency: Evoking a Woman's Support for the Islamic State". It scrutinises an exclusive, "state" sanctioned, woman-authored advice column of the Islamic State. It first contextualises the salience of the column before exhibiting how the narratives provoke support through a multi-pronged approach at challenging state and patriarchal authority. The conclusion presents the implications of this thesis, detailing how the findings evidence that new conceptual and methodological approaches are necessary to understand the recruitment devices in contemporary religious terrorist organisations that compete for transnational support.

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Introduction

> *ISIL as a threat, its existence as a cellular terrorist organization, or as an appealing banner for disturbed individuals searching for meaning in their lives, will be with us for many years.*
>
> The Honourable Brett H. McGurk, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL.[1]

The Islamic State is a threat. It is a hazard, a danger. Its very existence raises a possibility to cause harm. As an object, it is an organisation that employs terrorist tactics.[2] As an organisation, it can be dismantled. Its parts can be identified, disconnected and eradicated. It can be "extinguished" from the "face of the Earth",[3] eliminated from our view via force. Its occupied territory has been reduced by 98%, representing an achievement towards the goal of extinguishing this threat. However, a danger lingers after its physical removal, and this is the existence of its ideology being a regarded as a "pull" for individuals to commit terror acts far after the organisation is seemingly dismantled.

There is an assumed metaphysical allure to this group. Or, as McGurk specifies, "an appealing banner for disturbed individuals searching for meaning in their lives".[4] The Islamic

1. Brett H. McGurk, "Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 'Global Efforts to Defeat ISIS'," 28 June 2016. Available at https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/062816_McGurk_Testimony.pdf.

2. Terrorist tactics are defined as acts of violence to cause fear for a political gain or motive, with the intention of spreading fear beyond the immediate victim(s). This is also known as communicative or political violence. Refer to Brian J. Phillips, "Terrorist Tactics by Criminal Organizations: The Mexican Case in Context," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 1 (2018): 47-78.

3. Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Joint Address to Congress," transcript from The White House, 30 January 2017. Available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-joint-address-congress/. See also Donald J. Trump, "President Donald J. Trump's State of the Union Address," transcript from The White House, 30 January 2018. Available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trumps-state-union-address/.

4. McGurk, "Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 'Global Efforts to Defeat ISIS'," 14.

State's "Caliphate" territory has been liberated to a large extent, with its leaders neutralised, and its foreign fighters denaturalised, processed locally and/or extradited back to their countries or other nations that serve as proxy judicial agents. However, the threat of homegrown terror acts or "lone wolves" who claim allegiance serve as a reminder of how the Islamic State's slogan of *baqiyya wa tatamaddad* (remaining and expanding) does not only refer to capturing and holding territory.[5] It also connotes the success of capturing and holding allegiance beyond borders, beyond space, beyond time.

The Islamic State has rapidly risen as a recognised global threat that agitated actions from four different, newly-formed state alliances aimed at defeating it. These coalitions range from the prominent US-led,[6] "Global" force to the French-led,[7] Russian-led,[8] and Muslim-states coalitions.[9] The quick alignment of states into these coalitions that, at times, had disparate objectives is due to this terrorist group arising into a formidable pseudo-state in a span of less than a decade—even fully precipitated as a violent, highly competitive actor in a concentrated time of three years.

5. Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (New York: Regan Arts, 2015).

6. For information on the development of the United States-led coalition, refer to John Kerry, "Remarks at Top of Meeting on Building an Anti-ISIL Coalition Co-Chaired by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, U.K. Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, and U.K. Defense Secretary Michael Fallon," United States Department of State, 5 September 2014. Available at https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/09/231288.htm.

7. For information on the coalition developed by France, refer to France Diplomatie, "International Conference on Peace and Security in Iraq," France Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 15 September 2014. Available at https://web.archive.org/web/20140918011834/http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/iraq-304/events-2526/article/international-conference-on-peace.

8. For details on the Russia-led coalition, refer to "Russia, Iran, Iraq & Syria setting up 'joint information center' to coordinate anti-ISIS operations," *Reuters*, 27 September 2015. Available at https://www.rt.com/news/316592-russia-syria-islamic-state/.

9. The Muslim states coalition is headed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, refer to Karen DeYoung, "Saudi Arabia launches 'Islamic military alliance' to combat terrorism," *The Washington Post*, 15 December 2015. Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/saudi-arabia-launches-islamic-military-alliance-to-combat-terrorism/2015/12/15/ad568a1c-a361-11e5-9c4e-be37f66848bb_story.html?utm_term=.4851c3d03794.

While it is more currently known as the Islamic State, ISIS or Daish/Daesh (a negative referent from the acronym of the group's Arabic name, Al-**D**awlah Al-Islamiyah fi Al-**I**raq wa Al-**Sh**am), this actor began as an insurgent group in Iraq in 2004. It began as an association of Al-Qaeda Central and self-identified as Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Two years later, it changed leadership and rebranded itself as the Islamic State in Iraq, absorbing tribal affiliation across the country and accepting Jabhat al-Nusra, the Al-Qaeda militant organisation in Syria, into its membership (the alliance was later dissolved). Building towards its success in 2013, it straddled the border between Syria and Iraq and expanded in both directions while creeping up to claim towns along Turkey's border. In April of that year, the Islamic State of Iraq rebranded once more to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria/Levant (ISIS/ISIL), displaying a triumphant capture of two states. After claiming the major cities of Fallujah, Mosul and Tikrit in Iraq and several cities in Syria, the group re-branded in the summer of 2014 to its most iconic name—the simple "Islamic State". It announced the creation of an expanding Caliphate (Islamic governance system) and the appointment of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the leader for the world's 1.8 billion Muslims. The 9th December 2017 marked the "liberation" of Islamic State territory (according to the Iraqi military), the assumed end of the conflict and the designation of the land reverting back into the defined borders of Iraq and Syria. However, as with most conflicts, the efforts to eradicate this organisation affected far more than a simple transfer of territory.

After three years of conflict, several issues emerged. These concerns are an influx of more than 40,000 Islamic State foreign fighters, a genocide of the Yazidi population, an enslavement of 7,000 girls and women, targeted ethnic and religious killings, an internally displaced population of almost 7,000,000 people, and damage and death that was the result of an estimated 25,000 airstrikes dropped by the US-led Global Coalition of seventy-seven countries. Additionally, the success of the Islamic State's defeat reinvigorated the leadership

of Bashar Al-Assad as Syria's President, an individual whose discriminatory practices caused certain tribes to seek out alliance with non-state actors such as the Islamic State in the first place. The impact of the Islamic State has created an urgency in responding to a humanitarian crisis, countering domestic insurgency and terrorism acts, restricting financial resources and preventing tribal alliances and foreign fighter membership. Within the realm of academic research, however, the quest to understand the nature of the Islamic State as both a terrorism organisation and political entity and what it represents in the terrorism landscape, has been sorely uncertain and is lacking in definitive answers. More specifically, does the Islamic State's growth in foreign fighter recruitment indicate something new in understanding it as a terrorist or politically violent non-state actor? In part, this uncertainty has been developed through how the Islamic State has been identified as an actor.

While the definition of "terrorism" is afflicted by the lack of consensus on its exact meaning, its exact source, and its exact outcome,[10] the *identification* of the Islamic State as a religious terrorist organisation that promotes a religiously-derived ideology and has religious, ideologically motivated foreign fighters is entrenched throughout the literature on terrorism and security. The United Nations officially designates it as terrorist entity,[11] and its religious designation and orientation is seen in its categorisation of being a militant Islamist organisation with a professed goal of establishing a Caliphate political system. More specifically, it is defined and more commonly known as a "Salafi-Jihadist militant

10. In particular, Stampnitzky explains that "the problem of definition has come to hinge around three core axes: politicization, rationality, and morality". See Lisa Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented "Terrorism"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 7. Additionally, Jackson and Hall elucidate that the "vernacular discourse about terrorism is much more unstable, context-dependent, and dynamic than the elite-level discourse". See Richard Jackson and Gareth Hall, "Talking about terrorism: A study of vernacular discourse," *Politics* 36, no. 3 (2016): 305. See also Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, third edition for Critical Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare (New York: Columbia University Press).

11. United Nations, "Resolution 2253," 27 December 2015. Available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2253(2015).

organisation".[12] It is the pinnacle example of an Islamic terrorist entity, and the threat of this is due its actions and violence having a "transcendental dimension".[13] The understanding of its characteristics and influence as a terrorist non-state actor has relied on viewing and analysing it through an unquestioned paradigm. This paradigm carries certain assumptions on the strength of its religious ideology. This consideration has developed from my own past scholarship on analysing this actor since 2014,[14] as well as understanding the crucial and influential role foreign fighters played in constructing the identification of the Islamic State as a political entity.[15]

Therefore, the research question driving this thesis is: *In what way does the emergence of the Islamic State foreign fighter in its recruitment materials reveal that new approaches are needed to understand and analyse contemporary extremist propaganda*?

Much of the analysis on the Islamic State is located in the field of terrorism studies. In terrorism studies, there is a focus to view contemporary terrorist organisations that have an international or "global" aspiration as being part of the "new terrorism" category. New terrorism is defined by the group's lack of territorial or national focus. New terrorism groups are often contrasted against an "old terrorism" actor like the Irish Republican Army. Four features are considered part of "new terrorism": transnational actors with loosely organised networks, religiously-inspired and religiously-motivated actors (also known as "religious

12. As defined in the resource "The Islamic State," Mapping Militant Organisations, Stanford University, updated on 23 October 2017. Available at http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/1.

13. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 90.

14. Nadia Al-Dayel and Aaron Anfinson, "'In the Words of the Enemy': The Islamic State's reflexive projection of statehood," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 11, no. 1 (2018): 46-64.

15. Jan Christoffer Anderson and Sveinung Sandberg, "Islamic State Propaganda: Between Social Movement Framing and Subculture Provocation," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, available at https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1484356. See also David Malet, "Foreign Fighter Mobilization and Persistence in a Global Context," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 3 (2015): 454-473.

fanatics" or "zealots"), the quest to acquire and use weapons that inflict mass casualties, and finally, an indiscriminate targeting of victims rather than assassinations.[16]

The characteristics of "transnational actors" with loose networks made of "religious fanatics" is often a prominent feature in Islamic State analysis (as is further explained in Chapters One and Two). Policies on counterterrorism are influenced by research in the terrorism studies field. In particular, counternarrative production to counteract the Islamic State's success with recruiting internationally often follows recommendations from papers published in the terrorism studies field.[17] For that reason, this thesis will directly engage with the terrorism studies field and the literature it presents. This thesis will examine and question the conceptual lens that is applied to the Islamic State in research, the definitions and parameters that are used in analysing its foreign fighters, and most crucially, the methods and themes that are applied in analysis concerning its recruitment material (commonly categorised as "propaganda").

This question must be answered by investigating the following factors: how the Islamic State is currently identified as a religious and political actor, what methods have been used for analysis, and if the assumptions on what motives foreign fighters to its ranks are apparent in the narrative themes in recruitment materials. This thesis further develops how a new approach is necessary in order to understand what has been missed in conceptualising the influence of contemporary extremist organisations' multi-national recruits, as well understanding what assumptions have led to a privileging of certain methodological and

16. Isabelle Duyvesteyn, "How New is the New Terrorism?," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27, no. 5 (2010): 443; Walter Laqueur, *No End to War*: *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Continuum, 2003).

17. For example, see the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Director Report entitled, "Gender Dimensions of the Response to the Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Research Perspectives," published on February 2019 and available at https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Feb_2019_CTED_Trends_Report.pdf.

analytical approaches to propaganda. Additionally, it is important to locate the specific socio-political conditions of *when* the propaganda is produced and consumed, because the Islamic State's emergence and influence indicates that it must be placed in a lens which allows for a full appreciation of how identifications are constructed within the media and how they are consumed in the audience. Moreover, contextualising the socio-political conditions in which the propaganda emerged gleans information on how the narratives attempt to respond to political issues that are experienced by its audience. Above all, this realisation must include a full awareness of how the Islamic State "citizens"—albeit often generalised through the identification of "Muslim"—have articulated a form of agency that is embodied by the movement from one territory to another, and a switch in authorising the legitimacy of power from one political entity to another. This is most notably seen with the Islamic State's "foreign fighters" as well as the women who have voluntarily migrated to support its state-building efforts.

Using case studies on the Islamic State, this thesis reveals a new approach to analysing contemporary terrorist groups which have foreign fighter recruitment. After this introduction, the thesis structure is in four parts: 1) Chapter One, a literature review, 2) Chapter Two, a conceptual review in the form of a publishable-quality article 2) Chapter Three, an empirical analysis in the form of a publishable-quality article, 3) Chapter Four, a second empirical analysis in the form of a publishable quality article, and 4) Chapter Five, a discussion on the implications from the findings and a conclusion.

Chapter One presents a literature review that explores how contemporary terrorist organisations have been conceptualised. This literature review is organized around what is *known* about religious terrorism and foreign fighters, and it provides a critical assessment of assumptions in the literature. It will first present prominent approaches in political science

regarding the understanding of an individual's engagement with organizations that promote political violence. Then, it narrows into a review of the literature from the terrorism studies field. The literature review chapter continues with assessing how "religious terrorism" is theorised and how the Islamic State is analysed. It then moves into a critique of the literature and explaining the tautology that exists. Finally, this chapter concludes with an explanation of a new conceptional lens and methodological treatment to recruitment materials from the Islamic State. This conceptual approach is tested and applied in the following Chapters Two through Four.

As foreign fighters are often defined by the ideological orientation or goals of the group that join (for example, a "jihadist" foreign fighter in a jihadist terrorist organisation or a "communist" foreign fighter in the Marxist International Brigades), it is necessary to step back from a micro view on the Islamic State in order to understand how it is conceptually addressed as a terrorist organisation. Therefore, this literature review scopes the terrain in which the Islamic State has been conceptualised in order to provide a thorough assessment of how the "religious" foreign fighter is approached in academic analysis. It begins with an introduction, stating the scope of the review. Then, it assesses three approaches in political science that have influenced terrorism studies: the rationalist, structuralist, and cultural approaches. With the consideration of these approaches, the chapter then goes into detail on why media engagement and securitisation acts must be incorporated when analysing a terrorist organisation that recruits online and heavily uses media which available to a "global" audience. The literature review then narrows into terrorism studies literature and presents how contemporary terrorist organisations have been categorised by their religious identifications, known as the religious, Fourth Wave in terrorism and security studies.[18] It

18. David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11," *Anthropoetics* 8, no. 1 (2002).

explains how the understanding of religious terrorism incorporated the theory of Pan-Islamism.[19] It assesses these theories and points out where certain assumptions have not been challenged, but entrenched in the continual scholarship on terrorist organisations. It also critically assesses the development of the Islamic State as a religious terrorism actor in terrorism studies literature. It displays how "religious ideology" as a defining characteristic is employed as a distinctive lens through which Islamic extremist groups have been examined. It then critiques this scholarship by illuminating how this lens has created a pre-determined bias for propaganda analysis. Finally, it reviews the literature on Islamic State propaganda analysis and points out how a tautological pathway has been created. It concludes by identifying the lacuna in understanding highly-mediatised, contemporary terrorist organisations with transnational recruitment.

Chapter Two begins to explore how the religious foreign fighter is assessed in literature, setting a basis to explore the research question of the Islamic State's foreign fighter. It is a conceptual review, questioning current assumptions of the Islamic State and how foreign fighters are defined. It offers a new lens for the paradigm that explores the socio-political salience of this organisation. It first examines how foreign fighters have been defined by ties to religious ideology, often categorised as "true believers".[20] It reveals that a focus on externally-derived ideology, such as the extremist, Salafi-jihadist ideology, overlooks the specific political agency of the citizen. It articulates how the perception of agency and authority influences voluntary foreign fighter migration to the Islamic State. It eschews current positions of the foreign fighter as being primarily "religiously-motivated", and

19. Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," *International Security* 35, no. 3 (2010): 53-94.

20. Ideology is defined as a set of ideas and beliefs that affect an individual's actions and social and political worldview. Religious ideology refers to how these ideas and beliefs are formed around a certain religious orientation and provide a differentiation between one religious group to others. Refer to Larisa Heiphetz, Elizabeth S. Spelke, Paul L. Harris and Mahzarin R. Banaji, "The development of reasoning about beliefs: Fact, preference, and ideology," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 49, (2013): 560.

instead places her/him in a realistic position of a citizen in a hierarchical power structure to their state, upon which a political awareness of agency and questioning the authority and legitimacy of the state is revealed. With this alternative presentation of the foreign fighter, it contributes to understanding how the tension in the citizen-state relationship affects allegiance and support. This chapter contributes theoretically to the foreign fighter conceptualisations, as well as developing a fresh lens through which to analyse recruitment material.

Chapter Three evidences the citizen-state power dynamics that manifest through the terrorist group's usage and stylisation of the foreign fighter. It is entitled, '"Now is the Time to Wake Up': Islamic State's Narratives of Political Awareness". It first summarises current propaganda findings, pointing out how a favouring of quantitative methods on medium and large-*n* studies have unintentionally obscured themes that lie outside of the current academic focus on finding "religious" narratives of *utopia* and *belonging*. It argues that the Islamic State's foreign fighters—especially the celebrity *jihadis* like the Western members—must be first contextualised with an understanding of two factors: the highly mediatised environment where the Islamic State grew to be seen as a political entity and the salience of the Islamic State foreign fighter being a citizen of another country. Examining the discourse from this terrorist organisation's top Australian recruiter, Neil Christopher Prakash (*nom de guerre* of Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi), this chapter illustrates that the narrative themes of a citizen challenging the state's authority and legitimacy are only revealed through an innovative, contextual treatment of critical discourse analysis, interpretivism and securitisation. These narrative themes also evidence the foreign fighter position that was conceptualised in the prior chapter, which argued for a lens that understands the political relationship of citizen-state and power dynamics in the Islamic State foreign fighter and its recruitment materials. It concludes with a direction on how to apply this method to other recruitment materials,

showing how both the method and findings have a level of generalisability that enrich current literature on the influence of Islamic State foreign fighter occurrences in propaganda.

Chapter Four provides an empirical analysis which considers the gender dynamics in the recruitment materials. Expanding the method of contextualising the Islamic State foreign fighter recruiter in a space that is fully aware of media salience, power dynamics and citizen-state relations, it focuses on a critical, wholly contemporary element of this terrorist organisation. This element is a woman's voice of authority as the author of propaganda in official "state"-produced materials. Entitled "Sexual Suppression and Political Agency: Evoking a Woman's Support for the Islamic State", this chapter evidences the narrative themes of political agency and challenging authority. It begins by contextualising the reality of women and girls in the Islamic-State occupied territories from 2014-2016. It applies an innovative method of determining the *reflexivity* and *responsivity* elements in the recruitment material. It examines the media salience of the Islamic State's recruitment magazine, *Dabiq*, and the emergence of the woman author, known as "Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah" (translates to "Mother of Sumayyah" and "the Migrant"), illustrating how these features demonstrate a level of *reflexivity* on the importance of the Islamic State's discourse in a media environment projected to a global audience. Then, it evidences the level of *responsivity* in the narratives, explaining how the themes in Al-Muhājirah's column must be contextualised to the wider political arena that the Islamic State and global audience of citizens experience. This chapter illuminates a new path for researchers through demonstrating how to incorporate novel and challenging methods that allow for an expansion past the literature's current vacuum of displaying the religiously-derived gender roles of the Islamic State's ideology.

Chapter Five states the implications from these findings. In particular, it illuminates the benefits of utilising a method which contextualises extremist organisation propaganda. It details how the findings have a level of generalisability and how they make specific contributions to three, often overlapping, fields of study: terrorism studies, political studies and language studies. For political studies, the contribution develops the understanding of how foreign fighter migration affects power dynamics in the citizen-state relationship. Moreover, the findings contribute to developing a consideration that identifies how non-state actors have the ability to be successful in competing for citizens and challenging the assumed, state's monopoly on authority over its citizens. For language studies, the contribution applies to enriching current methods of analysing Islamic State recruitment narratives. Specifically, it discusses the current limitations in determining over-arching themes in recruitment narratives. It should be noted that the implications will not critique specific policies or offer a procedural approach to developing counter-radicalisation/extremism/terrorism programs. Rather, the significance of the findings illuminate the urgency in addressing the oversights that have developed in current approaches to religious terrorist organisations. The findings also implore both academia and policy-makers to adopt conceptual and methodological frameworks that fully consider the media and political environment within which the religious terrorist organisation has grown.

The main concepts used in this thesis are *terrorist organisation*, *state* and *foreign fighters*. Therefore, before proceeding to the literature review, it is important to briefly define these concepts and explain how they are used in this thesis.

Currently, the definition and label of "terrorist organisation" is set by authorities at the state level and the supranational level. For the former, an example is seen with the US State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism. This Bureau is tasked with identifying which

entities should be labelled as a "foreign terrorist organization" (FTO), a designation that applies to entities that engage in "terrorist activity" which is further defined in Congressional-passed Authorization Acts.[21] Al-Qa'ida was designated as a FTO on 8th October, 1999. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formally al-Qa'ida in Iraq) was designated on 17 December 2004, and the current branches—basically franchises—of the Islamic State were listed throughout 2014 to 2018 as each one became operational.[22] As mentioned on page four in this thesis, the Islamic State is designated as a terrorist entity by the United Nations. In both of these designation acts from the state and United Nations level, the "terrorist" label is used to limit the recruitment protentional, material support, and financial assets that would enable the entity to grow and perform acts of terror while challenging the legitimacy of "recognized states". In this thesis, the Islamic State is considered a terrorist entity which performs or encourages acts of terrorism in the territory it controls (in Syria and Iraq and elsewhere) as well as the territory in which its supporters currently reside in (such as France and Australia).

A "state" is not easily defined. The state is an abstraction which involves the "recognition of authority and the exercise of power within specific territorial boundaries".[23] Currently, there are two ways in which an entity or political organization can attempt to claim to be a state. This is known as the two theories of statehood: the constitutive and the declarative theory of

21. Refer to "Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)", *Congressional Research Service*, 1 January, 2019, available at https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/IF10613.pdf.

22. As operational branches grew from the Islamic State, so did the application label of "foreign terrorist entity" as seen in the following list and designation dates from the US State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism: ISIL-Korasan (14 January, 2016), ISIL-Libya (20 May, 2016), ISIS-Bangladesh (28 February, 2018), ISIS-Philippines (28 February, 2018), ISIS-West Africa (28 February, 2018), ISIS-Greater Sahara (23 May, 2018). Refer to "Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)."

23. Al-Dayel and Anfinson, 2018, 46. Also refer to Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969).

statehood.[24] The former theory requires *outside* acknowledgment that the desired entity is indeed a state. Legitimisation is granted through this external process and recognized by other states and international organizations. However, the declarative theory of statehood rests in the consideration that the entity declares that it is indeed a state--whether or not any external acknowledgment of its existence and sovereignty over territory has been granted. Certain parameters have been defined by the United Nations as what should be present in order to declare statehood: a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and the ability to enter into relations with other states.[25] It should be noted that declaring statehood does not automatically follow a path of being recognised as a state by external states or governmental bodies.

This thesis does not claim that the Islamic State is a state. The Islamic State is not a recognised state by any country or the United Nations. However, as Al-Dayel and Anfinson have argued, it attempts to merge aspects of both the declarative and constitutive theories in its recruitment materials and official statements to world leaders.[26] For the purpose of this thesis, the Islamic State is considered a political entity—and this label exists alongside the terrorist entity label—with a territory (forcibly gained) and a form of government, yet unrecognised by other states and international organisations as a legitimate state. In other words, it does possess some of the characteristics or attributes of statehood that is assumed with states, but it is not recognised as a state that has authority or deems respect from other states. It should be noted that the violent tactics that the Islamic State uses to capture territory are not considered acceptable for modern statehood, as this behaviour contradicts article

24. United Nations Archives. D-21826. "League of Nations." Convention on the rights and duties of states, adapted by the Seventh International Conference of American States at Montevideo and signed, Montevideo, Uruguay, December 16, 1933.

25. Ibid., 4.

26. Al-Dayel and Anfinson, 2018.

eleven in the Montevideo Convention set by the United Nations which stipulate that States "not recognise territorial acquisitions" which have been gained through force.[27]

The final term that is frequently used in this thesis is "foreign fighter". While the conceptualisation of foreign fighters is not constant amongst researchers, it can be summed up as an individual who does not have citizenship in the country she or he travelled to in order to take part in a conflict. Chapter Two explains the historical development of the term and details the distinguishing features in definitions provided by researchers. These definitions are often made through typologies that delineate the level of involvement of the "foreign fighter". In this thesis, the foreign fighter is defined as *an individual who leaves her/his country of origin, nationality, or residence in order to join and a non-state actor or foreign entity in an armed conflict*. This definition closely follows the foreign fighter term set by the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights: "an individual who leaves his or her country of origin or habitual residence to join a non-State armed group in an armed conflict abroad and who is primarily motivated by ideology, religion, and/or kinship".[28] An important part of this thesis is examining why the foreign fighter is used in Islamic State materials that are disseminated across online spaces for a "global" audience, and how these efforts impact recruitment and the understanding of the foreign fighter as a religious and/or political actor.

Certain parameters have been determined in order to designate the issues that will not be explored in this thesis, as they do not aid in the investigation of the research question. Three issues are noted. First, this thesis does not explore the process of radicalisation. The literature on radicalisation is multi-disciplinary and greatly extends beyond the scope of analysing how

27. United Nations Archives D-21826, 4; Al-Dayel and Anfinson, 59.

28. Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, "Academy Briefing No. 7 – Foreign Fighters under International Law" (Geneva, 2014), 3.

the Islamic State utilises foreign fighters in its propaganda and how it is classified as a terrorist actor. However, the issue of radicalisation is discussed in the implication section of the conclusion (Chapter Five) with a direction on how the findings from Chapters Two to Four enrich our understanding of how certain narrative themes may influence individuals towards radicalisation.

Second, this thesis does not compare or contrast elements of the Islamic State to competing organisations that are designated as sharing its religious terrorism ideology, like Al-Qaeda. As this thesis explores *how* the emergence of Islamic State foreign fighters in its salient recruitment materials post 2014-branding reveal that new approaches are needed, a comparative study linking this organisation to others falls outside the scope that is established through the research question. In other words, comparing the Al-Qaeda foreign fighters to the Islamic State foreign fighters falls outside of the research question scope. The literature review (Chapter One) more thoroughly explains the problems of doing a comparative analysis with both groups, and details what crucial contemporary features of the Islamic State are obscured in such studies.

Third, this thesis does not provide a step-by-step counternarrative process as a solution to religious terrorism. It will not provide a framework for constructing a counternarrative. The reason for not performing this policy-making step is due to the necessity of this thesis evoking a realisation in the terrorism and security fields for a new paradigm in understanding recruitment. In the implications section of the conclusion (Chapter Five), I explain how the findings encourage researchers to develop methods of contextually analysing recruitment pieces as reflecting and responding to temporal, socio-political conditions with real political situations and consequences. Therefore, a solution which provides a step-by-step process of constructing narrative themes against narrative themes (assuming a one-to-one application of

unchanging conditions) is, I argue, problematic. It risks cycling generalisations and assumptions that are, as I reveal in the literature review (Chapter One), what we get wrong in the first place about the Islamic State and its influence.

This thesis illuminates that propaganda analysis should not be an effort to combat an external virus of religious ideology that affects "disturbed individuals", but rather it is an opportunity to engage in a reflexive manner that understands why contemporary terrorism has an influence that extends beyond borders, beyond religious affiliation, yet wholly cognizant of the critical political situations that affect its audience. The reconceptualisation of the Islamic State and the alternative methodological lens applied to its recruitment materials reveal a new approach to propaganda analysis as well as a new utilisation for propaganda that considers the power dynamics in the citizen-state relationship. This thesis demonstrates how a contemporary non-state actor is projecting an awareness of being "politically aware" in both domestic and international issues that affect the audience of potential foreign fighter and migrant supporters. We cannot afford to ignore this threat, as it will be with us for many years to come.

Chapter One: Literature Review

In the field of political studies, analysing the motivations for joining politically violent organizations often falls within rationalist, structuralist, and culturalist approaches. In turn, these approaches are used in the terrorism studies field and have shaped the category of "religious terrorism", a label that is often applied to Islamic extremist terrorist organisations such as the Islamic State. Each approach views the individual as responding to certain factors. However, importance is placed on where the factors come from—whether they are from a cost-benefit analysis like the rationalist approach, the greater social and political environment as with the structuralist approach, or the individual's cultural or religious environment as seen in the culturalist approach. It is important to understand the distinction between these approaches and where they fit into the field of terrorism studies and current analysis on Islamic State foreign fighter motivations.

1.1 Three approaches to studying political violence

According to Hafez, the rationalist, structuralist and culturalist approaches are often seen in research on understanding why individuals engage with terrorist organisations.[1] While "there is no direct link between social, political, and religious mobilizations and the descent into terrorism," [2] analysis of terrorist engagement follows approaches that attempt to understand certain structural factors that enable political violence to occur, as well as violence being presented as a rational choice along with cultural and religious variables. This section defines these three approaches and reviews how they have been used in terrorism studies, with a focus on research concerning the Islamic State. Then, it will explain the importance of

1. Mohammed M. Hafez, "Rationality, Culture, and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers: A Preliminary Theoretical Synthesis and Illustrative Case Study," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 2 (2006).

2. Olivier Roy, *Jihad and Death: The Global Appeal of the Islamic State*, translated by Cynthia Schoch (London: Hurst & Company, 2017), 4.

considering media engagement and securitisation discourse related to the contemporary citizen-state power dynamic, and how incorporating these perspectives enriches our understanding of the Islamic State recruitment material's success.

1.1.1 Rationalist

The rationalist approach examines the attempts to "reason" out a choice or a set of choices, weighing benefits to costs and considering the price of risks to consequences. This line of study is also known as the "rational-actor" model that helps in understanding predictive behaviours of an organisation or individual. According to Lichbach, the rational actor "emphasizes cost-push factors (i.e., opportunities, costs and benefits, resources)".[3] In the field of terrorism studies, the "hallmark of the rational-actor model is that terrorists use their scarce resources so to maximize the expected value of their utility."[4] This position assumes that the organisation or individual is acting in a rational manner and that they foresee a certain realistic outcome. Additionally, it assumes that they plan accordingly in the expectation that other members of that group strive towards the same goal.

In terms of how the organisational capacity affects members' choices to engage or support a terrorist group, the rational-actor model views how the "terrorist group has access to a finite set of resources including financial assets, weapons and buildings, personnel, and entrepreneurial abilities".[5] This set of limitations is typical for actors engaging in asymmetrical warfare, where one side has superior or traditional capabilities in the conflict. Due to these limitations, the rationalist approach examines how certain resources can be

3. Mark Lichbach, "An Evaluation of 'Does Economic Inequality Breed Political Conflict' Studies," *World Politics*, 41 (1989): 459.

4. Walter Enders, "Terrorism: An Empirical Analysis," in *Handbook of Defense Economics, Volume 2*, ed. T. Sandler and K. Hartley (New York: Elsevier, 2007), 832.

5. Ibid., 833.

utilised and maximized for the greatest effect of pursuing the organisation's goal(s). This is the where the foreign fighter comes in as a category of finite resources.

Foreign fighters of the Islamic State are often multicultural and multilingual. They possess skills of cultural knowledge outside of the "Islamic" traditions and Iraq/Syria context as well as technical ability for multimedia productions and online recruitment. The rationalist approach can be further broken down into two paths: how the organisation uses individuals (in this case, foreign fighters) as a finite resource, and how the individuals themselves may make a cost-benefit calculation when joining and supporting the Islamic State. For the former path, the Islamic State would often put foreign fighters in a privileged position. Their language skills—in which English was highly regarded—would come into use on the various social media platforms where the Islamic State would attempt to recruit. These platforms range from Twitter and WordPress blogs like "Green Bird of Jannah" to the encrypted message sharing application Telegram. Thus, the foreign fighters' languages were considered a resource, as well as their ability to culturally relate to the "global" audience that the Islamic State recruitment materials were directed towards.

The Islamic State was not the first Islamic extremist terrorist organisation to utilise the nationality and cultural knowledge of their foreign fighters. Al Qaeda's famous operative, media advisor and top recruiter Adam Yahiye Gadahn, known as Azzam al-Amriki ("the American"), was tasked with recruitment through English propaganda videos. However, the *scale* of the Islamic State recruitment is what makes the effort unprecedented. The act of specifically noticing the value in some foreigners versus others and making videos of their support utilised the scarce resource of certain "Western" individuals for the maximum effort of garnering world-wide media exposure. This is discussed more in depth in Chapters Three and Four and with the method of determining *reflexivity*, which is analysing how the

awareness of media exposure and uptake determines certain narrative and language choices in the recruitment material.

The rationalist approach is more commonly applied to a case study on an individual level. It places a starting point on a subject noticing that certain actions have greater outcomes that benefit the individual or what the individual cares about, and comparisons are made between the actions. Lichbach states that "given that actors receive greater returns from some activities than others, they may base their actions solely on the amount of rewards they receive from the various activities".[6] Decisions from the actor are made on a cost-benefit analysis, primarily based on what the actor perceives as their own "income" from that action, and not in relation to what others receive for those actions.[7]

1.1.2 Structuralist

The structuralist approach views political violence as part of a larger system. Environments shape and limit individual behaviour or organisational capacity. According to the structuralist lens, how an individual acts and reacts is due to certain conditions which enable violence to be a possible choice. Ross explains that, "structural theories posit that the causes of terrorism can be found in the environment and the political, cultural, social, and economic structure of societies".[8] The factors (or "causes") that may affect support for terrorism can be further broken down into variables for predictive purposes, where the more defined the variable is, the more reliable a predictive model would be in gauging whether or not an individual supports terrorism.[9] Such factors may be, but are not limited to, the cultural, social, economic

6. Lichbach, "An Evaluation of 'Does Economic Inequality Breed Political Conflict?' Studies," 460.

7. Ibid.

8. Jeffry Ian Ross, "Structural Causes of Oppositional Political Terrorism: Towards a Causal Model," *Journal of Peace Research* 30, no. 3 (1993): 317.

9. Gerald W. Hopple, "Transnational Terrorism: Prospectus for a Causal Modeling Approach" *Terrorism: An International Journal* 6, no. 1 (1982): 73-100.

or geo-political environment that affects the individual like poverty, political instability, the limits placed on rights or liberties and social inequality.[10]

Variables like political instability and social inequality are often labeled as "root causes".[11] As the terrorism studies field explores causal factors that lead individuals to join terrorist groups and/or commit acts of terrorism, the research often heavily leans on case study research designs. Due to this, following a structural approach doesn't maintain the level of generalisation that is necessary for predictive purposes or lend to replicability. Structural approaches can, however, confirm or refute assumptions of root causes. [12]

Structural approaches towards analysing terrorism engagement are often further studied along the lines of micro, meso, and macro levels. These correspond loosely to studying the individual (micro), the organisation that she/he joined (meso), and the larger socio-political environment in which they operate within (macro).[13] These levels are built from Crenshaw, which understands the causes of terrorism as being distinguished between the structural factors that enable it to occur (known as *preconditions*) and specific events that occur prior to the act of terror (known as *precipitants*). In other words, triggering event(s). However, it is the culturalist perspective which dominates research concerning religious-orientated terrorist

10. Brynjar Lia and Katja H-W Skjølberg, "Causes of Terrorism: an Expanded and Updated Review of the Literature" (Kjeller: Norwiegan Defense Research Establishment, 2004): 17-63.

11. James J. F. Forest, "Exploring Root Causes of Terrorism: An Introduction," in *The Making of a Terrorist, Volume III: Root Causes*, ed. James J. F. Forest (Westport/London: Praeger Security International, 2005), 1-2.

12. In the context of European "homegrown jihadism," Shuurman, Bakker and Eijkman state that although studies with a single case research design cannot sustain generalizations on structural factors for terrorism involvement, they can "can provide empirical evidence relevant to the confirmation or refutation of structural-level hypotheses for such involvement". Bart Shurrman, Edwin Bakker and Quirine Eijkman, "Structural Influences on Involvement in European Homegrown Jihadism: A Case Study," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30, no. 1 (2018): 98.

13. Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4 (1981): 379-399. See also Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

groups such as the Islamic State. In a large part, this is due to how political violence is studied in "trends" or patterns.[14]

1.1.3 Culturalist

The cultural approach in terrorism studies examines how groups use discourse and traditions located in a set of religious knowledge in order to rationalise their objectives and behaviors. In other words, how violence is legitimised. Values in a belief system set a standard for determining actions, guiding "moral" judgments and justifying behaviours.[15] Based in the work of Stuart Hall, the cultural approach understands identity—or the "sociological subject"—as being shaped in specific socio-historic contexts and broader sociological structures.[16] In studies concerning political violence, Hafez explains that cultural approaches begin the investigation with four presumptions.[17]

First, actors can access a "tool kit" in the culture that is able to be employed for action.[18] In the case of the Islamic State and other Islamic extremist groups, this pertains to the instruments of religious texts and the authority that the text carries amongst followers. This does not mean that religion is the cause for extremist engagement, but rather that the role that "religiosity (i.e., the degree of personal commitment to a religious worldview)" plays in

14. Ben-Dor and Pedahzur note that "New trends in regional and global terrorism, commonly referred to as the fourth wave of terrorism, often correspond with fundamentalism—primarily of an Islamic nature". Gabriel Ben-Dor and Ami Pedahzur, "The Uniqueness of Islamic fundamentalism and the fourth wave of international terrorism," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 4, no. 3 (2003): 82.

15. Milton Rokeach, *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970), 160.

16. According to Hall, "The notion of the sociological subject reflected the growing complexity of the modern world and the awareness that this inner core of the subject was not autonomous and self-sufficient, but was formed in relation to "significant others," who mediated to the subject the values, meanings, and symbols—the culture—of the worlds he/she inhabited." Stuart Hall, *Modernity and Its Futures* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 597.

17. Hafez, "Rationality, Culture, and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers: A Preliminary Theoretical Synthesis and Illustrative Case Study."

18. Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Goodwin, "Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problem of Agency," *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 6 (1994); Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986).

influencing "quite ordinary people [to] do extraordinary things".[19] There are several tools in the religion that the Islamic State references for their legitimacy, and the following examples are but a few: the establishment of the Islamic State's Caliphate is linked to the historical Caliphate that grew after Prophet Mohammed's death, the *ummah* (an imagined transnational community of Muslims) is linked to stories in one of the religious texts called the *Sunnah*, and the contested notion of *jihad* is found within scripture. The Islamic State makes references to this religious knowledge in order to show a form of authority and legitimacy in violent behavior.

The second presumption in the culturalist approach is that violence which disrupts society has to be framed as purposeful acts of redemption.[20] The justification of performing an act of terror against the public or taking part in a conflict may be framed around fulfilling a duty to the religion, defending the religious community, or being honorable. Redemption is a frequent theme in the Islamic State recruitment materials, as seen in the July 2015 multilingual video, "Honor is in Jihad: A Message to the People of the Balkans".[21] However, this communication effort can only be successful if it articulates and responds to an identity in a socially constructed community.[22] This consideration of a socially constructed identity relates to the third and fourth presumptions that are often applied in the culturalist approach.

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19. Lorne L. Dawson, "In Their Own Words: Religiosity and the Islamic State Foreign Fighters," *Sustainable Security*, 27 April, 2018, para. 17. https://sustainablesecurity.org/2018/04/27/in-their-own-words-religiosity-and-the-islamic-state-foreign-fighters/.

20. David C. Rapoport, ed., *Inside Terrorist Organizations* (London: Frank Cass, 2001): 217-236; Bruce Hoffman, "'Holy Terror': The Implications of Terrorism Motivated by a Religious Imperative," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 18, no. 4 (1995): 271-284.

21. "Honor is in Jihad: A Message to the People of the Balkans," 2015. Al-Hayat Media Center.

22. The notion of a socially constructed community is developed by Benedict Anderson. Refer to Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

Rituals are "cultural performances" that not only communicate ideas, but "arouse emotions, deepen commitments and inculcate the values of collective ethos".[23] Identities may be linked to a sacred time or space.[24] Cultural performances relate to concept of identity construction, which, as Hafez discusses, is the fourth presumption that is used in the culturalist approach. The culture that is linked to a certain identity "provides our criteria for rational action" as well as the context in which rationality is to be judged.[25] Ingram further finds that propaganda from both Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State construct crisis and solution through leveraging both "rational-choice" and "identity-choice".[26]

The approaches of rationalist, structuralist, and culturalist are some of the ways to look at individuals engaging with political violence. In particular, the "two prevailing perspectives on suicide terrorism utilize rationalist and culturalist approaches".[27] Roy further notes that "fundamentalism alone does not produce violence".[28] A level of rationality is a factor in joining the Islamic State, as individuals are given a choice that attempts to merge the cultural duty of *being* Muslim by supporting the terrorist organisation through individual deeds of violence or migrating to the Caliphate territory. Structural elements play a part as well. This is apparent in some Islamic State's fighter testimony of migrating to the Caliphate so that they can live in a land governed by *Sharia* (religious law), have social equality and even

23. Hafez, "Rationality, Culture, and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers: A Preliminary Theoretical Synthesis and Illustrative Case Study,"169.

24. Jack Santino, *Signs of War and Peace: Social Conflict and the Use of Public Symbols in Northern Ireland* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).

25. James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography and Creativity in Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 83.

26. Haroro J. Ingram. 2017. "An Analysis of *Inspire* and *Dabiq*: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 40 (5): 358.

27. Hafez, "Rationality, Culture, and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers: A Preliminary Theoretical Synthesis and Illustrative Case Study,"167.

28. Roy, *Jihad and Death: the Global Appeal of the Islamic State*, 5.

partake in (Islamic State claimed) free, quality healthcare.[29] What needs to be explored, however, is how propaganda from the most successful foreign fighter recruiting terrorist organisation considers the contemporary affordances of media engagement. Additionally, we must consider how this media engagement can be looked at methodologically to understand the structural, rational, or cultural factors at play.

1.1.4 Understanding media engagement and securitisation discourse

The rationalist, structuralist, and culturalist approaches pertain to the radicalisation process of terrorism engagement. However, the research question for this thesis investigates a different angle in terrorism studies and is deeply embedded in propaganda analysis of Islamic-orientated extremist groups that specifically have grown in number with foreign fighters. In other words, this thesis explores the situating of the foreign fighter in propaganda that is directed to a "global", multilingual, multinational audience across social media platforms. It explores how understanding this situation on this scale tells us about the power structure in a citizen-state relationship that develops from the discourse in recruitment materials. This consideration requires us to apply a perspective which contextualises the media environment where these foreign fighters and supporters are displayed, and from there develop methods that uncover narratives of power dynamics and political relations in recruitment materials.

It should further be noted that while the Islamic State is known for its brutality and use of violence, one of its primary directives was to encourage migration to its territory, not necessarily performing an act of violence in one's own country (like suicide terrorism) or in the Islamic State territory. The Islamic State needed to project and show a force of *willing* bodies that would stay in the Caliphate—"citizens" that acknowledge the political

29. "Islamic State Healthcare Service," 2015. Al-Hayat Media Center.

representation of the Islamic State and the legitimacy of its violence that is enforced in the territory it controls. This physical show of willing migrants is displayed in media for recruitment purposes. In many cases, the recruitment material is produced in English or contains multilingual subtitles and translations. This thesis does not disregard the contributions of the rationalist, structuralist, or culturalist lens. It seeks to analyse the important intersection of media engagement, political representation of the individual and the identifications of a terrorist group that is primarily categorised as a religiously-led organisation with religiously-motivated individuals. The parameters of *what* determines the Islamic state fighter as being religiously-motivated or politically-motivated needs to be questioned, as well as how discourse in the recruitment material is viewed as religious or political (or a mixture of both). For that reason, the analysis of recruitment material in Chapters Three and Four examines the power dynamics that pertain to the citizen-state relationship which manifest through the terrorist group's usage and stylisation of the foreign fighter. It demonstrates that the recruitment narratives are not just a cost-benefit argument of rational choice or following a structural theory that points out social inequality as a root cause. It also demonstrates that themes of political discord exist within narratives that are often categorised and generalised in terrorism studies as religious or following commands of enacting *jihad* out of religious obligation.

The culturalist theory of religious identity is put to question when the recruitment materials weigh the religious discourse and religious rationale to arguments and statements that would be considered "non-religious" and more political. (This is later demonstrated in the analysis in Chapters Three and Four.) For that reason, this thesis develops different methods to analysing terrorist recruitment material, with a large focus on media engagement and the salience of the foreign fighter being front and centre in a majority of its English language productions. This thesis also takes a view that components in the securitisation approach can

be used as a method when analysing discourse that comes from the individual and causes a direct reaction from the state. After all, state acts which "secure" the populace from dangers are communicated through the medium of news, press releases and media appearances.

The securitisation approach is about the "inherently political nature of any designation of security issues", thereby putting forth the ethical questions of "why do you call this a security issue and what are the implications of doing this?".[30] In order to use this approach, it is important to narrow down the sector that we focus on. In the case of examining the Islamic State foreign fighter and the response from her or his prior state, the sector is political, which refers to "relationships of authority, governing status, and recognition".[31] Securitisation can be used in a blended method of discourse analysis when considering there is a process of securing something and determining what is a threat and why. This process is explained through Buzan's statement, "the securitizing act attempts to convince [the audience] to accept exceptional procedures because of the specific security nature of some issues".[32]

Due to this process of convincing an audience, the securitisation approach has great potential in being integrated as part of a propaganda analysis on contemporary terrorist organisations. Jarvis and Legrand further elucidate that "a relevant audience must recognise such an act in order that a particular issue be successfully transferred to the realm of security politics".[33] To further stress how securitisation is an act or process between a speaker that carries authority and an intended audience, "it *does* matter how others judge the reasonableness of a

30. Ole Wæver, "Securitizing Sectors? Reply to Eriksson," *Cooperation and Conflict* 34, no. 3 (1999): 334.

31. Mathias Albert and Barry Buzan, "Securitization, sectors and functional differentiation," *Special issue on The Politics of Securitization* 42, no. 4-5 (2011): 418.

32. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and J De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

33. Lee Jarvis and Tim Legrand, "'I am somewhat puzzled': Questions, audiences and securitization in the proscription of terrorist organizations," *Security Dialogue* 48, no. 2 (2017): 150.

securitization, because this influences how other actors in the system will respond to a security claim".[34]

However, before approaching any recruitment material, it is crucial to examine how the Islamic State has historically been conceptualised within religious terrorism, and how this has further affected the conceptualisation of the foreign fighter and the presumption of motivations that encourage support for religious terrorist organisations. The next section will first present an overview of the development of religious terrorism and the foreign fighter. It will then assess some prominent theories that led to the development of the religious foreign fighter before demonstrating how certain theoretical and methodological lens to recruitment material created a pre-determined bias for propaganda analysis.

1.2 Developing "religious terrorism"

The Islamic State has characteristics of being a terrorist non-state actor and a pseudo-state.[35] From its emergence as the Al-Qaeda in Iraq insurgent group in 2003 to the more recent, global threat of "Islamic State" in 2014-2017, analysis of this terrorist entity exemplifies a pattern. This pattern applies unquestioned concepts from prior scholarship on terrorist organisations post-1970s which focus on the distinct religious characterisations of the groups and has three elements which thereby shape the lens of investigation (the conceptualisation), determine the parameters for the method of analysing and even influence the findings.

34. Buzan, et al. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*: 31.

35. A pseudo-state has features of a functioning government and administrative system like a state, but it is unrecognised by other states as a legitimate political entity. Audrey Kurth Cronin, "ISIS is not a Terrorist Group: Why Counterterrorism Won't Stop the Latest Jihadist Threat," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 2 (March/April 2015): 87-98.

First, literature on the Islamic State treats the terrorist entity as a "religious" organisation above all other identifiers.[36] Second, the literature displays an initial classification of the Islamic State's supporters as being religiously-led. Specifically, the Islamic terrorist group supporters are classified as being motivated by an overarching "religious" ideology that creates a collective identity of defending the global religious community, and this argument is seen in influential works that have framed Islamic State analysis.[37] Third, the pattern encourages methods for propaganda analysis which place the "ideology" of the Islamic State as a starting construct for determining themes that affect recruitment. Namely, the ideology components are defined as a *victimhood narrative*, the Manichean worldview of *Muslims versus Crusaders*, and *religious obligation*.[38] In other words, the literature on the recruitment narratives presume certain themes are inherent to this terrorist organisation that is classified as a religious actor, rather than working with more grounded approaches that do not apply the religious characteristics of its classification as a lens.

36. As stated by Gerges, "The group's ideological lineage of Salafi-jihadism forms part of the ideological impetus; the other part of its ideological nature is a hyper-Sunni identity driven by an intrinsic and even genocidal anti-Shia ideology", in Fawaz Gerges, *ISIS: A History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2017), 24. Additionally, Hoffman describes the Islamic State as a "transnational network of religious extremists" which do not "conform to our traditional stereotypes of the secular terrorist" groups. Refer to Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 135-136. See also Peter R. Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016) and Philip Seib, *As Terrorism Evolves: Media, Religion and Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

37. David C. Rapoport, ed., *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, Vol. 4 (London, Routledge, 2006); Hegghammer, "The Rise of the Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad"; David Malet, *Foreign fighters: transnational identity in civil conflicts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

38. Refer to the themes set up in Haroro Ingram, "An Analysis of Inspire and Dabiq: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 40, no. 5 (2017): 357-375; Charlie Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate: Understanding the Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy," Quilliam Foundation (2015). Available at https://www.quilliaminternational.com/shop/e-publications/the-virtual-caliphate-understanding-islamic-states-propaganda-strategy/; Logan Macnair and Richard Frank, "To my Brothers in the West…A Thematic Analysis of Videos Produced by the Islamic State's al-Hayat Media Center," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 33, no. 3 (2017): 234-253; Alyssa Chassman, "Islamic State, Identity and the Global Jihadist Movement: How is the Islamic State successful at recruiting 'ordinary people'?" *Journal for Deradicalization* 9, (2016): 205-259.

Additionally, the Islamic State is frequently studied via comparison to other terrorist entities that are deemed as having a similar ideology, linked together by the classification of *jihadism* as a religious ideology.[39] While the findings from this current paradigm yield rich analysis on this terrorist entity, an oversight is being developed in the literature. This oversight restricts our understanding of the Islamic State and consists of viewing it as first and foremost being a religious organisation with narratives of religious justification. This problematic starting point colours the academic treatment that is applied to recruitment materials and correspondingly, influences the findings. Therefore, this literature review questions the very foundations upon which the analysis of the Islamic State has been built.

The continuation of this chapter is divided into three sections. It forms a three-part movement, beginning with synthesising concepts that have shaped (religious) terrorism studies to understanding the emergence the Islamic State in the literature, and finally, to developing how the Islamic State is analysed for its influence in encouraging migration to a conflict-zone. First, it provides an overview of the prominent theories which have determined the classifications of terrorist organisations. This focus details how terrorism organisations have been defined by Rapoport as developing within Waves in a socio-historical manner.[40] It also evaluates the development of the "Pan-Islamism narrative" theory, a concept created by Hegghammer as an explanation for foreign fighters joining the Al-Qaeda organisation and other Islamic terrorist or insurgent groups.[41] Overall, this section establishes how the Fourth Wave theory, also known as the Religious Wave theory, and Pan-Islamism narrative theory

39. See comparative studies from Ingram, "An Analysis of Inspire and Dabiq: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War" and Stuart Macdonald, "Terrorist Narratives & Communication Devices: Findings from a Study of Online Terrorist Magazines," in *Expanding Research on Countering Violent Extremism*, ed. Sara Zieger (Abu Dhabi: Hedayah, 2016): 127-141.

40. Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*.

41. Hegghammer, "The Rise of the Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad."

have set an academic standard which further shapes analysis on the foreign fighter recruitment in groups that are determined as being religiously-orientated.

The second section situates the emergence of the Islamic State within the environment of terrorism studies. It evaluates how the development of *what* the Islamic State represents has been determined by the Religious Wave lens. It critically examines the development of Fifth Wave terrorism or New Tribalism, an additional categorisation by Kaplan to define contemporary religious terrorist organisations.[42] It illuminates how further efforts at categorising the Islamic State halt at reflexively exploring if the categorisation itself unintentionally instils generalisations. More specifically, this section examines the literature on the Religious Wave, Pan-Islamism and New Tribalism in regard to Islamic State analysis. Finally, this section exposes how an adherence to exploring the Islamic State's religious characteristics in its recruitment narratives binds further exploration of themes that lie outside of its ideology.

This leads to the final section. This section expands the critique that is presented in the previous sections. It also addresses the lacuna in the literature. It develops the argument of how the findings from Islamic State recruitment and propaganda analysis are shaped by the root concepts that determine terrorist organisation categories. It advances this assessment through illuminating the tautology in current literature that developed from an unquestioned application of concepts. It evidences how there is a need for a new paradigm that reconceptualises contemporary extremism engagement based on the effects of a terrorist entity's media engagement, socio-political circumstances and the salience of the recruitment actors and propaganda. Additionally, this section highlights certain contemporary features of

42. Jeffrey Kaplan, "The Fifth Wave: The New Tribalism?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, 4 (2007): 545-570.

the Islamic State foreign fighter membership that are not explored in depth in much of the secondary literature—therefore demonstrating the need for a new paradigm on the actor. Overall, this literature review sets up the terrain for a thorough investigation on the Islamic State as a religious and political actor, the utilisation of foreign fighters in recruitment materials and the narrative themes that emerge in these materials.

1.2.1 Theorising religious terrorism

The knowledge of terrorism being a public threat seems ever frequent and pervasive in many aspects of society. From the heightening of transportation security in reaction to 9/11 and the overnight erection of barriers in response to the 7/17 London attack to the ongoing efforts at building a multi-level "prevention" that attempts to stop an individual from adopting extremist ideologies, *knowing* that terrorism has the ability to disrupt seemingly stable societies is the norm. The spread of Islamic terrorism is even analogously explained through the behaviour of an infectious disease—secretly passing from person to person, halted by inoculation.[43] Two theories heavily influence the understanding of religious terrorism: Rapoport's Fourth Wave and Hegghammer's Pan-Islamism.[44]

1.2.2 Waves of Terrorism

Rapoport developed the Fourth Wave theory as an explanation of the shared commonalities between terrorist groups in historical contexts.[45] Noticing that academics have been concerned with the specific characteristics of organisations, he steps back from a micro view

43. Dipak K. Gupta, "Waves of international terrorism: an explanation of the process by which ideas flood the world," in *Terrorism, identity and legitimacy: The Four Waves theory and political violence*, ed. Jean E. Rosenfeld, 33-44 (New York: Routledge).

44. David C. Rapoport, "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the history of terrorism," *Current History* 100, no. 650 (2001): 419-424; Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11"; Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*; Hegghammer, "The Rise of the Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and Globalization of Jihad."

45. Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*.

and assesses the terrain of terrorism's growth as being in a metaphorical *wave* with a rise, a crest and a fall. The Wave is determined by a generational lifespan of terrorism on a global scale. The First Wave (1870-1910s) is defined as Anarchist, and terrorist organisations in this wave shared the tactics of assassination and bank robberies. The Second Wave (1920s-1960s) is defined as Nationalist, with tactics changing to guerrilla acts on a state's military and police force. The New Left is designated as the Third Wave (1960s-1990s). This wave is also known as the Marxist Wave and terrorist operatives utilised tactics of kidnappings, assassination and hijackings. The final Wave that Rapoport conceptualised is the Fourth Wave, which started in the 1970s. This wave has a pattern of suicide bombings and is expected to run well into the 2020s.[46] The theory of Waves is applied in terrorism and security studies as being the best explanation for describing and predicting terror acts and organisations on a global scale.[47]

A steadfast loyalty has developed for this theory, backed by empirical analysis in academia. This adherence has led to scrutinising the Islamic State through a lens of naturally belonging in the Fourth Wave. However, I argue that the discipline's dedication to the Wave theory has led to a concentration of assumptions that were never challenged. Uncritical paths of research may lead to a consensus of "pet theories", showing how "it is only too easy to obtain what appears to be overwhelming evidence in favour of a theory which, if approached critically, would have been refuted".[48] This critique does not dismiss the validity of the Fourth Wave findings or claim that they are erroneous. Rather, it reminds researchers to contextualise complex entities such as the Islamic State—which had an unprecedented success in recruiting foreign fighters—through a consideration of it being a contemporary, viable political project

46. Ibid.

47. Jean E. Rosenfeld, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy: The Four Waves theory and political violence* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

48. Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge, 1960), 334.

apart from its strong religious identification. This realisation forces us to push past the dependency on frameworks and comparative examples that academics often rely on in order to quickly analyse a situation or entity that is extremely topical, and when advice on countering terrorism engagement is of the utmost importance. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate how the conception of the Fourth Wave developed in order to evaluate if it influences the analytical lens that is applied to contemporary transnational Islamic extremist groups.

A wave is a "cycle of activity in a given time period".[49] A wave has international characteristics, from shaping the objectives of organisations to determining their recruitment tactics. According to Rapoport, understanding the terrain in which terrorist organisations grow requires attention to the "predominant energy" that forms the organisations' characteristics. At the same time, it is important to track how several countries experience terrorist activities of a similar nature. The "energy" of the wave is pulsed by an "overarching transcendent purpose".[50] Each wave must have a definable event distinguishing a prediction of a pattern going forward. This pattern provides a classification that denotes what is common in the terrorism landscape. Rapoport identifies two events in the "Islamic World" which acted as a condition for a new wave: the Islamic revolution that occurred in Iran in 1979 and the Taliban's defeat of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan ten years later.[51]

The success of the Islamic revolution invigorated the Muslim Shiite demographic in Lebanon and inspired the Sri Lanka terrorist organisation "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam" to utilise martyrdom as a terrorist tactic.[52] Terrorist groups with Muslim Sunni membership also rose

49. Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, 4.

50. Rosenfeld, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy: The Four Waves theory and political violence*, 2.

51. Rapoport, "The fourth wave: September 11 in the history of terrorism."

52. Ibid.

in influence during this time, revolting against their own state of Islamic governance and society. The 1979 Grand Mosque siege, for instance, was led by an extremist insurgent group that sought to overthrow the ruling Saud family in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on a religious, auspicious date of 1400 in the Islamic calendar and for a religious objective. The extremist organisations operating through these religiously-led events are seen as existing in a "continuity". Kaplan elucidates this progression as discerning a "part of a historical chain" in which the field of terrorism studies turned towards and applied this continuity to understanding terrorist entities.[53] The act of highlighting religious objectives set the stage for binding the features of organisations into similar characteristics, being led by religious objectives yet performing terror acts that do respond to disparate political situations.

While Rapoport admits that religious characteristics have always permeated terrorist groups prior to the Fourth Wave, the characteristics are highlighted as profoundly shaping the identities and goals on a wider scale. Groups are categorised in this wave by sharing the same feature of using religion to provide the "justifications and organizing principles for the New World".[54] Two prominent features distinguish the difference between the prior waves of Anarchist (First), Nationalist (Second), New Left (Third) and the trending, Fourth Wave: the latest wave has organisations that display a willingness to cause mass casualties and the construction of an identity orientated to a certain interpretation of a religion.[55] These features are not bound to Islamic extremist groups. The Japanese apocalyptic doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyo committed a sarin gas attack in Tokyo in 1995. It recruited 2,000 people for a

53. Jeffrey Kaplan, "David Rapoport and the study of religiously motivated terrorism," in *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy: The Four Waves theory and political violence*, ed. Jean E. Rosenfeld (New York: Routledge, 2011), 74.

54. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11," para. 41.

55. Leonard Weinberg and William Lee Eubank, "Backlash: reactions against terrorism studies," in *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy: The Four Waves theory and political violence*, ed. Jean E. Rosenfeld (New York: Routledge, 2011), 103-112.

belief system of a new doctrine that merged Buddhism, Hinduism, Nostradamus and Christianity. While not committing violence on the same scale or with the same methods of Aum Shinrikyo, the structurally-fragmented Christian Identity movement in the United States increased its targeted shootings, hate crimes and abortion clinic bombings in the 1990s. Espousing a narrative of conspiratorial anti-Semitism and racism, this movement is considered an influential source for the "lone wolf" convicted terrorist Timothy McVeigh, otherwise known as the Oklahoma City bomber. The proliferation and influence of groups that orientate their objectives towards establishing Islamic governance, however, determined that Islam is the most significant religion in the Fourth Wave.[56]

Besides having the tactic of suicide terrorism, the predominant feature that is seen as being shared in Islamic extremist groups is the application of *jihad*. While it is strongly associated with violent acts, the literal meaning is "to struggle" or "to exert oneself" in an introspective manner.[57] In other words, the *jihad* is not only about outward aggressions like *jihad as-sayf* ("jihad of the sword") in the rationale of defending a religious community (or religion itself), it also is theologically sourced as being about a personal reflection on one's behaviour to others and the strength of one's faith. Sheikh Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of Hezbollah in Lebanon, saw terrorism on a basis of *jihad* being legitimately applicable only as a last resort against Israeli occupation. He attempts to explicate the rationale of a holy struggle in the employment of defending oneself from violent actions with, "Jihad in Islam is a defensive movement against those who impose violence".[58] However, influential figures in Middle Eastern and Afghanistan insurgent movements more firmly shaped the concept of *jihad* into a focus on performing outward acts of violence on a

56. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11."

57. Alex P. Schmid, *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* (London: Routledge, 2013).

58. Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah quoted in Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 93.

path that projects hatred to enemies on a global scale. According to Al-Qaeda operatives Abdullah Azzam and Osama bin Laden, *jihad* has the ability to expand past state borders and past local grievances, turning it into an act with future-orientation as much as a defence.

Abdullah Azzam is the "father of the modern global jihad" and the "spiritual father" of Al-Qaeda.[59] With his influence and Osama bin Laden's quest to incorporate Arab fighters into both military and political leadership in the conflict arena of Afghanistan in the late 1980s to 1990s, the concept of *jihad* became designated as:

> "a call to arms, a mandatory obligation for each individual Muslim to take the sword to fight on all fronts; to overthrow their own governments, intervene in countries where Muslims are engaged in civil war and take up arms against the superpower America and its Western allies".[60]

This new scope surveyed all areas as being applicable territory for a place of conflict. *Jihad* was (and still is) conceptualised as being expansive. It is a two-pronged approach of exploiting or utilising perceptions of present grievances from Western intervention alongside establishing a political order that replaces one's own government and challenges the hegemonic presences of America and the West. Not confined as being just a time of critical and personal reflection as well as an act of defence, *jihad* became its own process of living: *jihadism*. This is a violent interpretation of Salafist Islam. Jihadism initially approaches Islam as being under threat in which the religion itself must be defended from unbelievers. It strives towards an "ultimate goal" of percolating a "universal expansion of Islam".[61] It works with

59. Bruce Riedel, "The 9/11 Attacks' Spiritual Father," Brookings Institution, 2011, accessed 10 August 2018. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-911-attacks-spiritual-father/.

60. Schmid, *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, 652.

61. Ibid.

the process of Islamism, a "politico-religious ideology which calls for the establishment of governmental rule based on the Islamic faith".[62] *Jihad*, therefore, takes in account one's perception of the legitimacy or illegitimacy in both local and international authority (such as state power and international alliances). The current concept even includes an evaluation of personal associations.

As Staffell and Awan observe, "jihadist ideologues" encourage concepts such as "*al-wala w'al-bara* –association with believers and disavowal of disbelievers".[63] Thus, the conflict arena for contemporary *jihadi* ideologues in Islamic extremist groups in this Religious Wave of terrorism encompass several, overlapping aspects of *near:* local insurrection for defence from Western intervention and purging one's associations of disbelievers and the *far*: attacking one's own government for association with Western intervention in Muslim lands and rising to the occasion of defending a population beyond one's own borders. Jihad is now conceptualised as being "global"—a "violent struggle against the enemies of Islam".[64]

As a tactic of non-state actors which operate in an irregular warfare environment, terrorism is context-specific. Certain socio-political conditions develop and provide a basis for employing terror acts as a "rational" choice. However, this realisation of terrorism's context specificity does not necessarily diminish academia's efforts at generalising terrorist organisations in order to establish patterns. Sageman elucidates a process for understanding terror networks. The attempt to find a "common social factor" runs into the problem of specificity. However, the various individuals in Islamic extremist groups, known as the "global Salafi mujahidin",

62. Sam Mullins, *"Home-Grown" Jihad: Understanding Islamist Terrorism in the US and UK* (London: Imperial College Press, 2016), 293.

63. Simon Staffell and Akil N. Awan, *Jihadism Transformed: Al-Qaeda and Islamic State's Global Battle of Ideas* (London: Hurst & Company, 2016), 9.

64. Mullins, *"Home-Grown" Jihad: Understanding Islamist Terrorism in the US and UK*, 293.

have a common element—jihad.[65] The condition of *being* a Muslim confines the choices of allegiance no matter the country of residence, as Sageman claims "When shown pictures of Muslims suffering because of wars, they [Muslim individuals] began to feel a common bond of victimhood based on Islam".[66] Attempts to explicate the complexities of understanding the political conditions are not attempted, therefore a religious identity triumphs as the explanation of empathy. Even feelings of empathy based on unjust suffering due to civilians being collateral damages of war is overshadowed by the belief that *being* Muslim automatically directs the frame of reference for behaviour: "a *common bond* of victimhood based on Islam".[67] This lack of perception in generalising religious identity as an overarching reason for joining extremist groups in this religious Fourth Wave of terrorism continues when the literature on religious terrorism establishes narrative themes for these organisations. Specifically, the concept of "Pan-Islamism" is highly influential and relates the characteristics of the Fourth Wave.

1.2.3 The theory of Pan-Islamism

"Pan-Islamism" is a construction that arose in the 1980s and continues to be a salient framework for analysing Islamic extremist groups today.[68] Hegghammer developed the theory of Pan-Islamism from studying the propaganda in Islamic terrorist organisations that are categorised as exemplifying the characteristics of the Fourth Wave. Pan-Islamism is a "victim narrative that highlighted cases of Muslim suffering around the word, paying particular attention to [Huntington's 1993] fault line conflicts".[69] The narrative features of

65. Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia, P.A.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 321.

66. Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 335.

67. Ibid., emphasis mine.

68. Hegghammer, "The Rise of the Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad."

69. Ibid., 83; Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22-49.

Pan-Islamism include the themes of self-victimisation, alarmism, conspiracies and xenophobia. The influx of foreign fighters in the "Muslim world" post-1980s indicated to Hegghammer that these unpaid fighters had no "apparent link to the conflict other than religious affinity with the Muslim side".[70] Pan-Islamism as a theme was established via a method of analysing 1980's magazines from Abdullah Azzam during the Afghan conflict, 1990's statements and videos from Islamist leaders in the Bosnian conflict and 2003-4 text and online videos from Abu Umar Al-Sayf which were produced to encourage migration for the insurgency cause in Iraq.

This method produces three elements in the narratives from Islamic terrorist organisations: a diagnosis, a prognosis and a rationale.[71] The diagnosis in the materials is: "the Muslim nation, known as the *ummah* is confronted with an existential external threat".[72] The prognosis is "Muslims fight back". The rationale is "all able Muslim men worldwide join the fighting because Islamic law requires it".[73] In order to find the commonality of *what* binds different groups together, generalisations occur and certain themes are highlighted as being dominant and repetitive. Hegghammer explicitly disregards forms of non-religiously based political awareness—such as objective grievances and an awareness of local and international political consequences—as motivations for the foreign fighters joining Islamic terrorist organisations. This inattention is due to two stated reasons.

Firstly, the strength of grievances in the foreign fighters' home countries is not regarded as a motivating factor. According to Hegghammer, this disregard is because "recruits came from

70. Hegghammer, "The Rise of the Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," 53.
71. Ibid., 72.
72. Ibid., 73.
73. Ibid.

many different countries and joined at many different times".[74] Therefore, there is no perception of being politically aware at a local level. There is no acknowledgment of situating the foreign fighter in a position with his/her state, and instead the foreign fighter is positioned through religious identity and heeding the call to migrate and fight out of pure religious obligation and belonging. Secondly, objective grievances are dismissed in these Fourth Wave religious groups. Specifically, material or political consequences are not determined as a deciding factor for involvement. Hegghammer states that, "most foreign fighters were not remotely touched by events in the countries to which they travelled",[75] therefore it is assumed that the grievances are not objective. However, Hegghammer's dismissal of these factors reveals a dangerous assumption.

Through his process of developing the Pan-Islamism theory within a view of dismissing a realistic understanding of any local or international grievances or treating political conditions as objective, Hegghammer reverts to the strength of ideology. After dismissing the above factors for Muslim foreign fighter involvement, he claims that "one arguable has to assume the existence of subjective grievances linked to an expanded notion of nationhood".[76] Hegghammer's assumption of grievances being *subjective* is key to how Pan-Islamism is understood as a binding factor amongst a Muslim populace, a demographic that is assumed to contain an ever-present possibility of feeling "nationhood"—linking individuals around the world through religious affinity alone. Hegghammer's assumption links back to Sageman's claim of Muslims being affected by a "common bond of victimhood based on Islam".[77] However, Hegghammer proposes a solution to the influence of Pan-Islamism. The solution is

74. Ibid., 63.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*.

to devote "spreading awareness of factual errors" in the Islamic terrorist organisation's victimhood narrative, while also "promoting state nationalisms and other forms of local identifications".[78] This solution assumes that victimhood narratives do not have a realistic basis and therefore do not reflect realistic socio-political situations, yet they have the ability to pull in individuals to the ideological cause of terrorist organisations by way of *being* Muslim. On the one hand, his solution constructs the idea that the Muslim identity overpowers state identity. On the other hand, it also constructs the idea of state nationalisms being inherently stronger in those citizens who do not self-identify as Muslim.

The Fourth Wave of terrorism theory has formulated a series of characteristics that are, for the most part, applied to emerging groups that are initially seen as sharing the same religiously-orientated identity. Similarly, the Pan-Islamism theory has defined the themes that are prevalent in these groups, cumulated as defending the religious community and the religion itself through the practice of *jihad*. While the Islamic State narratives do have themes of *victimhood*, a promotion of religious identification, and encourage *jihad*, they do not exist alone. They are not prominent or even leading themes in all materials and are always responsive to realistic political situations. Narratives of socio-political situations that can be deemed objective do scaffold religious obligations.

The next section details how the Islamic State is approached in terrorism studies. It evaluates if the unchallenged characteristics in the Fourth Wave and Pan-Islamism theories have been solidified in understanding this terrorist organisation, as well as how they have been concentrated in propaganda analysis. It also critically examines the further categorisation of Fifth Wave terrorism, known as New Tribalism. This categorisation has become a lens of

78. Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," 90.

analysis which is determined in certain studies as forming the objectives of the Islamic State and explaining the influence it holds in global jihad.

1.3 The emergence of the Islamic State in the Fourth Wave

The Islamic State is an organisation that represents something familiar, yet also new. Once affiliated with the Al-Qaeda insurgency movement in Iraq, it evolved to become a formidable actor that proudly claims violent methods of occupying territory and controlling its populace. Its level of public brutality and having an ability to adapt institutions for its own goals contributed to its path of surpassing its predecessor Al-Qaeda as the global Islamic extremist threat. Fermenting within the power vacuum that, in a part, was a consequence of the US-led occupation of Iraq, it rapidly spilled into its neighbour Syria. It forged alliances and exploited grievances of the Sunni population in both states by claiming to represent the needs of the civilians, with the ultimate agenda of erasing internationally-recognised borders and "cleansing" territory through ethnic and religious genocide. Its quest was to "break" the defined lines from Western intervention of Sykes-Picot, the consequence of the British-French negotiation in dividing up the Ottoman Empire in May 1916. Its announcement of this was "global" in late June 2014, and the message contained warnings of expanding over more borders. The message was carefully staged in several languages, with a promotion of English to capture the attention of international news outlets.[79] It ascribed to a Caliphate political system, which Hoffman explains as ensuring "that a rigidly fundamentalist interpretation of Islam becomes the only accepted religion and sharia, the legal system based on Islamic religious precepts drawn from the Qur'an and Hadith, the only law".[80] The Islamic State,

79. For example, see Mark Tran and Matthew Weaver, "Isis announces Islamic caliphate in area straddling Iraq and Syria," *The Guardian*, 30 June 2014, Middle East, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/30/isis-announces-islamic-caliphate-iraq-syria.

80. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 99.

therefore, contained elements of Al-Qaeda, yet eclipsed Al-Qaeda by the violent threat it represented and influence it commanded.

The Islamic State is "certainly the worst kind of representative of a non-state actor one can imagine".[81] At the peak of its power in late 2015 to early 2016, this entity controlled over fifty affiliations across twenty countries.[82] Additionally, its astute perception of noticing how institutions ensure a certain viability to realistically portraying a Caliphate project led to the swift establishment of thirty-three official provinces.[83] Being a religiously-orientated pseudo-state, it is seen through a lens of encouraging terrorism by way of promoting a certain religiously-based meaning for the end goal of building a viable political project that can support a multi-generational population. At the same time, it represents an "emergent category of non-state actor that is desperately opposed to status quo" of the state-centric international system.[84] Despite the strong political features of this organisation, understanding the motivations of *why* one would migrate to join this state is still bound within a "lingering assumption" of countering the prominent jihadi narratives with complex religious arguments.[85] This focus on defeating the group with debates on religious norms and religious authenticity and/or legitimacy has left a void in addressing political motives that may be outside the purview of the Islamic State's religious ideology. The approach which attempts to de-legitimise the Islamic State through an assumption on the perceived strength of religious rationale is, I argue, precisely due to how Hegghammer's Pan-Islamism narrative themes and Rapaport's wave theory has lingered throughout the emergence of this

81. Philip Leech, "Globalisation and the fight against ISIS," *Middle East Monitor*, 30 September 2014, para. 22, https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20140930-globalisation-and-the-fight-against-isis/.

82. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 100.

83. Ibid.

84. Leech, "Globalisation and the fight against ISIS," para. 21.

85. Mullins, *"Home-Grown" Jihad: Understanding Islamist Terrorism in the US and UK*, 275.

organisation. Furthermore, Kaplan notices that the distinction of a religiously-ideological wave has "shaped, defined and indeed invented the study of religious terrorism".[86]

The relatively rapid rise of the Islamic State as an influential actor of transnational terrorism recruitment has led to studies developing *what* this terrorist organisation represents and *how* its narratives have the ability to convince tens of thousands of citizens and residents to leave their current countries and migrate towards the volatile area occupied by a terrorist organisation with many enemies. The conceptual lens that is utilised prior to analysing the Islamic State defines the factors that are used to create the parameters for researching recruitment narratives. Determinations are made that decide *how* to categorise the Islamic State, *what* values and beliefs structure its assumed worldview and *what* to focus on when applying a methodological treatment to its propaganda. The conceptual lens that is applied to the Islamic State is due to how the Wave theory became "increasingly paradigmatic" post-9/11.[87]

The Fourth Wave trends in terrorism studies. Klein notices how its strong focus on ideology leads the way to understanding the motives of Islamic extremist groups.[88] Since the Fourth Wave was established as the leading and mostly undisputed prediction in classifying emerging religious terrorist organisations, it is no surprise that the Islamic State is placed unquestioningly within this wave. The deterministic lens is evidenced by Solomon, who states that, "the emergence of the Islamic State (IS) could be said to be part of this fourth or Religious Wave of terrorism".[89] Additionally, the Islamic State is often compared with its

86. Kaplan, "David Rapoport and the study of religiously motivated terrorism," 77.

87. Rosenfeld, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy*: *The Four Waves theory and political violence*, 74.

88. Graig R. Klein, "Ideology Isn't Everything: Transnational Terrorism, Recruitment Incentives and Attack Casualties," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28 (2016): 868-887.

89. Hussein Solomon, "The Particular Role of Religion in Islamic State," *South African Journal of International Affairs* 23, no. 4 (2016): 437.

predecessor of "global jihad", Al Qaeda, and thus has fallen into a prism which highlights "extreme Pan-Islamism" as leading narratives, rather than socio-revolutionary purposes or a national-separatist rationale.[90]

The deterministic character of approaching the Islamic State as being within the Fourth Wave reveals all too well the quest in academia to apply frameworks that are mono-disciplinary and uncritical. "Political science," explains Tololyan, "seems all too eager for a model, or at best a few models, that will enable generalizations suitable to its empirical discourse and instrumental aims".[91] The enthusiasm in finding a model to use for generalising complexities is particularly exemplified in the treatment of the Islamic State in the terrorism and security studies discipline. The Islamic State is viewed as a religiously-orientated terrorist organisation. It is determined as having an identity of defending the religious community, which confines the parameters for an analysis of narrative themes. Analysis that sets itself to broadly define themes in order to generalise elements or characteristics for quantification purposes is at risk of mirroring the expected ideological framework that pre-defined the Islamic State as existing in the Fourth Wave. This danger is represented in findings such as this: "the strongest and most successful [IS] narrative is one which relates to utopianism, and imagery of brotherhood, serenity and comradery".[92]

However, it is important to question these findings. Analysing the same propaganda material that most terrorism researchers have used, Friis illuminates that the Islamic State discourse

90. Thomas Hegghammer, "Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Religion and Politics in the Study of Militant Islam" in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

91. Khachig Tololyan, "Cultural narrative and the motivation of the terrorist," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 10, no. 4 (1987): 217.

92. Shahira Fahmy in Seib, *As Terrorism Evolves: Media, Religion and Governance*, 122.

has elements relating to an attempt at projecting a realistic state project,[93] rather than simply denoting ephemeral elements of utopia and belonging. Such themes are "strength, persistence and order,"[94] which indicate an astute consideration of a political project. Yet, Friis is in the minority. Within the literature on Islamic State propaganda, photographs of men installing waterworks and children playing in a newly-built playground are primarily seen as projecting utopianism, rather than projecting the semblance of a state that can support multi-generational growth in a territory that is, at the same time, caught in a condition of constant conflict and under attack from the many "enemies" of the Islamic State. Similarly, a display of multinational foreign fighters in a recruitment video is primarily categorised as showing a theme of brotherhood, rather than acknowledged as mirroring cosmopolitan multinationalism and a challenge to the sovereignty and authority of states.

The deterministic aim of Islamic State recruitment materials representing themes related to belonging and religious ideology is repeated and instilled as an unchallenged truth throughout the literature on the terrorist organisation's propaganda. This is evidenced in the terrorism discipline's leading Islamic State propaganda analysis of Winter, Macnair and Frank and Ingram.[95] The methods in these studies consist of viewing recruitment narratives through a lens of the pre-determined, ideological-orientation of a religious group. The emphasis on the narratives reflecting a constructed Other and the foreign fighters being motivated by spirituality and a longing for belonging has unsurprisingly led researchers to confidently establishing themes of *defence of the ummah*, *victimhood*, *utopia*, *brotherhood* and

93. Simone Molin Friis, "'Behead, burn, crucify, crush': Theorizing the Islamic State's public displays of violence," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 2 (2018): 260.

94. Ibid., 259.

95. Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate: Understanding Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy"; Charlie Winter, "Apocalypse, later: a longitudinal study of the Islamic State's brand," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 35, no.1 (2018): 103-121; MacNair and Frank, "'To my Brothers in the West…' A Thematic Analysis of Videos Produced by the Islamic State's al-Hayat Media Center"; Ingram, "An Analysis of Inspire and Dabiq: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War."

spirituality.[96] While the predominant lens to view the Islamic State has been through a privileging of its religious ideology set within the religious wave, a critique has risen in the form of the Fifth Wave theory—further noting salient features of religious terrorist organisations.

1.3.1 The Fifth Wave

The theory of terrorism's "Fifth Wave" is also used as a lens for analysing the influence of the Islamic State. In particular, the application of the Fifth Wave examines how certain tactics mark some religious groups as distinctively apart from other terrorist organisations and illuminates a predictive behaviour path for future groups. While there is only one of the Four Waves theory,[97] with one distinctive Fourth Wave, there are surprisingly several different Fifth Wave theories. All do rely on and accept Rapoport's Four Waves as a starting point, but they differ in the concept of what makes a Fifth Wave terror organisation or what determines a Fifth Wave pattern for predictive purposes of emerging groups. This section will first overview Post, McGinnis and Moody's Fifth Wave theory.[98] Then, it will introduce Honig and Yahel's Fifth Wave concept.[99] It will provide the main arguments for both Fifth Wave theories before critiquing the oversights and assumptions that led their research. It will also briefly synthesis what is common with both of those Fifth Wave theories. After that, the

96. Ibid.

97. Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*.

98. Jerrold Post, Cody McGinnis and Kristen Moody, "The Changing Face of Terrorism in the 21st Century: The Communications Revolution and the Virtual Community of Hatred," *Behavioural Sciences and the Law* 32 (2014): 306-334.

99. Or Honig and Ido Yahel, "A Fifth Wave of Terrorism? The Emergence of Terrorist Semi-States," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2017). DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2017.1330201.

section will continue with a focus on the Fifth Wave theory from Kaplan,[100] an influential argument that has been used to specifically analyse the characteristics of the Islamic State.

Post, et al. follow Rapoport's Four Waves theory in order to explain the collective identity that forms in the psychology of a terrorist.[101] The authors view the influence of online communication as a distinctive marker for identifying a pattern of terrorists who are radicalised via the internet. These individuals belong to a "virtual community of hatred". Through a method of making biographical case studies on certain individuals—including Faisal Shahzad, the "Times Square Bomber" and Nidal Hasan, the Army soldier who committed the Fort Hood shooting—the authors conclude that the strength of the internet causes radicalisation above other factors. However, there is a tendency in their investigation to highlight a perceived defence of the Muslim nation, and this shapes their analysis. This is particularly seen with the findings on Nidal Hasan, ultimately shaping the authors' recommendation on how to classify Islamic religious terrorism organisations and their narratives.

Hasan has a documented history of filing a conscientious objector request to restrict his deployment to Afghanistan. He was outspoken about the Western intervention in Afghanistan and the occupation in Iraq. The authors state that he was aware of his imminent deployment, and his conscientious objector request was denied. However, it is the online exposure to the radical cleric Anwar Al-Awlaki that, according to the authors, "moved Hasan along his radical path to violent jihad."[102] Correspondingly, he is reduced in the author's typology as a "lone-wolf hero worshipper"—constructing him as being "defined by the identity of a larger

100. Jeffrey Kaplan, "The Fifth Wave: The New Tribalism?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 4 (2007): 545-570.

101. Post, McGinnis and Moody, "The Changing Face of Terrorism in the 21st Century: The Communications Revolution and the Virtual Community of Hatred."

102. Ibid., 320.

group" and thereby limiting the conscientious objector refusal factor as playing a possible higher role of consideration in affecting his motives.[103] The Fifth Wave theory focuses on the technological means to the end of the terror act, as the authors state that "the three prominent terrorists were all influenced by the revolution in communication".[104] With this argument, there is an ignorance on the nuanced reasoning that fully contextualises Hasan's declared uncomfortable—yet dismissed—position in the military. His identity of *being* Muslim overshadows other factors. Similarly, the authors' case study of Faisal Shahzad, who criticised the hypocrisy of detention in Guantanamo and the drone program in Afghanistan, is reduced to "positioning themselves as victims of injustice; rather than taking responsibility for their actions".[105]

If the focus is on online communication being like a virus, seeking to infect with "radical propaganda", then it is no wonder that researchers look for comfortable answers that generalise a problem that fits well with the established findings of religious terrorism and Pan-Islamism narratives. Again, as with Sageman's theory of Muslims having a common bond,[106] Hegghammer's Pan Islamism theory of grievances being subjective and self-victimisation,[107] Post, McGinnis and Moody's Fifth Wave strengthens the view that propaganda antagonises Muslim identity against a state/national identity. This is seen in their solution to radicalisation, which advises on "facilitating incorporation" into the Western country.[108] This type of solution falls short in addressing the complex political issues in the

103. Post, McGinnis and Moody, "The Changing Face of Terrorism in the 21st Century: The Communications Revolution and the Virtual Community of Hatred," 323.

104. Ibid., 320.

105. Ibid., 326.

106. Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*.

107. Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and Globalization of Jihad."

108. Post, McGinnis and Moody, "The Changing Face of Terrorism in the 21st Century: The Communications Revolution and the Virtual Community of Hatred," 320.

narratives that, in some parts, have validity to a minority audience aware of the consequences of Western intervention in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Therefore, the Fifth Wave theory from these authors is entrenched in the same oversight that led the Fourth Wave categorisation and Pan-Islamism narrative themes.

The second Fifth Wave theory is developed by Honig and Yahel.[109] While the prior Fifth Wave authors focused on individual radicalisation to show a new Wave, Honig and Yahel highlight the terrorism organisations' increased focus on territory acquisition. Developing the Fifth Wave as a pattern of Terrorist Semi-States, the authors view religion as a primary categorisation. Specifically, they state that since religion is seen as a percolator for the Fourth Wave phenomenon, then the Fifth Wave is naturally "religious in its essence".[110] Detailing further, the authors assert that the "Terrorist Semi-States emergence is merely a transformation within the Fourth—the religious wave".[111] However, the authors do introduce the idea of the Islamic State orchestrated attacks in the West as being more about the "real-politik goal of expanding their power", rather than being the goal of expanding a certain version of Islam.[112] Overall, Honig and Yahel's Fifth Wave is focused on the territorial aspects of emerging terrorist organisations, with, understandably, limited development on questioning identity construction of the Islamic State or the recruitment of foreign fighters. The final Fifth Wave theory that is introduced in this section deals more specifically with being a framework upon which to analyse the Islamic State's foreign fighter recruitment narratives.

109. Honig and Yahel, "A Fifth Wave of Terrorism? The Emergence of Terrorist Semi-States."

110. Ibid., 8.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., 14.

Working within an acknowledgement of Rapoport's Fourth Wave theory, Kaplan develops the Fifth Wave.[113] This wave highlights the tactics of terrorist movements that indicate an inward turn of developing goals, rather than an outward, international orientation of developing the organisation. In studying the versatile characteristics of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia (1975-1979) and the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda (1988-current), Kaplan notices how these groups are initially placed within the international wave of religious terrorism, yet they display certain characteristics that fall outside of the pattern that is determined with other groups in the Religious Wave. The characteristics make Fifth Wave groups distinctive as an emergence of a new type of terrorist organisation, which therefore indicates a new pattern.

These characteristics are percolated by the rise of charismatic leaders and the "rapid creation of a utopian society".[114] Most crucially, the argument for the Fifth Wave relies on determining how the terror group's focus and tactic on utilising women and children for certain reasons allow it to remain relevant and live past the generational life span that is thought to be tied to the Religious Wave. In Fifth Wave terrorism groups, the leaders are "building" the society to last past the expected 40 year lifespan of each of Rapoport's Waves. Out of the seventeen characteristics that are determined to define Fifth Wave groups, the hallmark of behaviour for an organisation is the strategic usage of sexual violence and a manifestation of tribal mysticism. The Fifth Wave is thereby aptly named New Tribalism.

The Islamic State contains elements of New Tribalism. These are the characteristics of having a "charismatic leader" of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi. This individual founded the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (the name of the group before the June 2014 branding of

113. Kaplan, "The Fifth Wave: The New Tribalism?"

114. Ibid., 546.

"Islamic State"). The group frequently dedicates its messages to Al-Zarqawi's leadership with his quotes entextualised in its recruitment material. The charismatic leader element is further supported by foreign fighters' and supporters' oft-professed loyalty to the Islamic State's leader, the Caliph Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. Extracts from his well-known speech on the steps of the Grand Mosque in Mosul in late June 2014 also open up prominent recruitment videos. The forced marriages, sexual servitude and rigorous efforts toward the indoctrination of religious and military training for (abducted) children fulfil the Fifth Wave characteristics of utilising women and children for the organisation's stability. These situations match Kaplan's criteria of rape being used as a "practical means to produce the children needed to build the new society".[115] The Fifth Wave terrorism theory has been applied to a comparative analysis on the Islamic State and Boko Haram.[116] It has also framed the lens and method of determining the "ideological orientation" of the Islamic State's communicative strategies.[117] However, the Islamic State's Fifth Wave tribalism elements which include the "internal genocide" strategy of *takfir* (an act that claims a Muslim as aberrant from the religion and thereby warrants severe, often deathly punishment) is critiqued as being generalising and erroneously shapes an irrational lens to Islamic extremism.

The practice of generalising Islamic-orientated terrorist groups as being irrational and aberrant from the norm works towards constructing the power of their enemy states. While the label of *takfiri* is used to refer to the Islamic State in academic literature that applies the frameworks of Fifth Wave terrorism, it is not self-referential. Hegghammer observes that, "Islamist actors, however radical, virtually never call themselves *takfiri*, but get labelled as

115. Ibid.

116. Anthony Celso, "The Islamic State and Boko Haram: Fifth Wave Jihadist Terror Groups," *Foreign Policy Research Institute* 59, no. 2 (2015): 249-268.

117. Lillie Chouliaraki and Angelos Kissas, "The communication of horrorism: a typology of ISIS online death videos," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 35, no.1 (2018): 24-39.

such by their enemies".[118] The construction works towards making sure the public identifies the Islamist actor as "crazy fanatics" and further obscures the content of their ideology,[119] content which carries the possibility of seeming rational and justifiable to the state's populace. Therefore, the current findings of *what* the Islamic State is and what the narrative themes are in its recruitment materials should be examined with the consideration of how the concepts of Fourth Wave terrorism, Pan-Islamism narratives, and even Fifth Wave/New Tribalism characteristics influence the lens for understanding this pseudo-state, terror actor. In other words, how have the identifications of the Islamic State been shaped by pre-existing theories, potentially obscuring salient features of its foreign fighter recruitment? The next section will engage with the literature that has been presented throughout this chapter, critiquing where gaps or generalisations exist.

1.4 A critique of the literature and exposing the tautology

While seemingly chaotic, the violence of terrorist organisations is "patterned", yet "innovative".[120] The confidence that the terrorism and security discipline has in explaining a behaviour that "elicits chaos" which can be "reduced to an orderly paradigm, model or theory" depends on the choice of methods to "understand the beast".[121] This process is exemplified by the application of the Wave theories and Pan-Islamism narratives to emerging terrorist organisations. This final section utilises the concepts introduced in the prior sections. It first evidences how literature on the findings from Islamic State analysis exhibit an initial dependency on the Wave and Pan-Islamism theories. Then, it illuminates the tautology is

118. Hegghammer, "Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Religion and Politics in the Study of Militant Islam," 4.

119. Ibid.

120. Rosenfeld, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy*: *The Four Waves theory and political violence*, 9.

121. Ibid.

developed with this dependency, especially in light of the Islamic State recruitment materials aimed at attracting foreign fighters to its cause. After that, it considers how the effects of the terrorist actor's global media engagement determine that the recruitment materials must be approached with innovative methods of contextualising the salience of the recruitment actor and materials aimed at a "global" audience of citizens. Finally, it highlights features of the Islamic State foreign fighter membership that are overlooked in literature and explains how this lacuna is addressed in the upcoming chapters.

1.4.1 The pre-determined lens from Fourth Wave and Pan-Islamism

Within the traditional terrorism studies literature, the Fourth Wave and Pan-Islamism theories have created a pre-defined space for the Islamic State. An automatic application of privileging religious ideology as an identifier met the Islamic State when it emerged as a formidable violent, non-state terrorism actor. (It should be noted that is not the case with studies in the Critical Terrorism field.) Specifically, there was a ready expectation of the narrative themes containing a rationale of defending the *ummah* and commanding an obligation of all Muslims to migrate and fight. It is convenient to follow this simplicity, as the Islamic State is seen as an extension or offshoot of preceding *jihadist* organisations that are classified as religious terrorism actors. Seen as an example of religious, ideologically-orientated terrorism with religious-ideological foreign fighters, the Islamic State narratives are viewed uncritically, simply reflecting the religious ideology of the group. This is exemplified by Solomon, where the "role of religion, broadly understood, is absolutely essential if we are to fully understand the Islamic State and its appeal to Muslims globally".[122] Using an initial lens of Rapoport's religious, Fourth Wave as defining the Islamic State's objectives and worldview, Ahmed further illustrates a dependency on using

122. Solomon, "The Particular Role of Religion in Islamic State," 438.

religious ideology as a starting point in understanding the Islamic State and thereby framing analysis, claiming that "ideology is powerful because it is capable of shaping a unique outlook of reality".[123]

The "global" nature of the Islamic State and the fear of it appealing to "Muslims globally" has privileged Islamic identity above other identifications. The communicative advancements that allowed for greater connectivity between terrorist cells has amplified the global concern of the identity being present and strengthened. Known as the "virtualization of jihad," recruitment materials from terrorist organisations classified as Islamic extremist are more accessible now than in the early 2000s. They are seen to be targeted to individuals who then share the identification of "being a global Islamic warrior".[124] Through an analysis of Islamic State recruitment narratives, Ingram further establishes the tenants of the group: Islam is the perfect guide for life, Jihad is obligatory, protect the *ummah* and the polarising view of the world divided between Muslims and the Other.[125] The Islamic State worldview, determined by its religious ideology, is taken at face-value in propaganda analysis. This veils the complex layers of discourse in themes. Narratives from Islamic terror groups are restricted to predominantly reflecting the *jihadist*, and there by religious, themes. After all, Hegghammer establishes that *jihadi* narratives have discourse which conveys the ideology and worldview of the religious terrorism actor, justifying actions for the group.[126] This assumption is automatically applied to Islamic State propaganda analysis. For instance, the Islamic State-produced recruitment video entitled, "There is No Life Without Jihad", contains complex narratives that encourage citizens rebelling against specific political features of her/his state.

123. Ranya Ahmed, "Terrorist Group Types and Tactic Choice," *Journal of Applied Security Research* 13, no. 1 (2018): 90.

124. Mullins, *"Home-Grown" Jihad. Understanding Islamist Terrorism in the US and UK*, 17.

125. Ingram, "An Analysis of Inspire and Dabiq: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War."

126. Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and Globalization of Jihad."

Yet, as it is produced by a *jihadi* terror organisation, the themes are reduced to "trumpeting the virtues of jihad and the ineluctable religious imperative of joining the caravan of martyrs".[127]

As an organisation in the Fourth Wave with Pan-Islamic narratives, the Islamic State is defined as being "theologically-driven".[128] Therefore, the attention to religious elements or behaviours seen as religiously unique to Islamic extremist groups frames the process of analysation and scaffolds the reason for choosing what to look for and display in the findings. The Islamic State inspires "millenarian violence" in such a way that the "ideological affinity for the group's worldview must also be a driving—if not preeminent force".[129] However, Hegghammer reminds us that even *takfîri* violence—seen as being irrational and self-destructive—must be contextualised in its specific situation of use, and generalisations hinging on religiously-derived violence obscure distinct political reasons for the violent acts.[130] The aspect of perceived grievances against the *ummah* is also a defining feature of describing the Islamic State's ideology and further shapes propaganda analysis.

Filtered through the Fourth Wave, the ideology of the Islamic State is identified as a "driving force" for its strategies.[131] In particular, the assumption is that so-called "perceived" grievances shape the organisation's worldview that in turn manifest in the recruitment narratives. This leads to researchers determining that themes of belonging operate as a recruitment device. This theme of belonging is a valid concern. However, there is a risk in taking identity construction and narratives of belonging as being the primary influence for

127. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 233.

128. Celso, "The Islamic State and Boko Haram: Fifth Wave Jihadist Terror Groups," 250.

129. Ibid., 251.

130. Hegghammer, "Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Religion and Politics in the Study of Militant Islam."

131. Ahmed, "Terrorist Group Types and Tactic Choice," 89.

joining the Islamic State due to two reasons: 1) It treats the narratives as if they are existing in a vacuum which primarily reflects the ideology that is pre-determined as a pattern in a Fourth Wave terrorism group and 2) apart from admitting that local grievances of discrimination in one's Western state may influence joining the Islamic State, there is a lack of *not addressing* the aspects of "truth" that do exist in the narratives. These findings are only revealed through a contextual analysis of the group, the influence of its recruitment actors, and above all, an avoidance in employing the trending propaganda treatment of generalising themes for quantification purposes.

Specifically, grievances in the literature are labelled as "perceived" with much doubt to their existence in the real world. Little engagement is made in propaganda scholarship to develop how these grievances have aspects that reflect realistic conditions and aptly affect one's view of her/his state's legitimacy and authority. This is exemplified in Al-Qaeda and Islamic State propaganda analysis from Ingram.[132] He establishes that the core narrative of their foreign fighter recruitment messaging is "ideologically based" and thereby determined as: "we are the epitome of the Sunni Muslim identity, non-Muslims are responsible for the *ummah* crises, so support us because we are your champions and protectors and together we will confront *our* enemies to restore Islam to its rightful status".[133] This research behaviour has led the author to confidently claim that the elixir to the Islamic State's recruitment narratives is—in traditional counter-insurgency fashion—to "exploit" the weakness of the enemy through simple counter-narratives.

In this application of seeing the Islamic State as constructing a *false* worldview and being an aberration to reality, the solution (according to Ingram) is to "expose" the "hypocrisy of

132. Ingram, "An Analysis of Inspire and Dabiq: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War."
133. Ibid., 370.

AQAP [Al-Qaeda of the Arab Peninsula] and IS", alongside providing the message of "Western governments are protecting civilians, providing humanitarian aid, and to a domestic audience, providing equal opportunities to all citizens regardless of faith or race".[134] The naivety of winning hearts and minds in this solution is outstanding, however it is understandable when taking in account how issues of hypocrisy in certain recent actions from Western governments are hardly acknowledged and rarely engaged with, and apart from Al-Dayel and Anfinson's analysis of propaganda,[135] the apparent awareness of the Islamic State *knowing* and engaging with realistic conditions of hypocrisy is rarely exposed as a tactic of strength in recruitment narratives.

1.4.2 The tautology in Islamic State analysis

Defined as an Islamic-orientated terrorist organisation, the Islamic State is seen as having the ability to activate a sympathetic identity in citizens within Western states. This belief has been developed in academic scholarship that adopted the Fourth Wave theory, seen in Sageman.[136] Acknowledging the Waves, yet wanting to develop "ripples" within the Waves to further distinguish trajectories of religious groups, Sageman's "bunch of guys" theory for Al-Qaeda support rests on the "activation of a collective Muslim identity", which consists of "being Muslim rather than identifying with their country of origin".[137] The specific use of "activate" to indicate belonging constructs the Muslim identity as always being inherently

134. Ibid., 371.

135. Al-Dayel and Anfinson, "'In the Words of the Enemy': The Islamic State's reflexive projection of statehood." The problem that manifests from avoiding certain issues in counter-terrorism efforts is further observed by Eadie, who states that "soft power is of potential value if it can attract moderates to the aims and ideals of the US. However, the US undermines its moderate appeal when it shores up despotic regimes, ignores the human rights and rule of law that it professes to champion and sanctions the torture and killing of civilians". Refer to Pauline Eadie, "Counter-terrorism, Smart Power and the United States," *Global Policy* 7, no. 3 (2016): 330.

136. Marc Sageman, "Ripples in the waves: fantasies and fashions," in *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy: The Four Waves theory and political violence*, ed. Jean E. Rosenfeld (New York: Routledge, 2011), 87-93.

137. Ibid., 88.

collective, yet simmering under a dichotomy of Muslim identity versus the identity with the country of origin or current residence. One identity is seen as overpowering another. The solution is therefore promoting a top-down approach at strengthening the non-Muslim identity in order for the Muslim identity to not be "activated" into supporting extremism. This is exemplified in the literature on creating policies to counter the influence of Islamic extremism. Neumann, for instance, claims that "the more traditional identities ["being British" or "being German"] get hollowed out, the more likely people are to look for alternative providers of meaning and certainty, including fundamentalist religion and particularism narratives".[138] Particularism narratives parallel the findings for Pan-Islamism, and Neumann's view assumes a healthy power dynamic in the citizen-state relationship, where all that is needed is a traditional identity.

However, a more recent regurgitation of this belief highlights the danger in continuing it with the emergence of Islamic State foreign fighters and migrants. Yun and Kim cite the religious conditions in Molenbeek, Belgium as a warning on the threat in Islamic extremism being activated within a Muslim community.[139] The authors parallel Sint-Jans-Molenbeek in Belgium to the security situation in South Korea—a country across the world with an entirely different socio-political environment and an incredibly small percentage of Muslim immigrants. The linkage is based on the belief that the Islamic State's ideology finds sympathy in Muslim communities worldwide, perhaps due to a common bond. While Muslim immigrants in South Korea make up approximately 0.2% of the population and there are no current active Islamic extremist threats (some classified "worrisome incidents" exist, according to the authors), the Muslim community is framed as being averse to assimilating to

138. Peter R. Neumann, *Old and New Terrorism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 161.

139. Minwoo Yun and Eunyoung Kim, "An Ethnographic Study on the Indonesian Immigrant Community and its Islamic Radicalization in South Korea," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2017.1374672.

the Korean identity. Moreover, the authors assert that the religion itself is "organised for the purposes of recruitment, logistical supply, operation preparation, hiding places, and political and religious support" for extremism to "breed".[140] Therefore, according to the authors, it is only natural to predict that the "potential terrorist safely prepares an attack and hides from authority within the unmonitored and secluded Muslim community".[141] This constructed tension of the Muslim identity as having the ability to become activated into extremism by an external terrorist organisation that promotes "global jihad"—which in turn overpowers a national identity—is also seen in Ingram.[142] In particular, he suggests calibrating counter messages to the Islamic State in the tune of highlighting "national, gender and other identities", and these identities can be used to thwart the "bi-polar constructs" of the terrorist organisation.[143]

Within this environment of classifying Muslim citizens as being in tension with national identities, a fulfilment of Rapoport's Fourth Wave has materialised and created a circularity. Flint and Radil noticed that a singular element of the Fourth Wave has been solidified in academic scholarship, and they predicted this element as a trend that shapes analysis of future groups.[144] "Terrorism," they claim, is "mainly understood as solely motivated by religion" with the Islamic extremist groups being privileged in analysis.[145] If tautology is $x = x$, a rhetorical style that is made true by its logical framing, then the pre-set categorisation of the Islamic State as existing in the Religious, Fourth Wave with the continuation of Pan-

140. Ibid., 5.

141. Ibid., 18.

142. Ingram, "An Analysis of Inspire and Dabiq: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War."

143. Ibid., 371.

144. Colin Flint and Steven M. Radil, "Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: Situating al-Qaeda and the Global War on Terror within Geopolitical Trends and Structures," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 50, no. 2 (2009): 150-171.

145. Ibid., 164.

Islamism narratives has created a tautology. This tautology confines Islamic State foreign fighters within a lens of being religiously motivated and influenced by religious rationales in recruitment narratives, materials which are viewed through the religious ideology identification and goals of the terrorist group.

This tautology is revealed in a claim by Hoffman who states, "for the religious terrorist, violence is first and foremost a sacramental act or divine duty executed in direct response to some theological demand or imperative".[146] The terrorist actor in the organisation classified as religious is treated as operating in an ideological vacuum. This circular reasoning is further supported in Solomon, where the religious terrorists' rationale of defending the *ummah* and asserting bi-polar worldviews is seen as being precisely *how* Islamic organisations have the power to elicit transnational affiliation for a "global jihad".[147] Solomon's belief is somehow "proved" by surveys that show one in five Muslims worldwide are "expressing terrorist sympathies".[148] No further explanation is given, $x = x$. Moreover, if the grievances in narratives provided by Islamic extremist groups are defined as being "subjective" and linked to "nationhood" or "ideology",[149] then the subjectivity is linked to the religious identity that orientates it, in this case, being Muslim. It is no wonder, then, that the leading propaganda analysis themes align with what is expected in an emerging terrorist group within the religious, Fourth Wave.

146. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 90.

147. Solomon, "The Particular Role of Religion in Islamic State."

148. Ibid., 443.

149. See Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and Globalization of Jihad."

1.3.3 A new contextual and methodological approach

There is a great need to break out of the terrorism discipline's somewhat circular treatment in understanding the Islamic State's influence with recruiting. I argue that gaps in the literature illuminate the need to consider the following aspects of Islamic State foreign fighters and recruitment materials: the influence of the media and how the materials display an awareness of this influence, and the discursive capital of the foreign fighter and woman supporter as having the ability to relate to being a citizen in a power structure with her/his state (in other words, not only being categorised as one in the *ummah*). It is imperative to reconceptualise the categorisation and influence of the Islamic State based on factors that lie outside of its current classification of having a bi-polar worldview with primary narratives of defending the *ummah*. This realisation must consider how the Islamic State is highly aware of challenging the states through media engagement.

There is a need to understand how the Islamic State's identity is constructed by analysing its contemporary features. These features address realistic conditions in the citizen-state relationship and wider political arena, thereby not confining the analytical lens to the Islamic State's overarching narrative of longing for the establishment of a historic, "glorious" period of Islamic domination through an application of (assumed) simplistic narratives of Othering and belonging. Therefore, this new approach must thoroughly assess these factors of media engagement and realistic citizen-state conditions. Methods of contextual analysis must also be used in order to see how the narratives aim to reflect some "truth" or respond to realistic events that affect its global audience of citizens. This new approach, therefore, will address two important gaps in current research on the Islamic State: 1) understand how it utilises the foreign fighter in the media environment to provoke political agency in its global audience and 2) reveal narrative themes alternative to the ones established in the literature.

First, the Islamic State's use of the media is well-researched.[150] This organisation harnesses the power of the internet in a far greater capacity than prior generations of violent Islamic extremist terror groups. Kiras explains the three intentions of the Islamic State's online communicative strategy: spreading its messages, gaining advice and generating resources and recruits.[151] Each act of stylised terrorism is not necessarily done to create fear in public spaces, but also to assert that the state's sovereignty is challenged. The message of this challenge ripples out to the global audience via the uptake in media outlets, and the Islamic State is highly aware of how the media environment picks up certain stories.[152] Terrorism is an emotional beast, and it meets the standards for "newsworthiness" in the commercial media environment. Capturing this emotion meets the public's "fear of, and fascination with," violent or brutal acts.[153] While the Islamic State is identified with brutal acts of violence, these situations are a "red herring".[154] The greater message is the existence of a powerful terrorist entity which is politically challenging states and evokes a political awareness in the citizens it wishes to recruit. This message is within a wealth of the materials it produces—

150. To see how the Islamic State is analysed as strategising its communication by way of "media jihad", refer to Chris Galloway, "'Media Jihad: What PR can learn in Islamic State's public relations masterclass," *Public Relations Review* 42, no. 4 (2016): 582-590. To examine the Islamic State within the context of the media of terrorism, refer to Ryan E. Artrip and Francois Debrix, "The Viral Mediation of Terror: ISIS, image, implosion," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 35, no. 1 (2018): 74-88. Vidino and Hughes examine the Islamic State's exploitation of social media platforms in Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, "ISIS in America: From Retweets to Raqqa," Program on Extremism, George Washington University (2015), available at https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/downloads/ISIS%20in%20America%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf. Additionally, the following study provides a mixed-methods analysis of the visual communication of the Islamic State: Aaron Zelin, "Picture It Or It Didn't Happen: A Snapshot of the Islamic State's Official Media Output," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 4 (2015): 85-97.

151. James D. Kiras, "Terrorism and Globalization," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 402-418.

152. Al-Dayel and Anfinson, "'In the Words of the Enemy': The Islamic State's reflexive projection of statehood."

153. Alex P. Schmid, "Terrorism and the Media," in *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, vol. 4, ed. David C. Rapoport (London: Routledge, 2006): 96.

154. Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate: Understanding Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy," 6.

whether it is a beheading, a pledge from a homegrown terrorist, a bombing or a warning of future terror acts.

Provocation is the intention of terrorism. The monopoly of violence which is assumed to be reserved for states is challenged. However, as the messages of the Islamic State are often consumed globally, the provocation is also global. It is projected at a global audience of citizens existing within designated states. Therefore, there are multiple challenges to the monopolies of violence towards multiple states, encouraging the citizens to enact agency in de-legitimising their own state's monopoly of violence and migrate to the Caliphate. My claim of noticing how foreign fighter recruitment has the components of agency and a realisation of power relations in the citizen-state relationship directly challenges Hegghammer's assumptions that were made in the Pan-Islamism theory of ideology strength.[155] Specifically, the lens I propose challenges his claim that foreign fighters do not have "objective grievances" or an awareness of political situations, as his claims assume that foreign fighters are not affected by the *far* conflict and have no awareness of political repercussions for their actions. It is important to note how his claims were based on the fact that foreign fighters come from multiple countries and thereby assumed to be linked by something that is not reflected in realistic socio-political conditions. While Pan-Islamism was developed with prior *jihadi* groups, the belief in the strength of the Islamic ideology activating a global Muslim support through religious rationale alone continues into research on the Islamic State. However, the materials produced by the Islamic State show a great awareness of political agency and complex narratives that go beyond simply responding to a call of *jihad*.

155. Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and Globalization of Jihad."

The recruitment materials from the Islamic State's Al-Hayat Media Centre, (an institution that operated mostly from 2014-2017 and produced multilingual videos, posters, music and text) display the awareness of performing an act of provocation. They also have an awareness of evoking the citizen to challenge the state's monopoly of violence and legitimacy over its body politic. Chapters Two and Three will exhibit how these politically-orientated themes are apparent in narratives which have been pre-determined in secondary literature as *utopia*, *belonging* and *defence of the ummah*. However, in order to reveal these layered political themes beyond the religious ones, it is important to avoid the discipline's current treatment of privileging quantitative methods to arrive at simplistic narrative descriptions. Even when the literature on Islamic State propaganda analysis asserts to be qualitative,[156] it either relies on pre-existing literature of narrative themes which were developed from quantitative studies or simply treats the materials as existing in an ideological vacuum—never looking further to see how messages of an Islamic extremist group have the possibility to reflect realistic conditions and respond to realistic grievances. This leads to the second component of the new approach.

Second, the literature on the Islamic State and its recruitment actors lack contextualisation that would otherwise allow for an exploration of alternative themes. This exploration has the possibility to challenge the trending ones in religious terrorism. However, the restriction of exploration is due to the outcome of Rapoport's Four Waves theory, because the reason for developing the Waves was to generalise particulars, to generalise heterogeneity into homogeneity. Waves are the metaphor for coping with the heterogeneous nature in terrorism groups and the heterogeneous tactics they employ.[157] Generalisations are employed for the

156. Macnair and Frank, "'To my Brothers in the West…' A Thematic Analysis of Videos Produced by the Islamic State's al-Hayat Media Center."

157. Karen Rasler and William R. Thompson, "Looking for waves of terrorism," in *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy: The Four Waves theory and political violence*, ed. Jean E. Rosenfeld (New York: Routledge, 2011): 13-30.

task of compiling the risks of terrorism.[158] However, as researchers we should not shy away from the heterogeneous character of political violence, because the generalisations have the ability to create unintended risks that overlook salient and critical features of the terrorist organisation in question.

The trust in Wave characteristics being predictable to emerging terrorist organisations de-contextualises non-religious elements of these groups and risks creating assumptions in counter-narrative efforts. For example, classifying narratives as "religious" and constructing a false, "bi-polar view" leads to creating counter-narratives which intend to provide a normative view of a "true" religious behaviour. This risky line of research is encouraged by Gupta's argument which stresses the need for a simple narrative to combat the (assumed) simple narrative themes coming from religious terrorist groups.[159] With this process of a "one-to-one" application in countering terrorists' narratives, we are never peering further than the religious rationale that we already pre-determined as orientating the goals for a terrorist organisation in the Fourth Wave. Thereby, we risk overlooking how narratives are responsive of some elements of truth in the socio-political environment that the intended audience experiences rather than responding to the assumed, simplistic "transcendent" overarching themes.

Contextualisation is paramount in understanding the specific dynamics and influence of the terror actor on an international scale. Kaplan elucidates that Rapoport's Wave theories do not sufficiently account for the "context in which terrorist movements emerge".[160] In order to comprehend this trajectory of particular groups, their circumstances of birth and evolution in

158. Gupta, "Waves of international terrorism: an explanation of the process by which ideas flood the world," 39.

159. Ibid.

160. Kaplan, "The Fifth Wave: The New Tribalism?," 547.

response to ongoing socio-political conditions must be illuminated through the process of analysing them. Therefore, it is important to consider the influence of media engagement and the influence of the "celebrity" jihadist recruiters that speak to the citizens in countries.

Current literature also has a gap in understanding the self-awareness of the foreign fighter recruitment actors. I develop this factor as *reflexivity*, which addresses how the individual is aware of their presence in the media, and how this presence as an Islamic State supporter challenges and changes socio-political conditions outside of the group's territory (such as altering how the state reacts to its citizens migrating to the Islamic State territory and/or actively recruiting people). This consideration also relates to how the recruitment materials highlight in their narratives an awareness of being salient in the competitive media environment. A contextual analysis on individual recruitment pieces addresses this gap.

The following chapters develop this new approach that reconceptualises the Islamic State in a three-part process, from offering a new lens of classifying the religious foreign fighter to evidencing salient themes in the recruitment materials that challenge and enrich the categories determined in secondary literature. Mullins observes that the "lingering assumption" of the solution for defeating jihadist narratives being based on religious arguments leaves the political arguments unaddressed.[161] This thesis intends to address the political arguments through a new paradigm of approaching the foreign fighter. It exposes how a reliance on the religious, Fourth Wave and strength of Pan-Islamism narratives blinds researchers to realistic, non-religious factors that affect the recruitment of citizens to revolt against their state and migrate.

161. Mullins, *"Home-Grown" Jihad: Understanding Islamist Terrorism in the US and UK.*

Chapter Two

Articulating Political Agency: Foreign Fighters and the Dynamics of Authority

2.1 Abstract

Contemporary terrorist organisations are distinctly characterised by an ability to attract transnational members, some of which are defined as "foreign fighters". These members are often further defined in terrorism studies literature by ties of (religious) ideology. A focus on ideology, however, overlooks the specific political agency of the individual. This theoretically-orientated article articulates how the individual's perception of agency and authority influences voluntary foreign fighter migration to the Islamic State. First, it provides an overview of the conceptualisation of the foreign fighter in academic literature. Then, it discusses how ideology is positioned as a highly influential factor, particularly in certain state-led counter-extremism efforts. Finally, it presents an alternative view of the foreign fighter, considering the influence of authority and the tension in citizen and state relations. Overall, this article contributes theoretically to the ongoing-refinement of foreign fighter conceptualisations as well as methodologically to analysing extremist materials which feature transnational support.

Keywords: foreign fighter, ideology, authority, Islamic State, extremism

2.2 Introduction

"*Oh my brothers in the West, I know how you feel, I used to live there*" [1]

Migration is a political act. It may be involuntary, such as escaping state-led violence, environmental or economic conditions. It may also be voluntary, such as deciding to travel to take part in a conflict as a "foreign fighter" for the defence of a population or organisation. In both cases, an awareness of one's political situation emerges prior to the act of migration. This awareness involves a perception of having agency in recognising and legitimising authority over the individual. Proclaimed by a British foreign fighter who migrated to the Islamic State, the above quote in a promotional video exemplifies the self-recognition of this agency in the act of migrating. "I know how you feel, I used to live there" illustrates that migration to the Islamic State is a calculated, political act.

The characteristics of the Islamic State are complex. It is, for the most part, identified as a "jihadist" and "Islamic extremist" terror organisation. Yet, its narratives entail more than attempts at religious reasoning and violence. Acutely aware of its modern, global audience, Islamic State propaganda has themes which respond to external political situations. Such examples include the "modern day slavery of employment",[2] anti-colonialism,[3] family honour,[4] and even a "tit for tat" rationale for imprisoning and murdering journalists.[5] Its well-known English language magazine, entitled *Dabiq*, has significantly less notations to the Qur'an than competing jihadist publications.[6] It is, however, both objectively framed and

1. "There is No Life Without Jihad," online video, 2014, Al Hayat Media Center.
2. "A Call to Hijrah," *Dabiq issue 3*. Shawwal 1435/ September 2014, Al Hayat Media Center, 29.
3. "End of Sykes-Picot," online video, 2014, Al Hayat Media Center.
4. "There is No Life Without Jihad."
5. "A Call to Hijrah," 39.
6. Macdonald, "Terrorist Narratives & Communication Devices: Findings from a Study of Online Terrorist Magazines," 133.

self-identifies as a transnational force that is able to summon support through a main pole of religious affinity. The transnational features of its membership—defined by the swift migration of over 40,000 foreign fighters from over one hundred different countries[7]—have elevated the notion that being "ideologically-motivated" is a crucial factor in migrating and supporting the state-building efforts of the Islamic State.

Migration as a form of activism specifically for state-building, however, is not new. Similarly, a state's exploitation of its "foreign" fighters in the endeavour to prove that a certain legitimacy exists by way of diaspora support is not a unique tactic of the Islamic State. The 1948 Palestine War, for example, prompted Israel to appeal for transnational support of fellow religious members around the world. Flocking from almost 60 countries, 4,800 individuals served as "foreign volunteers", known as *Mahal* or *Machal*. These volunteers were tasked in a variety of combat and non-combat roles to "fight shoulder to shoulder" with local forces for the "victory and survival of the State of Israel".[8] The Islamic State's recruitment narratives do echo the *Mahal*, enticing support through rationales of defending a particular religious group and even having a "sense of adventure".[9] Thus, the "foreignness" of the fighter is able to be exploited. It is crafted as a necessity for state survival by fortifying an assumption that the state has legitimacy through the support of a constructed religious community. Perhaps nowhere is this more recognisable than in the

7. Niall McCarthy, "Scores of ISIS Foreign Fighters Have Returned Home [Infographic]," *Forbes*, 25 October 2017, https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2017/10/25/scores-of-isis-foreign-fighters-have-returned-home-infographic/#158506c05e8e. See also Richard Barrett, "Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees," The Soufan Group, 2017, http://thesoufancenter.org/research/beyond-caliphate/.

8. Yossi Melman, "Don't forget the foreign fighters who sacrificed for Israel's independence," *The Jerusalem Post*, 30 April 2017, para. 3, http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/From-strength-to-strength-489359.

9. Yaacov Markovitzky, "Machal: Overseas Volunteers in Israel's War of Independence," Hebrew Ministry of Education, Israel Information Centre, 2003, 9, https://www.mahal-idf volunteers.org/about/Machal.pdf.

Islamic State's project which highlights and exploits the "foreign" in its fighters, leading to great concern in the established states from where those fighters hailed from.

The conceptualisation of the Islamic State foreign fighter often constrained within security and terrorism studies as being "ideologically" motivated, as religion is assumed as constructing the rationale and principals for the establishment of a new order.[10] While researchers have been careful to hedge that ideology is not the primary motivating factor,[11] the "foreign fighter" or "radical traveller" is increasingly described as being "motivated by ideology",[12] or "obviously ideologically driven".[13] Ideology, commonly defined as a set of beliefs and values, is seen as being able to travel and expand. It is, according to Gerges, the "super-glue" that binds the Islamic State migrants from around the world.[14] In response, this focus on an external, religiously-derived ideology having the ability to affect a population frames both the conceptualisation of the contemporary foreign fighter as well as shapes how propaganda materials are analysed in academic research.

I argue that a new approach is needed to understand how the contemporary foreign fighter has been confined by a focus on ideology, affecting our lens of analysis. In particular, we must question the current trend of emphasising religious affiliation over distinct political factors manifest in the relations between citizen and state. An approach which considers the political condition of the foreign fighter apart from the religious affiliation opens up a theoretical space refreshingly unrestrained from the rehashing of Islamic authenticity within

10. Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical concepts in political science*; Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11."

11. Peter Neumann, "The Trouble with Radicalization," *International Affairs* 89, no. 4 (2013): 873-93.

12. Mark Sexton, "What's in a Name? Proposing New Typologies for 'Foreign Fighters'," *The RUSI Journal* 162, no. 5 (2017): 4.

13. Hegghammer, "The Rise of the Muslim foreign fighters: Islam and the globalization of Jihad."

14. Gerges, *ISIS: a history*, 23.

extremist narratives. At the same time, it also allows for an articulation of a more nuanced and internal understanding of the power dynamics in citizen and state relations, and how these relations affect the voluntary migration of foreign fighter. This does not create a dichotomy in viewing the discourse. Rather than contrasting political versus religious factors, this article enriches our understanding of the specific political agency of citizen within the homogenising ideology that are used to categorise the contemporary foreign fighter, caught in a "religious wave" of "religious terrorism".

Therefore, the aim of this article is to assess the conceptualisation of the foreign fighter (and its related connotations) in academic literature alongside contemporary theories on motivations in order to open paths towards alternative perspectives on foreign fighter membership. Specifically, I eschew the assumptions which conceptualise the relationship between the citizen and state as hinging on individual security.[15] Instead, I focus on authority and claim that migration towards the Islamic State has shown an emergence of the citizen's recognition in having agency towards accepting or rejecting a state's authority—apart from whether or not the state can provide safety.

This article is divided into four main parts. Firstly, I provide a socio-historical overview of how terrorist organisations have increasingly been identified by their religious goals, thereby shaping the conception of the foreign fighter as religiously and ideologically motivated. In the second section, I introduce how state-led counter terrorism efforts concentrates this belief, shaping the Islamic State's foreign fighter motivations. Thirdly, I theorise an alternative perspective to situating the foreign fighter. I develop a political lens that highlights the role of authority and the relations between the citizen and the state. Specifically, I theorise three

15. Jonathan Herington, "Philosophy: The concepts of security, fear, liberty and the state," in *Security: Dialogue Across Disciplines*, ed. by Philippe Bourbeau, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 22-44.

distinct reasons for viewing Islamic State migration through this lens: 1) migration entails a realisation that authority exists in a power relationship between individual and state 2) an act of agency and shift of authority is manifested in the migration act and 3) migration challenges the assumptions of a state's internal authority and domestic sovereignty over its own citizens, as set out by Weber on the recognition of the state's usage and legitimisation of force.[16] Finally, I detail the implications of positioning the foreign fighter in a political lens of authority recognition and highlight the limitations of certain perspectives. Overall, the contributions of this article impact the conceptualisation of the foreign fighter, challenging current methodological approaches to Islamic State materials.

2.3 Terrorism, religion and the foreign fighter

Over the last four decades, terrorist organisations have been increasingly defined by religious objectives.[17] While organisations with separatists and ethnonationalist goals have declined, religious-orientated terrorist groups have risen.[18] As a result, terrorist acts—which were once associated with anarchist, anti-colonial and new left groups with "radical" political agendas—have become predominately affiliated with religious terrorist organisations, characterised by espousing certain religiously-derived ideological goals.[19] Contemporary terrorism, according to Rapoport, is located within a "religious wave".[20] Objectives are shaped around a religious narrative. This is most recently seen with Islamic-orientated terrorist organisations that utilise (or exploit) the concept of *jihad*, which refers to a struggle

16. I refer to Weber's notion of the state, which is conceptualised as a manifestation from the relations between individuals, recognition of authority and the utilisation of force. Max Weber, Peter Lassman, and Ronald Spiers, *Weber: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

17. Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical concepts in Political Science*.

18. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*.

19. Hegghammer, "The Rise of the Muslim foreign fighters: Islam and the globalization of Jihad."

20. Rapoport, *Terrorism*: *Critical Concepts in Political Science*.

in both nonviolent and violent forms and is delineated by external and internal conflicts of belief.

Being led by *jihad* and being a "jihadist" is often utilised as an overarching label within terrorist recruitment materials as well as outside analysis in news reports. In other words, the *jihadist* label is both used in a self-referential manner as well as an objectifying frame. The act of framing foreign fighters through a "belief in jihad" as a grand ideology does fit neatly with the equally grand and sweeping ideals of eradicating "global" terrorism. As a result, distinct political reasons for supporting extremist organisations are often generalised and simplified. This generalisation is particularly seen in the news media, linking Islam to recent terror acts. This correlation usually begins with a "problematic notion that does not distinguish between 'Jihad' and 'jihadists' from one side, and 'terrorism' and 'violence extremism'" from the other.[21] As Da Silva and Crilley observe, the "understanding of Jihad is loose and unreflective, and it replicates the existing stereotype that Jihad equates to terrorism, instead of being informed by an understanding of what Jihad actually means to most Muslims".[22] Alongside the public's exposure to the homogenisation of "jihadis" is also the framing of the transnational foreign fighter being a unique social phenomenon.

The foreign fighter is referred to as a "phenomenon" within media and academic reports.[23] While these reports often provide rich and useful analysis, this temporal framing of

21. Mohamed Elmenshawy, "Jihadists vs. Extremists…When Language Matters," *Huffington Post*, 21 December, 2015, para. 1, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/mohamed-elmenshawy/jihadists-vs-extremists-w_b_8851224.html.

22. Raquel Da Silva and Rhys Crilley, "Talk about terror in our back gardens: an analysis of online comments about British foreign fighters in Syria," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 10, no.1 (2017):169.

23. As exemplified in the following: 1) United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, "Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon," July 2017. http://www.un.org/en/counterterrorism/assets/img/Report_ Final_20170727.pdf, 2) Bibi Van Ginkel and Eva Entenmann, "The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union," ICCT Research Paper, April 2016, and 3) Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, "ISIS and the Foreign-Fighter Phenomenon," *The Atlantic*. 8 March 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/03/isis-and-the-foreign-fighter-problem/387166/.

"phenomenon" discursively constructs a mystified event and continues the post-9/11 pattern of discursively constructing threats—whether it is intentional or not.[24] The specific political factors of migration is obscured through this mystification. Adding to this construction is a problematic tactic in analysing foreign fighters by characterising them through a binding of religiously-led irrational behaviour. While there is no consensus on definitions,[25] the foreign fighter is currently described through a lens of engagement with organisations identified as terrorist or religious extremist. This has understandably led to the concept of the foreign fighter being imbued with references to violence and terror acts as well as religious identifications. McCabe, for instance, classifies foreign fighters as either "murderously devout" or "devoutly murderous".[26] In this manner, foreign fighters may be discursively constructed as a distinct threat in which denaturalisation procedures (known as "citizenship stripping") would be justified. Pillai and Williams illustrate that the act of revoking a citizen's citizenship "absolves a country from any responsibility for their fate".[27] Therefore, while the threat arising from returned foreign fighters is a great concern, treating the specific supporters of the Islamic State in a denaturalisation manner is controversial.[28]

Generalising the distinct reasons for supporting the Islamic State into a rationale of primarily supporting terrorism and violence is problematic—even counter-productive in the long struggle against extremism. Sexton observes that a careless use of the term foreign fighter or terrorist reinforces "the perception leveraged by Islamists that the West is engaged in 'War

24. Lee Jarvis, *Times of Terror: Discourse, Temporality and the War on Terror* (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 167.

25. Sexton, "What's in a Name? Proposing New Typologies for 'Foreign Fighters."

26. Thomas R. McCabe, "A Strategy for the ISIS Foreign Fighter Threat," *Orbis* 60, no. 1 (2016): 143.

27. Sangeetha Pillai and George Williams, "The Utility of Citizenship Stripping Laws in the UK, Canada, and Australia," *Melbourne University Law Review* 4, no. 2 (2017): 43. Advance copy available at http://law.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/2659178/Pillai-and-Williams-412-Advance.pdf

28. Shiva Jayaraman, "International Terrorism and Statelessness: Revoking the Citizenship of ISIL Foreign Fighters," *Chicago Journal of International Law* 17, no. 1 (2016).

on Islam'".[29] Therefore, in order to understand how we have arrived at framing the foreign fighter in a view of violence and being "ideologically-motivated", it is important to trace the development of the foreign fighter conception. Foreign fighter involvement is not a novel occurrence nor an irrational choice primarily led by condoning violence. The conceptualisation of the foreign fighter has existed prior to the Islamic State's influence, and scholars are steadily adapting the concept to reflect contemporary contexts.

Prior to the Islamic State context, Hegghammer describes foreign fighters in Middle East conflicts as having four aspects: operating within the boundaries of an insurgency, not having citizenship of the conflict area, not operating in an official military capacity and being unpaid.[30] However, the presence of foreign fighters has not been geographically bound to conflicts in the Middle East region. Malet explores the historical aspects of migrating to conflicts on a global scale.[31] From the period of 1818-2005, he details that foreign fighters have represented approximately 25% of members across 331 civil conflicts. From this data, he defines the foreign fighter as a "noncitizen of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflicts".[32] Within this wide span of involvement, several features stand out in which to categorise the individuals by way of their motivation factors—a "typology" of the foreign fighter.[33] This typology is the foundation in which further categorisations have developed and adapted to suit analysis of Islamic State membership.[34]

29. Sexton, "What's in a Name? Proposing New Typologies for 'Foreign Fighters," 3.

30. Hegghammer, "The Rise of the Muslim foreign fighters: Islam and the globalization of Jihad."

31. Malet, *Foreign fighters: transnational identity in civil conflicts*.

32. Ibid, 8.

33. Ibid.

34. Neumann, *Radicalized*. *New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*. See also Randy Borum and Robert Fein. "The psychology of foreign fighters," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40 no. 3 (2017).

According to Malet, foreign fighter membership is divided into four categories.[35] First, the *diasporans* consist of nationalist rebels who join to advance shared national goals. Such examples, according to Malet, include the "diaspora Jews" who travelled to challenge immigration quotas imposed by the British Mandate in Palestine from 1936-1948. Second, the *liberationists* are anti-colonialists and migrate to defend "ideological" goals, yet they do not share common ethnic identities with those they are defending. This is exemplified in the foreign fighters who travelled to take part in the Biafra secessionist conflict from 1967-1970. The final two types of foreign fighters are said to exist in "non-ethnic conflicts" and are increasingly characterising contemporary movements, including the Islamic State. These two types are the *encroachers* and the *true believers*.[36]

The *encroachers* are neighbouring citizens who join groups that have clear political goals to secede from a country in order to control territory. Unlike the *liberationists*, the *encroacher* foreign fighters usually share some commonality in their cultures. The Indonesians who travelled to Malaysia in 1948 to fight the Chinese Communists exemplify this typology, as well as the migrant fighters who took part in the 1835 Texas Revolution.[37] Regarding the Islamic State, the *encroachers* are illustrated through the involvement of the Syrian Sunni tribes that existed alongside the border to Iraq, travelling to take part in a conflict that offered both the promise of a stable income and a chance to eventually destabilize the Syrian Alawite government.[38]

The *true believer* foreign fighter, however, joins "ideological" groups in order to maintain structures and values that are perceived as important to a "shared identity". Examples of *true*

35. Malet, *Foreign fighters: transnational identity in civil conflicts*.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Jamal J. Halaby, "Sunni tribes in Iraq and Syria split over ISIS," *The Arab Weekly*. 9 October 2015.

believers were the foreign fighters who enlisted with the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War, as well as the post-1980s growing list of "Islamist" groups.[39] This list coincides with Neumann's observation that, as of 2014, we had 49 different groups that had "jihadist" goals.[40] According to Hegghammer, "jihadist" ideology is seen as a powerful force, a "new ideological movement" which constructs an *ummah* (religious community/nation) under threat.[41] The foreign fighters of the Islamic State, in particular, are frequently classified as *true believers* due to a certain ideology of jihadism being seen as a binding factor among transnational affiliation.

True believers is a label often applied to the proliferation of the "Western" foreign fighter migrating to the Islamic State controlled territories.[42] According to Malet, the "ideological binding" between the recruits and the local operators in the conflict is made possible by the eruption of communication advancement and how certain identities have been made extremely salient, enough to persuade one to join a terrorist organisation in a transnational allegiance.[43] Amongst Muslim youth in Western countries, "transnational ideological affiliation was a highly salient identity because immigration and modernization had destroyed other communal ties and produced embattled individuals ripe for recruitment".[44] More specifically in Europe, "radical Islam" became a "positive protest identity" even amongst those with little religious education.[45]

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39. Malet, *Foreign fighters: transnational identity in civil conflicts*.

40. Neumann, *Radicalized*. *New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*.

41. Hegghammer, "The Rise of the Muslim foreign fighters: Islam and the globalization of Jihad."

42. Charlie Winter, "How ISIS Survives the Fall of Mosul," *The Atlantic*, 3 July 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/07/mosul-isis-propaganda/532533/. See also Barbara Walter, "The Extremist's Advantage in Civil Wars," *International Security* 42, no 2 (2017).

43. Malet, *Foreign fighters: transnational identity in civil conflicts.*

44. Ibid., 205.

45. Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The search for a new ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 315.

Thus, a solidification has formed within the *true believers* typology and the religious wave of terrorism.[46] Arising from its transnational characteristics, the foreign fighter is seen through a pre-set prism of being "ideologically" motivated to join groups that have "ideological" goals. Or, as Duyvesteyn and Peeters say, the transnational foreign fighter is categorised as an individual "without any ascertainable link to the conflict *except for* religious affinity with the Muslim side".[47] Yet, I caution against this framing. As researchers, we must be careful with simplifying the relationships between foreign fighters through religion alone. The focus on religious affinity with this "phenomenon" overlooks the political factors that are shared in Islamic State members, as well as arguments of a non-religious rationale in Islamic State promotional materials. The placement of the Islamic State in a category of a "religiously-led ideological group" has framed our analysis of what binds its foreign fighters. Furthermore, it is important to notice that contemporary terrorism and traditional terrorism still do share the same attempted goals of working towards a "creation of a 'new and better society'" to replace what is perceived as a corrupt political environment.[48] Directing themselves towards this goal and within an atmosphere of competition, terrorist entities are now vying for a *specific* foreign fighter: youthful, technologically-savvy and "Western". This recruitment aspect is noticeably strong in both the Islamic State and its competitor Jabhat al-Nusra, exemplified by the "dozens" of British foreign fighters who have taken the name of "Al-Britani" [British].[49]

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46. Malet, *Foreign fighters*: *transnational identity in civil conflicts.* See also Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical concepts in Political Science*.

47. Isabella Duyvesteyn and Bram Peeters, "Fickle Foreign Fighters? A Cross-Case Analysis of Seven Muslim Foreign Fighter Mobilisations (1980-2015)," ICCT Research Paper, 4 (emphasis mine), https://icct.nl/update/fickle-foreign-fighters-a-cross-case-analysis-of-seven-muslim-foreign-fighter-mobilisations-1980-2015/.

48. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism.*

49. Kim Sengupta, "Dozens of jihadis fighting in Syria using the name 'al-Britani'," *The Independent*, 27 February 2015. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/dozens-of-jihadis-in-fighting-in-syria-using-the-name-al-britani-10076635.html.

The characteristics of the "Western" Islamic State supporter remain an imperative line of enquiry for research. This, in some part, is due to many features of the Islamic State membership. Roles may overlap between individuals. Additionally, the Islamic State is "not solely a terrorist group, and those who join it are not all terrorists".[50] With this observance, Sexton offers the term "radical travellers" to characterise Islamic State membership.[51] In perhaps one of the more specific attempts to redefine the foreign fighter, Sexton claims that "radicals travellers" are "individuals who are motivated by ideology and a desire to play an active role in securing social, political or economic change to leave their country of residence, citizenship or nationality to travel to an area in which political violence is prevalent and join or align themselves with a party to that violence".[52] Yet it is important to remember that despite its predilection towards brutality and violence, the Islamic State is not necessarily nihilistic; acts are not devoid of meaning nor done for pure violence's sake. Winter defines the Islamic State's violent productions as a "strategy of provocation".[53]

Unfortunately, the Islamic State has been extremely skilful in understanding how carefully staged acts of violence work as media exposure currency for narratives of a political nature. The political nature relates to the projection of sovereignty and competition. An example is the well-circulated 2015 multi-lingual video of "Uncovering the Enemy Within".[54] Depicting a child or "cub of the Caliphate" shooting a prisoner at close range, a stylised display of violence ensures a political message is circulated by international media—far beyond what the Islamic State media centres could have achieved alone in just online dissemination in

50. Sexton, "What's in a Name? Proposing New Typologies for 'Foreign Fighters," 3.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid., 4.

53. Winter, "Apocalypse, later: a longitudinal study of the Islamic State brand," 103.

54. "Islamic State video purports to show child executioner," *The Times of Israel*, 13 January 2015. https://www.timesofisrael.com/islamic-state-video-purports-to-show-child-executioner/.

jihadist forums and social media. As a "state" production, the staging of a foreign child fighter acting in a judicial role projects the idea that citizenship negotiation is possible and that the terrorist organisation is enacting a form of sovereignty within its seized territory. The carefully staged performances and ability to inspire individual actions in several countries work toward a specific political project of being competitive with established nation-states.

The individual acts of terrorism done in the name of the Islamic State ("inspired by" and "self-radicalised")—such as the terror acts by the United States citizen Omar Mateen in 2016 in a Florida nightclub and French citizen Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel in 2016 in Nice—have only been made possible through the Islamic State's keen marketing of narratives. These narratives reflect and respond to the wider structure of polarised, political narratives. After all, one can only claim to act in the name of the Islamic State if one first *knows* about its political salience. Politically, the Islamic State's dual nature is characterised as a "hybrid of a state and an insurrectionary group".[55] However, at the time of writing, it is rapidly becoming de-territorialised as a "state" due to losing 98% of its territory.[56] It has steadily urged for insurrectionary acts within the home countries of foreign supporters and adapted its materials accordingly.[57] Winter details how the Islamic State's prior position of *preventing* emigration from the caliphate has informally, yet drastically, changed. He states that allowing citizens to return to their home countries is a "huge strategic shift to put ISIS in a place they

55. Neumann, *Radicalized. New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*, 82.

56. Hassan, Hassan, "Down but not out: ISIL will regroup and rise again," *The National*, 25 December 2017, https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/down-but-not-out-isil-will-regroup-and-rise-again-1.690559.

57. Charlie Winter, "Is Islamic State Losing Control of its 'Virtual Caliphate'?" *BBC News*, 3 November 2017. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-41845285.

need to be in five years time".[58] In effect, this change again requires a new typology which aptly reflects the decentralised support and transnational affiliation of foreign fighters.

What began as a call for migration for state-building has shifted into tactics of destabilising established states. Foreign fighters, therefore, now reflect a more decentralised aspect of engagement that shows different levels of support and guerrilla warfare. This is seen with Borum and Fein's foreign fighter categories: *direct action foreign fighters* participate in direct warfare and conflict, *operational support foreign fighters* plan attacks, *movement support foreign fighters* are involved in recruitment activities and *logistical support foreign fighters* are not involved in attacks but do support the group through administration, supplies and transportation.[59] With these categories, the foreign fighter's involvement has clear boundaries. Determining boundaries is especially useful for assessing limits of a member's responsibility and area of support in a group which is often seen as a phenomenon or in a lens of violent behaviour.

If the Islamic State is regarded as both a state and insurrectionary group, the spectrum of individuals that participate in this terrorist organisation (or are forcefully positioned within it) do not fit neatly under religious or terrorist generalisations. The following is a range that exemplifies the complex nature of support and how individuals are positioned in the Islamic State: the career mercenary; the local insurgent; a local who is part of a tribe that pledged *bay'ah* (allegiance); those who travel specifically to engage in violent acts and war crimes to support the organisation (males and females); females that travel to support the organisation (not necessarily engage in violent acts); females that accompany their husbands; those who

58. Anthony Loyd, "Foreign jihadists hide in deserts of Syria and Iraq to evade justice," *The Times*, 27 December, 2017, para. 22. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/foreign-jihadists-hide-in-deserts-of-syria-and-iraq-to-evade-justice-pkgc8k8zg.

59. Borum and Fein, "The psychology of foreign fighters."

have migrated and claimed non-violence and wish to return back to their home countries due to "disillusionment" and allegiance negotiation; the "homegrown" terrorist who is actively in correspondence with the Islamic State leaders; the terrorist cells that claim allegiance; businesses who are involved in the crime-terror nexus operations; the "inspired by" "homegrown" terrorist who shouts "*Allahu Akhbar*" before committing a crime or pledges *bay'ah* through Facebook (with or without any external order or Islamic State communication); and in the most critical position, even the children who have grown up under Islamic State educational systems.[60]

Trapped in this categorisation of "religious wave" terrorism and "true believer", the Islamic State foreign fighter is positioned as being led by ideology. The specific power dynamics that determine the relationship between citizen and state have been obscured. A focus on religious ideology" distracts us from a lens of viewing the foreign fighter in a political relationship with her/his state. Yet, the Islamic State foreign fighters produce specific political concerns that do affect how the state relates to its citizen. Most notably, these concerns exist within the conception and application of state sovereignty and citizen rights. The European citizens caught as prisoners of war or being held in Iraq illustrate this complex situation, as hesitations exist with the Iraqi justice system. Negotiations are needed to determine the necessity and conditions of trials in accordance to the individual's gender, age and citizenship.[61] The "foreign fighter" designation, therefore, entails a complex political situation that extends far beyond affinity with religious ideology.

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60. Noman Benotman and Nikita Malik, "The Children of the Islamic State," Quilliam Foundation, 2016. https://www.quilliaminternational.com/quilliam-releases-report-on-children-in-the-caliphate/.

61. Sara Al-Qahar, "What is the fate of foreign IS fighters in Iraq?" *Al-Monitor*, 10 August 2017, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/08/foreign-fighters-iraq-isis-counterterrorism.html. See also "Iraq holding 1,400 foreign 'ISIL wives, children'" *Al-Jazeera*, 11 September 2017, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/iraq-holding-1400-foreign-isil-wives-children-170911073249739.html.

Neumann, in particular, points out the current problem of labelling Islamic State supporters as "foreign fighters".[62] In contrast to previous foreign fighter definitions, not all migrants to the Islamic State engaged in warfare. Not all migrants were fighters or intended to commit violence, as some did operate in non-combative roles such as media production or marriage.[63] The most substantial collection of face-to-face interviews with returned foreign fighters claim that not all of them migrated to Syria with the goal of fighting and "even less of committing atrocities".[64] Therefore, the question is: how is a citizen motivated to negotiate her/his own safety and allegiances in order to fully participate in the Islamic State? In the next section, I detail how the study of Islamic State foreign fighter motivations have been viewed through a lens of religious ideology.

2.4 The motivations of the Islamic State foreign fighter

Motivations describe the reasons for an individual to behave in a certain way. They are often classified into two distinct categories: *push* factors (such as perceived grievances and socio-economic conditions) and *pull* factors (such as "belonging" or defending a social group). The investigation of motivations, especially in terrorism studies, is not always subject-centric and often rely on procuring migration rationales that are not directly obtained from face-to-face interviews. With the advantages afforded by globalised communications and the opportunity to rely on the Islamic State's *need* to publish in order to remain relevant and competitive, academic investigations on motivations have scrutinised a variety of sources. These methods and sources range from interviews with returnees, combing through social media accounts, cumulating open-source data such as news and government reports, interviewing family

62. Neumann, *Radicalized. New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*.

63. Sexton, "What's in a Name? Proposing New Typologies for 'Foreign Fighters," 3.

64. United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism, "Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon," 5.

members of foreign fighters and even looking through the Islamic State's own propaganda.[65] However, there has yet to be a consensus on the motivations of the contemporary foreign fighter that is based on strong empirical evidence.[66]

Just as there is no one model to explain radicalisation,[67] there is no one set of pre-defined, or fixed factors that encourage support for extremist or terrorist organisations. Mullins details that a combination of the following five factors may exist in the motivations of "home-grown Islamist terrorists": individual explanations, conditions in the West, Western foreign policy, the influence of the "Islamic World" and the role of religion and group dynamics.[68] More specifically, he states that "home-grown jihadis" experience "personal crises of identity" and adversity.[69] Theories which view personal identity crises as motiving factors towards transnational affiliation are commonly used for investigating contemporary foreign fighter involvement.

Hegghammer positions the transnational affiliation of foreign fighters within a perception of "nationhood". Specifically, he states that the "existence of subjective grievances" is

65. Ibid., Reinier Bergema and Marion van San, "Waves of the Black Banner: An Exploratory Study on the Dutch Jihadist Foreign Fighter Contingent in Syria and Iraq," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2017) DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2017.1404004; Jakob Sheikh, "'I Just Said It. The State': Examining the Motivations for Danish Foreign Fighting in Syria," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 6 (2016); Alyssa Chassman, "Islamic State, Identity, and the Global Jihadist Movement: How is Islamic State successful at recruiting "ordinary" people?" *Journal for Deradicalization* 9 (2016); Lorne Dawson and Amarnath Amarasingam, "Talking to Foreign Fighters: Insights into the Motivations for Hijrah to Syria and Iraq," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 40, no. 3 (2017); Dorle Hellmuth, "Of Alienation, Association, and Adventure: Why German Fighters Join ISIL," *Journal for Deradicalization*. 6 (2016); Lasse Lindekilde, Preben Bertelsen and Michael Stohl, "Who Goes, Why, and With What Effects: The Problem of Foreign Fighters from Europe," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no.5 (2016); Dafna Rand and Anthony Vassalo, "Bringing the Fight Back Home: Western Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria," Policy Brief. Center for a New American Security, https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/bringing-the-fight-back-home-western-foreign-fighters-in-iraq-and-syria; Richard Barrett, "Foreign Fighters in Syria," The Soufan Group, 2014, http://www.soufangroup.com/foreign-fighters-in-syria/.

66. United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism, "Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon."

67. Neumann, "The Trouble with Radicalization."

68. Mullins, "*Home-Grown" Jihad: Understanding Islamist Terrorism in the US and UK*.

69. Ibid.

connected to "nationhood" or "nonmaterial selective incentives" and found to affect motivations.[70] Rather than confirming motivations as being driven by religious construction of utopian ideals or responses to Western political presence in the Middle East, he observes that the ideology in "pan-Islamism" parallels nationalism. This sense of nationhood is considered, for some researchers, as being an important component of motivations in so much that it is able to trigger a certain identity.[71] The strength of those ties, according to Malet, is due to "identity" being more "immediately present" than feelings of national citizenship.[72]

Feelings of non-belonging may percolate radicalisation. For Pascarelli, this manifests from a duality of feeling non-belonging in both one's resident/home nation and "ethic"/familial nation. [73] Feelings of non-belonging sends individuals to "search for these basic needs" of ethnic identity and belonging amongst "manipulative and dangerous groups".[74] Pascarelli's observance fits with Neumann's classification of Islamic State foreign fighter motivations.[75] Specifically, Neumann defines some foreign fighters as "seekers" who are motivated by identity, belonging, "jihadi counterculture", and even feelings of masculinity, rather than primary motives of religion or politics.[76] As a social construction, identity and belonging to

70. Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and Globalization of Jihad," 89.

71. Malet, *Foreign fighters: transnational identity in civil conflicts,* 7.

72. Ibid.

73. Paige Pascarelli, "Identities 'Betwixt and between': analyzing Belgian representation in 'homegrown' extremism," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, (2017) DOI: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19434472.2017.1374988.

74. Ibid., 16. See also Frank Cilluffo, Jeffrey Cozzens, and Magnus Ranstorp, "Foreign Fighters, Trends, Trajectories & Conflict Zone," Report for US Homeland Security Policy Institute, George Washington University, 2010, https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/HSPI_Report_16.pdf; Alan Travis, "The Making of an Extremist." *The Guardian*, 20 August 2008, https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/aug/20/uksecurity.terrorism.

75. Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*.

76. Ibid.

an external "nation" are therefore viewed as a salient factors in motivations for supporting the Islamic State.

Viewing transnational terrorism affiliation by its connections to "nationhood" can be problematic. Emphasis is placed on the "pull" factors of religious discourse in narratives which are presumed to respond to transnational identities and ideology of religious community or "nation". This focus hinders an exploration of how the religious discourse responds to local, political conditions in which the individual resides. Moreover, an emphasis on transnational affiliation limits our approaches, yet at the same time, fulfils the self-serving desires of counter-terrorism. Namely, the limitation arises from the focus on the pull factors in narratives that are seen to activate some sense of borderless, religious identity, thus fulfilling counter-terrorism's tactic of "blurring between the real and the hypothetical".[77] Overall, the belief that religious ideology is *so* powerful it is able to be mobilised transnationally ironically matches Osama's Bin Laden's view expressed in November 2001: "there is no way to forget the hostility between us and the infidels. It is ideological, so Muslims have to ally themselves with Muslims".[78]

Being an abstract concept, ideology is seen in some ways as "borderless" and even timeless. The fear of the borderless threat has come to define contemporary terrorism. The most salient example, of course, is the "global" war on terror. The threat and fear of terrorism has not arisen from the violent act itself, but rather its future-orientation of unknown times and unknown places.[79] A cycle of anxiety is created, self-serving counter-terrorism's rationale of

77. Michael Frank, "Conjuring up the next attack: the future-orientedness of terror and the counterterrorist imagination," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 8, no.1 (2015): 91.

78. Neil Macfarquhar and Jim Rutenberg, "A Nation Challenged: The Video; Bin laden, in a Taped Speech, Says Attacks in Afghanistan Are a War Against Islam," *The New York Times*, 4 November 2001, para. 4. http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/04/world/nation-challenged-video-bin-laden-taped-speech-says-attacks-afghanistan-are-war.html.

79. Frank, "Conjuring up the next attack: the future-orientedness of terror and the counterterrorist imagination."

being prepared for ideology's future appearance and threat. This anxiety is found within the United Kingdom's basis and rationale of its counter-extremism program known as "Prevent". In an attempt to separate "ideology" from "legitimate religious beliefs", Prevent's first specific strategic objective is to "respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it".[80] The conception of terrorism is now intrinsically seen as being dangerous due to it not just describing a violent act in a public space, but tied to the abstract and subjective notion of beliefs and values—terrorism is an "ideological challenge".

If ideology is presupposed as a motivation factor, it shapes how we analyse materials and attempt to counter foreign fighter recruitment. In other words, whether analysing Islamic State materials or categorising answers from interviews, a starting position of ideology as a primary motivating influence does shape *what* to look for during analysis and *what* to counter in counter-terrorism. The abstract and borderless conception of the "Islamic extremism" ideology is also seen as being embodied within individuals. This positioning fits well within the War on Terror narrative which specifically needs both an abstract and physical, "locatable enemy".[81] Ideology has been pushed to the forefront, and this tactic has been formed from certain prominent state-led efforts in understanding motivations.

Ideology drives motivation. This claim was firmly established through a multi-national project sponsored by the United States Office of the Secretary of Defense in 2005 entitled, "CIST: Countering Ideological Support for Terrorism – Sythesizing Strategies World Wide". This project specifically analysed cases of terrorist groups worldwide in order to

80. Revised Prevent Duty Guidance, United Kingdom Report for HM Government, 2015: 3. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445977/3799_Revised_Prevent_Duty_Guidance__England_Wales_V2-Interactive.pdf.

81. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 20.

"characterize the nature of the relationship between ideological support and terrorist activities".[82] Ideology is viewed as a powerful force, one which is able to "indoctrinate the public to become sympathizers, sympathizers supporters, and supporters terrorists".[83] Terrorism is seen as a "vicious by-product of ideological extremism," therefore "government and society must develop an ideological response".[84] Known as the "war of ideas", ideology is positioned as a vital element in contemporary terrorist warfare in so much as having its own theatre: the "ideological battlefield".

The "ideological battlefield" is concerned with the "butterfly effect" of ideas, how local events are processed as a global concern and triggering support by way of narratives aimed at a certain identity. The difficulty in countering terrorist ideology is due to a terrorist organisation's skill in performing a "synergy of messages across simultaneous levels" in a much greater capacity than security and intelligence services.[85] Triggering support is based on the ideology tapping into a certain identity, in which identity is seen as an essential feeling for the individual and set apart from perceptions of citizenship. In other words, "stronger ties to others through an identity lead to that identity becoming activated".[86] More specifically, Chassman theorises that the Islamic State offers a "new social identity, one that is perceived as stronger with more benefits than their previous identity".[87]

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82. Anne Aldis and Graeme P. Herd, eds., *The Ideological War on Terror: Worldwide strategies for counter-terrorism*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), xvii.

83. Rohan Gunaratna, "Ideology in Terrorism and Counter Terrorism," in *The Ideological War on Terror: worldwide strategies for counter-terrorism*, ed. by Anne Aldis and Graeme P. Herd (London: Routledge, 2007), 17.

84. Ibid, 21.

85. Magnus Ranstorp and Graeme P. Herd, "Ideology in Terrorism and Counter Terrorism." in *The Ideological War on Terror: worldwide strategies for counter-terrorism*, ed. by Anne Aldis and Graeme P. Herd (London: Routledge, 2007), 3.

86. Malet, *Foreign fighters: transnational identity in civil conflicts,* 21.

87. Chassman, "Islamic State, Identity and the Global Jihadist Movement: How is the Islamic State successful at recruiting 'ordinary people'?," 226.

According to the CIST project, the consensus is that ideology plays a "major formative role in shaping the character of various forms of asymmetrical adversaries".[88] In 2007, the "ideological front" in the "global" War on Terrorism was seen as being "severely understudied".[89] However, the elevation of "ideology" in contemporary terrorism studies has led to it being *over-studied*—to the point of saturating counter-terrorism initiatives and media discourse. The concept of ideology as a motivating factor has created an irony in countering terrorism. By overlooking the pull of political factors, such as "statehood" characteristics of the Islamic State that project citizenship, territory and sovereignty,[90] the intent of the Islamic State has been fulfilled.[91] The counter-terrorism focus on destroying "ideology" has engendered the Islamic State as having the ultimate power to evoke an utmost, competitive transnational movement through an "ideology" of "global jihad" amongst its constructed *ummah* or religious community.

A focus on religious ideology being the cause of extremist support leads to obscuring the state's responsibility in how its citizens may become politically "activated" to support terrorist organisations. Similar to how Jayaraman elucidates that denationalisation plans "do not resolve the underlying problems associated with international terrorism" and allow for a state to "wash its hands of one of its nationals",[92] the focus on countering ideology allows that state to close its eyes on the political health manifested from its power relations to its body politic. In line with censorship policies, ideology is treated as a virus which is able to

88. Ranstorp and Herd. "Ideology in Terrorism and Counter Terrorism," 4.

89. Ibid., 3.

90. Al-Dayel and Anfinson, "In the Words of the Enemy: the Islamic State's reflexive projection of statehood."

91. A notable exception is Sheikh, who urges for a narrative analysis of state building discourse that is often overlooked in counter radicalisation efforts. Refer to Sheikh, "'I Just Said It. The State': Examining the Motivations for Danish Foreign Fighting in Syria."

92. Jayaraman, "International Terrorism and Statelessness: Revoking the Citizenship of ISIL Foreign Fighters," 205.

affect an (assumed) healthy body. In order to elucidate the distinct political agency of the individual, it is imperative to re-politicise terrorism engagement. This requires viewing the individual apart from the Muslim identifications she/he is usually cast in. This doesn't minimise the importance of religious identifications. Rather, it reminds us that we are, after all, political animals and even religion is a mechanism for organising authority and reinforcing political power dynamics. Therefore, the next section details how the foreign fighter reveals a negotiation of authority, demonstrating the need to rethink approaches to Islamic State materials. This begins by briefly reviewing the power dynamics in citizen and state relations.

2.5 The citizen, state and authority

In our current Westphalian system, the dominant power structure involves the state and the institutionalised tendrils that enforce it. In fact, the state *only* exists due to the citizens' adherence to authority and personal negotiation of where an individual stands in relation to a greater governing structure. This is known as *domestic sovereignty*, or the realisation that the state possesses the highest authority within a certain territory.[93] Furthermore, the citizens' recognition of authority involves acknowledging the state's legitimacy of force. This recognition relates to the Weberian concept of state, where its sovereignty manifested from the "monopoly over the means of violence and control over its territory".[94]

The state is legitimised through an acknowledgement of authority from individuals residing in its territory. The subject's requirement to obey the state, however, is not necessarily

93. Stephen Krasner, "Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States," *International Security* 29, no. 2 (2004): 88.

94. Stein Sundstol Eriksen, "'State failure' in theory and practice: the idea of the state and the contradictions of state formation," *Review of International Studies* 37 (2011): 233. See also Weber, Lassman and Spiers, *Weber: Political Writings*.

located in the content within the command. It is located in the perception of the source having power to be an authority. This is known as the *consent theory of authority*, as developed in different, and debatable stages by Hobbes, Hume, Raz, Locke and Rawls.[95] In the modern nation-state, the consent to authority manifests from citizens' adherence to laws and norms of society. If the citizen feels the authority is legitimate, she/he consents—although not always explicitly. This is conceptualised as tatic consent,[96] where an explicit expression of consent is not necessary if one resides in the territory which the state claims sovereignty. An integral element to the formation of a Westphalian nation-state, moreover, involves an optimistic belief that subjects do adhere to the same rules, norms and laws of the sovereign state in which they reside and are considered residents and citizens.[97] Yet, this condition is not without strain.

A tension exists in the relations of consent between the citizen and state. Securitisation theory, after all, exists for this tension, illuminating how threats to the nation are constructed and dramatized as a priority to the body politic, and how these constructs affect relations.[98] Therefore, perceptions of security and authority need to be considered in the process of radicalisation. This view contributes to a more "holistic understanding" of radicalisation in which we are able to elucidate the factors that affect the process of adopting extremist narratives. Eschewing the Platonic and moralistic treatment of how the state is conceptualised, I argue that a lens of consent theory of authority illuminates how the foreign

95. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 1992 [1668]); David Hume, "Of the Original Contract," In *Hume's Ethical Writings*, ed. Alasdair MacIntyre (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965 [1748]); Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, ed. C.B. MacPherson (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett. 1990 [1690]); John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

96. Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*.

97. Manlio Graziano, "The long crisis of the nation-state and the rise of religions to the public state," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 42, no. 4-5 (2016): 352.

98. Ole Wæver, "Securitization and desecuritization," in *On Security*, ed. Ronnie Lipschutz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

fighter acts in reaction to her/his perception of authority within their own state. After all, motivation involves perceptions of (legitimate) authority over the self. I further assert that three reasons support a political treatment of motivations, specifically detailed through a focus on the Western foreign fighter who has voluntarily migrated to Islamic State territory.

First, voluntary migration involves a realisation that authority exists. At the same time, there is a realisation of the individual having the power to self-position under that authority. This also means that there is a realisation of a power relationship between the citizen and state. There need not be a competing authority in place for a citizen to have a confliction of allegiance. Rather, just having the *perception* of an absence of authority allows for a new authority to develop.[99] Our modern arrangement orders individuals within territory of constructed state boundaries. Yet, there is a perception of fluidity in switching authority, and a perception of agency in which a "field of possibilities" exist.[100] This is demonstrated by foreign fighters who wish to return back to their home countries because they've disavowed the authority of the group they joined. Thus, a realisation that one has agency in determining authority is seen in the reasoning for *both* joining and leaving the Islamic State. According to interviews with returnees, the foreign fighters were "motivated to leave Syria either by their own genuine disappointment in and disenfranchisement by the terrorist organisation they joined".[101]

Second, voluntary migration involves a shift of authority, which again is an act of agency. The tension between citizen and state is strongly realised at some point, where a citizen may not adhere to the state's authority if she or he perceives themselves as possessing a form of

99. Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government.*

100. Michel Foucault. "The subject and power," in *Power*, ed. John Scott. (London: Routledge, 1994 [1982]), 229. See also John Scott, *Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).

101. United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism, "Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon," 4.

power to not obey.[102] In other words, a shift happens in which the individual disavows her/his state's authority and aligns with another subject's authority. This political moment of authority recognition and choice is within religious discourse. According to researchers el-Said and Barrett, the "decision to make hijra to the land of Islam is less of a religious obligation than an emotional response to a feeling of injustice in their home countries".[103] "Feeling of injustice in their home countries" demonstrates that political awareness exists and influences one to negotiate allegiances back and forth, rather than simply responding to al-Baghdadi's 2014 call of obligatory migration.[104] The perception of authority is further elucidated by Gerges, who observes that "at the heart of the utopian longing for the imagined caliphate is the feeling of some Muslims that the modern nation-state has failed to build a just and inclusive order".[105] In Islamic State promotional materials, this realisation of authority is found within statements that encourage reflexive engagement with the audience's local political environment, ultimately persuading that one must shift authority due to the failings of their nation-state. For example, this statement from a top foreign fighter recruiter in an Islamic State production displays the perceived failings of the state: "You must start attacking before they attack you. Look how much of your sisters have been violated. All I hear on the news in Australia is that this sister was hurt, this sister's *hijab* was ripped off".[106]

Third, voluntary migration involves the state realising a form of competition exists between its authority and others amongst its citizens. The state's sovereignty over its citizens and

102. Niccolo Machiavell, *The Prince*, trans. Tim Parks (London: Penguin Classics, 2009 [1532]).

103. United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism, "Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon," 15.

104. "A Message to the Mujahidin and the Muslim Ummah in the Month of Ramadan from Amirul- Mu'minin," online video, Al Hayat Media Center, 2014.

105. Gerges, *ISIS*: *a history*, 46.

106. "Stories from the Land of the Living: Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi," online video, Al Hayat Media Center, 2015.

assumption of legitimacy is challenged. This leads the state to discipline norms of citizenship behaviour, repositioning the citizen in its relationship to the state. The voluntary aspect of migration self-positions the citizen as regarding a new authority. At the same time, there is a moment of disregarding the validity of authority in her/his *prior* state of residence. The voluntary nature of migration allows for the state to forcefully position the citizen as "deviant" to the norm, thus needing "moral" disciplining.[107] Labelling an individual as deviant from the norm—such as "terrorist" or "extremist"—is in the intent of strengthening state sovereignty and reinforcing power relations. Within this arrangement, developing rationales for restriction of choice is an act of power which reinforces sovereignty. The "greater the restrictions, the greater is the power" of the state.[108] Overall, voluntary migration is an entirely political act, and the state treats it as a political act. It is an act which only seems illogical, irrational and even "tribal" due to pre-conceptions that the state is intrinsically tied to individual's security.

Our current notion of security was formed from the political philosophers of the Enlightenment era. Security of the individual is conceptualised as a "fundamental objective of all individuals that can be gained through the state".[109] This relation of security to state is, perhaps, why it seems irrational for a citizen to leave a country of political stability and safety and migrate towards an instable, dangerous area. It is irrational *if* we view the migration through this norm of security-state conceptualisation. However, it is *not* irrational if we view an individual's action as being a performance of the authority-state conceptualisation. In other words, the foreign fighter "phenomenon" has revealed that

107. Christopher Baker-Beall, "Writing the threat of terrorism in Western Europe and the European Union: An interpretive analysis," in *Interpreting Global Security*, eds. Mark Bevir, Oliver Daddow and Ian Hall (New York: Routledge, 2014), 147.

108. Thomas Wartenberg, *The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 3.

109. Herington, "Philosophy: The concepts of security, fear, liberty and the state," 28.

migration is a *form of authority over the self*, dispelling the notion that presuming *safety of the self* is a homogenous, primary factor in adhering to expected norms of citizen behaviour.

2.6 Implications and conclusion

The Islamic State foreign fighter reveals that a negotiation has been made of who is allowed by the individual, to have authority over the individual: "Oh my brothers in the West," the British foreign fighter calmly states in this article's introduction, "I know how you feel, I used to live there". The theme of authority recognition continues throughout the video, and is apparent in many Islamic State recruitment materials. The phenomenon of foreign fighters in the Islamic State is not simply an instance of exemplifying the "crisis of the nation-state". Nor is it only about an "ideology" that is borderless, infectiously spreading if unchecked by state censorship. Rather, as the growth of nativist and far-right movements have equally shown, we are now exposed to how extremist groups have the power to address and exploit the fragility of state and citizen relations. Relations—which are experienced by citizens—are not easily articulated. These relations are grown and revealed beyond the veneer of identity politics that they are assumed to be bound within. Thus, a consideration of a political scenario appears in our contemplation of the Islamic State "foreign fighter": is the propensity of "foreignness" representative of the contemporary citizen's absurdist condition of authority recognition, or is migration seen as a salvation through religious absolutionism alone? Where does the basic political moment of authority recognition fit within our current knowledge base of "ideology" as the motivating factor and even part of the constant reiteration of foreign fighter definitions?

As I have demonstrated, the political relation between the citizen and state is manifested by the fluidity of the foreign fighter. Moreover, the articulation of *what* is "political" is within discourse that may be seen as non-political, such as religious language. If anything, the

religious connotation is a vehicle which works towards the political. It would be a mistake to not consider the political reflections that are within what is considered "religious" or "non-political" discourse. Religious discourse may not seem political at first glance or first coding—whether it is narratives from extremist propaganda or answers in interviews. All discourse may not be religious, however it does respond to political situations that are multifaceted and layered through experiences in partnerships, friendships, family and social settings.

This is not a call to cumulate discursive data in order to quantify themes and weigh the "religious" terms versus "secular" rationales. That would not be helpful. Rather, an investigation into the discursive manifestation of citizen and state relations requires unearthing nuances through qualitative analysis. Such scrutiny involves understanding how discourses reflect external political relations. They reveal themes like authority, positioning of the individual, perceptions of power, agency, legitimacy and competition. While our experiences of the political relationship between citizen and state are not easily articulated by either the foreign fighters or researchers, they do exist. If we do not pay attention to this situation, then we may be obscuring political factors that motivate and affect the radicalisation process of a citizen. Additionally, the external socio-political environment of the individual must be considered as well as how discourse within interviews and extremist narratives respond to that environment.

Understanding how terrorism becomes "homegrown", for instance, requires how narratives and the contexts of "far" conflicts respond to individuals who have been shaped by "near" experiences of power and authority. The merge of near and far has created a tension between the assumed sovereignty that state has in its domestic "conflicts" and the assumption of fighting in a "battle of ideas". The "battle of ideas" is a typical narrative utilised for the

sustainment of a securitised atmosphere, conflating the "near and far". This situation is particularly exemplified in a statement from the United Kingdom's minister for the Middle East, who states "even as we see Isis pushed back onto the physical battlefield, we know that they will continue to pose a threat in the region. We also know that the battle of ideas is far from won".[110] The fight against the "ideology" of terrorism does, after all, envision counter-insurgency on the borderless, ideological battlefield. Mumford observes that on the defensive side, the "operational space in which contemporary counter-insurgency is conducted conflates the domestic and the foreign".[111] Similarly, Mullins states that "homegrown terrorism has been enflamed by military occupations and war" outside of the citizen's borders.[112] The migration has, for the most part, ceased and the Islamic State supporters are following violent grassroots actions of "think globally, act locally".

For this reason, it is imperative to consider if the localised relationship between the citizen and state affects radicalisation, and what this tells us about the changing nature of what is considered successful in extremism. After all, beneath the flurry of concern over the citizens who have joined and the engagement with social media "jihadist" discourse, this violent terrorist organisation has been highly *unsuccessful* in its "ideology". The overwhelming majority of Muslims across the world do not support the Islamic State. They do not recognise its authority or support its harsh, extremist interpretation of religious law and creed. While there has been some horrific terror attacks associated with the Islamic State and done in the name of a religion, the overwhelming majority of Muslims in "Western" nations perceive a manageable relationship between themselves and their state. Or, at the least as with any

110. Lizzie Dearden, "UK security services preparing to launch new crackdown on terrorism as Isis attack threat rises," *The Independent*, 23 November 2017, para. 15, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-terror-attacks-isis-threat-rising-new-terrorism-strategy-propaganda-online-islamic-state-a8072641.html.

111. Andrew Mumford, *The Counter-Insurgency Myth* (Routledge: New York, 2012), 146.

112. Mullins, *"Home-Grown Jihad": Understanding Islamist Terrorism in the US and UK*, 13.

citizen, much healthier than an alternative political arrangement like the Islamic State. Furthermore, the citizens who have joined the Islamic State support it for distinct reasons. There is no homogenous "Western" Muslim experience that is triggered by narratives, nor should the Islamic community be targeted in a dangerous and basic assumption of being the only audience for Islamic State materials.[113] Deeply personal individualised factors, not all of which are of a religious nature, have affected their decisions.[114] Yet, what is common across the board of individuals joining extremist groups is the extent of the political relationship between the citizen and the state.

A set of beliefs (ideology) does play an important role, no doubt. However, a generalised "ideology" of "Islamic extremism" must be further broken down and scrutinised for intricate political pieces that exist with any citizen, whether Islamic or not. The label of "ideology" should not be used as a scapegoat for critical reflection of the political nature and political agency. For the most part, academics have been working towards an understanding of the nuances within the ideology label, and how a set of beliefs work with push and pull factors. Some even caution against viewing ideology as a primary motivating factor, and as Neumann points out, "none of the widely used models and theories of radicalization suggest that beliefs or ideologies are the sole influence" of terrorism engagement.[115] Yet, when this term "ideology" is pushed upwards from academic scholarship and into bureaucratic control for

113. There is a danger in ethnographically targeting an already marginalised group. The limits of research methods are usually determined by a robust ethics committee. Refer to Simon Cottee and Jack Cunliffe, "Watching ISIS: How Young Adults Engage with Official English-language ISIS Videos," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 8, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1444955.

114. I strongly caution against attempting to explain the "Western" Muslim experience in a homogenous manner. Such attempts objectify individuals, "Others" them and inadvertently creates the homogenous object of scrutiny to reference a religious community that the Islamic State *also* attempts to homogenously represent. An action of that nature thus binds people by "religious affinity" alone and decontextualises motives.

115. Neumann, "The Trouble with Radicalization," 892.

securitisation purposes, it returns again in its depoliticised form, signifying a powerful, triggering force for motivating one into violent action.

This issue is exemplified quite transparently in some state reports. For instance, Canada's "2017 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada" claims, "All forms of ideology have the potential to inspire individuals or groups to commit acts of violence in their name".[116] While the intent of this phrasing is most likely to dispel the erroneous notion that Islam itself purely inspires terrorism (as well as highlight the rise of far-right terror threats) it unintentionally mystifies motives and the reflexive characteristics of discourse in narratives. The practice of generalising "ideology" to an extremely complex situation, such as "violent extremists who are inspired by violent Islamist ideology",[117] is not necessarily helpful to an investigation of contemporary extremist engagement. Such views may obscure the distinct and personalised nuances in motivations, ones which are, fundamentally, local and political.

116. "Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada," Report for Public Safety Canada, 2017, 5. https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/pblc-rprt-trrrst-thrt-cnd-2017/index-en.aspx.

117. Ibid.

Chapter Three

"Now is the time to wake up": Islamic State's narratives of political awareness

3.1 Abstract

Terrorist organisations are increasingly seeking to attract transnational membership. In particular, the Islamic State proudly displays transnational support in its propaganda. As a result, academics have established that themes of *belonging*, *religious fulfilment*, *victimhood* and *utopia* are important recruitment devices. This article reveals additional themes that encourage a critical reasoning of the power dynamics in the citizen-state relationship, questioning the strength of religious ideology that is assumed to attract and bind transnational membership. These themes are revealed through an innovative, blended method of critical discourse analysis, interpretivism and securitisation that examines the narratives and influence of the recruitment actor on an international scale. After a review of the Islamic State's media operations, this method is applied to a prominent video featuring a top recruiter and UN designated terrorist, Australian citizen Neil Christopher Prakash. Then, it details how Prakash's migration to the Islamic State led to securitisation discourses from both Australia and the US, affecting citizen-state relations. It concludes with a discussion on implications, suggesting directions for research on transnational extremist organisations.

Keywords: Islamic State, recruitment, propaganda, critical discourse, securitisation

3.2 Introduction

A "fascination" with death defines the foreign fighters of the most mediatised terrorist organisation in history, the Islamic State.[1] Supporters and media consumers alike are absorbed by, as Weiss and Hassan claim, its "psychopathic spectacle".[2] While it briefly existed as a pseudo-state from 2014-2017, it is predominantly identified as a religious terrorism movement that embraces a "Manichean worldview" of good and evil frames.[3] Even though it is a religiously-orientated organisation, researchers have been careful to not assume religiosity as the only motivating factor for migration and support.[4] Correspondingly, its recruitment materials—especially those targeted at the "Western" audience—are scrutinised in the expectation of finding meanings that convinced thousands of citizens to migrate towards a conflict zone or inspire acts of terror at home. Academic analysis has considered how the Islamic State projects itself in its official media productions for recruitment efforts, revealing operational strategies that belie the assumption of it being only an irrational force with barbaric actions.

Quantitative and mixed-methods work has investigated the complex infrastructure of the Islamic State's media production, challenging public assumptions that are constructed from selective media exposure to its propaganda. In particular, Zelin's investigation of a sample week of its media production reveals that the practice of mass media coverage on violent or selective pieces on Islamic State foreign fighters has created a bias in comprehending the

1. Roy, *Jihad and Death: The Global Appeal of the Islamic State*, 2; Al-Dayel and Anfinson, "In the Words of the Enemy: the Islamic State's reflexive projection of statehood.".

2. Weiss and Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, 160.

3. "CTC Sentinel Report" (Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, November 2017), 5-6. See also Imogen Richards, "'Good and Evil' narratives in Islamic State media and Western government statements," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 10, no. 3 (2017): 404-428 and Kiriloi Ingram, "IS's Appeal to Western Women: Policy Implications" (ICCT Brief, October 2017).

4. Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, Seamus Hughes and Clifford Bennett, "The Travelers" (Program on Extremism, George Washington University, 2018): 85, https://extremism.gwu.edu/travelers.

overall strategy of this organisation.[5] Winter's longitudinal study of the group's media output exhibits how its thematic narratives have strategically altered from "utopia" to "warfare" as it began losing its "Caliphate" territory.[6] Analysis on Islamic State propaganda (in medium and large-*n* material selection) has revealed additional recruitment narratives of: in-group Sunni identity, "othering" the disbelievers, defence of the *ummah* (religious community), belonging, brotherhood, religion and spiritual fulfilment, brutality, mercy and victimhood.[7]

According to Fahmy, the "strongest and most successful" narrative in Islamic State materials relates to "utopianism, and imagery of brotherhood, serenity and comradery".[8] However, Friis illuminates that the Islamic State propaganda discourse has elements relating to an attempt at projecting a realistic state project of "strength, persistence and order" that go beyond denoting the ephemeral elements of utopia and belonging.[9] Al-Dayel further advances this political consideration through evidencing how the Islamic State utilises a woman author to urge female readers of the organisation's magazine entitled *Dabiq* to consider their role as a citizen and question the behaviours of the state and patriarchal structure.[10] Building from this scholarship, I claim that narrative themes that define aspects of a citizen-state relationship operate as a dynamic yet overlooked component of transnational

5. Aaron Zelin, "Picture Or It Didn't Happen: A Snapshot of the Islamic State's Official Media Output," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 4 (2015): 85-97.

6. Charlie Winter, "Apocalypse, later: a longitudinal study of the Islamic State brand," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 35, no. 1 (2018): 103-121.

7. For a comparative study of in-group construction, refer to Ingram, "An Analysis of Inspire and Dabiq: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War." Thematic narratives from a large-*n* study is found in Winter, "Apocalypse, later: a longitudinal study of the Islamic State brand" and Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate: Understanding Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy." Also refer to Macnair and Frank, "To my Brothers in the West…: A Thematic Analysis of Videos Produced by the Islamic State's al-Hayat Media Center."

8. Shahira Fahmy in Philip Seib, *As Terrorism Evolves: Media, Religion and Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 122.

9. Simone Molin Friis, "Behead, burn, crucify, crush': Theorizing the Islamic State's public displays of violence," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 2 (2018): 260.

10. Nadia Al-Dayel, "Sexual Suppression and Political Agency: Evoking a Woman's Support for the Islamic State," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, (2018) DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2018.1538661.

recruitment. This claim enriches current research on Islamic State propaganda by highlighting how non-religious, political narratives intend to justify or scaffold religious ones (such as defence of the *ummah,* belonging, *jihad* and *hijrah*).

I further argue that narratives of authority recognition and projections of critical reasoning are in the materials—and may even dominate—other themes in specific productions that feature prominent, "Western"-identified recruiters. Therefore, this article presents an original, blended method to analysing Islamic State recruitment materials. This article demonstrates how political narratives are apparent through a method of contextual analysis on Islamic State recruitment material, examining the political influence of the foreign fighter recruiter on a transnational scale.

This article will not quantify linguistic features, themes or perform line-by-line coding on the content in Islamic State productions. In order to break out of the methodological practice of establishing a somewhat circular or tautological analysis (the process of finding the religious, ideological narratives or "in-group/out-group" narratives for a "religious, ideological" terrorist organisation), I identify a salient recruitment piece and situate it in a realistic, socio-political context prior to applying it to the Islamic State's religious ideology. I perform a contextual analysis on a critical piece of propaganda that features a top-ranking foreign fighter, entitled "Stories from the Land of the Living: Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi". (It should be noted that this video has not yet been analysed in a qualitative manner in secondary literature on Islamic State propaganda or media production.) Using a blended approach of qualitative methods, I demonstrate how the discourse pertains to an articulation of a citizen noticing that *they* have agency in the choice of legitimising authority. This positioning contrasts the framing of religious identifications that are assumed to bind the foreign fighters together, as well as motivate them. This article, however, will not just stop at providing

analysis of the narratives in the video. Similar to how Al-Dayel and Anfinson first analyse a particular column in the Islamic State's magazine *Dabiq* then trace its reception in the media and amongst policy elites,[11] this article will explore how the speaker (Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi) and his power as a transnational recruiter is received by his home country Australia, and trace how his successful migration affected the dynamics in citizen-state relations in other countries.

A contextual analysis on Islamic State materials enriches our understanding of its recruitment strength and leads to a greater perception on combatting future transnational recruitment efforts. Qualitative methods on a case study are assumed as not being generalizable, thus limiting the reliability and impact of the findings. However, the particular methodological approach utilised in this article extends outward into other extremist, non-Islamist groups that utilise narratives of *belonging*, *victimhood* and *utopia*. In other words, this article does not pertain to understanding narratives in just one video from one organisation. Instead, it questions our methodology in propaganda analysis, demonstrating the need to situate productions and actors in a realistic condition of citizen-state relations in order to understand the organisation's ability to reflect contemporary political situations. Overall, this article demonstrates that a method of contextualising propaganda pieces and the actor(s) in them develops a lens of how narratives reflect contemporary socio-political conditions and how the transnational appeal has the ability to shape citizen-state relations.

This article is divided into five parts. First, it provides the background context of Islamic State material production, the emergence of foreign fighters in its materials, and the rise and designation of its prominent foreign fighter recruiter, Al-Cambodi, as a "Specially

11. Al-Dayel and Anfinson, "'In the Words of the Enemy': the Islamic State's reflexive projection of statehood."

Designated Global Terrorist". Part two presents an overview of the methodology that is applied in analysing the video and the political impact of the actor. The method is a blended approach of critical discourse analysis, interpretivism and securitisation. Following that, the data analysis is presented in part three. It explains how the theme of political awareness, authority recognition and critical thinking operate as dynamic aspects of recruitment. Part four analyses the reaction from Australia and the United States of America in response to this video and Al-Cambodi's proud display of migration. In particular, it illustrates how the actions of denaturalisation (citizenship stripping) and categorising Al-Cambodi as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist" work towards re-establishing domestic sovereignty power in the citizen-state relationship that was challenged by his migration and recruitment success. Finally, part five details the implications of this study.

3.3 The Islamic State and its foreign fighters

The rapid rise of the Islamic State's brand and global salience is due to its self-positioning in the forefront of a "revolution in terrorist communication".[12] This is largely attributed to its utilisation of digital media and centralised communication strategies, characterised by Galloway as "media jihad".[13] While it has several media outlets, the notable ones for official multilingual material are: the al-I'tisam Foundation, the al-Furqan Foundation and the Al-Hayat Media Center. The latter is responsible for several multilingual productions, like the well-known, online English language magazine of *Dabiq*. However, the content is disseminated in more of a decentralised way once it is past production. The propaganda disseminators are, for the most part, not in official positions in the organisation.[14]

12. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 231.

13. Chris Galloway, "Media jihad: What PR can learn in Islamic State's public relations masterclass," *Public Relations Review* 42, no. 4 (2016): 582-590.

14. Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate," 7.

Out of several social media platforms, Twitter became a critical tool for disseminating propaganda during the years of the Islamic State's Caliphate growth. Its functions revive material, allowing for a further circulation of messages within the platform that is further spread into the global media system.[15] Content is produced by "node" Twitter accounts. From there, the content is amplified by each "like" or "retweet". The "shoutout" accounts revived previously banned nodes by the alerting of new handles.[16] This intent on replication works towards instilling the "truth" that the propagandists strive towards, as the rationale of finding "truth" in the propaganda requires replication of its narratives. Thus, quantity is just as salient as quality in the material itself.[17]

The objective of producing propaganda works with an assumption that the messages will resonate with a specific audience.[18] There is also an intention in creating messages that respond to certain socio-political conditions of the target audience. As its audience is global, the Islamic State tailors its content to resonate with different levels of local, regional and, most noticeably, international audiences. Alongside the intent to polarise the competition and "enemies" of the Islamic State, the media institutions of this terrorist organisation produce material as "evidence" to assure its potential recruits within the international audience to perform an act of allegiance.[19] The productions which feature stylised brutality are what capture the attention of Western media outlets, pushing the aura of competition further than what the Islamic State's media centres could have done alone in encrypted networks.

15. Ryan Artrip and François Debrix, "The Viral Mediation of Terror: ISIS, image, implosion," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 35, no. 1 (2018): 74-88.

16. Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, "ISIS in America: From Retweets to Raqqa," (Program on Extremism, George Washington University, 2015): 24.

17. Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate," 15. See also Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitudes*, trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner (New York: Random House, 1973).

18. Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 6th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015), 4.

19. Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate," 7.

The Islamic State is known for its ultra-violent productions, and this violence-as-spectacle fits both the conditions in the global media environment while strategically framing the Islamic State as a competitive force.[20] The stylised violent productions are "currency" for the narratives to expand, keeping the terrorist organisation relevant. Therefore, the resulting competitive environment works towards garnering support as well as provoking established nation-states. The selective reporting by Western media—in which the focus is on brutality and the alarm at the "foreignness" of Islamic State fighters—has characterised the Islamic State as being able to evoke irrational barbarism amongst a transnational force. This construction is engendered by selective public exposure to its media production, where a misunderstanding has been created in which the supporters are seen as politically irrational or primarily led by foreign fighters.[21] Central to this provocation is the proud display of the Islamic State's foreign fighters, which numbers estimate to be from 40,000 to 53,000 citizens from over 100 countries.[22]

Categorised by "waves", the largest portion arrived soon after the self-proclaimed "Caliph" or leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, announced the final branding of the "Islamic State" as well as a call for migration in late June of 2014. Membership doubled in just one year.[23] Following the recruitment path laid out by previous religiously-characterised terrorist organisations, the narratives of a constructed "pan-Islamism" is utilised as a rallying cry, where national identifications and citizenship are framed as secondary to religious

20. Artrip and Debrix, "The Viral Mediation of Terror."

21. Zelin, "Picture it," and Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate."

22. McCarthy, "Scores of ISIS Foreign Fighters Have Returned Home," *Forbes*, 25 October 2017, https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2017/10/25/scores-of-isis-foreign-fighters-have-returned-home-infographic/#55bbb2115e8e; Barrett, "Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees."

23. "Number of foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria doubles in a year, report finds," *The Guardian*, 8 December 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/08/isis-foreign-fighters-iraq-syria-doubles-report.

membership in order to defend an assumed, homogenous religious community or *ummah*.[24] In particular, the Islamic State has had recruitment success with Western foreign fighters, a group termed by Awan as "the new rock stars of global cyber jihad".[25] In turn, the foreign fighters portrayed in recruitment videos have come under the scrutiny of their home states, as exemplified by the salience of Neil Christopher Prakash (Islamic State *nom de guerre* of Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi.)

Prakash is an Australian citizen who also has transnational significance. He travelled to Raqqa, Syria in 2013 and had evaded United States targeted air strikes twice in 2016 only to be captured in November of that year. At the time of writing, he is in a high-security prison in the Turkish province of Gaziantep. Australia sought his extradition and is currently unsuccessful. Australian has also attempted to assign Fiji nationality to Prakash (as his father was Fijian) in order to facilitate stripping Prakash of his Australian citizenship.[26] Despite this effort, Fiji does not recognize Prakash as a citizen. The United Nations imposed sanctions on him in June 2015, and he further was designated as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist" by the United States in January 2017. The significance of Al-Cambodi in Islamic State recruitment materials and the challenge he presents to the domestic sovereignty of states is more thoroughly engaged with in part four. However, before presenting the analysis, I will

24. Mullins refers to home-grown terrorism as being percolated by "strong emotional responses and self-identification as a defender of the Muslim people" in Sam Mullins, *"Home-Grown" Jihad: Understanding Islamist Terrorism in the US and UK* (London: Imperial College Press, 2016), 50. Additionally, Gerges observes how the Islamic State utilises religion to construct its "social identity" which is exploitable in times of insecurity, and "the group's rhetoric is anchored not in novelty but in identity politics whose main articulating pole is religious" in Gerges, *ISIS: a history*, 25. Also refer to Chassman, "Islamic State, Identity and the Global Jihadist Movement: How is Islamic State successful at recruiting 'ordinary' people?."

25. Imran Awan, "Cyber-Extremism: Isis and the Power of Social Media," *Social Science and Public Policy* 54 (2017): 138.

26. "Australian-born terrorist Neil Prakash cannot go to Fiji," *ABC News*, 4 January 2019, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-01-03/fiji-pm-says-neil-prakash-not-welcome/10683038.

briefly discuss the methodological lens which cumulated to the investigation of the video and the reaction from established states.

3.4 A blended method of critical discourse analysis, interpretivism and securitisation

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) views how socio-political situations are constructed and reflected in discourse—whether it is text, visual, auditory or other semiotic material.[27] When doing CDA, it is crucial to notice how power relations are manifested in the discourse, and how the discourse also shapes power relations. In other words, a reflexivity is shown—discourse is not made in a vacuum nor is it received in one. This makes CDA a tool for uncovering assumptions of racism, sexism and inequality in language. Since CDA reveals power relations in discourse, it is also a useful approach for analysing extremist materials, as they are often value-laden through the category of propaganda due to their (attempted) persuasive characteristics. Fairclough mentions that CDA has a "particular focus on discourse and on relations between discourse and other social elements".[28] For this reason, CDA allows us to go past the initial coding of "religious" and "non-religious" in discourse within terrorist materials to examine the wider social significance. The exploration in this article illuminates social elements of political awareness—namely how the foreign fighter proclaims agency through a process of critical reasoning that is framed in autobiographical productions of the Islamic State.

Working within this usage of CDA, I also treat the autobiographical materials through a lens of interpretivism. An interpretive approach views linguistic repetitions or "markers" in

27. Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London: Longman, 1989); Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2001); Ruth Wodak, ed., *Language, Power and Ideology* (Amsterdam: Benjamins Publishing, 1989). Also refer to power and knowledge formations in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

28. Norman Fairclough, "Critical discourse analysis," in *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, edited by James Paul Gee and Michael Handford, (London: Routledge, 2012): 9.

discourse that would reveal the world-view in the narrative of the speaker, as seen in research that focuses on policy elites and international security issues.[29] The intent of Islamic State recruitment materials is to highlight the organisation's success in attracting the "foreign". In other words, the Islamic State attempts to prove that a certain legitimacy exists in its constructed, homogenous Muslim diaspora. Additionally, it attempts to prove that a competition exists which causes citizenship negotiation in the populace within established nation-states. The "foreign" individual therefore is stylistically framed as elite, compared to the more numerous fighters from countries whose "foreignness" is not seen as competitively attractive as the "Westerner". Moreover, the Western media news outlets are attracted to these productions, further framing the subjects as representatives of the Islamic State. In this way, the foreign fighter makes an apt representation as a form of a leader, a policy elite that affects political action in a reactive nature and shapes perceptions of the Islamic State.

The interpretive approach also notices how *dilemmas* are constructed and the responses used to justify certain actions. Bevir *et al.* explain that *dilemmas* arise for institutions or individuals "when a new idea stands in opposition to existing beliefs and practices and so forces a reconsideration of these existing beliefs and associated traditions".[30] In particular, I will see how Al-Cambodi's migration to the Islamic State and his emergence in its recruitment material shapes a *dilemma* with issues of the state's authority. Finally, a lens of securitisation is also considered in the investigation of the state's reaction to Al-Cambodi.

The securitisation approach is developed by the Copenhagen school.[31] Often used for examining discourse in international relations, the securitisation approach views public issues on a spectrum in which the state decides to act upon: from nonpoliticised (no action from the

29. Mark Bevir, Oliver Daddow and Ian Hall, *Interpreting Global Security* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014).

30. Bevir et al., *Interpreting Global Security*, 7.

31. Buzan, Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*.

state) to politicised to securitised. The latter term (securitised) refers to issues that are presented as an "existential threat", examining how salient speech actors frame an object as being threatened in which certain actions are required. From President George W. Bush scripting the Al-Qaeda orchestrated terror acts of 9/11 as "enemies of freedom" in which "freedom itself is under attack" to the Executive Order signed by President Donald J. Trump who declares that "entry of nationals of Syria as refugees is detrimental to the interests of the United States",[32] a long history of securitising acts are easily found in political discourse for securing a populace of "us" from "them". Noticing what acts are done for security purposes in a certain time and context requires understanding how, in the words of Edward Said, the "framework separating us from them is belligerent, constructed and situational".[33] Highlighting this construction, Wæver (1999) elucidates that an approach of securitisation is about the "inherently political nature of any designation of security issues", thereby putting forth the ethical questions of "why do you call this a security issue and what are the implications of doing this?".[34]

Part three and four applies the considerations of critical discourse analysis, interpretivism and securitisation to the Islamic State production, "Stories from the Land of the Living: Abu Khalid Al-Cambodi", as well as to the reception of this video and the reaction of his state, Australia, and the United States. A strict framework is not used, as a blended application of the approaches develops a more holistic view of the video, its subject and the reception of both. As critical discourse analysis illuminates the constructions of political situations, it is

32. "President Bush Addresses the Nation," *The Washington Post*, 20 September 2001, para. 7, 20, 22, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html; "Executive Order Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States" (White House, January 27, 2017, section 5c), https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states/.

33. Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000), 557.

34. Wæver, "Securitizing Sectors? Reply to Eriksson," 334.

used to analyse the themes in the production and how they situate the speaker in a political role in part three. Since part four analyses the reception of an Australian joining the Islamic State, a lens of interpretivism and securitisation is used to show how Al-Cambodi's migration causes a *dilemma*, a situation that arises due to the event of a citizen challenging the state's domestic sovereignty over its citizenry. Accordingly, Al-Cambodi has been designated worldwide by established states as a threat. Therefore, a lens of securitisation is also applied to view how his presence has embodied the "existential" threat to several countries, thereby presenting a challenge which may de-legitimise the state's claim to domestic sovereignty.

3.5 Analysis of "Stories from the Land of the Living: Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi"

In April 21, 2015, the Islamic State released a twelve minute, thirty-five second video online entitled, "Stories from the Land of the Living: Abu Khaled al-Cambodi". Contrasting the more well-known 2014 production "There is no Life without Jihad" that featured several nationalities of foreign fighters, this video is an intimate documentary of just one foreign fighter. It begins in the typical fashion of Al-Hayat Media Center productions. The Arabic liturgical blessing of "*bis'm allah ar-rahmann ar-raheem*" appears in white font against a black background and fades into a droplet of calligraphy. A golden Al-Hayat Media Center logo appears in this calligraphy, stylised remarkably similar to Al-Jazeera News logo, which is presumed as being intentional as this beginning production credit operates as a "trademark" to signify that the following material is from an official "state" institution and trusted media producer. See Figure one.



Figure 1. (from left) The video's opening production credits with *bis'm allah ar-rahmann ar-raheem*, Al-Hayat Media Center logo and the Al Jazeera News Agency Logo (https://www.aljazeera.com/aboutus/).

This video does not represent a command to convert to Islam. It also does not order Muslims to make *hijrah* (migration) to the Islamic State. It does urge for attacks on—in its terms—a *kafir* (unbeliever), however this is at the end of the video and is built upon prior narratives of the failings of the state. In other words, this video attempts to rationalise a form of "religious" brutality through attempts at critical reasoning, going further than just being categorised as having a victimisation theme along identity politics. With a critical approach towards power relations, different political themes are revealed.

This section presents two themes that are strongly prevalent in the production. The first theme is the awareness of political agency. I detail how Al-Cambodi's *subject position* operates to structure the power relations of the Islamic State.[35] The second theme is the projection of critical thinking. I explain how this theme aids in positioning the Islamic State as a competitive entity. In both of these sections, I utilise direct quotes from "Stories from the Land of the Living: Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi" in order to show how the themes emerge throughout the twelve minute video.

35. Fairclough, *Language and Power*.

3.5.1 "This is the reality of things": The theme of political awareness and agency

Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi represents how a recruitment video—shot documentary style—projects a progressive face as the "everyman" in an organisation that is usually framed as traditional or even pre-modern due to its harsh judicial code and rejection of the authority of modern states and international governing bodies such as the United Nations.[36] Abu Khaled al-Cambodi is the subject in this video and the only speaker. (Additionally, an Arabic *nasheed* [religious acapella music] plays at certain parts of the video.) Figure two is a screenshot which shows how he is displayed, sitting and walking in several locations and with different people.



Figure 2. Title screen (top left, 00:36), talking about visiting Cambodia (top right, 01:55), standing behind a man in a camouflage jacket and talking to two other men with a baby (bottom left, 5:11), walking with an assumed woman in a freshly-mown park (bottom right, 10:18).

36. *Dabiq 14: The Murtadd Brotherhood,* April 2016, Al Hayat Media Center, 56.

In this documentary, Abu Khaled is in a *subject position*. According to Davies and Harré, the positioning may be interactive, "in which what one person says positions another", or reflexive, "in which one positions oneself".[37] This operates in discourse types, the assumed rules on what speech is deemed to be "correct" in a certain setting—relating to Foucault's *discursive formation*.[38] Discourse develops "truths" and generates knowledge about a person and her/his perceived world. The *subject position* is "essentially a matter of doing (or not doing) certain things".[39] In turn, people become social agents, representing a certain identity through the discourse in a discursive formation – like an ethnic identity, national identity, gender, class, etc. The very first sentences uttered by Al-Cambodi explicitly structure how he identifies (positions) himself, and wishes us to identify (position) him as well. In other words, a certain "truth" and knowledge is produced through his *subject position* as the individual who joins the Islamic State. The following extract exemplifies the reflexive positioning of Al-Cambodi:

> This is brother Abu Khalid Al-Cambodi. I come from the land of Australia and *hamdu allah* [thanks be to God] today I want to share with you brothers and sisters my story of how I came to Islam.
>
> (00:34-00:45).

The speaker's birth name is Neil Christopher Prakash. However, the name "Neil Christopher Prakash" links to his prior identity before joining the Islamic State. Similar to how Bruce Jenner revealed herself as embodying a new, female identity with "Call me Caitlyn" boldly

37. Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré, "Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 20 (1990): 48.

38. Discursive formations are statements and concepts that develop and confine what counts as "knowledge". Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1972).

39. Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 32.

written across the cover picture for the July 2015 issue of *Vanity Fair*, Neil Prakash has transitioned from an ethnically Cambodian-Fijian, Buddhist, Australian citizen to an ethnically Cambodian-Fijian, Muslim, Islamic State citizen in a very public fashion. The choice of renaming oneself is intentional and carries meaning in how one wants to be identified. The last name, Al-Cambodi, is significant and represents a pattern found with contemporary Islamic extremist foreign fighters: from Al-Qaeda's and al-Shabab's "Abu Mansoor Al-Amriki" (the American) to the Islamic State's "Abu Adam al-Australi" (the Australian), "Abu Fu'Ad Al-Faransi" (the French) and "Abu Abdullah al-Britani" (the Britain).

Keeping one's nationality and displaying it as a label is a strategic move for the Islamic State. It provides a form of legitimacy in the Islamic State's quest to represent and support a global array of "citizens". In fact, the *nom de guerre* "Al-Britani" is so popular that it is chosen by dozens of British citizens who have travelled to take part in the Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra organisations.[40] Translated as *the Cambodian*, Al-Cambodi denotes the foreign "currency" that is continually utilised by the Islamic State. In other words, the Islamic State is highly aware that projecting a stylised display of "foreignness" in its foreign fighters provokes media attention, thus circulating the video much farther than being bound to jihadist forums and covert sharing.

The phrase "I come from the land of Australia" displays that the journey to the Islamic State is possible. Citizenship negotiation is, therefore, possible. Addressing both "brothers and sisters", Al-Cambodi establishes himself as not only an authority of the journey, but an authority of the successes in religious conversion with "I want to share with you" of "how I

40. Sengupta, "Dozens of jihadis fighting in Syria using the name al-Britani," *The Independent*, 27 February, 2015, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/dozens-of-jihadis-in-fighting-in-syria-using-the-name-al-britani-10076635.html.

came to Islam". This is a very salient aspect of the video, as most propaganda is assumed as showing unity and a plea for the constructed homogenous Muslim *ummah* (nation, community). In turn, this assumption of a homogenous "target" audience has framed the base of ethnographic research on Muslim youth audience reactions to Islamic State videos.[41] However, the theme of conversion in general is prominent in Islamic State materials. In particular, Al-Cambodi sets up an argument of the "irrationality" in the tradition of following your family's religion.

Al-Cambodi shares his personal story of conversion. This conversion is proven "true" by the use of such references as travelling to Cambodia with his family and requesting a statue if he can eat food during "Cambodian New Year" (at 01:27-02:20 in the video). He represents the idea that one is not born with religion, but comes to religion, as "come to Islam". He further explains the steps of conversion and education. He even addresses the reality of wavering in one's faith. Throughout the monologue, he code-switches to extremely recognisable, liturgical Arabic that is assumed to signify religiousness. The extracts below exemplify liturgical code-switching, sprinkling "religiousness" in an ornamental fashion:

> There were brothers giving me *daw'ah* [preaching, missionary act]
>
> (03:20).

> The *hadith* [story in the *Sunnah* collection] says that the one who kills a *kafir* [non-believer] they will not be in the same place in the *akhira* [afterlife]… You kill him, Allah has promised you a place in *Jannah*, *inshallah* [heaven, by the will of God] (11:20).

41. Simon Cottee and Jack Cunliffe, "Watching ISIS: How Young Adults Engage with Official English-language ISIS Videos," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (2018).

Al-Cambodi's appearance in the video has been generalised amongst other foreign fighters as being "designed to exalt the holy warrior image as the face of ISIS instead of the face of cult members who were killed for the ambitions of a terrorist organisation".[42] This generalising claim, however, is an inaccurate analysis which overlooks several key features of Al-Cambodi's speech: the long monologue about his formative years, the negotiation of identity, the educational "training" to be a proper Muslim and most importantly, the proclamation of self-awareness in what it means to be a citizen. The latter refers to the realisation that one has a choice to support her/his government, if one first *realises* the costs in supporting it. The call to commit violence only appears in the last minute of the video. However, the projection of a citizen negotiating his citizenship and being politically aware runs throughout the twelve minutes. The extract below exemplifies a political awareness of a citizen questioning the dynamics of power in the relationship with his state, rather than constructing unity by way of a certain social identity of being "Muslim".

> Finally one day, when my uncle came to visit me, and I had the energy to go speak to him. 'Cuz at this time I was very tired, very fatigued and not wanting to do anything. *Alhamdu allah* [praise to God] gave me the strength to sit with him. And when I sat with him I started asking him questions. I said, "What are we doing in life?" And he told me, "We work. We work, we have a family, we get a nice house, have a car, in the end we die and that's it." And I said, "But that can't really be it." I go, "Don't you ever think about where, everyday you're working, you're working, you're working, all this money goes to a government and the government uses that money for what?" He goes, "For to help the society." I go, "No, not really, if you

42. Malcolm Nance and Christopher Sampson, *Hacking ISIS: How to Destroy the Cyber Jihad* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2017), 77.

> think about deeply, they use that money to have war on other people." He goes, "What do you mean?"
>
> I go, "You know yourself we come from Cambodian background. What happened? What happened when America invaded Vietnam, they invaded Cambodia." I said, "At the time, what was taken from us?" He said, "A lot of things." I go, "Exactly, so these governments you work for, you give all your money for, you slave, every single day of your life for this. And all that money now is directed to war, to take natural resources from other countries." He said, [laughs] "You're thinking too deep into this." I said, "No, this is the reality of things, if you research it, you'll know this." (03:41-04:56).

Al-Cambodi first asks a family elder (his uncle) the meaning of life. "We work", his uncle answers, "we have a family, we get a nice house, have a car, in the end we die and that's it". Instead of directing the conversation with his uncle to a more spiritual discussion of "what happens when we die"—a direction that one would predict with an Islamic extremist and seen in other recruitment videos as "There is no Life without Jihad" — Al-Cambodi immediately attacks the *worth* and *ethics* of working. Specifically, the worth of working for the Australian government and the ethics involved in adhering to its legitimacy as tax-collector and representing its citizens. In a move which can only be described ironically *anti-war* and even *pacifist* for an Islamic State foreign fighter, Al-Cambodi claims, "they [the government] use that money to have war on other people".

Cambodia is used by Al-Cambodi to exemplify a political awareness and even personal responsibility to not support a government that uses its taxes for warfare. Paralleling a class struggle, he "educates" his elder by stating: "the governments you work for, you give all your money for, you slave, every single day of your life, for this. And all that money now is

directed to war, to take natural resources from other countries". Going even further, Al-Cambodi projects that a critical lens in scrutinising the power in citizen-state relations supports his position. A personal initiative of finding the answer is required to "Be woke" as he states, "This is the reality of things, if you research it, you'll know this". Straddling between the Black Lives Matters slogan of being alert to injustice with "Stay Woke!" and conspiracy theorists slogan of "Wake up, Sheeple!", this extract displays how the Islamic State attempts to provoke political awareness in its global audience. This theme is repeated later in the video, with the phrase, "Now is the time to rise, now is the time to wake up" (11:05). This video, therefore, shows that it is crucial to examine how the Islamic State uses persuasion techniques of "a careful consideration of options" to find "better solutions for complex problems" rather than assigning narratives as propaganda that assumes a "pre-determined point of view".[43] The second theme that particularly stands out is the urge for critical thinking. In particular, this projection is in regards to the citizen-state relation and backgrounds further choices which are categorised as religious (such as terror acts of *jihad*).

3.5.2 "I started analysing": The theme of critical thinking

Current themes that have been established in thematic or narrative analysis of Islamic State content from Al-Hayat Media Center are *friendship and comradery*, *strength and victory*, *religion and religious persecution* and *spiritual and existential fulfilment*.[44] "Stories from the Land of the Living: Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi", however, offers a unique perspective of political intent prior to promoting religious ideology. Specifically, this section of analysis

43. Anthony R. Pratkanis and Marlene E. Turner, "Persuasion and Democracy: Strategies for Increasing Deliberative Participation and Enacting Social Change," *Journal of Social Issues* 52 (1990): 190-191.

44. Macnair and Frank, "To my Brothers in the West."

pertains to narratives which scaffold the urge to critique tradition and the need to analyse socio-political events through critical thinking.

Al-Cambodi establishes—rather quickly—the idea that people usually follow the religion of their family. Immediately after introducing himself as "from Australia", he recounts the following story to the audience, claiming that a Muslim asked him why he (Al-Cambodi) is Buddhist:

> He said, "Why are you following the religion of Buddhism?" I said, "Because my family is," He said, "That's not a reason to stay somewhere, you should keep searching" (00:50).

This narration of conversion projects the idea of questioning *why* one follows a tradition of his/her family's religion is natural. In turn, a personal quest in critical thinking of this assumption leads to a form of emancipation and empowerment. This theme of showing Al-Cambodi actively doing critical reasoning prior to supporting the Islamic State and "freeing" himself from the shackles of tradition is repeated throughout the video. Specifically, this is seen in the following extracts, as Al-Cambodi both questions himself subjectively and questions a family elder again:

> So after this I started thinking deeper and I started getting a lot of thoughts to myself. And the thoughts were telling me why don't you leave your religion and enter Islam? But then other thoughts would come to me and say but would you leave the religion of your forefathers to follow something new, strange? (01:04).

> I saw people praying to statues…I actually saw the meaning of what this religion [Buddhism] was and it didn't make sense to me. So I was very sad, I

> was very confused, very upset at the time. And I asked my mum, and I go, "How are we doing this? How does it make any sense?" She said, "This is what we know" (01:50).
>
> So after my trip I went home, and once I got home I started analysing…
>
> (03:20).

This is the danger in the Islamic State recruitment efforts, as with any contemporary extremist organisation that projects a diverse pool of support. The Islamic State has the ability to represent a rationalisation of political conversion and rebellion due to analysing choices, rather than only religious adherence to defend the Sunni Muslim in-group in a form of identity politics. In other words, the deeper articulation of a citizen noticing that *they* have agency in a choice of authority may lie beyond the initial layer of religious identifications that are assumed to bind the transitional recruits together. Al-Cambodi's structured story exemplifies how the Islamic State projects its transnational supporters as carefully reasoning out choices and being politically aware. This political awareness goes beyond noticing discrimination towards the (Sunni) Muslim populace or a "War on Islam". It encompasses being aware of the power dynamics in citizen-state relations. Overall, this realisation illuminates how the foreign fighter is framed as representing the dynamics of citizenship. In other words, this analysis shows how the fluidity in authority recognition and the agency of the individual should be considered as part of the growth in support due to its salience in recruitment narratives.

Going beyond the assumed narratives of "brotherhood and unity" and "victimisation", "Stories from the Land of the Living" projects the possibility of a radical departure of one's forefather's religion. A departure from the mundane futility in working everyday towards taxation and waging war towards causes that are perceived as unjust. Furthermore, it contains

an awareness of how Muslim women are victims of Islamophobia in which the state *fails* to protect its citizens. This is particularly salient in Al-Cambodi's plea of, "Look how much of your sisters have been violated. All I hear on the news in Australia is this sister was hurt. This sister's *hijab* was ripped off. But no, you see the brothers sitting, and I ask you brothers. When is the time you gonna rise up and attack them for attacking you?" (11:14). While victimisation is inherent in this quote, it also reveals that Al-Cambodi is framing the Western state as being unable to uphold its idealised democratic standards of providing safety for all citizens equally. Therefore, the citizen must act independently in a form of vigilantism in order to de-legitimise the assumed authority of the state and correct its failings. However, in order to glean a more thorough understanding of the salience and reflexive elements in the narratives, it is important to view how Al-Cambodi's migration and public appearance as an Islamic State foreign fighter recruiter present a challenge to the domestic sovereignty in established states engaged with the War on Terror narrative.

3.6 The reaction: a challenge to domestic sovereignty

Understandably, the appearance of an Australian citizen directing an Islamic State recruitment message to both "brothers" and "sisters" back home caused great concern. As predicted with other Western foreign fighters, news agencies delved into Al-Cambodi's past in an attempt to show hypocrisy, such as "Australian IS recruiter Neil Prakash was a wannabe gangster rapper".[45] Al-Cambodi, however, did not hide his conversion into a man of faith, he celebrated it. Whether he or she is a convert or from a Muslim family, the Islamic State's Western foreign fighter is often self-characterised in promotional materials as having an identifiable moment of questioning current conditions and personal behaviours in their

45. "Australian IS recruiter Neil Prakash was a wannabe gangster rapper," *News.com.au*, 28 April 2015, http://www.news.com.au/world/middle-east/australian-is-recruiter-neil-prakash-was-a-wannabe-gangster-rapper/news-story/ff268dc2635733808d377d332047f183.

Western country. In turn, this is framed as leading them to having a distinct "born again" moment of acceptance into being a person of faith. On some level, this action is recognisable in the Islamic State's "Western" audience for which it targets its English language materials, as it parallels the Christian Evangelical "born-again" practice. In other words, Al-Cambodi's announcement is a global declaration that has aspects of being "born-again"— a practice which is often public and displays an individual commitment towards changing aspects of their life and adhering to certain doctrines. As discussed in part two, Al-Cambodi talks about his conversion from Buddhism to Islam and passivity before converting in great detail.

According to Australian Attorney General George Brandis, the danger of Al-Cambodi is due to his influence not being bound within Islamic State territory. Al-Cambodi was "the principal Australian reaching back from the Middle East into Australia".[46] He travelled to Raqqa, Syria via Malaysia in 2013, approximately two years before appearing in the video. Like most in his generation, he was a prolific social media user who became a point of contact for Islamic State migration facilitation. One of his now-defunct Twitter account handles, @Abuk_313, had a description of "Migration Matters" with location as "Tawheed Flags Flyin", and another listed several Twitter account contacts "For help with Hijrah".[47] Links to encrypted messaging accounts, such as Telegram and Surespot, were displayed on his Twitter accounts—forming a pipeline from publically sourcing a jihadist celebrity such as Al-Cambodi to having the privilege to contact him privately.

Once it was known that Al-Cambodi was in Islamic State territory and actively encouraging migration, his state of citizenship took action. On October 22, 2014, the Australian

46. Refer to the interview with Brandis in Alistair Walsh, "Ex-IS fighter Abu Khaled al-Cambodi pleads for government help from Australia," *DW-Deutsche Welle,* 13 August 2017, http://www.dw.com/en/ex-is-fighter-abu-khaled-al-cambodi-pleads-for-government-help-from-australia/a-40070867.

47. "Neil Prakash" (Counter-Extremism Project, accessed 12 February 2018, https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/neil-prakash).

government cancelled his passport.[48] The action of cancelling passports is a feature of dealing with a rapid influx of foreign fighters joining violent extremist and terrorist movements.[49] They present a risk not only by returning back to their home countries with the possibility of recruitment or engaging in terror acts, but also through the privilege that comes with a having a "Western" passport. As an Australian, Al-Cambodi had visa-free access (or visa on arrival) to 171 countries—making it the seventh strongest passport in the world.[50] Issuing an arrest warrant upon return is helpful for domestic security. However, a state that is able to secure the privilege of travel freedom for its citizens is also aware of its responsibility in the fluidity of the citizens' visa-free travel choices. This displays how the state –in the role of a security practitioner—is constantly interpreting contexts, "deciding what needs to be secured, what might threaten the referent object's security, and how these threats might be addressed".[51] Despite the obvious security reasons for passport cancellation, we must also be aware of how this act may lead to further entrenchment and reliance on the terrorist organisation's goals being successful. As Byman and Shapiro observe, once a passport is cancelled, the foreign fighters become "highly dependent on the group they've joined".[52]

The act of cancelling passports is not just a practical move, it is strategic for enforcing the perception of authority in discouraging others to join Al-Cambodi. The legitimacy of authority, after all, is dependent on the *anticipation* of power usage.[53] Therefore, a restriction

48. "Commonwealth Government Notice, C2015G00866" (*Gazette Government Notices*, 4 June 2015, https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2015G00866).

49. Daniel Byman and Jeremy Shapiro, "Be Afraid. Be a Little Afraid: The Threat of Terrorism from Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq" (Brookings Institute, 2014, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Be-Afraid-web.pdf).

50. "Henley Passport Index" (Henley and Partners, 2018, https://www.henleyglobal.com/henley-passport-index/).

51. Oliver Daddow and Jamie Gaskarth, "From Value Protection to Value Promotion: Interpreting British Security Policy," in *Interpreting Global Security*, edited by Mark Bevir, Oliver Daddow and Ian Hall, (London: Routledge, 2014), 73.

52. Byman and Shapiro, "Be Afraid," 6.

53. John Scott, *Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 5.

of travel reinforces the sovereignty that was challenged by his migration. The state must publically re-position the power structure that was challenged by its citizen voluntary migrating to a conflict area and supporting an organisation that denies the sovereignty of the state. "Perception matters", notes Bryan, "especially in a democratic age when popular opinion drives government policy".[54] These acts are defined actions in a power relationship, and further instil a point of securitisation rationale that enforces a certain socio-political expectation. As Wæver elucidates, a characteristic of securitisation is an act which is a "productive moment" that reconfigures a social condition.[55] Restricting of choice, therefore, is an exercise of power: the greater the restriction, the greater is the power of the one who is restricting.[56] In this way, the "tactical" move of passport cancellation is towards the "strategic" move of reinforcing a hierarchal power relation between the state and its citizens. Thus, the symbolic aspect reinforces the legitimacy of authority that was challenged by Al-Cambodi's migration.

Al-Cambodi does explicitly reference and challenge the situation of passport cancellation, as seen in the following extract:

> And I'd like to praise the attacks by my dear beloved brother and may Allah accept him. And the other brothers. My dear brother Numan. I knew this brother personally, and the efforts that he tried to make *hijrah* [migration], when he failed because the government took his passport. It did not stop him. Look what he did, brothers. He rushed towards *Jannah* [heaven] (12:10).

54. Ian Bryan, "Sovereignty and the Foreign Fighter Problem," *Orbis* 54, no. 1 (2010): 118.

55. Ole Wæver, "Politics, security, theory," *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 4-5 (2011): 468.

56. Scott, *Power*, 30. Also refer to Thomas Wartenberg, *The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

It is presumed that "Numan" is Abdul Numan Haider. He is a suspected Islamic State supporter whose passport was cancelled in 2014. In September that year, Haider stabbed two officers with a knife after arriving at the police station in a planned meeting to contest the cancellation. An Islamic State flag was found in his possession.[57] As a spokesperson for the Islamic State, Al-Cambodi's message of *knowing* that the government attempts to restrict support for the Islamic State through a restriction of travel performs the function of a dialogue. He is reflexively aware of how the state enacts power over the citizen. In turn, the message is a warning: if the state restricts emigration from its territory to the Islamic State, then the state should expect attacks within its borders. Exemplifying the notion that sovereignty is a powerful concept "only so long as it commands respect",[58] the Victorian Joint Counter-Terrorism Team secured an arrest warrant on 19 August 2015 "should Prakash return to Australia".[59] However, the threat to the legitimacy of authority and domestic sovereignty was not restricted to Al-Cambodi's home state. Just as Al-Cambodi became the Islamic State's "transnational" voice of authority, the threat of him and the challenge of what he embodied and signified also became transnational.

On January 1, 2017, Neil Christopher Prakash was one of four "foreign" individuals who became a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT), per order of the U.S. Department of

57. John Silvester, "Melbourne terror shooting: Numan Haider 'planned to behead Victoria Police officers, drape bodies in IS flag'," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 September 2014, http://www.smh.com.au/victoria/melbourne-terror-shooting-numan-haider-planned-to-behead-victoria-police-officers-drape-bodies-in-is-flag-20140924-10lb4i.html.

58. Bryan, "Sovereignty and the Foreign Fighter Problem," 117.

59. Carly Crawford, "Warrant issued for Islamic State recruiter Neil Prakash," *Herald Sun*, 19 August 2015, http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/warrant-issued-for-islamic-state-recruiter-neil-prakash/news-story/e6baca708051256d627f6d57ba786418. Also see "Counter-terrorism related sanctions listings" Media Release for Foreign Affairs for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 4 June 4 2015, https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2015/jb_mr_150604.aspx?w=tb1CaGpkPX%2FlS0K%2Bg9ZKEg%3D%3D.

the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets and Control.[60] This action was in pursuant of an Executive Order created shortly after 9/11, signed on September 23, 2001 by President George W. Bush. With the objective to "lead the international effort to bring a halt to the evil of terrorist activity",[61] the act of specially designating foreign individuals as "Specially Designated Global Terrorists" is not just a move for symbolically proving some sort of international solidarity against evil. It is also done in anticipation of a foreigner, such as Al-Cambodi, having the ability to challenge the domestic sovereignty of the United States. Al-Cambodi has influence that potentially persuades American citizens to de-legitimise the United States' authority. This action of international solidarity, therefore, directly relates to the power relationship of the citizen-state construction on a domestic level.

In order to identify this domestic power relation, we must identify the intentions of the actors involved. The threat of the foreign fighter who has successfully emigrated causes the state to reassert its position of authority in the power structure of citizen-state. This positioning follows a trend in post-9/11 treatment of citizenship in certain states, as seen in case studies on the justification of citizenship revocation in the U.K., the U.S. and Australia.[62] Additionally, there is an increase of "hyper-legislation" that affirms or describes conditions in the citizen-state relationship. Specifically, Pillai and Williams observe that citizenship has been defined by policy elites as a "privilege" with conditions rather than a right.[63] By designating a non-American as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist" and prohibiting

60. "Treasury Designates Australian and Southeast Asian ISIL Operatives and Leaders" (U.S. Department of the Treasury Press Center, 10 January 2017, https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0698.aspx.

61. "Executive Order 13224," U.S Department of State, 23 September 2001, https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/122570.htm.

62. Pillai and Williams, "The Utility of Citizenship Stripping Laws in the UK, Canada and Australia," Melbourne University Law Review 41, no. 2 (2017), http://law.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/2659178/Pillai-and-Williams-412-Advance.pdf.

63. Ibid.

Americans from "engaging in transactions" with SDGTs, the state is enacting domestic sovereignty as well as structuring legitimacy of being the sole authority over the American citizen. The fight against terrorism, after all, is about a contestation over the legitimate authority over individuals.[64] Just as the Islamic State projects "triumphalism" when it produces a video on the successful migration of a foreign fighter,[65] so does the state in its swift legislation on citizen-state relations. An action which betrays allegiance, must, in turn, "come with a price".[66]

3.7 Implications and conclusion

The analysis that arises from this blended methods approach to "Stories from the Land of the Living: Abu Khalid Al-Cambodi" displays the opportunities that are available from performing a context-specific case study on both the material and actor. Contextualising the multi-national speakers' positions and discourse enriches our understanding of the rhetorical strategies that the Islamic State media employed in order to provoke the audience into critically thinking about their position as citizens in relations with their states. Furthermore, instead of relying on prior scholarship of generalised themes, this analysis highlights the nuances and reflexive elements in Al-Cambodi's recruitment. Aware of both being a citizen of Australia as well as a new "citizen" of the Islamic State, Al-Cambodi taps into recognisable elements of citizenship and daily living that go well beyond being a Muslim.

64. Bryan, "Sovereignty and the Foreign Fighter problem," 118.

65. Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate."

66. As stated by Senator Nicole Eaton when introducing the *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act*, "Citizenship is based on allegiance. Those granted citizenship pledge allegiance to our monarch, the Queen of Canada, and to our system of government and its laws. Betrayal of this allegiance comes with a price". Refer to Pillai and Williams, "The Utility of Citizenship Stripping Laws in the UK, Canada and Australia," 22.

This is not to say that religious discourse is to be ignored. On the contrary, it should be scrutinised just as thoroughly to understand how it reflects the external socio-political environment of the speaker and the audience in contemporary contexts. The production is a performance: an intimate reveal of not just Neil Christopher Prakash turning into Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi, but of a citizen questioning the role of authority over his life. In turn, the state reasserts its domestic sovereignty and authority that was challenged by the migration of its citizen through restrictive acts of power—setting a precedent of what to expect in the citizen-state relationship going forward.

Contrasting the oft-framing of nihilistic and irrational behaviour of the Islamic State foreign fighter—one who beheads a journalist with zest, forces his children to execute hostages, enslaves and rapes civilians and hostages—the careful stylisation of its "citizens" such as Al-Cambodi urges us to consider how to analyse discourse beyond the normal constructions of "othering" or even propaganda framings of ideology, victimisation and religious fulfilment. This consideration follows the advice of Meleagrou-Hitchens, Hughes and Clifford, who warn that "it is essential to consider the differential impact of both types of messaging [violent and legitimacy narrative] and how they may contribute to drawing different types of recruits".[67] As difficult and unpalatable as it may be to distance the foreign fighter from the horrific and brutal actions they frame themselves—and have been framed—within, persuasive techniques that encourage agency and rationalisation of choices must be considered. This consideration must be performed in a path of analysis that is not just in the normal trajectory of Islamic State recruitment goals, but in the trajectory of attempting to exploit the fragile relationship of state and citizen. Al-Cambodi attracts attention not only because he represents a foreigner having adventures and living in an "exotic" land while

67. Meleagrou-Hitchens, Hughes and Bennett, "The Travelers," 69.

engaging in military activities. His narration of working, conversion, self-doubt, taxes, self-education and challenging the "status quo" of citizen-state relations and family traditions is decidedly recognisable to citizens around the world. He was not born into supporting the Islamic State, he brought himself into supporting it by first rebelling against the norm conditions expected in his own home state.

Going forward, the analysis goes beyond enriching research on Islamic State foreign fighter migration. It contributes to our understanding of citizen-state relations in the recruitment dynamics of non-state actors that project and boast transnational support. It shows that the message to commit localised acts of terrorism can be within narratives that urge for a personal realisation of power relations. In other words, there is a goal of wanting supporters to de-legitimise their local authority by breaking the bonds of norms in the social contract, regardless of whether or not the individual can migrate to build the territory of a competing state.

Future research with the blended method presented in this article has two directions: analysing Islamic State materials for complex, reflexive narratives and preparing a socio-political situated lens for current and future non-state actors that command transnational support (especially those classified as "ideological" groups). For the former direction, it would be useful to determine the politically salient narratives in other materials, such as "There is no Life without Jihad" which features several multi-national foreign fighters with distinctive names and, of course, the NHS-styled "Islamic State Healthcare Services" video that features the Australian doctor Tareq Kamleh, re-named as "Abu Yousef al-Australie". Beyond displaying the assumed narratives of *utopia* and *religious identity*, these videos exemplify the themes that manifested in "Stories from the Land of the Living" as well as others that reflect specific socio-political conditions. For the latter direction that expands the

method past Islamic State propaganda, it would be useful to consider recruitment materials from a non-Islamist group that seeks transnational support through extremist views, such as Generation Identity (a "pan-European Identitarian Movement" that presents a multi-national force for an essentialised, "ethno-cultural, European" identity). While it is not a terrorist organisation, its online recruitment narratives share similar tropes to those that are in the materials of the Islamic State. Thus, this organisation—along with others that aim for transnational support with ethno-nationalist or ideological narratives—are ripe for an analysis to understand their influence in certain socio-political environments.

In conclusion, this article has evidenced how recruitment narratives become critical for understanding contemporary political relationships between the individual and authority—offering contributions on the health of citizen-state relations on a wider scale than just the foreign fighters of the Islamic State. The phenomena of Western foreign fighters reveals far more than the changing face of terrorism recruitment. It unveils the exploitable tension erupting from the power dynamics between the individual and authority.

Chapter Four

Sexual Suppression and Political Agency: Evoking a Woman's Support for the Islamic State

4.1 Abstract

This article explores the gender dynamics of recruitment materials published by the so-called "Islamic State". Through an investigation of the Islamic State's only female-authored column in *Dabiq*, it reveals how a unique "voice" evokes support by urging readers to consider their agency in both the citizen-state relationship and the husband-wife patriarchal structure. It utilises an original method of contextualising narratives through *reflexivity* and *responsivity*. Overall, it reveals that an analysis of contemporary extremist recruitment materials must consider the mediatised environment in which it forms as well as the realistic political situations it responds to.

Keywords: Islamic State, recruitment, *Dabiq*, gender, reflexive, responsive

4.2 Introduction

The White Widow. Jihadi Jane. The Bethnal Green schoolgirls as "jihadi brides". These truncated names refer to the familiar, media-constructed fascination with women and girls who have joined contemporary Islamic terrorist organisations. It denotes the irrational, patriarchal terrorist merged with the liberated, Western woman. This construction has been normalised through images of black-clad young women raising Kalashnikovs in defiance to their global audience, whose gloved fingers tweet out the latest piece of jihadi "girl power". While the White Widow (British citizen Samantha Louise Lewthwaite) operated on the front lines of the radical Islamist group Al-Shabaab to become an international terrorist, Jihadi Jane (American citizen Colleen Renee La Rose) is more known for providing material support and conspiring to commit terrorism. Less than ten years after Jihadi Jane's indictment, the academic focus on what drives girls and women to join terrorist organisations has expanded to match the gender-orientated recruitment for the most influential Islamic terrorist organisation, the Islamic State. After all, the school girls of east London are more publically known for the role of being "jihadi brides" than holding a grenade or being politically active, fitting well within the media trend of over-determining traditional(ized) femininity in female terrorist supporters.[1] However, the urge to distinctly mark the motives of the "jihadi brides" as primarily romanticism or being victims of brainwashing is, warn Saltman and Smith, dangerously "reductionist".[2]

Most media constructions of Islamic State foreign female migrants have downplayed their agency while conversely exaggerating the agency of women who battle this terrorist

1. Laura Sjoberg, "Jihadi brides and female volunteers: Reading the Islamic State's war to see gender and agency in conflict dynamics," *Conflict, Management and Peace Studies* 35, no. 3 (2018): 296-311.

2. Erin Marie Saltman and Melanie Smith, "'Till Martyrdom Do Us Part': Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon" (Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2015) https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Till_Martyrdom_Do_Us_Part_Gender_and_the_ISIS_Phenomenon.pdf.

organisation.[3] The jihadi woman is primarily positioned as being "misled, brainwashed and championing the Jihadi cause of the Caliphate".[4] Research, however, suggests otherwise as Bloom points out that agency exists in female motivation for supporting terrorist goals.[5] Motives for this voluntary engagement may encompass overlapping factors of revenge, redemption, relationship and respect,[6] and the specific narratives aimed at Islamic State female supporters operate as a source of "empowerment".[7] This empowerment factor develops within what Hegghammer predicted as a "female emancipation" turn in the evolving jihadi recruitment environment.[8] In the face of this research however, undercurrents of generalised observations of narrative themes threaten the progress made in understanding the strength and complexity in propaganda created by the Islamic State. Its narratives are, and always have been, more than "marrying Islamic State fighters and bearing their children." [9]

Successful migration to the Islamic State has revealed that we need to understand extremist supporters in a way that is fully aware of the social and cultural milieu that has shaped the identifications of the groups they join. Current analysis on female-subject narratives in Islamic State recruitment materials still view religious obligation as a primary hypothesis for motivation and narrative themes.[10] It is not surprising that the religious dimension guides

3. Sjoberg, "Jihadi brides and female volunteers."

4. Yasmin Ibrahim, "Visuality and the 'Jihadi-bride' The re-fashioning of desire in the digital age," *Social Identities* (2017):10, doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2017.1381836.

5. Mia Bloom, *Bombshell. The Many Faces of Women Terrorists* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011).

6. Ibid.

7. Elizabeth Pearson and Emily Winterbotham, "Women, Gender and Daesh Radicalisation," *The RUSI Journal* 162, no. 3 (2017): 60-72. See also Kiriloi Ingram, "IS's Appeal to Western Women: Policy Implications" (International Centre for Counter-terrorism, October 2017) http://dx.doi.org/10.19165/2017.2.04.

8. Kathy Gilsinan, "The ISIS Crackdown on Women, by Women," *The Atlantic*, 25 July 2014, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/07/the-women-of-isis/375047/.

9. Nance and Sampson, *Hacking ISIS: How to Destroy the Cyber Jihad*, 77.

10. Julia Musail, "'My Muslim sister, indeed you are a mujahidah' – Narratives in the propaganda of the Islamic State to address and radicalize Western Women. An Exemplary analysis of the online magazine *Dabiq,*" *Journal for Deradicalization* 9, (2016): 39-100.

narrative analysis, as further seen in Ingram's lens that positions the narratives as constructing in-group and out-group identity with a "Manichean perception of reality between 'good' and 'evil'".[11] While aspects of religious obligation and belonging are obvious factors in the narratives, a starting dependence on using religious identifications for propaganda analysis overlooks a key element: how this organisation successfully encouraged a force of multinational men and women to migrate and build a "state". In other words, viewing religious narratives in a group pre-defined as a "religiously ideological" terrorist organisation in a "religious wave" of terrorism[12] is actually tautological. It pre-determines the findings and responses while also obscuring the fundamental contemporary features of the Islamic State. Besides treating its recruitment narratives in a deductive manner or in a closed system that reflects Islamic State ideology above all else, it de-politicises individuals who were citizens of states that actively joined a new political organisation with (attempted) statehood characteristics.

This article utilises an innovative method that reveals how recruitment narratives resonate with a contemporary audience. In order to see why narratives may be perceived as "true" and how they encourage citizens to migrate from their states to the Islamic State, it is imperative to view recruitment materials in light of realistic political conditions. We must understand how an official "state" publication dually encourages citizenship negotiation and a breakage of the social contract that keeps one from harming others in society and joining a dangerous group. We thereby need to acknowledge the political salience of the Islamic State as a statehood project, vastly different to its predecessor and competitor Al-Qaeda. These materials develop in reaction to certain political situations in a specific historical time. It is

11. Ingram "IS's Appeal to Western Women," 5.

12. Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical concepts in political science*; Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11."

not relevant *only* in that time, but specific socio-historical conditions do shape how "true" the narratives are to the audience's perception of political events.

I argue that a method of contextual analysis provides rich evidence of the themes in the recruitment narratives of the Islamic State. In particular, this article provides an original method of *reflexivity* and *responsivity* that highlights the media and political importance of recruitment materials. Reflexivity determines the level of self-awareness portrayed in the materials and details how the Islamic State's own projection of importance operates in the competitive media environment. Responsivity highlights how the narratives *do* respond to real, social-political events outside the initial "ideology" of the Islamic State developing a Caliphate. With both of these considerations, an informed understanding of the relevance of the Islamic State narratives develops—highlighting how the materials intend to "report" events and conditions to an audience.

This article demonstrates reflexivity and responsivity elements with a female authored column entitled "From Our Sisters" by an anonymous author named "Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah". "Umm Sumayyah" is the honorific title known as *kunya* (translates as "Mother of Sumayyah") merged with the *nom de guerre* "Al-Muhājirah" (translates to the "female migrant"). This column appears in a semi-recurring instance in the prolific Islamic State magazine, *Dabiq*. Produced from July 2014-July 2016, *Dabiq* is the most comprehensive and well-known propaganda for this terrorist organisation and operated at the height of migration to the territory controlled by the Islamic State. "From Our Sisters" is the only instance in the Islamic State's official propaganda that explicitly provides a female voice while strategically using the "global" language of English with a calculated usage of transliterated (but not necessarily translated) Arabic.

Firstly, the methodology section of this article explains how the considerations of reflexivity and responsivity apply to the column. Secondly, the reflexivity characteristic is discussed through a contextualisation of the reality of women in the Islamic State occupied territories from 2014 to 2017. I focus on the contrast that is created between the Islamic State enforcing a brutal institutionalisation of sexual enslavement while simultaneously needing to attract a force of voluntary female migrants to legitimise the state project. As slavery has been a defensive topic in Islamic State recruitment materials, this leads to a discussion on the media uptake of *Dabiq* and the explicit projection of self-awareness of its own value in Western media. I introduce the language features of the column "From Our Sisters" and assert the need to move beyond a fascination with liturgical (religious) language and scripture references. Then, in the third part, I investigate this female-authored column in depth for its responsive elements.

Through a focus on the context and narratives in issue ten (released in July 2015), I discuss how the themes challenge the "submissive" assumption of Islamic State female jihadists. This section enriches current research on gender-orientated narratives by investigating the particular points of gender-orientated agency. Evidencing with extracts from the column, I illustrate how Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah's advice has themes of recognising corporal agency that claim the independence of the female body in two ways: sexual suppression and migration. I then expand on the responsivity of these themes within the greater socio-political environment. I analyse how they respond to "true" events that evoke a political response to the power relations between citizen and state, rather than simply construct a Manichean worldview or the jihadist ideology of the West versus the *ummah* (Islamic nation). Finally, I conclude with the implications of the findings, highlighting how this specific methodology reveals the success that the Islamic State had in recruiting citizens and how to absorb these findings into the greater scope of understanding and responding to extremist engagement.

4.3 Reflexivity and Responsivity: a methodology for contextualising contemporary extremist narratives

The Islamic State epitomises an organisation that has benefited from decentralised communicative practices and globalised connectivity. An understanding of its materials, therefore, involves a consideration of the effects of mediatisation.[13] Put simply, we must examine the relationship between media and socio-cultural formations. As an extremely dangerous socio-cultural formation, the Islamic State is not only aware of using media to its advantage, it is perceptive of the competitive environment within online space. Thus, looking for narrative themes of competitive "truth" that battle the "falsehoods" of news media is just as important as understanding its strategy of operating on social networks like Twitter. Along with this consideration, I also treat the recruitment narratives for this aspiring "state" as constructing identifications. This treatment follows Lebow's argument that states do not have identities, but rather they have classifying identifications that make them distinct or recognisable to individuals within and outside of the state.[14] The Islamic State narratives reproduce and discipline these classifying identifications to a "global" audience of potential citizens. *Dabiq* particularly exemplifies this continuity and strategic effort at fortifying identifications. However, in order to see how these narratives do more than promote a jihadist ideology, it is important to examine both the *reflexivity* and *responsivity* elements in the discourse.

13. Andreas Hepp, Stig Hjarvard, and Knut Lundby, "Mediatization: Theorizing the Interplay Between Media, Culture, and Society," *Media, Culture & Society* 37, no. 2 (2015): 314-324.

14. Richard N. Lebow, *National Identities and International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

The narrative of belonging to a transnational religious identity is not enough to persuade migration to the Islamic State territory.[15] One of the Islamic State's explicit goals is to attract citizens, and the specific aim of a female-authored column is to attract women. In order to be effective, recruitment narratives must persuade a breakage of a social contract between the citizen and her state. Reflexivity refers to the discourse (in this case, text) projecting a form a self-awareness of operating towards a state-building effort. In other words, reflexivity considers how recruitment materials are produced in a competitive environment that must persuade an audience of citizens for support. It does not rely on an assumption of allegiance through Muslim identity alone. This reflexivity is shown in the next section (part two). It discusses how the Islamic State has adapted to the changing media environment and how the use of religious scripture has also considered a "global", non-Muslim or non-Arabic speaking audience. Once the reflexivity is established, the consideration of responsivity is presented in an analysis of the narratives in part three.

Responsivity refers to how the materials responds to the realistic political conditions of its audience for the aim of provoking localised, political responses. It considers how narratives contain themes—directives, even—that encourage the reader/listener to act in a manner that de-legitimises the authority between her/him and the state. Responsivity establishes the degree in which the author wants the audience to shift allegiances in a deeper manner than just responding by way of identity politics as a Muslim in the "global" *ummah*. It provides an opportunity to analyse narratives past the "sisterhood" or "supporter" construction that women Islamic State members are frequently cast in. In the instance of this female-authored column in *Dabiq*, the responsivity is operationalised through viewing how the narratives intend to de-legitimise two layers of authority that affect the female reader: the state and the

15. Aaron Anfinson, "Projections of Statehood: the disciplining of transnationalism and the attempted (self)legitimisation of the so-called Islamic State" PhD diss., University of Hong Kong, 2018.

patriarchal structure of the domestic realm with the husband. In both cases, the responsivity element reveals that Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah urges for the female reader to claim authority over her body by suppressing sex and enacting this authority with physical migration from one state to another "state". Thus, this action legitimises a new authority with the physical gesture of voluntary mobility. However, before the narratives in "From Our Sisters" are able to be analysed, we must first understand the media salience of the Islamic State's recruitment materials and its recruitment actors. The next section addresses how its propaganda has adapted to media advancements and how there is an explicit display of an awareness of being competitive to a "global" audience.

4.4 Sex slaves and slaves of Allah: the reflexivity of media exposure

"More than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media." This message was from the senior Al-Qaeda leader, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, to the Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) leader, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, in July 2005.[16] Under the section of *al-mushaahid al-dhabh,* "Slaughter scenes", Al-Zawahiri explains how the rising practice of attacking civilians and the Shiite populace would turn the global Muslim community against supporting AQI. However, the Al-Qaeda leader's message of restraint in that 6,300 word letter is diminished with the first page in each issue of the Islamic State's online magazine, *Dabiq*. A translated quote appears above the Table of Contents, paying homage to the Islamic State's founder, the "Sheikh of The Slaughters" Al-Zarqawi eight years after his death: "The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify—by Allah's permission—until it burns the crusader armies in Dābiq. – Abū Mus'ab az-Zarqāwī". Al-Zarqawi originally stated this warning of brutality in an audio message intended for foreign fighter recruitment to his group

16. Ayman Al-Zawahiri, "Zawahiri's Letter to Zarqawi," 2005, https://ctc.usma.edu/harmony-program/zawahiris-letter-to-zarqawi-original-language-2/.

"Jamaat al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad" (translates to "organisation of oneness and religious struggle") on September 11, 2004.[17] Shortly after the statement, he decapitated the American hostage Eugene Armstrong, with Al-Zarqawi's distinct voice belying the anonymity of the balaclava-clad "executioner".

With the hostage dressed in an orange jumpsuit to reference Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib prisoners, this killing of Armstrong is stylised for public consumption. Initially made for distribution to the Arabic language news station Al-Jazeera, the grainy footage of the beheading still lives today within gore-fetish websites—its political salience now divorced from the violent act and discussed in terms of aesthetics or spectacle. Succeeding Al-Qaeda as the most mediatised and influential terrorist organisation in history, the Islamic State has heavily invested in its propaganda and idolises Al-Zarqawi's display of violence. Stylised brutality is carefully scripted with chosen fighters who "act" out a role. The materials exist in various mediums and are produced in over a dozen languages for witnesses on a global scale, displaying how the "scale of the Islamic State's operation is unprecedented".[18] Blurry and pixelated videos of beheadings have been succeeded by high-definition productions that feature child executioners, mass murderers and graphic torture—even soliciting suggestions from Twitter, with the Arabic hashtag of #suggestawaytokillthejordanianpilotpig securing thousands of retweets that ultimately led to the captive Muath al-Kasasbeh being burned alive. The identifications that define *what* the terrorist organisation is, therefore, have been cultivated in an intense media environment, placing limits on how far we can comparatively analyse Islamic State propaganda to the older Al-Qaeda organisation. This environment is made of mass media uptake, decentralised communication, social media hosting and

17. "Al-Zarqawi's Message to the Fighters of Jihad in Iraq on September 11, 2004," Global Terrorism Research Project. http://gtrp.haverford.edu/statements/.

18. Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate: Understanding Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy."

encrypted channels. Rather than being exploited, these technological advancements are swiftly utilised to their upmost communicative potential.

The media has been a terrain in which the Islamic State has grown in, profited from, and also defended itself within from "lies". It purports that the horrific accounts from escaped sex-slaves "appear on the screens of falsehood" and come from those who write "false stories".[19] Far from denying that sex slavery exists, its materials gloat on its bureaucratic success and claim that the slaves are treated fairly and willingly convert to Islam.[20] The terrorist organisation's recruitment materials, therefore, exist on a fine balance of intent and often contribute to a multi-pronged defensive approach: from vehemently denying that certain atrocities have taken place, how the atrocities have been reported on, claiming brutal events and practices as legitimate, and attempting to point out the hypocrisy in established states and their populace. While each of these concerns deserve greater scrutiny, this section contextualises the reality in Islamic State-held territories specifically regarding women. It details how its recruitment materials reflect or refute that reality and explains the significance of an official, "state"-produced female-authored advice column.

Some of the most atrocious (and heavily mediatised) behaviour committed by the Islamic State is in its treatment of captured women and girls. From the 26-year old American humanitarian aide worker, Kayla Mueller, to nine-year old Yazidi girls, Islamic State women have been aware and involved in situations of enslavement. Some of the women were compliant to this abuse and even actively ensured the enslavement conditions were upheld. One of Mueller's captors, after all, was Nisreen Assad Ibrahim Bahir ("Umm Sayyaf"), the

19. *Dabiq 9*, May 2015 Al Hayat Media Center, 48.

20. Ibid.

wife of the Islamic State's chief financier. She admits to being "responsible for maintaining custody" of Mueller and others "on behalf of ISIL".[21]

Slavery became normalised through regulatory systems. Schools and wedding halls swiftly became holding areas for thousands of enslaved women and children who were captured by the Islamic State when it swept through the defenceless Sinjar region on August 3, 2014—barely a month after Al-Baghdadi's announcement establishing the Islamic State's Caliphate. The regulation of female bodies became tightly controlled and bureaucratically administered as a "state"-like project, with this pseudo-state establishing a Committee for Buying and Selling of Slaves.[22] Through documentary evidence and interviews with Yazidi survivors, the United Nations Human Rights Council establishes that the Islamic State's treatment of the Yazidi people and the practice of enslavement amass to multiple crimes against humanity. While the Islamic State attempts to legitimise its treatment towards the Yazidi people as them being unworthy of being free, it simultaneously attempts to recruit a transnational force of willing women to migrate and thereby "domesticate" its territory.[23] It needs "slaves of Allah".

The women who have willingly travelled to the Islamic State are a significant demographic compared to earlier jihadist movements.[24] Since 2013, 15% of the migrants have been female. At the time writing, about 800 women and children from over 40 countries have been captured by Kurdish forces and detained in Syria.[25] Exact numbers of those who have

21. United States of America v. Nisreen Assad Ibrahim Bahar, 1:16-mj-63 (United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Alexandria Division, 2016).

22. Human Rights Council,"'They came to destroy': ISIS Crimes against the Yazidis" (A/HRC/32/CRP.2 Thirty-second session, 15 June 2016).

23. Seib, *As Terrorism Evolves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

24. Pearson and Winterbotham, "Women, Gender and Daesh Radicalisation."

25. Shehab Khan, "Hundreds of foreign women who joined Isis captured by Kurdish forces in Syria," *The Independent*, 10 February 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-foreign-women-islamic-state-detained-human-rights-watch-a8204686.html.

migrated are not known, but estimates provide researchers and the public with an understanding of the unfortunate success that the Islamic State had in persuading citizens from over a hundred countries to migrate. In a large part, this multinational result is due to the Islamic State's erasure of linguistic, cultural and even geographical barriers of entry. Belying the diverse demographic and motivations of its recruits, the Islamic State has furthermore benefitted from the homogenising discourse of the "jihadi bride" that permeates news reports. The jihadi bride is seen as volunteering herself to the Islamic State.[26] Female migrants play a role in the Islamic State's propaganda by promoting *jihad* and the organisation's "ideological project".[27]

The women's role, according to Ibrahim, is informal yet glorified.[28] Producing children and providing a safe domestic space is vital for the growth and stability for the state. The female bodies are projected as being "pledged" to the mortal cause of establishing the "Caliphate" as well as harbouring the belief that they will benefit in the afterlife.[29] The men are seen as fighters who uphold martyrdom as an ultimate quest—an expectation of being granted an abrupt division from the corporal world to the assumed ethereal rewards as the state is built, or as the foreign fighter Abu Sa'd at-Trinidadi ("the Trinidadian") expresses, "our blood would water the ground and our skulls would prop up the flag of tawhid".[30] However, the women are more permanent. They are a state necessity in this territory that militarises its populace. Since it is permissible and highly encouraged/enforced for widows to re-marry after the required mourning time of four months and ten days known as *'iddah*, the role of the women extends long-term into the terrorist organisation's state-building efforts. The

26. Ibrahim, "Visuality and the 'Jihadi-bride'," 10.

27. Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*, 125.

28. Ibrahim, "Visuality and the 'Jihadi-bride'."

29. Sjoberg, "Jihadi brides and female volunteers."

30. *Dabiq 15*, July 2016, Al Hayat Media Center, 68.

women—both enslaved and free—exist a continuous churn of marrying, producing children, re-marrying, and producing more children. Their uterus is functionalised by its ability to produce citizens and therefore weaponised by its power to bear numerous soldiers for a "state" that is forever in conflict towards an apocalyptic desire. Starkly contrasting the reality of how the Islamic State has been identified through its crimes, the message in its recruitment materials is not simply "come and kill", but "come build the Caliphate".[31] This theme prominently features in its flagship, multi-lingual online publication *Dabiq*.

4.4.1 Dabiq and the media

Dabiq is eschatologically significant. It refers to an area outside of Halab (Aleppo) in Syria that Islamic State claims—via selective scripture validity—will cumulate into an apocalyptic arena between believers and non-believers. It first appeared in early July 2014, replacing the short-lived publications of the *Islamic State Report* and *Islamic State News*. *Dabiq* is often picked up in the media and framed as the "voice" of the Islamic State.[32] It is produced by one of the terrorist organisation's seven "state" sanctioned media institutions, the Al-Hayat Media Center.[33] The well-known English language version is visually-rich and crafts transliterated (romanized) Arabic terms in dedicated columns of: a forward that orientates the issue's theme, news, announcements from the Caliph (leader) Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, reports, advice, advertisements, dedications to the *shuhadā*' (martyrs), interviews with foreign fighters, quotes from its enemies, along with various other articles. Figure three displays a selection of the covers. The dates on the issue are shown in the *hijra* year of 1435 onward, rather the Gregorian year.

31. Seib, *As Terrorism Evolves*, 10.

32. Al-Dayel and Anfinson, "In the Words of the Enemy: The Islamic State's reflexive projection of statehood."

33. Winter, "The Virtual Caliphate."

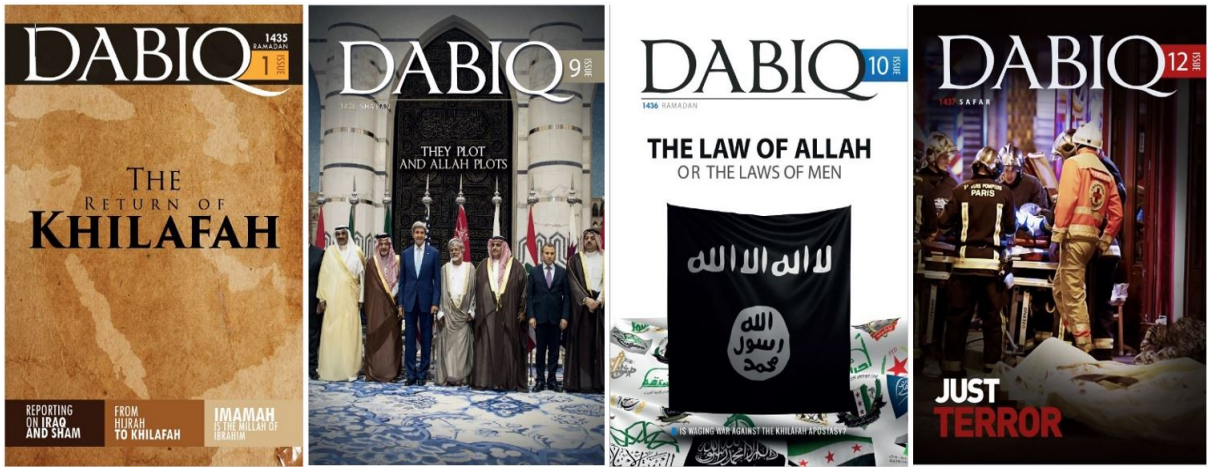


Figure 3. Covers from Issue one (July 2014), Issue nine (May 2015), Issue ten (July 2015) and Issue twelve (November 2015).

Dabiq is deliberately provocative. Each issue exists due to a strategy of responding to direct events. These events are offensive acts from the Islamic State (such as terror attacks orchestrated by it or claimed to be directed by it) and defensive postures as the Iraq and Syrian forces battled for territory with coalition support. Even the tactical acts of organising terrorism in countries outside of Iraq and Syria are framed as a defensive response to the attacks by the "Crusaders" and "proxy agents" inside Islamic State territory. A virtual or physical possession of *Dabiq* can lead to terrorism charges. In the United Kingdom, for example, the material has been considered as "mind-set evidence in support of ISIS" by the Counter-Terrorism Division of the Crown Protection Services.[34] The US Chair of the House Homeland Security Committee, Mitchell McCaul, printed out and bound a coloured copy of this online publication for a congressional hearing,[35] waving it around and warning that it is a

34. Crown Protection Services. Counter-Terrorism Division, "Successful prosecutions since the end of 2006," https://www.cps.gov.uk/counter-terrorism-division-crown-prosecution-service-cps-successful-prosecutions-end-2006.

35. Daniel Newhauser and Fawn Johnson, "Border Bill Brings More Headaches for Embattled GOP," *The Atlantic*, 25 January 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/01/border-bill-brings-more-headaches-for-embattled-gop/451650/.

"key tool for indoctrinating young potential followers".[36] The average citizen may not have been aware of *Dabiq* prior to that event, however they became alerted to its ability to alarm politicians—a triumphant feature of competitiveness that *Dabiq* capitalises on.[37]

Despite the danger in downloading and possessing *Dabiq*, it cavalierly projects itself as an easily-accessible, freely available online magazine. It is self-referential, containing footnotes denoting topics to articles in past issues. The back matter in issue three even contains contact email addresses for *Dabiq* staff in case a reader has any suggestions or advice for future articles. Questions and suggestions should be brief, however, as the editor(s) remind the readers that the "brothers" are supposedly busy with "many responsibilities".[38] Figure four displays a contents page and a self-referential advertisement that encourages a global audience to "catch up" on previous issues.

36. Mitchell McCaul, "Islamic State is Recruiting America's 'Jihadi Cool' Crowd," *The Wall Street Journal*, 11 September 2014, 9, https://www.wsj.com/articles/michael-mccall-islamic-state-is-recruiting-americas-jihadi-cool-crowd-1410478638.

37. Al-Dayel and Anfinson, "In the Words of the Enemy: The Islamic State's reflexive projection of statehood"; Charlotte Heath-Kelly, "Forgetting ISIS: enmity, drive and repetition in security discourse," *Critical Studies on Security* 6, no. 1 (2018): 85-99.

38. *Dabiq 3*, September 2014 Al Hayat Media Center.

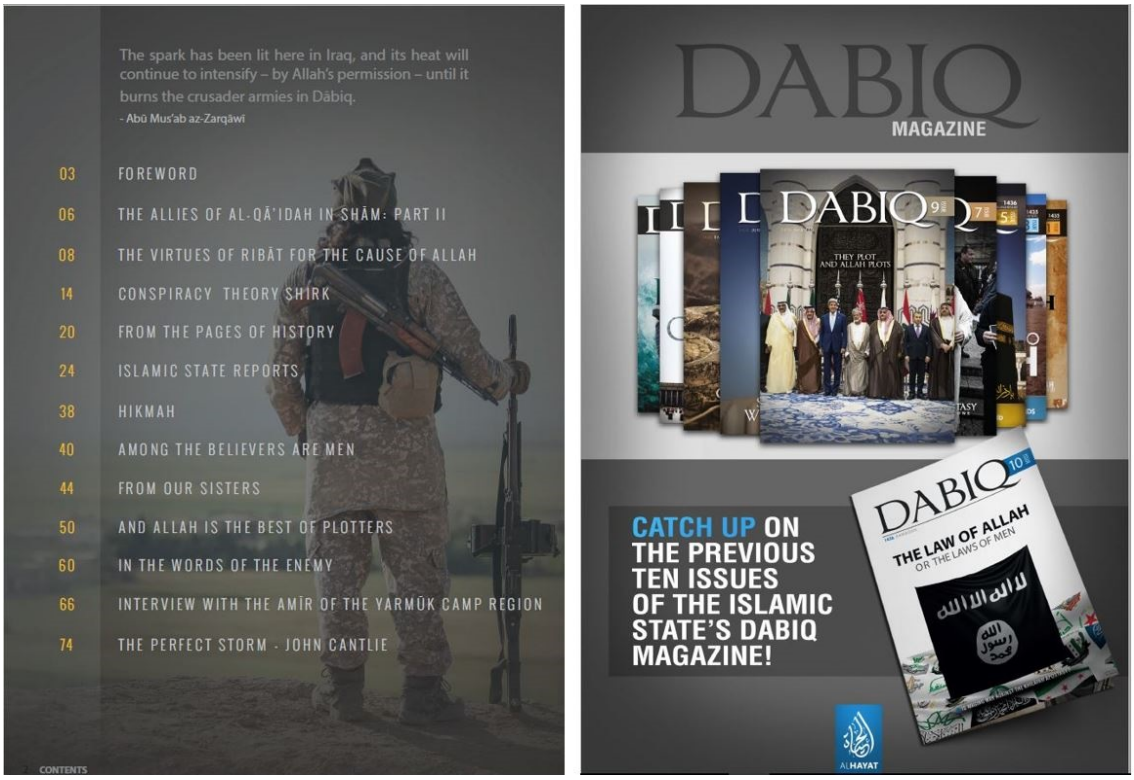


Figure 4. Contents page from issue nine (May 2015), advertisement in issue eleven, page 31.

The first six issues of *Dabiq* contain articles that are aimed at an assumed audience of men, and some are gender-neutral because they do not specifically address any gender in readership. Issue one, released on July 2014 and entitled, "The Return of Khilafah", contains translated extracts from Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi's speeches that are a "call to *hijrah* [migration]" as well as an open jobs advertisement for Muslim "doctors, engineers, scholars and specialists".[39] Issue two, released in September 2014 and entitled "The Flood", contains an editorial forward that details the first priority of Muslims is to perform *hijrah* from "wherever you are to the Islamic State" and, in case one is unable to emigrate, "organize

39. *Dabiq 1*, July 2014, Al Hayat Media Center, 10-11.

bay'āt (pledges of allegiance)", taking care to "use means of anonymity" if one lives in a "police state".[40] It takes the *Dabiq* editor(s) five more months before half-heartedly deciding to address the potential female readership with a dedicated piece, in which issue seven (released February 2015) contains an interview with "Umm Basīr Al-Muhājirah". "Al-Muhājirah" is the *nom de guerre* of Hayat Boumeddine, and "Umm Basīr" is her *kunya*, denoting that she is the mother (Umm) of a male child named Basīr. She is an Islamic State migrant, French citizen and wife of the slain French citizen and terrorist Amedy Coulibaly (his *kunya* of Abu Basīr and *nom de guerre* of al-Ifrīqī, African). The newly-made column in *Dabiq* issue seven is entitled, "To Our Sisters". It displays a half-page picture of the terrorist Amedy Coulibaly casually sitting next to his rifle and a page and half interview with Boumeddine. The interviewer is labelled simply, "Dabiq".

4.4.2 "Our Sisters": A woman's voice of authority

Boumeddine became "France's most wanted women",[41] and *Dabiq* capitalised on her notoriety to project an air of competition. It encourages its female readership to align with its political quest and reminds them of their religious obligation. Furthermore, it capitalises from the legitimacy as the "voice" of the Islamic State when the interview is immediately picked up and mentioned in prominent news outlets. This is particularly seen in a report from the *Guardian* on 12 February 2015, which carried the headline, "Islamic State magazine interviews Hayat Boumeddine" and the byline of, "Fugitive former wife of terrorist Amedy Coulibaly who killed four Jewish men in Paris supermarket given voice in Isis Q&A article". An overlooked feature in Islamic State propaganda analysis is its acute understanding of the

40. *Dabiq 2*, September 2014, Al Hayat Media Center, 3.

41. Bill Gardner and Ben Farmer, "Paris shootings: France's most wanted woman Hayat Boumeddiene has 'escaped to Syria'," *The Telegraph*, 10 January 2015, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11337944/Paris-shootings-Frances-most-wanted-woman-Hayat-Boumeddiene-has-escaped-to-Syria.html.

legitimacy that happens when its pieces are pushed further than the social media jihadist circles it shares materials on, and thereby framed as the "voice" of the organisation.

Noticing the media success with Boumeddine, the *Dabiq* editor(s) continue with a focus on female-centred subject pieces. In studying "From Our Sisters", Musail claims that "people and places in the West are mentioned to make the text more accessible to Western women".[42] Her analysis, however, treats the Islamic State in a vacuum of having only one audience and disregards how the discourse of *Dabiq* is capital for an organisation that is trying to be competitive, wants to get noticed and is quite aware of what brings media attention. The subject matter in the column is deliberately inflammatory and aimed at attracting the most media attention possible, as English-speaking second generation Muslims are just *one* of *Dabiq* audiences—yet, are often seen as the *only* target.[43] An article that relishes the capture of slaves—its "letters dripping of pride"—is acutely aware of provoking the media with a line of, "And who knows, maybe Michelle Obama's price won't even exceed a third of a dīnār, and a third of a dīnār is too much for her!".[44] Predictably, a headline appears barely a week later of, "Islamic State claims forced sex is not rape and calls Michelle Obama a prostitute".[45] Not confined to attempting to defend institutionalised slavery, the female-subject column even strategically tries tactics of school-yard bullying to vie for media attention. Its last issue provides a picture of US Army Secretary Eric Fanning alongside the caption of "An effeminate sodomite leads the Crusades".[46] Not surprisingly, the National

42. Musail, "'My Muslim sister, indeed you are a mujahidah'," 74.

43. Brandon Colas, "What Does Dabiq Do? ISIS Hermeneutics and Organizational Fractures within Dabiq Magazine," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 3 (2017): 1-18.

44. *Dabiq 9*, 49.

45. Angela Sharda, "Islamic State claims forced sex is not rape and calls Michelle Obama a prostitute," *International Business Times,* 24 May 2015, https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/islamic-state-claims-forced-sex-not-rape-calls-michelle-obama-prostitute-1502767.

46. *Dabiq 15*, 23.

Security Reporter of the conservative media outlet *Daily Caller News Foundation* then parrots a few weeks later, “ISIS Calls Gay US Army Secretary An ‘Effeminate Sodomite’”.

Issue eight contains the first woman-authored piece by “Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah”. Table one lists the issues with content that contains female-subject pieces and female-authored pieces, starting from issue seven.

Issue (Gregorian date, *Hijrah* date)	Issue title	**Column name:** Article title, pages *Author	Content of the column
7 (February 2015, *Rabi Al-Akhir 1436*)	From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone	**To Our Sisters:** A Brief Interview with Umm Basīr Al-Muhājirah, pages 50-51. *No author	An interview between "Dabiq" and French citizen, recent Islamic State migrant Hayat Boumeddine. She is the wife of slain terrorist Amedy Coulibaly who committed multiple attacks in France on 7-9 January, 2015.
8 (March 2015, *Jumada al-Akhirah 1436*)	Shari'ah Alone Will Rule Africa	**To our Sisters:** The Twin Halves of the Muhājirīn, pages 32-37. *Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah	Advice covering the matters on *hijrah* rationale for women. Stories on recent migrant journeys. Ends with a brief warning directed to men who prevent migration of women.
9 (May 2015, *Sha'ban 1436*)	They Plot and Allah Plots	**From our Sisters:** Slave-Girls or Prostitutes?, pages 44-49. *Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah	A defensive rationale for the legitimacy in capturing and enslaving women and children.
10 (July 2015, *Ramadan 1436*)	The Law of Allah or the Laws of Men	**From our Sisters:** They Are Not Lawful Spouses for One Another, pages 42-48. *Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah	Advice for the wives who reside in secular and Islamic nations, offering rationale for the need to leave husbands and family.
11 (September 2015, *Dhul Qa'Dah 1436*)	From the Battles of Al-Ahzāb to the War of Coalitions	**To our Sisters:** A Jihād Without Fighting, pages 40-45. *Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah	Advice for the "mother of lion cubs", detailing how one may enact *jihad* through motherhood and the importance of educating children.
12 (November 2015, *Safar 1437*)	Just Terror	**To our Sisters:** Two, Three, or Four, pages 19-22. *Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah	Advice regarding the legitimacy of polygamy, urging readers to support their husband's choice to take another wife. Ends with a brief warning directed to men to treat the wives fairly.

13 (January 2016, *Rabi'Al-Akhir, 1437*)	The Rafidah from Ibn Saba' to the Dajjal	**To our Sisters:** Advice on Ihdād, pages 24-26. *No author	Advice directed at the widows in the Islamic State, regarding the rules of '*iddah* (mourning period) and chastising the widows for mistakes being made with *ihdād* (behaviour during mourning). Ends with a comment directed to men who gossip about the availability of widows.
15 (July 2016, *Shawwal 1437*)	Break the Cross	**For Women**: The Fitrah of Mankind and the Near-Extinction of Western Women, pages 20-25. *No author **How I Came to Islam**, pages 36-39 *Umm Khalid al-Finlandiyyah	A lecture on the "decadence" of the Western world apparently started by Sigmund Freud, and the error of assigning Mary as "mother of god". (Not addressed to any specific target audience.) A story of conversion and migration from a Finnish woman citizen. No reference to a legal name.

Table 1. *Dabiq* issues that have a specific article focused on women or have a female author.

As seen in table one, the column "To our Sisters"/"From our Sisters" in issues eight to twelve all have the same female author. The words "by Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah" is written under the title. While there are unofficial blogs and Twitter accounts from Islamic State women supporters, this effort to display a "female" voice of authority from the official Al Hayat Media Center is politically centralised and strategic. It is not necessarily strategic regarding the efforts to instil the ideological goals of a Caliphate, but rather it develops this terrorist organisation's outward awareness of the necessity in showing a strong, state effort for supporting a female's voice. This state-sanctioned show of support creates an identification that the Islamic State is, in a sense, contemporary. This contemporary identification is necessary in order to compete for individuals who have been pre-determined as citizens in the liberal, Western states which are the enemies of this terrorist organisation. Thus, the column projects the Islamic State as modern—even emancipatory—contrasting the assumption (and reality) that the female's voice is silenced, ignored or unworthy of attention. This voice is displayed as "Al-Muhājirah", (female migrant), and unlike issue fifteen's one-

off female author of “Umm Khalid al-Finlandiyyah” (the Finnish), her nationality is not revealed. Al-Muhājirah is the migrant, she is the everywoman of any citizenship. She is denoted only by her use of English and her possible Arab ethnicity with a single phrase in a single column, “I was the only Arab woman amongst the muhājirah sisters”.[47] The effort to consistently identify both the migrant status and gender of this author gives Al-Muhājirah the “credibility to speak to an international audience of women”.[48] Within each instance of her column, imagery provides context to her words, as seen in Figure five.



Figure 5. First pages of “From Our Sisters” and “To Our Sisters” by Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah. From left: issue nine, issue eleven and issue twelve.

The pages of *Dabiq* show a professional level of production. They have been described as “slick” due to the “sophisticated media” skills of Islamic State members.[49] This labelling of

47. *Dabiq* 8, March 2015, Al Hayat Media Center, 33.

48. “The Women in Daesh: Deconstructing Complex Gender Dynamics in Daesh Recruitment,” The Carter Center, May 2017, 7), https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/countering-isis/women-in-daesh.pdf.

49. Nick Robins-Early, “4 Things to Know About Dabiq, ISIS’ Slick Propaganda Magazine,” *Huffpost*, 10 February 2016, https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/isis-dabiq-magazine_us_56a7e6cfe4b04936c0e8938a.

"slick" and "sophisticated", however, is a tired application of neo-orientalism,[50] displaying an expressed shock of how a Middle-Eastern organisation and its violent/"barbaric" members are conversationally or fluently multilingual, have the skills to take photographs with a shallow depth of field and use media editing software. What is overlooked in much of the discussion of its propaganda is the continuous feature of reflexivity that is within the materials. The Islamic State is perceptive to *how* its identity is being constructed through media exposure, and the power it has in its *own* efforts of identity construction. Its official state media centres are acutely aware of how Islamic State practices are discussed about in the wider mass-media environment. The editor(s) assumes its readership is constantly exposed to reports from multiple media outlets and are not just blindly subscribing to the "truthful" words of the Islamic State. For instance, the following extracts taken from the column illustrate how the Islamic State attempts to challenge media narratives and even academic analysis with "on-the-ground" accounts from Al-Muhājihra.

"The opponents often repeat that those who perform hijrah to the Islamic State belong to a marginalized class in their former lands, living in difficult conditions between unemployment, poverty, family problems, and psychological disorders. But I saw something contrary! I saw sisters who divorced the Dunyā and came to their Lord, striving. I saw sisters who abstained from a life of luxury and abundant wealth".[51]

"The first checkpoint we saw, the first image of the State's soldiers far from the Internet and TV screens…".[52]

50. Dag Taustad, "Neo-Orientalism and the New Barbarism Thesis: Aspects of Symbolic Violence in the Middle East Conflict(s)," *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (2003): 591-599.

51.*Dabiq 8*, 33-34.

52. Ibid., 36.

The act of projecting an awareness of how the Islamic State identity is constantly constructed by the Other in the media is reinforced throughout *Dabiq*, as well as in other recruitment materials. The Islamic State is aware of how knowledge is produced and who disciplines that knowledge for public consumption. The following extract exemplifies this. It opens up a one-off article entitled "Why We Hate You", and it specifically responds to the debate of determining whether or not the Florida nightclub attack by Omar Mateen on June 12, 2016 is an act of terrorism.

"Shortly following the blessed attack on a sodomite, Crusader nightclub by the mujahid Omar Mateen, American politicians were quick to jump into the spotlight and denounce the shooting, declaring it a hate crime, an act of terrorism, and an act of senseless violence".[53]

The *Dabiq* team does not assume its readership will simply follow Al-Baghdadi's call for migration due to their Muslim identity. Even though they constantly declare that a religious identity is above a national citizenship, they must continually argue and posture themselves as being consistently competitive for supporting citizens, as providing *enough* reason on semi-monthly basis for one to negotiate their citizenship of nationality and migrate. As the above extracts show, there is an awareness of continually writing in current socio-political events to encourage reasoning amongst its global audience. While the Islamic State frequently attempts to denounce the validity and worth of its enemies by labelling them as *kafir/kuffar*, liars and *taghut* (false leaders, tyrants), it needs to first display that the enemy's identifications of the Islamic State have some value in the media environment. It must acknowledge this value before it can offer its "true" version of events. The Islamic State cannot ignore the worth of the "enemy's" words. Thus, it inadvertently acknowledges and proves that the "enemy's" words are valuable in a global audience when it devotes attention

53. *Dabiq 15*, 30-31.

to them in *Dabiq* and constructs a counter-argument.[54] This tactic is not unique to the Islamic State media production. It is found in other media outlets that have polarising agendas. For example, the US "news" network FOX promotes the tags of "It's about to get real" and "Real News. Real Honest Opinion" to insinuate that other media networks offer fake news, yet that "fake" news is treated as competitive discourse and therefore potentially valuable to a FOX audience.[55] Similarly, the efforts to construct counter-narratives to combat terrorist narratives first acknowledge that the initial terrorist narratives have the *possibility* to be valid and carry worth in changing behaviour towards supporting violent acts of terror.

Al-Muhājihra, therefore, must display in her column that she is "in the know" of public discourse on the Islamic State. She must do this in order to represent herself as "from our sisters" and offer useful advice "to our sisters". She must compete for discursive capital in a field of power made of political elites and the news media.[56] To argue that slavery is legitimate for the Islamic State, she first must write how this Islamic State practice is seen as illegitimate by established states and people of authority. To argue that polygamy is the correct and encouraged practice for the Islamic State, she must first acknowledge the complaints about polygamy amongst the Islamic State populace and admit to the admonishment it carries amongst other religions. Al-Muhājihra is the defensive, "knowing" voice of the Islamic State, sculpturing the power of the article as representing a position of strength that is uniquely "voiced" by a woman. Creating this defensive voice entails a continuous control of Arabic language features and scripture—just enough for attempts at

54. Al-Dayel and Anfinson, "In the Words of the Enemy: The Islamic State's reflexive projection of statehood."

55. Michael Hill, "Fox News tackles 'fake news', adds 'opinion' to new slogan," *Newscast Studio*, 13 March 2018, http://www.newscaststudio.com/2018/03/13/fox-news-slogan/.

56. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of cultural production: essays on art and literature* (Cambridge: Columbia University Press, 1993).

legitimacy for a Muslim audience, yet not *too much* that would hinder the comprehension for a global audience of no particular religion and no Arabic language skills.[57]

The language features in the column point to a performative use of selectively referencing scripture. The language is minimally transliterated and sporadically translated. Very little Arabic script appears, except for the iconized religious calligraphy in the latter issues and some stylised Arabic titles in advertisements of videos that have been selected as winning the "top ten" spot of documenting the Islamic State territory. The column also contains direct references to scripture from the Qur'an and the Sunna, with the latter being a collection of sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammed known as *hadith* (plural is *ahadith*). Boutz, Benninger, and Lancaster analyse the usage of *ahadith* in Islamic State Arabic and English propaganda and observe that it functions to support certain positions, as well as give a sense of religious legitimacy and commitment to a certain religious identity.[58] While the Islamic State adheres to a canonical set associated with Sunni Muslims, it favours referencing scripture within that set which support its behaviours and claims. As one expects, it ignores *ahadith* which condemn the Islamic State actions.[59] This act is referred to as *entextualisation*,[60] in which discourse is selectively extracted from one context and put into another (new) context. With this transformation, the text carries a certain meaning from its earlier context of being part of a religious text, and a meaning also manifests from the new context of being in "state" recruitment material. This is an act of control. Since the text brings

57. Aaron Anfinson, "Projections of Statehood: The Disciplining of Transnational and the Attempted (Self)Legitimisation of the So-Called Islamic State" PhD diss., University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 2018.

58. Jennifer Boutz, Hannah Benninger and Alia Lancaster, "Exploiting the Prophet's Authority: How Islamic State Propaganda Uses Hadith Quotation to Assert Legitimacy," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2018) https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1431363.

59. Ibid.

60. Richard Baumann and Charles Briggs, "Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life," *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 19 (1990): 59-88.

"elements of its history of use" to the new context,[61] Al-Muhājihra attempts to project that her words are supported by the "legitimacy" of scripture, and that her beliefs on subjects are proper and authentic. Figure four evidences the percentage of scriptural entextualisation in the articles that are written with the "female" voice of the state, Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājihra (issues eight to twelve).

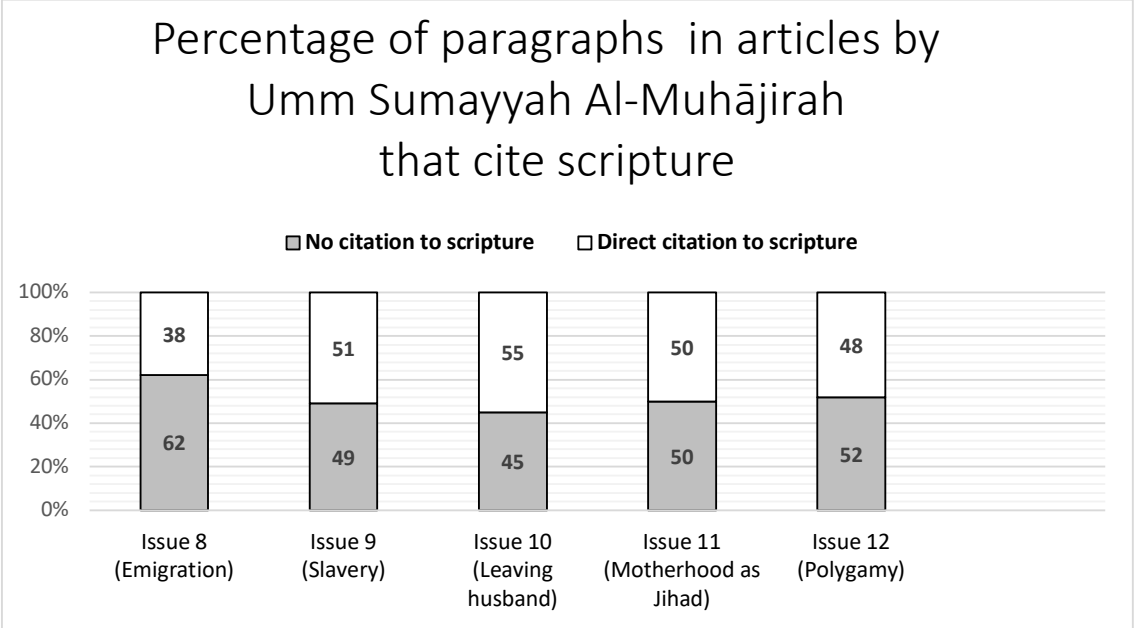


Figure 6. Percentages of paragraphs that contain direct citation to religious scripture.

The above figure exhibits how the column begins with less direct citation to scripture (only 38%) than latter issues. Issues nine to twelve show an almost equal ratio. While the choice of scripture may be extracted and analysed for determining attempts at authenticity, I argue that it is just as important—if not more—to not treat scripture in isolation and to examine the paragraphs that do not utilise direct scripture citation. Obviously, scripture is important to the Islamic State project, as it provides a sense of legitimacy. However, an investigation limited to scripture authenticity overlooks how the Islamic State is a uniquely contemporary

61. Ibid., 73.

organisation. The narrative strength comes from its display of reflexivity and acute awareness of needing to be positioned in the media as responding to socio-political events that shape the environment of its assumed readership, conditions that are not necessarily related to scriptural legitimacy. (This claim is discussed further and evidenced in part three.)

The irony of the Islamic State's identity manifests from this very column. In its quest to represent the "true" binary genders of male and female, man and woman, provider and supporter, fighter and nurturer, it must actively show gender performance in the materials that define *what* the Islamic State is. "Truth" must constantly be disciplined. Rather than striving to show a "realistic" norm of utopian behaviour (which, of course, does not exist), the behaviours of man and woman are evoked in the official materials and constantly disciplined into a crafted project, seen both inside its propaganda and outside in the occupied streets. This is exemplified in the occupied city billboards that order the "natural" way to dress is the obscuring black *abaya*, *niqab* and gloves,[62] in the photographs of killing those who stray from the expected gender performances,[63] and in the continuous use of the "brothers" and "sisters" labels that allocate who the narratives are for. The Islamic State project ironically demonstrates that gender is produced and reproduced, disciplined and reinforced through a performance to uphold the assumption of a natural condition or societal norm. As documentary evidence of a "utopian" state of "natural", God-divined laws, *Dabiq* epitomises how "gender is no way a stable identity", it must be "instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*".[64] In its brash starkness of being female-penned, this column embodies the efforts to discipline the illusion of gender norms. This is revealed with pages of continuous

62. Nabeelah Jaffar. "ISIS bride reveals an unprecedented look inside the terrorist organisation," *The Guardian*, 25 June 2015, http://uk.businessinsider.com/isis-bride-reveals-an-unprecedented-look-inside-the-terrrorist-organization-2015-6?r=US&IR=T.

63. *Dabiq 7*, February 2015, Al Hayat Media Center.

64 Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 519.

"advice" to the women. It also gives unsolicited advice to the men, warning and even chastising them in the expectation of having bad behaviour—breaking any assumption that it condones anti-social behaviour due to a societal expectation of "boys will be boys".

The narratives expose much deeper dynamics than simple binaries of the men being fighters and the women being supporters and passive to their husbands. The next section will provide an analysis of issue ten's column. It will show the complex attempts by Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah to rationalise migration to the Islamic State through tapping into the political relationship between the female reader and layers of authority that permeate and must be negotiated daily in her socio-political environment.

4.5 Analysis of "From Our Sisters": Narrative themes and elements of responsivity

If feminism is defined as a form of advocacy towards equality of the sexes, it is historically seen as *not* being a motivation for women joining terrorist organisations. From an array of interviews with women who have been actively involved in terrorist organisations, Bloom observes that "feminism was not the basis of their participation in the terrorist movement, many of them were decidedly anti-feminist".[65] The Islamic State scoffs at the idea of equality between sexes and disciplines harsh rules regarding acceptable behaviours for both c genders. Yet at the heart of its quest to encourage a negotiation of allegiances and physical migration to its territory, the elements of challenging current authority course through its narratives—irrespective of the end result of equality of the sexes. In order to pursue past being comfortable with accepting "we are not feminist" from a face-value assessment of the narratives, we must go forth with an understanding of *what* feminism does to agency.

[65] Bloom, *Bombshell*, 245.

Namely, the first step is activating one's political awareness to an unequal distribution of power that affects daily life.

We therefore must not assume that feminism is to be discarded as an analytical lens. It complements a scrutiny on Islamic State propaganda. More specifically, it aids our understanding of the complexity in the organisation's attempt to encourage forms of critical reasoning and individual challenges to authority and power relations. These attempts are illustrated in this analysis that examines the narratives in issue ten, "From Our Sisters" entitled, "They Are not Lawful Spouses for One Another". First, it discusses the narrative themes of sexual suppression and migration. Then, it contextualises these themes by discussing the political conditions outside of the Islamic State "ideology". It illustrates how Al-Muhājirah attempts to evoke a form of political agency through challenging the power relations in two layers: the citizen-state relationship and the wife-husband relationship. In other words, this analysis demonstrates how the column's responsive elements make the material a powerful recruitment device in evoking the citizen to challenge their current state's authority, legitimacy and claims of morality in conflict. Overall, this section demonstrates that within the practice of visually censoring women, the Islamic State simultaneously claims and promotes a woman as a voice of authority through textual representation. This voice of authority is the author of the column, Umm Sumayyah al-Muhājirah.

4.5.1 Themes of sexual suppression the solo journey

In its quest to represent a political order that competes for citizenship, the recruitment materials of the Islamic State do not reflect utopia. Rather, they offer a realistic territory that needs bodies to hold any successes gained so far and defend against those that attempt to trespass. Within the column of issue ten, narratives of acute political awareness resonate strongly through paragraphs that are hinged together with scripture rationale. Specifically,

Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah gives advice that urges for a suppression of sex if the husband does not switch his allegiance to the Islamic State and migrate. The following extract opens up the advice on denying sexual relations with one's spouse:

"I say, know O female slave of Allah that although every accountable slave will alone be held responsible on the Day of Judgement for his deeds—as Allah says, {And all of them are coming to Him on the Day of Judgement alone} [Maryam: 95]—it is not permissible for you in any case to remain under the same roof with someone who has removed the noose of Islam from his neck, and the marriage contract between you and him was nullified the moment when he apostatized from the religion of Islam. So he becomes unlawful for you at that moment and will no longer be lawful for you, and he is not permitted to have from you what a man is permitted from his wife—for you have become a stranger to him—except if he is ordered to repent and returns to Islam anew. As such, any relationship you have with him is a relationship that is impermissible according to the Sharī'ah. Rather, it amounts to zinā (fornification) so beware".[66]

The message usually directed to both free and enslaved women is that their existence is for the sexual pleasure of the men and to submit to their authority for procreation. The above extract, however, places power in the hands of the woman, urging the wife to leave her husband. Through the power afforded in the construct of the female's voice of authority as "Al-Muhājirah", a framing of compliant and dutiful women is inverted. Al-Muhājirah begins this call to leave the husband quite traditionally with scripture, then she provides a process of rationalisation for the reader. She opens up with a quote for self-reflection and individualism, reminding the reader that "every accountable slave" (not literal slave in this case) "will alone be held responsible on the Day of Judgement for his deeds". The husband is framed as a

66. *Dabiq 10*, July 2015, Al Hayat Media Center, 44.

hypocrite of Islam who is not permitting his wife to migrate to the Islamic State. He does not support the Islamic State, so therefore he becomes "apostatized from the religion". One must suppress sex with him, as he is now "unlawful". With this realisation of "unlawfulness", Al-Muhājirah challenges the traditional Islamic view that a woman's testimony carries less value than a man's.

In applications of *Sharia* (Islamic religious law), the value a woman's accusation and testimony may only be worth half or a third of a man's. This applies in several countries with Islamic jurisprudence, as exemplified with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A *fatwa* (religious decree) rules that menstruation and raising children can "affect a women's ability to remember correctly".[67] This legislation is due to a (contested) belief that women commonly make "errors" in testimony as explicitly stated in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah (2:282), "if one of the women errs, the other can remind her". Yet, as the "From Our Sisters" extract shows, the woman's accusation is now 100% credible on its *own* accord when it comes to the suspicion of hypocrisy and apostasy of the husband, as proposed by Al-Muhājirah for purely political purposes of increasing the Islamic State's population. The directive of sexual suppression empowers the woman to act in a way that violates the submission required as a wife, and this agency is prior to the zinā warning. The themes of individualism and being held accountable for one's actions continues in the following extract:

> "And do not wait for other women from amongst the wives of Sahwah soldiers to make hijrah before you. Rather, be a model and an example for them all, and what a great honor it would be to be the first".[68]

67. Fatwa number 11090. "Rulings Related to Women," (Fatwas of the Permanent Committee, 17, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

68. *Dabiq 10*, 48.

In studying the recent influx of foreigners to the Islamic State, Neumann observes that female migrants usually joined through a male influence, such as a husband or relative.[69] While this describes the realistic conditions of the migration, the above extract displays how the "state" encourages a form of rugged individualism for both genders. Instead of waiting for the physical and economic safety that comes from migrating as a group, Al-Muhājirah urges for self-reliance and self-confidence in being a "model" for others. This is a challenge for self-determination and autonomous action, contrasting the framings of passivity that the female Islamic State supporter is often confined within, both in the news media and in Islamic State materials.

The narratives of this column can be identified as the duties of being a proper Muslim (religious obligation) and constructing a fear of hell. Both themes exist under the umbrella of the legitimacy brought about by entextualising religious scripture. Al-Muhājirah is a "woman" name, thus this shows that the Islamic State promotes a disciplining of women *through* women. An analysis can halt at claiming that this woman-authored column is a textual representation of the physical, all-woman *Al-Khansaa* brigade that patrolled the streets of Islamic State occupied cities of Raqqa and Mosul with whips, lashing out at exposed skin, form-fitting *abayas*, and "not being meek enough".[70] However, halting the analysis at this point is misleading, as it confines the narratives to a vacuum of the Islamic State ideology. It does not contribute to understanding the influence in constructing a politically-aware female author that aims to attract citizens for a state. Thus, we must fully investigate the power of the narrative that takes in account the gender dynamics and the conditions that shape citizen-state relations. As Kahn points out in the disobedience of

69. Neumann, *Radicalized*.

70. Azadeh Moaveni, "ISIS Women and Enforcers in Syria Recount Collaboration, Anguish and Escape," *The New York Times*, 21 November 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/world/middleeast/isis-wives-and-enforcers-in-syria-recount-collaboration-anguish-and-escape.html.

citizens, the "understandings of gender cannot be separate from the understandings of power, authority, and violence necessarily challenged" by acts of citizen rebellion.[71]

As a "female's" voice of authority in a "state" publication that urges for citizenship negotiation, the column reflects and responds to broader issues of the political relations between the citizen and state. The next section demonstrates how the awareness of a "proxy war" and the ability to challenge authority reveal that the column urges for a realisation of power relations in both citizen-state relationship *and* the hierarchy of male domination. In a responsive manner, Al-Muhājirah is provoking the woman reader to challenge two layers of authority that are *only* relatable due to the wider social and political environment that binds and defines the woman. She first provokes a challenge to the citizen-state relationship. She then provokes the woman to break apart from patriarchal construction in a wife-husband relationship, an ironic stance when considering the authoritarian patriarchy of the Islamic State. Thus, the next section first contextualises the political environment that Al-Muhājirah responds to. It discusses the military loss and gains. Then it provides evidence on how placing the narratives in the socio-political context it is responding to reveals a strategy of confronting two layers of authority: the state and the domestic realm of patriarchy.

4.5.2 Challenging layers of authority: the state and the husband

Issue ten of *Dabiq* was released in mid-July 2015. The territory of the Islamic State shrunk ten percent that summer. Its gains of Palmyra in Syria and Ramadi in Iraq were at the cost of other territory being lost to an array of Islamic State opponents, namely the governments of Iraq and Syria along with Kurdish forces and Sunni insurgent groups.[72] The first six months

71. Karen Kahn, "Challenging Authority: Civil Disobedience in the Feminist Anti-Militarist Movement," *Women's Studies International Forum* 12, no. 1 (1989): 75.

72. Zach Beauchamp, "ISIS has lost 9.4 percent of its territory this year," *Vox*, 30 July 2015, https://www.vox.com/2015/7/30/9069705/isis-map-10-percent.

of 2015 also contained a strategic shift in increasing the use of suicide VBIED, vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (car bombs). From January to June, Syria experienced 101 suicide VBIED attacks, and this number increased by 164% in neighbouring Iraq.[73] June was a busy month of the Islamic State expending individuals, as it marked the anniversary of the "Caliphate" establishment as well as being the month of Ramadan. This month is considered exceptionally sacred for Muslims, and it is believed that actions and *dua* (prayer) carry extra value if done during certain times of the day. Rather than being a time of pious reflection and forgiveness as it is commonly practiced by self-identifying Muslims around the world, Ramadan 2015 was conscripted into a strategic month of violence by the Islamic State. The senior leader of the Islamic State, Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, ordered in an audio message "Oh mujahedeen everywhere, rush and go to make Ramadan a month of disasters for the infidels".[74]

Outside the Islamic State occupied areas in Iraq and Syria, attacks in Tunisia, Somalia, Kuwait and France reflected al-Adnani's orders and matched the scale of violence in the "Caliphate". In particular, June 26, 2015 became known as "Bloody Friday". Attacks across several countries resulted in almost 1,000 people dead or injured in just one day. Thus, it is imperative to view the political context in which *Dabiq* issue ten's column of "From Our Sisters" reflects in mid-July 2015. A July release responds to events from prior months, such as in January to June. Al-Muhājirah places herself as acutely aware of the political situation on the ground. She is not confined with domestic issues like encouraging matrimony or religious obligation of submissiveness. She brusquely assumes that her female audience are

73. Columb Strack, "Islamic State territory shrinks by 9.4% in first six months of 2015," *Janes.com*, 28 July 2015, http://www.janes.com/article/53239/islamic-state-territory-shrinks-by-9-4-in-first-six-months-of-2015.

74. Ben Hubbard, "Terrorist Attacks in France, Tunisia and Kuwait Kill Dozens," *The New York Times*, 26 June 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/world/middleeast/terror-attacks-france-tunisia-kuwait.html.

far from being apolitical. The following extract is from the third paragraph on the first page of issue ten's "From Our Sisters":

> "And it is known to every impartial person with vision that those who fight as proxies on behalf of the dog of the White House and his puppets as well as those who ally with the proxy factions against the Islamic State while falsely claiming that they are fighting for the cause of Allah and His Sharī'ah yet you don't find them implementing this Sharī'ah in any span of territory over which Allah has given them control, and their only concern is to please 'the people' even at the expense of angering Allah".[75]

Proxy warfare is the "direct engagement in a conflict by third parties wishing to influence its strategic outcome".[76] The introduction of jihadist groups within traditional proxy wars has added an intricate layer, where individuals as "mujahadeens" or "soldiers of the Caliphate" battle in the physical arena for the long term goal of territorial hold as well as soul-salvation.[77] Just as the United States and Egypt have been labelled as proxy agents in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Al-Muhājirah pens a proxy construction in the above quote. She ascribes the "proxy" label to highlight a "guilty by association" relationship. She places the citizen in the Western or Arab state as being a proxy to another state who attacks Muslims. This narrative theme can be scrutinised along the lines of a resurgence of "pan-Islamism" narratives that researchers have established from jihadist propaganda analysis.[78] However, the first line in the extract is crucial and illuminating. The quote "It is known to every impartial person with vision" frames an initial message of critically examining the power of the citizen-state relationship. This message of critical reasoning is prior to the

75. *Dabiq 10*, 42.

76. Andrew Mumford, *Proxy Warfare* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 1.

77. Ibid.

78. Hegghammer, "The Rise of the Muslim foreign fighters."

religious belonging narrative. The "impartial" person can clearly observe the current condition of political actors. Near the end of the column, Al-Muhājira continues to instil a "guilt by proxy" that comes from the association inherent in the spousal relationship.

> "Indeed you, may Allah guide you, are associating with a husband who is pleased having the warplanes of the cross flying in his skies in order to pour the lava of death upon the Muslims, upon helpless women and children. And how badly have they been exposed by their walkie-talkies, which revealed their joy and ecstasy at seeing the crusader coalition airstrikes in on the lands of the Muslims".[79]

Since the American-led coalition began attacks on the Islamic State in August 2014, more than 27,500 air strikes have rained down on the territory.[80] The coalition is identified by Al-Muhājira as the "warplanes of the cross" and the "crusader coalition". A display of transparency regarding the strikes is offered by the US Department of Defense—at least in providing a summary of how many strikes occur. The turbid characteristic of the attacks carried out by the coalition is revealed in the large disparity between the number of civilians killed that is reported by the Department and number reported by external monitoring organisations.

The Combined Joint Task Force "Operation Inherent Resolve" (CJTF-OIR) was established by the Department of Defense in October 17, 2014. It states that "coalition fires" are directed at "ISIS leadership and infrastructure", with "deliberate and dynamic precision airstrikes".[81]

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79. *Dabiq 10*, 47.

80. Azmat Khan and Anand Gopal, "The Uncounted," *The New York Times*, 16 November 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/11/16/magazine/uncounted-civilian-casualties-iraq-airstrikes.html.

81. CJTF Document (Operation Inherent Resolve, 4), http://www.inherentresolve.mil/Portals/14/Documents/Mission/HISTORY_17OCT2014-JUL2017.pdf?ver=2017-07-22-095806-793, accessed 15 April 2018.

The number of people killed is noticeably absent on the daily reports intended for press releases. Instead, "ISIL tactical units", "ISIL buildings" and even "land features" fall victim to coalition strikes. Civilian deaths are reserved for monthly reports which "assess" and determine a majority of death claims as "non-credible", because "at this time there is insufficient information to assess that, more likely than not, a Coalition strike resulted in civilian casualties".[82] The Department of Defense reports that the number of civilians killed between August 2014 and November 2017 is barely above 800. Thus, it has been up to external monitoring organisations to provide an alternative number—which is estimated to be as high as 6,000 civilians.[83]

Attempts to expose hypocrisy in nation-states is a defining feature in Islamic State materials—especially those directed at the Western audience. Al-Muhājira exemplifies this, writing in a manner which corresponds to an awareness of the hypocrisy between targeted air strikes and the collateral damage. She goes as far as to frame (or rather, simply claim) the "helpless women and children" as being victims of the air assault—revealing that the coalition strikes are far from being directed solely at "Islamic State leadership" and even further from being precise. This message of being aware of indiscriminate bombings is echoed by monitoring agencies, as Amnesty International reveals that the coalition's claims of its "precision air campaign" causing "very few civilian casualties" is proven false when investigated.[84]

82. Refer to "CJTF-OIR Monthly Casualty Report," http://www.inherentresolve.mil/News/Article/1040262/cjtf-oir-monthly-casualty-report/, accessed 15 April 2018.

83. Kareem Shaheen, "US-led coalition says its strikes have killed 800 Iraqi and Syrian civilians," *The Guardian*, 30 November 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/30/us-coalition-airstrikes-iraqi-syrian-civilians.

84. "War of Annihilation," Amnesty International, 5 June 2018, 66, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/8367/2018/en/.

As convenient and comfortable it would be to dismiss these writings from Al-Muhājira as constructing a narrative of Othering based on politics of identity with "Muslim" versus "Crusader", we cannot ignore the political salience of this column that resonates with criticism of real political events. These narratives are not irrational. They are not an angry rant orientated to only promote the jihadist ideology of the Islamic State. Past the veneer of entextualised scripture, the column operates in a manner similar to Wikileaks and Edward Snowden's whistleblowing. The column intends to put forth the eyes-on-the-ground "reality" of the messy condition of collateral damage and civilian death in war. Thus, this column operates in a way which provokes the citizen role of the female reader, a person who becomes acutely aware of the unease at being apolitical once the "reality" is revealed. After all, a decision must be made, a classic instance of "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists",[85] because as a political animal forcible positioned in a political environment, "you can't be neutral on a moving train".[86]

Problematizing the notion that Islamic State transnational support rests upon the construction of the Sunni Muslim identity, this column enriches an understanding on the power of placing a female writer as politically engaging the readership—going well beyond the construction of women being passive and only responsive to male direction and religious narratives. Ultimately, the female "voice" of the Islamic State is urging the reader to understand the power relations of citizen and state and understand the consequences that arise in choosing to be apolitical.

85. George W. Bush, "President Bush Addresses the Nation," *The Washington Post*, 20 September 2001, 53, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html.

86. Howard Zinn, *You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 8.

The second layer that shows a responsivity to a female reader's environment lies in the narratives which urge for the wife separating from her husband. The questioning of authority pertains to the domestic sphere of "husband"— again ironically challenging the hierarchal status of patriarchy through the wisdom and moral elevation of the woman. The following extract reveals this provocation.

> "And if you are a seeker of truth, then search and investigate, and Allah will not forsake your deed. And know that there are two options before you, with no third. You advise your husband and make him fear Allah and remind him of Him. If he desists and repents, then that is the grace of Allah, which He bestows upon whom He wills. If, however, he shows arrogance and his pride in his sin takes hold of him, then it's upon you to abandon him in the dunyā so that you may succeed in the Hereafter. And here I call on you to make hijrah to us here in the lands of the blessed Islamic State! Do you not love Allah and His Messenger? Do you not desire to live in a land over which no rule is established other than the rule of Allah? Then come, make your way to the dārul-islām. And I remind you of the individual obligation on every Muslim and Muslimah to make hijrah from dārul-kufr to dārul- islām".[87]

The above extract frames an argument with liturgical reference. Thus, it can be assumed that the main message in this extract is the creation of Manichean worldview of two political systems: the good in "dārul-islām" (represented as the Islamic State) and the bad in "dārul-kufr" (literally the "land of infidels/unbelievers", basically everywhere else *but* the Islamic State). Yet the opening line is once again crucial: "if you are a seeker of truth, then search and investigate" refers to the necessity to first perform critical reasoning. Al-Muhājira provides an ultimatum for the reader: once you seek the truth, you are aware of the dearth of

87. *Dabiq 10*, 47.

options. Islam promotes a patriarchal system, a common characteristic in conservative strains of monotheistic religions. However, Al-Muhājira first positions the woman reader as *knowing* a hypocrisy may exist in the current condition of dārul-kufr (land of infidels), then empowering her to *educate* the husband. "Advise your husband" is primary to "make him fear Allah". A repentance is granted, if it is on the "grace of Allah". Thus, the "grace of Allah" frees the shackles of responsibility if the wife fails to convince the husband to stop supporting the "crusader coalition" and legitimise another authority. If he persists in his proxy position of being a citizen who "shows arrogance" and "pride in his sin", Al-Muhājira assures the woman that she is *freed* from any guilt arising from leaving her husband. She grants the woman a chance to liberate herself from the patriarchal system in this instance with the manipulative end goal of encouraging her to slip into another patriarchal system. The Islamic State is not feminist. However, the strength of its narratives aimed at the female readership lie in its ability to encourage a form of liberation, claiming that women have equal—or superior!—intelligence in recognising power and political situations, all in the end result to perform an act of autonomy and migrate.

4.6 Implications and conclusion

The contextual analysis presented in this article exhibits how Islamic State recruitment materials do not operate in a vacuum of displaying jihadist ideology. This analysis proves that "From Our Sister" is reflexive of its importance as a competitive piece of recruitment material and responsive to the audience's socio-political conditions. It exhibits how the female's "voice" of the state plays an active role in encouraging a form of individualism and critical reasoning of power relations. Furthermore, it details how scripture functions as an addition that is relational through experiencing current political environments. A focus on challenging authority is essential, as the fight against terrorism, after all, is largely concerned

with contesting and assuming authority over the individual.[88] As Rae reminds us, attempts to even profile a terrorist must admit that "its assessment is both ephemeral and context-specific".[89] Correspondingly, the narratives produced by terrorist organisations are context-specific, responding to complex layers of socio-political expectations and perceptions of power.

The contextualisation and analysis of narratives in "From Our Sisters" breaks through a thin, surface level of understanding narrative themes. This article illuminates how the Islamic State provokes a sense of political agency, erupting through a challenge of power relations and authority recognition in both the citizen's awareness of the "international" conflict arena and the hegemonic patriarchal structure of the "domestic" realm. The Islamic State has not been successful in recruiting Western Muslims, although it espouses representing Muslims. It has been successful in exposing a contemporary, insecure position of citizenship and the power of authority. This tenuous position may become more brittle with each instance of securitisation abuse (such as selective travel bans or discriminatory surveillance and rhetoric), and, most importantly, a continuation of the explicit avoidance of approaching discussions of civilian deaths and problematic political relationships—thus causing the narratives of extremists to become more relational, more truthful, more "real" to an audience of citizens.

88. Ian Bryan, "Sovereignty and the Foreign Fighter Problem," *Orbis* 54, no. 1 (2010): 115-129.

89. Jonathan Rae, "Will it Ever be Possible to Profile the Terrorist?," *Journal of Terrorism Research* 3, no. 2 (2012): 70.

Chapter Five

5. Implications, recommendations and conclusion

This chapter details the implications from the previous chapters, provides recommendations for further research and concludes with a discussion on the findings impacting three disciplines. Firstly, it summarises the findings from Chapters Two to Four. Secondly, it specifically addresses how the findings from each chapter have implications that answer the main research question of understanding the Islamic State and its foreign fighters. It also highlights the thematic link that ties the theory and praxis aspects of the articles together. Thirdly, it provides directions for future work on Islamic State recruitment materials. It details how this potential research direction enriches specific areas in understanding Islamic State foreign fighter engagement and the influence of this non-state actor. Finally, it widens out the findings from the analysis by theoretically engaging with the disciplines of terrorism studies, political studies and language studies. It describes the contributions to these three areas of study by addressing the lacuna in research that was established in Chapter One as well as enriching current methods of analysis that are applied in analysing propaganda from terrorist organisations that are classified as being religiously-orientated.

5.1 Summary of findings

This thesis investigated the conception of the foreign fighter and the role it plays in the legitimisation efforts of a violent, non-state actor. The critical findings regard the assumptions that are used for current theorisation of religious terrorism, the Islamic State's foreign fighters, its female supporters and the narrative themes in the propaganda. It also illuminated new narrative themes that are revealed in the Islamic State recruitment materials which are aimed at a global audience of potential "citizens" that could migrate to the

Caliphate. These findings prove how the thesis advances both theoretical and empirical contributions to the discipline of terrorism studies.

This thesis further revealed the discourses of "self-awareness" that the Islamic State projects in its materials. This was explained out as a characteristic of *reflexivity*. This characteristic aids in constructing the violent, non-state organisation as a competitive political actor that competes for support from its global audience. *Reflexivity* also reveals a rhetorical strategy of urging for a personal reflection in the audience member in order to evoke political agency through the act of voluntary migration.

The findings also exposed how studies which are labelled as "qualitative" propaganda analysis offer a thin description of narrative themes. They generalise for the purpose of simplifying complex, layered discourse to create counternarratives. Furthermore, these studies still rely on certain assumptions that were established through past scholarship on religious terrorism organisations or via quantitative methods. This thesis also revealed that a certain privileging of religious discourse exists in the literature, overshadowing themes that fall outside of the Islamic State's *jihadist* ideology.

Additionally, this thesis demonstrated two instances of applying novel methods to understand the recruitment devices and rhetorical strategies in religious terrorism propaganda. It demonstrated how to use a blended method of critical discourse analysis and securitisation. Specifically, this thesis illuminated how a contextual analysis has the ability to uncover critical and salient narrative themes. These themes challenge the ones assumed to structure religious terrorist organisations such as the Islamic State. Within this thesis, Chapters Two, Three and Four provided findings that distinctively filled the gaps in the Islamic State and propaganda analysis literature that was presented in Chapter One.

Chapter Two introduced the conceptualisation of the foreign fighter in organisations categorised as being orientated around a religious goal. It explained how current literature and state-led efforts to understand the foreign fighter has created a tautology of her/him being primarily religiously-motivated. The findings from this chapter discussed the overlooked aspect of the foreign fighter existing in a tension created from the citizen-state relationship. It introduced a fresh conceptual lens, illuminating how the Islamic State foreign fighter should be considered as responding to a reaction of political agency and perceptions of legitimate or illegitimate authority. This reconceptualisation of the foreign fighter is important because it reveals reasons that go beyond Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's claim of migration being a religious obligation alone. These findings revealed that there is room to position the foreign fighter in a religious terrorist organisation not just as a religious devotee, but as a political actor in a relationship with her/his state that is structured by dynamics of power and perceptions of authority. Overall, the findings elucidate that the Islamic State foreign fighter and supporter migration is not irrational—however morally wrong it may seem. It is rational due to the migration being a *form of authority over the self*. This realisation problematises the assumption of the "zealot", "true believer" religious terrorist supporter being largely led by a devotion to a religious ideology, unaffected by political conditions or not being "politically aware". This claim was evidenced by empirical studies in Chapters Three and Four.

5.2 Answering the main research question and the thematic link

The research question for this thesis was:

> *How does the emergence of the Islamic State foreign fighter in its recruitment materials reveal that new approaches are needed to understand and analyse contemporary extremist propaganda?*

This thesis answered this question across three strands that were developed into articles.

Firstly, Chapter Two's article, entitled "Articulating Political Agency: Foreign Fighters and the Dynamics of Authority", problematises the conceptions that have led analysis on foreign fighters for religious terrorism groups. Instead of situating the Islamic State foreign fighter through a primary position of being religiously-motivated and a religious actor, it positioned the individual as someone who is aware of where authority is located in the political environment and who controls that authority. In order to understand instances of voluntary migration as a choice (not being pushed out due to state-led genocide, for example), the chapter revealed that the foreign fighter's act of physically moving from one state's jurisdiction to another state's jurisdiction manifests political agency. It de-legitimises the *previous state* as being a legitimate political order over its citizen and legitimatises the *new state* as being a legitimate political order that has a form of authority over the individual. This is a fresh approach to understanding the Islamic State supporters, because it does not confine them as only responding to religious narrative themes. In other words, the recognition of the Islamic State foreign fighters (and women supporters) migrating in a voluntary manner reveals that new approaches are needed in terrorism studies to understand the political salience of this act of agency and allegiance switching. This consideration for terrorism studies which focus on propaganda falls more in line with the rationalist and structuralist approaches in political studies rather than a culturalist approach. Chapter Three and Four's analysis of "Waking up" and understanding the cost of staying under a state's authority contains elements of the subjects using a cost-benefit argument to persuade the audience to physically migrate to the Caliphate territory and join the Islamic State. The following two articles explored this new positioning through empirical evidence.

Secondly, Chapter Three's article, entitled "'Now is the Time to Wake Up': Islamic State's Narratives of Political Awareness", applies new methods to analyse narratives in religious propaganda. Instead of coding the discourse (which in the literature is often further divided

into religious/non-religious categories), it approached the Islamic State foreign fighter as a political actor, rather than just a religious warrior. As the person chosen was in a high-profile foreign recruitment position, the step of explaining his political significance *prior* to approaching the discourse contextualises salient features that have been overlooked in the literature. Using a contextual analysis of an innovated, blended method, the article displayed that an understanding of the narrative themes must incorporate *realistic* conditions that the speech actor is attempting to frame, or respond to. It evidenced that the narrative themes go beyond simply calling for *jihad*. They directly reflected a speaker who has an awareness of power dynamics, addresses the issue of the state being a legitimate authority and urges for political awareness in his audience. Therefore, this article not only enriched current research on Islamic State narrative themes, but provided a wholly unique way to analyse propaganda. The third chapter continued this exploration of evidencing new recruitment themes with new methods.

Thirdly, Chapter Four's article, entitled "Sexual Suppression and Political Agency: Evoking a Woman's Support for the Islamic State", tackled the complicated context of female Islamic State migrants. The Islamic State's ability to attract a large number of women and teenage girls reflected its strength in utilising media presence to its upmost potential. This article again employed a contextual analysis. However, it introduced the elements of *reflexivity* and *responsivity* to fully develop the context in which the recruitment material grows within, challenges realistic conditions, and even projects a high level of self-awareness as being media-worthy. It evidenced that the narrative themes do not necessarily respond to what is expected in the Islamic State's ideology. Rather, as with the previous article, the themes encourage a form of critical reasoning in the *realistic* political conditions. Moreover, this analysis exposed how the Islamic State has an acute awareness of gender dynamics, tackling the hegemonic structure that confines the woman citizen in the patriarchal domestic realm

and the realm of the (aggressive) state. It also discussed how these themes would have been buried in quantitative methods that cumulate all of the discourse, as those methods do not contextualise any realistic conditions that the global, women audience experiences. The next section provides recommendations for future research.

5.3 Recommendations

This thesis displays the benefits from performing a close, contextual study on representative pieces of Islamic State recruitment materials. Widening out the research to incorporate more studies would therefore be very beneficial to understanding further thematic elements in the propaganda. The recommendations purposed in this section come from a pilot study. I have personally made a preliminary analysis from a wealth of Islamic State recruitment materials that are aimed at a transnational audience and have found salient themes which problematise current assumptions on the Islamic State. The recommendations are provided in two parts: analysing the foreign fighters displayed in additional, underexplored material and analysing the elements in more of the woman-authored columns in *Dabiq*. Both of these considerations utilise the innovative methods that were introduced in Chapter Three and Four.

Firstly, the blended method used on Chapter Three's material of the foreign fighter Neil Christopher Prakash (Al-Cambodi) and the video "Stories from the Land of the Living: Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi" is applicable to numerous productions. The application of a critical discourse method highlights the *subject position* of the speech actor. This shows the importance of understanding how this individual wants to be identified by the audience and how she/he self-identifies. This is an unexplored area in terrorism studies, and it provides nuance in the literature that simplifies the foreign fighter as portraying a type of "holy warrior" or religious zealot.

As Chapter Three evidenced, Al-Cambodi proudly displays his ethnicity and nationality. He wishes not to be solely identified as a member of the Islamic State, but as a convert and Australian citizen who made an active decision to migrate. Several videos from the Islamic State would benefit from exploring the *subject position* and using an application of a "grounded" method (such as Interpretivism) alongside contextualising the political salience of the actor. The first example is "There is No Life Without Jihad". Like the "Stories" video, this production is rich with political discourses that relate to the citizen-state structure and (according to the speakers) Western hypocrisy in both the domestic realm and international relations. And, just like "Stories from the Land of the Living", it is dismissed in the literature as being a call for *jihad* and a scene of brotherhood and utopia. However, contextualising the multi-national speakers' positions and discourse would reveal salient themes that not only match Al-Cambodi's speech, but greatly enrich our understanding in the rhetorical strategies that the Islamic State media employed in order to provoke the audience into critically thinking about their position as citizens in relations with their states.

Alongside the above discussed video, an exploration can include under-explored productions. For example, the self-identified deaf foreign fighters in "From Who Excused to Those Not Excused" address issues of inclusion and ableism, and the NHS-style "Islamic State Healthcare Services" video projects skilled doctors who speak about healthcare, accessibility and employment concerns for both genders. The blended method can also be applied to the ultra-violent productions that feature multi-nationals as well, from both the Al-Hayat Media Center and the Al-Furqan Media Center. These productions include the "Flames of War" (which shows captives digging their own graves and later being "executed") and "In Spite of the Unbelievers" (which contains a scene of beheading by several multi-national foreign fighters). Besides displaying a spectacle-of-violence, there are themes that address sovereignty discourse and even attempts at a tit-for-tat rationale in these videos and others—

issues which are, understandably, highly uncomfortable yet unexplored as narrative themes of strength for a non-state actor.

Secondly, the method of analysing the *reflexivity* and *responsivity* elements in Chapter Four's material of "From Our Sisters" column can be replicated in an exploration across all of the column's appearance in *Dabiq*. The writing from Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhājirah is extremely layered, as the analysis in Chapter Four evidenced. A full contextual investigation in each instance of "From Our Sisters" further develops the importance of understanding why a woman's voice of authority for the Islamic State is influential to a global audience of female citizens. In Chapter Four, the recruitment themes related to a female recognising and challenging the power dynamics in the citizen-state relationship and the patriarchal structure of the husband-wife relationship. This analysis also evidenced how the Islamic State writes in a form of "political awareness" in its foreign fighters/supporters.

From a preliminary pilot study, I have found other issues that show critical themes well beyond promoting the gender roles assumed in the jihadist ideology of the Islamic State. Such themes are: having patience in making a decision, being an advisor to the males in the family, critical reasoning apart from the imam/scholar (issue seven's column of "A Brief Interview with Umm Basīr Al-Muhājirah"); travelling alone, the strength in staying in the Caliphate (issue eight's column of "The Twin Halves of the Muhājirīn"); the legitimacy of enslavement, a form of "Manifest Destiny", sovereignty of the state (issue nine's column of "Slave-Girls or Prostitutes?"); the importance of education, migrating before your husband (issue eleven's column of "A Jihād Without Fighting") and more.

As exemplified in Chapter Four, an analysis with the new method of *reflexivity* and *responsivity* requires a deep contextualisation of political issues prior to the publication release. Therefore, following this recommendation of further research would make a

worthwhile, intensive project. This high-impact project would potentially reveal not only the narrative themes in the column, but also illuminate *which* issues in the wider political arena affect the rhetorical strategies of the Islamic State (as exemplified out in Chapter Four with proxy wars and collateral damage from airstrikes).

Finally, the exploration of the Islamic State's foreign fighter/supporter in this thesis has multi-disciplinary contributions. It aids in enriching the fields of terrorism studies, political studies and language studies, which will be covered next.

5.4 Multi-disciplinary contributions

Terrorism studies concerns the production of knowledge about individuals, groups and even states that commit, or intend to commit, acts of terror. It generally covers the features of terrorism, the effect of terrorism, the responses to terrorism and emerging patterns related to terror acts or groups defined as terrorist. This thesis enriches knowledge on the Islamic State, a violent, brutal actor who has claimed responsibility for terror acts on a global scale and encourages future acts of terror in its materials. It enriches what we know about the rhetorical strategies employed by the Islamic State. It also elucidates new narrative themes, of which can be used in further studies on preventing or countering terrorist messages. Above all, this thesis provides a wholly new approach to understanding the Islamic State as a political actor. It also provides a novel way of analysing its narratives which takes in a full consideration of the media environment and political conditions of the Islamic State's intended audience. Overall, this thesis changes how we embark on understanding emerging violent, non-state actors, preparing the terrorism studies field with new tools for analysing recruitment material.

Political studies aims to understand political behaviours, including questions of structure, agency and the beliefs which inform political activity. Within this discipline, there is a consideration of the power that is manifested from the state and how this power affects the

citizens/populace. This thesis addresses the tenuous relationship that citizens exist in with their states. Chapter Two revealed that studies on state power and the perceptions that citizens have on state power are intrinsically a part of the Islamic State's foreign fighter. This thesis contributes to understanding how an individual in a high profile position within a religious terrorist organisation utilises discourse to address the citizen-state relationship. Furthermore, it shows how issues of authority recognition and a citizen's perception of state actions being legitimate or illegitimate may influence one to support a religious terrorist group for political reasons. This thesis aids in understanding how a non-state actor has the ability to exploit the fragility that is in the relationship between the individual and a higher authority.

As language studies concerns how language is used and what influences language choices, this thesis makes a large contribution to this field of study. It shows that we must move beyond determining that religious language denotes religiosity or a religious ideology. Instead, the findings from this thesis determine that religious language plays more of a connotative role, where the religious discourse may be scaffolding more political meanings or responding to distinct, realistic political situations. Chapter Four evidenced that Al-Cambodi's urge for *jihad* is due to a perception of the political failings from his state, a finding which is obscured in current literature that employ only coding methods or provide a thin analysis of discourse in accordance to the expected *jihadist* ideology. This thesis provides a method which understands the importance of the Islamic State's word choices as existing in tandem with the media environment and an awareness of political issues. This thesis evidences that religious terrorism discourse is not just reflecting the religious ideology that is assumed to construct the identity of the Islamic State. Understanding this frees the researcher to explore new methods of analysing propaganda, and ultimately, de-legitimising the assumed, metaphysical allure of joining violent non-state actors. While the Islamic State

supporter is seen as a "disturbed individual searching for meaning in their lives",[1] she/he is at the core a citizen from somewhere, responding to distinct socio-political events. Confronting this uncomfortable truth is a vital step in creating a path towards recognising the influence of non-state actors.

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Appendix 1

Transcript of “Stories from the Land of the Living: Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi”.

Length is 12 minutes, 35 seconds.

Glossary of Arabic terms used

Was was = refers to whispers from Shaytan,. A parallel to devil temptation in Christianity.

Daw’ah = preaching, missionary act.

Miswak – a branch with antiseptic qualities that is used for cleaning the teeth. Specifically mentioned in the Sunnah.

Du’a = prayers apart from obligatory *salat.*

Ya’Rub = Oh, Lord. Not one of the official 99 names for God (as those personify god with adjective/verbal forms), but is frequently used in the Qur’an.

Haq = truth.

Surah = chapter of the Qur’an.

Surah At’Tawbah = the ninth surah, controversial in nature and discusses a range of issues-especially regarding a period of immunity for ‘idol worshippers’.

Duroos = religious lessons.

Deen = roughly translates as adhering to a system of authority, way of life, living out religious creed.

Tawbah = a prayer of repentance.

Dunya = the comfort of material ‘Earthly’ things.

kiyam al layl = to stay awake to pray at night.

bilad = land, *bilad al-sham* = religious reference to land in Syria.

dawlah = the state.

isha = the last prayer after sunset, out of five daily.

Sahabah = companions of the Prophet Muhammad.

Akira = afterlife, heaven, usually contrasting the *dunyā.*

Jannah = heaven.

Numan = Abdul Numan Haider, who attacked two policemen in Australia 9/2014, shot dead.

Time Scene change	**Speech discourse**: Nasheed is Arabic (religious) music. The speaker's language is Australian-accented English with liturgical Arabic.	**Visual discourse**, Arabic subtitles are shown throughout that match the speaker's narration.
00:00	[Nasheed]	Opening logo of ALHAYAT MEDIA CENTER A person standing, not facing the camera, a rifle slung over his shoulder, the Islamic State flag fluttering in front of him. Opening blocking established of placing the soldier between the viewer and the flag.
00:29	[Nasheed]	Four men of different ethnicities sitting in a circle on a rug in a well-appointed house or perhaps masjid (judging by the small book holders, but not traditional *rehal* Quran stand). Dressed in desert camouflage and traditional men's casual clothes. The title of "Stories from the land of the living" is overlaid onto the picture. Arabic subtitles are shown, translation matching.
00:34	This is brother Abu Khalid Al-Cambodi.	Arabic subtitles and fade-in shot of a man's military boots, unlaced and loose trousers. A rifle muzzle and front sight is shown, so it is assumed that he is casually holding the firearm at ease. -Quickly pans up.
00:36	I come from the land of Australia and *hamdu allah* today I want to share with you brothers and sisters my story of how I came to Islam	The title of "The Story of Abu Khaled Al-Cambodi from Australia" is shown.
00:45	Pretty much my story started when one day one brother said to me He said what religion are you I said I'm a Buddhist, but I believe there's a god, there's a deity. He said you're not a Buddhist then, you're confused He said why are you following the religion of Buddhism? I said because my family is He said that's not a reason to stay somewhere, you should keep searching	Fade black, not looking at the camera, possibly looking at an interviewer. Sitting, with a tactical vest on and holding the rifle casually.
01:04	So after this I started thinking deeper and I started getting a lot of thoughts to myself And the thoughts were telling me why don't you leave your religion and enter Islam? But then other thoughts would come to me and say but would you leave the religion of your forefathers to follow something that is new, strange. And *subhanna* at the time I didn't know what it was, it was *was was*	Not looking at the camera. Closer shot, burnout from the sun in the background. Fade into black.
01:27	The next three months were very different for me. My family they took me to a trip to Cambodia	New angle, still not looking at the camera.

	For the first time in my life I finally went there, what was it, the age of 20 at this time. And *hamda* [hamduallha] I saw *shirk*, I literally saw what *shirk* was. I saw people praying, crying towards statues, giving money to statues, depending on statues and I actually saw the meaning of what this religion was and it didn't make any sense to me. So I was very sad, I was very confused, very upset at the time. And I asked my mum and I go, 'how are we doing this? How does it make any sense?' She said, 'this is what we know'.	
02:08	[Nasheed]	Fade into a new scene, he's talking to some men on the street, along with a teenage boy in a camouflage baseball hat. Everyone is smiling. Title of "stories from the land of the living" bottom left.
02:14	[Nasheed]	New location, he slowly turns to the camera and smiles.
02:20	[Light Nasheed in background] I used to ask my mother, 'why,' in this certain month what is called Cambodian new year, 'why do I have to ask this statue if I can eat food? It never made any sense to me.	He's standing on some square rocks/ruins.
02:35	There's so many other related stories I can tell you but to keep it short I just want to say to you	Panning shot of idol ruins.
02:39	Before me here was an idol. And *alhamdu allah* by the will of allah	He's standing on some square rocks/ruins.
02:44	The Islamic state destroyed this idol here in *sham*. And I say to the idol worshippers	Panning shot of idol ruins.
02:51	Think about what you're doing. Think, sincerely think to yourself what am I doing, what can this idol benefit me or anything like that. And I invite you to the message that *allah wazujha* sent to all his prophets to preach. That there is none above the heavens nor below the earth worthy of worship except *allah.*	He's standing on some square rocks/ruins, panning around the ruins. Fade out into turquoise.
03:15	[Nasheed]	He's in a shop, title of "stories from the land of the living" in bottom left.
03:20	So after my trip I went back home, and once I got home I started analysing even deeper and at this time *alhamdu allah* There were brothers giving me *daw'ah*	He's narrating, shot of him walking, rifle muzzle down.
03:30	One of the lectures really spoke to me. It was about judgement day.	Back to opening shot of men sitting in a circle listening to one man
03:35	That judgement day lecture always ran through my head and I always thought about, what if I became a muslim? What would happen? How would life be?	Shot pans out and we see him sitting next to a man speaking. Fade to black.
03:41	Finally one day, when my uncle came to visit me, and I had the energy to go speak to him. Cuz at this time I was very tired, very fatigued and not wanting to do anything. *Alhamduallah* gave me the strength to sit with him. And when I sat with him I started asking him questions, I said, 'What are we doing in life?' And he told me, we work. We work, we have a family, we get a nice house, a have a car, in the end we die and that's it. And I said but that can't really be it. I go, 'Don't you ever think about where, everyday you're working you're working, you're working, all this money goes to a government and the government uses that money for what?' He goes, 'for…to help the society'. I go, 'no, not really, if you	He's sitting outside again, not facing the camera. Camera moves slightly.

	think about deeply, they use that money to have war on other people.' He goes, 'what do you mean?' I go, 'you know yourself we come from Cambodian background. What happened? What happened when America invaded Vietnam, they invaded Cambodia.' I said, 'at the time, what was taken from us?' He said, 'a lot of things.' I go, 'exactly, so these governments you work for, you give all your money for, you slave, every single day of your life for this. And all that money now is directed to war, to take natural resources from other countries.' He said, [laughs] 'You're thinking too deep into this.' I said, 'no, this is the reality of things, if you research it, you'll know this.'	
04:56	And *subhan allah* at this time I felt a very strange feeling. I felt passion, I felt jealously. And then I said to him, 'you know what? I want to be a Muslim.' So I went and I called on that brother	Night, he's talking to people of different ethnicities, laughing.
05:10	That told be about what religion are you following. And I said to him, 'I think I'm a muslim.'	Day time outside in a neighbourhood, he's amongst four men, one in camouflage with a rifle, one in traditional clothing, and one holding a baby and dressed in desert fatigues. Laughing and smiling.
05:15	Then *hamdu allah*, about five days after that, it was the last Friday of *Ramadhan*, and he said 'it's time to take *shahada*, *inshallah*, in front of brothers in the masjid.' I said, '*inshallah*. So that day, *alhamdu allah*, I took *shahad* with the brothers and *allahu akbar*, it's one of the best feelings I've had in my life. The unity that I felt with the brothers, the masjid and how everyone looked like they're following the *Sunnah* with the beard the tawwab the miswak, everything, *hamduallah*	He's sitting outside, in a circle of men, multiple ethnicities. He's wearing a tactical vest and his rifle is on his lap. The man next to him has an AK-47 propped on his shoulder, but not dressed in fatigues. Fade out black.
05:43	So I was just praying, making a lot of *du'a*, trying to be the best Muslim that I can at that possible moment and *hamduallah,* one day I was thinking to myself, there's more to Islam than just praying and *du'a*, uh…*siyam* and going to *hajj*. I thought, Islam cannot just be this.	A masjid, he's doing *salat* amongst rows of men. Fade to black.
06:05	So one day I made *du'a* and I asked *Allah wa'jud, Ya'rub* please guide me towards the *haq*, towards the true, the true meaning of Islam and how I can practice it to the best way I possibly can. *Alhamdu allah* one morning I woke up and I opened the Qu'ran. *Subhanallah* the *surah* that I opened up was *Surah* at' *tawbah.* I was reading through the *surah* and I was reading about how the three that missed	He's sitting outside, in a circle of men, multiple ethnicities. He's wearing a tactical vest and his rifle is on his lap. Fade out black.
06:27	the battle, because they missed the caravan, what happened to them and what Allah *wa'zawjid* said about them. And I was shocked, I was shocked at myself. I was thinking	He's in the masjid alone, reading the Quran in Arabic. Fade to black.
06:36	what am I doing? I have such… I have a good life here. I have a job, I have income, I have a car, I have a house. What sacrifice have I done for the sake of Allah? Honestly, I can't even think of anything. So all these nights that we sleep in comfortably, I thought about the people overseas in the Muslim lands that are suffering.	Returning to scene of sitting down with a group outside, wearing a tactical vest.
06:55	And this is when my journey really started beginning. I started attending this masjid, attending the *duroos*, learning about the basis of Islam	Close up. Quick fade.

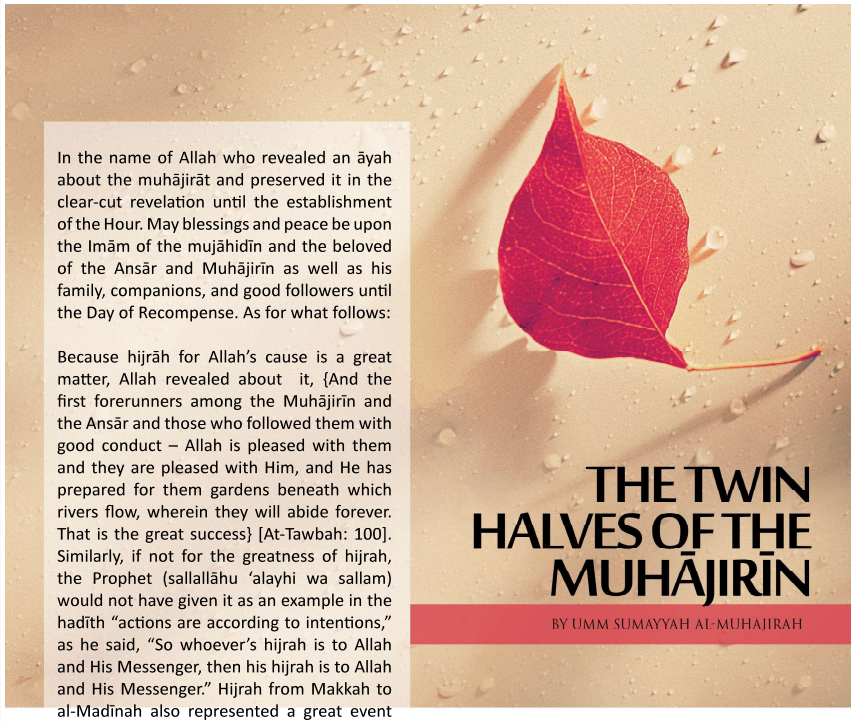
07:05	After this time, I got a bit comfortable, cuz I was studying about the *deen* and I was learning different things, and every time I want to make *hijrah* something would come in the way.	Return to scene sitting outside with men.
07:16	The only point where I was able to make *hijrah*, I was able to throw every single thing away, was when I sincerely submitted to Allah *wa'jud*. I made *tawbah*. And I tried to throw away the *dunya* as much as I can. I started sacrificing things, I started selling things.	Close up.
07:32	I was Muslim for about one year and four months. Only in the last two weeks of my life in Australia did	Return to previous scene.
07:38	Allah *wa'zawjid* grant me that step. ['Alhamdulillah' external voice] *Alhamdu allah* And I was already on my way towards the land of *jihad*	Cut to him walking in the military boots and loose trousers with a rifle, panning up. Fade to black.
07:45	Throughout this whole time, my best message to any brother or sister trying to make *hijrah* is *kiyam al layl*. This very important. In the last third of the night where Allah *wa'zajid* says he would descend to the lowest heaven. And he says which of my servants is asking for forgiveness? Which of my servants needs anything? This is allah *wa'zajid* telling you: ask me and I will answer you.	Close up of him talking, not facing the camera. Fade to black.
08:05	Eventually the next few days I found myself in *bilad al-sham* During my first few weeks in *al-sham*	A playground with some children running. He walks across the screen and his narration is placed over. Fade into black.
08:13	I was settling in with the brothers that I was with at the time. The things that I was, I was seeing, I was getting a bit worried about, and a bit concerned about. So what I did was I listened to Allah *wa'zawjid*.	Return to close-up sitting outside with others. Fade to black.
08:27	I made *du'a* and I asked him, *ya Allah* please guide me towards the group that will bring your *deen* victory.	Return to praying in a masjid with others, fade into next scene.
08:35	This is one *du'a* I love to make, and subhanallah, after my days of constant *du'a*s, a brother approached me and he said to me, would you like to come to *dawlah*? And at the time I was thinking, *dawlah*? What *dawlah*?	He is in a shop, with his rifle, looking at sells supplies and tactical necessities, a large Islamic State flag hangs on the shelf. Men and children are in the shop with him. Fade into black.
08:50	The reason I said is that I only knew the English name, Islamic State. And he said to me, there's a lot of brothers from Australia that want to meet you.	Close up, he's outside again.
08:56	So he took me to, he took me to *dawlah*. And *subhanallah*, I spent one day there and out of my four weeks in Sham at the time	Sitting again outside with the group. Fade into next scene.
09:06	This is the first time I prayed *isha* in a masjid, in a mosque. *Subhan allah*. This is a different feeling from where I was to where I ended up *hamduallah*.	At the masjid again with others. Fade into turquoise.
09:17	[Nasheed]	Title of "stories from the land of the living" bottom left, panning around him standing at night, fade into black.
09:32	Arabic: *Ya muahaddin, wa'allahi*, If anybody were to ask me this three years ago and tell me that I'd be living under Shari'ah amongst Muslims, I would tell them they're crazy. But *subhan allah*, look at the message of *allah wazajal*. Look what he's planned for me. He can plan this for you too. All you have to do is put your trust in him. All you have to do is believe. And understand that *Allah wazajal* is above all the plans. [Nasheed]	Standing at night directly addressing the camera, some shots of people watching a large screen. Fade into turquoise.

10:00		Title of stories from the land of the living, Islamic State flag fluttering as he begins to narrate.
10:08	*Alhamdu allah* we came to establish a state. We came to give our blood, we came to pave the way towards establishing the *khilafah*. And *Alllah wa'zajud* granted that to us	Islamic State flag, he narrates over. Fade into black.
10:18	*Alhamdu allah*. Now you have children walking the path. You have children going to school. We have hospitals. We have doctors. We have everything here that we need. We left everything behind. Why?	A green park, freshly mown, he is walking on a path towards to the camera, talking with a woman in an abbayah. Fade into black.
10:28	To be like the *sahabah*. Where they left Mecca, and went to Madinah	A close up of a boy child writing in a book with a pencil. A classroom with new desks and notebooks, a teacher walks around boy students.
10:32	and they established a state. The land for the Muslims. The land of honour. So I invite the Muslims to come here.	Close up.
10:37	I tell you that this is the land of life. The media has portrayed that we come here as social outcasts, that we had nobody, that we had to turn to Islam because we were just trouble makers in the past. But this is far from the reality. You see people from all walks of life here. Every single street you walk through. Every single, uh, courthouse you go to. Hospital. You see all different types of brothers.	Farther out a bit, addressing the camera.
11:00	I also send a message to my brothers. My beloved brothers in Islam in Australia. Now is the time to rise, now is the time to wake up. Now is the time to rush for that *irjda* wa Allah *wa'zujada* has promised you.	Close up.
11:13	You must start attacking before they attack you. Look how much of your sisters have been violated. All I hear on the news in Australia is this sister was hurt. This sister's *hijab* was ripped off. But no you see the brothers sitting, and I ask you brothers. When is the time you gonna rise up and attack them for attacking you? There's a *hadith* narrated by Abu Harrayrah radannahu [sp?] The *hadith* says that the one who kills a *kafir* they will not be in the same place in the *akira*. So you kill this disbeliever, this one that denies allah *wa'zawjid*. This one that makes *shirk bilad* (billah?) that associates idols with Allah. You kill him. Allah has promised you a place in *Jannah*, *inshallah*. And I'd like to praise the attacks by my dear beloved brother and may Allah accept him. And the other brothers. My dear brother Numan I knew this brother personally, and the efforts that he tried to make *hijrah*, when he failed because the government took his passport. It did not stop him. Look what he did brothers. He rushed towards *Jannah*. So now is the time to work on yourselves and forget what you have. But just work on your connection with Allah *wa'zawjid*	Farther out a bit, sometimes cuts closer in and out while he is speaking.
12:18	And that we unite and we fight under one row. *Allah wa'zajid*. Those who fight in one row and this is when victory will be given to us, *inshallah*	Fade in new scene, rifle magazine, Islamic State flag fluttering. 'One Row, One banner, One ummah, One leader, Khilafah on the Prophetic Methodology' title appears under the flag.

Appendix 2

The following extracts are from *Dabiq*, issue eight to twelve. (Note: the page sizes have been reduced to accommodate margin parameters. Each page as an extract represents one A4 page in *Dabiq*.)

Issue	Title of column	Page number in appendix
8	To our Sisters: The Twin Halves of the Muhājirīn, pages 32-37.	228
9	From our Sisters: Slave-Girls or Prostitutes?, pages 44-49.	231
10	From our Sisters: They Are Not Lawful Spouses for One Another, pages 42-48.	234
11	To our Sisters: A Jihād Without Fighting, pages 40-45.	238
12	To our Sisters: Two, Three, or Four, pages 19-22.	241



THE TWIN HALVES OF THE MUHĀJIRĪN

BY UMM SUMAYYAH AL-MUHAJIRAH

In the name of Allah who revealed an āyah about the muhājirāt and preserved it in the clear-cut revelation until the establishment of the Hour. May blessings and peace be upon the Imām of the mujāhidīn and the beloved of the Ansār and Muhājirīn as well as his family, companions, and good followers until the Day of Recompense. As for what follows:

Because hijrāh for Allah's cause is a great matter, Allah revealed about it, {And the first forerunners among the Muhājirīn and the Ansār and those who followed them with good conduct – Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great success} [At-Tawbah: 100]. Similarly, if not for the greatness of hijrah, the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) would not have given it as an example in the hadīth "actions are according to intentions," as he said, "So whoever's hijrah is to Allah and His Messenger, then his hijrah is to Allah and His Messenger." Hijrah from Makkah to al-Madīnah also represented a great event and important turning point in the prophetic mission, as it contained many great lessons. Rather, it was the greatest event in the history of Islam, and for this reason it was used as the basis for the Islamic calendar.

Hijrah for Allah's cause has many purposes, amongst them being to escape tribulations, fearing that one may fall into them and that his religion may be affected by them. Also, getting used to seeing kufr and shirk without changing it could lead to death of the heart, to the point that the person does not recognize Islam and its people. Also, from amongst the purposes of hijrah is to join the sides of the Muslims, support them, strengthen their forces, and wage jihād against the enemies of Allah and their enemies.

Hijrah, as it was defined by Ibn Qudāmah is "to leave dārul-kufr for dārul-Islām" [Al-Mughnī]. Sa'd Ibn 'Atīq (rahimahullāh) said, "It is migrating from the places of shirk and sin to the land of Islam and obedience" [Ad-Durar as-Saniyyah]. So dārul-Islām is the place ruled by Muslims, where the Islamic laws are executed, where authority is for the Muslims, even if the majority of its population are kuffār from ahlul-dhimmah. As for dārul-kufr, then it is the place ruled by kuffār, where the laws of kufr are executed, where authority is for the kuffār, even if the majority of the population are Muslims.

As for the ruling on hijrah from dārul-kufr to dārul-Islām, then it is obligatory. Allah (ta'ālā) said, {Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves – [the angels] will say, "In what [condition] were you?" They will say, "We were oppressed in the land." The angels will say, "Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?" For those, their refuge is Hell – and evil it is as a destination} [An-Nisā': 97].

Ibn Kathīr (rahimahullāh) said, "The āyah indicates the general obligation of hijrah. So everyone who lives amongst the mushrikīn while being able to perform hijrah and not being able to establish his religion, then he is wronging himself and committing sin. This is in accordance with ijmā'. Abū Dāwūd reported through his isnād on the authority of Samurah Ibn Jundub (radiyallāhu 'anhumā) that Rasūlullāh (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, 'Whoever gathers and lives with the mushrik, then he is like him.'"



Also, if there were no evidences for the obligation of hijrah except the following ahādīth of the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam), "Hijrah will not cease as long as there is repentance, and repentance will not cease until the sun rises from the West" [Reported by Abū Dāwūd], "Hijrah will not cease as long as there is jihād" [Reported by Imām Ahmad], "I have nothing to do with any Muslim who resides amongst the mushrikīn" [Reported by Abū Dāwūd and at-Tirmidhī], and, "Hijrah will not cease as long as the enemy is fought" [Reported by Imām Ahmad and an-Nasā'ī], it would suffice us to refute the doubts of the doubters and the rumors of the fearmongers.

This ruling is an obligation upon women just as it is upon men, for Allah (ta'ālā), when excluding those incapable of performing hijrah, He excluded the incapable women just as He excluded the incapable men. Allah (ta'ālā) said, {Except for the oppressed among men, women and children who cannot devise a plan nor are they directed to a way – for those it is expected that Allah will pardon them, and Allah is ever Pardoning and Forgiving} [An-Nisā': 98-99]. The Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) has also said, "Women are the twin halves of men" [Reported by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī, and Ibn Mājah].

And today, after the Muslims established a state that rules by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam), which expanded to wide territories larger than the areas of some of the states of Sykes and Picot, and whose blessed soldiers restored the promised khilāfah by the edge of the sword not through pacifism, the rate of hijrah magnified and now every day there are not only muhājirīn to the land of Islam but also muhājirāt who were sick of living amongst kufr and its people. As soon as the sun of their awaited state rose, they rushed to it alone and in groups from the eastern and western extents of the Earth. Their colors and tongues are different, but their hearts are united upon "there is no god but Allah." I remember the day I performed hijrah, I was the only Arab woman amongst the muhājirah sisters during that trip.

If speaking about the muhājirīn is amazing, then speaking about their twin halves the muhājirāt is even more amazing! How many stories have I heard which I would not have believed if not for hearing them directly from the mouths of those sisters involved or seeing these sisters with my own eyes; otherwise, I would have thought them the product of imagination or something impossible!

The opponents often repeat that those who perform hijrah to the Islamic State belong to



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a marginalized class in their former lands, living in difficult conditions between unemployment, poverty, family problems, and psychological disorders. But I saw something contrary! I saw sisters who divorced the Dunyā and came to their Lord, striving. I saw sisters who abstained from a life of luxury and abundant wealth. I saw sisters who abandoned a beautiful home and luxurious car, and ran for the cause of their Lord, as if they were saying, {"My Lord, build for me near You a house in Jannah"} [At-Tahrīm: 11]. I consider them as such, and Allah is their judge!

They are as fragile as glass bottles but their souls are those of men with ambitions almost hugging the heavens. Yes, these are the muwahhidah muhājirah sisters who performed hijrah to the lands of the Islamic State. They inherited this ambition from the Mother of the Believers Sawdah Bint Zam'ah (radiyallāhu 'anhā), the wife of their Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). She was the one who performed hijrah to Ethiopia and al-Madīnah, leaving Makkah despite its virtue. And eleven women from Quraysh as well as seven women from other tribes performed hijrah from Makkah to Ethiopia on the second hijrah there!

The stories of the hijrah of the muwahhidāt that have been narrated to me are almost never free of hardship and tribulations. All of them start with the sister resolving to depart for her Lord's cause. The first obstacle the muhājirah faces is the family. And what can make you know what the family is! In most of the cases, the families are from the laymen Muslims, and with these people, merely thinking about proposing the subject of hijrah to them is like butting a rock with your head. Yes, the sister is their honor and it is their right to fear for her, but why do they not fear for their honor when the sister wants to travel to Paris or London to specialize

in some worldly field of knowledge? Rather, you see them hailing this, supporting it, and being proud of it! But if the direction is towards the Islamic State, then suddenly they all become fuqahā', saying this is permissible and that is not permissible. By Allah, I know of a sister who left in the accompaniment of her husband for hijrah and was surprised to be stopped by the soldiers of the tāghūt in the airport after her parents had sent a notice to the police! This is a story of a woman with a mahram, so what of a woman without a mahram?

Here I want to say with the loudest voice to the sick-hearted who have slandered the honor of the chaste sisters, a woman's hijrah from dārul-kufr is obligatory whether or not she has a mahram, if she is able to find a relatively safe way and fears Allah regarding herself. She should not wait for anyone but should escape with her religion and reach the land where Islam and its people are honored. Whoever doubts this, then let him review the books of fiqh and opinions of the imāms so that he may inform us concerning who this noble āyah was revealed:

{O you who have believed, when the believing women come to you as muhājirāt, then test them [meaning, test their faith]. Allah is most knowing as to their faith. And if you know them to be believers, then do not return them to the kuffār} [Al-Mumtahinah: 10].

Also, these shouters do not agree with us on a principle matter and that is the establishment of an Islamic state fulfilling the conditions and characteristics for its legitimacy. So how can they debate us on a secondary issue – the ruling of a woman's hijrah without a mahram from dārul-kufr to dārul-Islām? We can only say Allah is sufficient for us and the best disposer of affairs against every person who insinuates slander of a muhājirah even if with a single letter. And all adversaries will be gathered in front of Allah.

The muhājirah sister thereby passes over the obstacle of family through ways and measures that Allah (subhānah) facilitates and then goes through the hardship of a long journey that is also exciting and full of memories. While we would discuss the stories of hijrah, we would all agree upon a feeling that overtakes every muhājirah during her journey. It is as if we leave from darkness to light, from caves of darkness to a welcoming green land. Rather, by Allah, it is as if we are resurrected, from death to life! Yes, there is fear and anxiety, because the hypocrites lurk in ambush for the muwahhidīn, but who is it that keeps people firm? Who keeps them secure? Who sends tranquility down upon His weak slaves? It is Allah, the King of kings!

I met a sister who was six months pregnant accompanied by her husband coming from Britain. I was surprised by this adventurist, so I said, "Why didn't you wait a bit until you gave birth to the baby you are carrying and then perform hijrah!" She answered, "We could not handle waiting any longer. We melted yearning for the Islamic State!"

Another sister performed hijrah with her husband while she was pregnant. She travelled by car and passed through three countries until she reached the land of the Islamic State and then gave birth to her child who, by Allah's decree, died during birth due to pregnancy complications apparently caused by the difficulty of the trip. Yes, he died and was buried in the Islamic State while his mother is always in remembrance of Allah and grateful to Him, I consider her such and Allah is her judge. Yes, he died and was buried in the Islamic State upon the fitrah, and this is better for him than to die through the curriculum of the tawāghīt's schools. How valuable is the hijrah and how valueless is every sacrifice on its path.

There was also this elderly grandmother who was my companion during the enjoyable journey. She came with her son, daughter, and grandchild. After she told us in length what she faced of hardships and tribulations until she was able to depart her land, she said, "My son was

killed, so I came with my other son, my daughter, and my grandson!" Allah is the greatest! You've raised the bar for everyone after you, O aunt!

Was the path of truth covered with anything but thorns? Was Jannah surrounded with anything but disliked matters? On the path towards Jannah, there is no place for the fearful and for cowards!

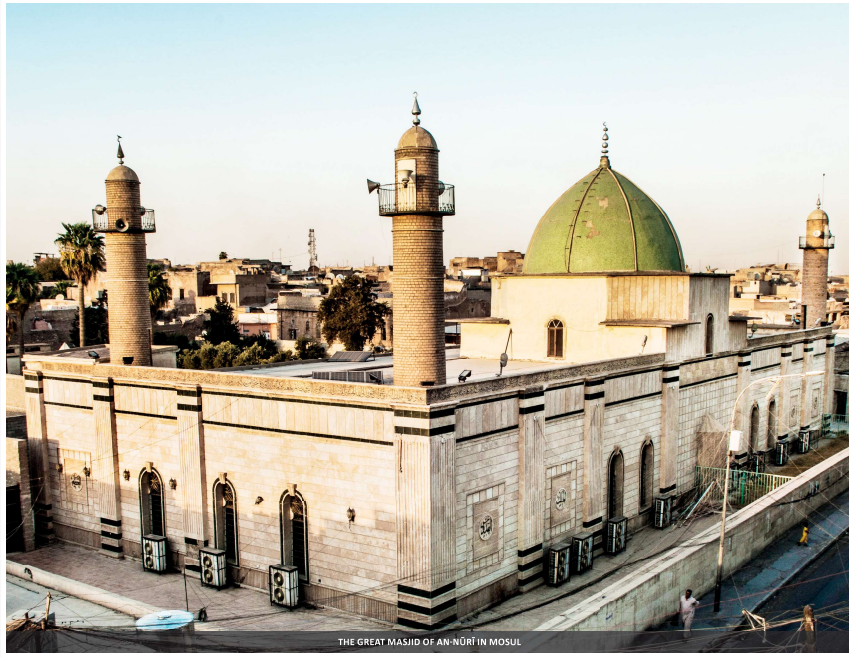
And even if I were to forget everything, I would never forget the moment our feet treaded upon the good lands of Islam and the moment our eyes saw the 'Uqāb banner fluttering high. Our hearts were cooled after having seen the idols fluttering in the skies of dārul-kufr for so long! The first checkpoint we saw, the first image of the State's soldiers far from the Internet and TV screens – those dusty and ragged in their flesh and blood – we saw them here with our eyes while tears from our eyes poured forth generously and our tongues pronounced the takbīr silently. How much good have you forbidden yourself, O you who have sat back and remained behind jihād!

Allah (ta'ālā) said, {Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves – [the angels] will say, "In what [condition] were you?" They will say, "We were oppressed in the land." The angels will say, "Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?" For those, their refuge is Hell – and evil it is as a destination} [An-Nisā': 97]. Ibn Qudāmah (rahimahullāh) said, "This is a severe threat indicative of an obligation" [Al-Mughnī].

Some ears of Allah's female slaves heard this āyah and comprehended it, so they rolled up their sleeves and abandoned their lands, families, and friends, and their goal was to live under the shade of the Islamic Sharī'ah. Every time I asked one of them what brought her, the same answer as the previous sister's would fall upon my ears, "Allah's Sharī'ah," a short and clear answer. Rather it is a comprehensive answer! As for the ears of the men from my people, then it is as if they are deaf, except for those whom Allah has saved. This one is pulled by the Dunyā. The other is inhibited by a wife. Another asked for the opinion of a terrified "shaykh" that answered, "My boy, sit back. Be wary of tribulations!" Shaytān whispered deeply into others' minds, so matters became blurry for them; they no longer could recognize good from evil. To them I say: Perform two raka'āt in the depths of the night with truthful prostrations, and make supplications soaked with tears, and say, "O Allah, show me the truth as truth and guide me to following it, and show me the falsehood as falsehood, and guide me to avoid it." If you are truthful, then by Allah's might and strength, you will not stay back for long.

No matter what I saw and what my fingers pen, I can never fulfill the rights of the muhājirāt who performed hijrah to the Islamic State. If not for some obstacles, I would mention stories that make the eyes weep. I saw sisters on a night enflamed by battle send their fifteen year old sons outside the home saying, "Allah is the greatest! Go to Jannah whose width is that of the Heavens and the Earth!" O Lord, it is their sons! Their own flesh and blood! But they are not more valuable than the religion nor this Ummah! Yes, they are muhājirāt who came to the Islamic State! I say it without pride. They understood that Hārithah is in Firdaws in accordance with the testimony of mankind's leader – may my father and mother be sacrificed for him. For, "Hārithah was injured on the day of Badr while he was a young lad, so his mother came to the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) and said, 'O Rasūlullāh, you know Hārithah's place in my heart. If he is in Jannah, I will be patient and await reward, but if it is the other… what do you advise I do?' So he (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, 'Woe unto you, have you lost your mind? Is it just one Jannah? There are many levels in Jannah and he is in al-Firdaws'" [Sahīh al-Bukhārī].

Here, I whisper into the ear of every muhājirah sister who has been afflicted with the loss of her



THE GREAT MASJID OF AN-NŪRĪ IN MOSUL

husband on the battlefield here in the State of honor: Be firm, my dear sister, be patient, and await your reward. Be wary, be wary of thinking of going back to the lands of the tawāghīt. Know that you have sisters who have been afflicted with great afflictions. Some of their husbands were killed, some were amputated, some were paralyzed, and some were imprisoned, but their wives were firm like the firmest of mountains. The tribulations did not increase them in anything but firmness and patience. Do not forget that reward is in accordance with the degree of hardship and "The matter of the believer is amazing. All of his affairs are good and that is only for the believer. If he is afflicted with happiness, he thanks Allah and that is good for him. And if he is afflicted with hardship, he is patient and so it is good for him" [Sahīh Muslim].

This is the path for the patient believing women, not the half-men whose attempts at dissuasion we see on what they refer to as "Minbar (Podium) at-Tawhīd wal-Jihād," where they call the people to remove the women from the blessed Wilāyat Nīnawā!

And for he who wears the cloak of advice upon that podium of dissuasion, I say: You falsely claim to fear for the muwahhidāt who do not fear anything but Allah; if there were any good in you, you would have worn clothes of war and come to guard the outskirts of Mosul to thereby protect your "sisters," but not in the least… May Allah disfigure the turbans of the PKK's women, yet they have more manhood than your likes!

Our last call is that all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the creation. May blessings and peace be upon our leader Muhammad and upon all his family and companions.



SLAVE-GIRLS
OR PROSTITUTES?

BY UMM SUMAYYAH AL-MUHĀJIRAH

In the Name of Allah, the Strong, the Firm, He who strengthens the Muslims with His aid, and humiliates the mushrikīn with His compulsion. And may peace and blessings be upon the exemplary Prophet and Messenger, and upon those who followed him and treaded his footsteps, and upon his family, companions, and those who supported him. As to what follows:

Allah (ta'ālā) said, {And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice]} [An-Nisā': 3].

He also said, {And marry off the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing} [An-Nūr: 32].

He also said, describing His believing slaves, {And they who guard their private parts, except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed} [Al-Mu'minūn: 5-6].

He (subhānah) said, inciting His believing servants to marry female slaves (if they cannot afford to marry freewomen) and preferring them to a free mushrikah of noble lineage, {And a believing slave-girl is better than a mushrikah, even though she might please you} [Al-Baqarah: 221].

The right hand's possession (mulk al-yamīn) are the female captives who were separated from their husbands by enslavement. They became lawful for the one who ends up possessing them even without pronouncement of divorce by their harbī husbands.

Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr reported that Ibn 'Abbās (radiyallāhu 'anhumā) said, "Approaching any married woman is fornication, except for a woman who has been enslaved" [Al-Hākim narrated it and said, "It is an authentic hadīth according to the criteria of al-Bukhārī and Muslim"].

Saby (taking slaves through war) is a great prophetic Sunnah containing many divine wisdoms and religious benefits, regardless of whether or not the people are aware of this. The Sīrah is a witness to our Prophet's (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) raiding of the kuffār. He would kill their men and enslave their children and women. The raids of the beloved Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) convey this to us. Ask the tribes of Banī al-Mustaliq, Banī Quraydhah, and Hawāzin about this.

Ibn 'Awn said, "I wrote to Nāfi', so he wrote back to me saying, 'The Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) raided Banī al-Mustaliq while they were not expecting it and while their cattle were out drinking water. So he killed their fighters, enslaved their children, and gained Juwayriyah. Ibn 'Umar told me this. And he was part of that army'" [Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

After the Battle of the Trench, Banī Quraydhah yielded to the judgment of Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh (radiyallāhu 'anh). So Sa'd said, "I rule that their fighters be killed and their families be enslaved." So Allah's Messenger (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "You have indeed judged in their affair by the ruling of Allah" [Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

The number of Jews killed in the battles of Khaybar reached 93 men [Maghāzī al-Wāqidī]. Their women and children were enslaved, and Safiyyah Bint Huyayy Ibn Akhtab – the Mother of the Believers (radiyallāhu 'anhā) – fell into captivity. Allah's Messenger (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) set her free and married her [Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

And during the expedition of Hunayn, Allah's Messenger (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) enslaved from Hawāzin until the amount of slaves reached six thousand [At-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā – Ibn Sa'd].

The scholars of Sīrah mentioned that the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) took four slave-girls as concubines, two of them being Māriyah al-Qibtiyyah and Rayhānah an-Nadriyyah [Zād al-Ma'ād].

The Sahābah and their followers in goodness treaded upon the path of the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) after him. Therefore, we almost cannot find a companion who didn't practice saby. 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib (radiyallāhu 'anh) had nineteen slave-girls. Ibn 'Uyaynah reported that 'Amr Ibn Dīnār said, "'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib wrote in his will, 'As to what follows: If something happens to me during this battle, then my slave-girls whom I copulate with are nineteen in number. Some of them bore me children, some of them are pregnant, and some of them are childless'" [Musannaf 'Abdir-Razzāq].

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (radiyallāhu 'anh) said, "I had a slave-girl with whom I used to practice withdrawal. She bore me the most beloved of people to me" [Musannaf 'Abdir-Razzāq].

After all this and after the sun of the Khilāfah radiated once again, and the winds of victory and consolidation blew, and the Islamic State, by the grace of its Lord alone, brought out the Islamic punishments and rulings of the Sharī'ah from the darkness of books and papers, and we truly lived them after they were buried for centuries… After all this, the ramblers dare to extend their tongues with false rumors and accusations so as to disfigure the great shar'ī ruling and pure prophetic Sunnah titled "saby"? After all this, saby becomes fornication and tasarrī (taking a slave-girl as a concubine) becomes rape? If only we'd heard these falsehoods from the kuffār who are ignorant of our religion. Instead we hear it from those associated with our Ummah, those whose names are Muhammad, Ibrāhīm, and 'Alī! So I say in astonishment: Are our people awake or asleep? But what really alarmed me was that some of the Islamic State supporters (may Allah forgive them) rushed to defend the Islamic State – may its honor persist and may Allah expand its territory – after the kāfir media touched upon the State's capture of the Yazīdī women. So the supporters started denying the matter as if the soldiers of the Khilāfah had committed a mistake or evil.

Thus, after the matter transcended its limits and the barking of the charlatans – the wicked scholars – rose upon the pulpits of deviance, it became necessary to face their declarations with a declaration, but one



of truth, to suppress their falsehood and restrain their tongues.

Yes, Allah has opened the lands for His awliyā', so they entered and dispersed within the lands, killing the fighters of the kuffār, capturing their women, and enslaving their children.

I write this while the letters drip of pride. Yes, O religions of kufr altogether, we have indeed raided and captured the kāfirah women, and drove them like sheep by the edge of the sword. And glory belongs to Allah, to His Messenger, and the believers, but the hypocrites do not know!

Or did you and your supporters think we were joking on the day we announced the Khilāfah upon the prophetic methodology? I swear by my Lord, it is certainly Khilāfah, as certain as your ability to speak, see, and hear. It is Khilāfah with everything it contains of honor and pride for the Muslim and humiliation and degradation for the kāfir. Our Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, as narrated by Ibn 'Umar (radiyallāhu 'anhumā), "I was sent with the sword before the Hour so that Allah alone is worshipped without partners. And my provision was placed beneath the shade of my spear. And humiliation and degradation was made for those who oppose my command" [Reported by Imām Ahmad].

Therefore, we did not humiliate them, but it was Allah who did so at the hands of His truthful slaves who did not wish for anything except for Allah's word to be supreme and the kuffār's words to be lowest. For that sake, they have exerted their souls and hearts. Their aim is sublimity for the religion and humiliation of whoever desires a religion other than Islam!

'Abdur-Rahmān Ibn Jubayr Ibn Nufayr reported that his father said, "When the lands of Cyprus were conquered, the people began to divide the captives. They separated between them as the captives were weeping for each other. So Abud-Dardā' went aside. He then sat down upon the ground and wept. Thereupon Jubayr Ibn Nufayr came to him and said, 'What makes you cry, O Abud-Dardā'? Do you cry on a day in which Allah has honored Islam and its people and humiliated kufr and its people?' Then he replied, 'May your mother be bereaved of you, O Jubayr Ibn Nufayr! How despicable are the people to Allah if they abandon His command. Were they not a manifest and powerful nation overpowering the people? They reigned until they abandoned Allah's command, so they ended up as you see them now. Indeed when slavery befalls a people, then they have left Allah's favor, so Allah has no need for them'" [Sunan Sa'īd Ibn Mansūr].

Therefore, I further increase the spiteful ones in anger by saying that I and those with me at home prostrated to Allah in gratitude on the day the first slave-girl entered our home. Yes, we thanked our Lord for having let us live to the day we saw kufr humiliated and its banner destroyed. Here we are today, and after centuries, reviving a prophetic Sunnah, which both the Arab and non-Arab enemies of Allah had buried. By Allah, we brought it back by the edge of the sword, and we did not do so through pacifism, negotiations, democracy, or elections. We established it according to the prophetic way, with blood-red swords, not with fingers for voting or tweeting.

As for those who rebuked the Khilāfah's soldiers for saby, then this is not surprising at all, for they themselves are those who crippled the obligation of jihād with false suspicions and crooked arguments. They are the same beards and their sheep-like followers. Why should we criticize them now? Isn't it sufficient for us to know of their sinful sitting back that has bloated their potbellies and increased their weakness abundantly?

They fear to speak up about a principle of the religion – the rejection of tāghūt? So do we then expect from them a word of truth on a secondary matter of the religion? Even the testimony of "There is no god but Allah," they obscure it and don't proclaim it openly, fearing that the cruelty of the tyrants – those they ally with instead of Allah – might reach them. They forgot the command of the All-Powerful to His slave Muhammad (sallallāhu alayhi wa sallam), {So declare what you are commanded} [Al-Hijr: 94]. Allah the One and Only is the commander and not Ibn Sa'ūd, nor Ibn Zāyid (tāghūt of the "UAE"), nor Ibn Mawzah (tāghūt of Qatar), nor anyone else. And all of these rulers are stepchildren of the White House.

They said one day that there's no jihād, then a group of believers established – with Allah's strength alone – the Khilāfah upon the prophetic methodology. Today they say no to saby, while some slave-girls in our State are now pregnant and some of them have even been set free for Allah's sake and got married in the courts of the Islamic State after becoming Muslims and practicing Islam well. Our father Ibrāhīm ('alayhis-salām) took Hājar as a concubine and she bore him Ismā'īl ('alayhis-salām) and our Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) took Māriyah as a concubine and she bore him a son whom he named Ibrāhīm. It was reported that Zayd[1] Ibn 'Alī once entered upon Hishām Ibn 'Abdil-Malik. Hishām told him, "It has reached me that you are entertaining hopes of becoming Khalīfah. But you are not fit for it as you are the son of a slave-girl!" So Zayd replied, "As for your statement that I am entertaining hopes of becoming Khalīfah – then no one knows the unseen except Allah. And as for me being the son of a slave-girl, then Ismā'īl was the son of a slave-girl, and Allah made the best of mankind, Muhammad, from his progeny."

Ibn Kathīr (rahimahullāh) mentioned that "al-Husayn (Ibn 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib) didn't have any male descendants except from 'Alī Ibn al-Husayn and 'Alī Ibn al-Husayn didn't have progeny except from his paternal cousin the daughter of al-Hasan, so Marwan Ibn al-Hakam said to him, 'If only you took concubines, your children would be more.' He replied, saying, 'I cannot afford concubines.' So he gave him a loan of a hundred thousand. He then bought concubines with it and they bore him more offspring. After Marwān became sick, he decreed in his will that nothing of which he had lent to 'Alī Ibn al-Husayn may be taken. Thus, all of al-Husayn's descendants are from 'Alī Ibn al-Husayn's progeny, rahimahullāh" [Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah].

Rather, let me add to the heartache of the spiteful.

1 Editor's Note: His father was 'Alī Ibn al-Husayn Ibn 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib al-Hāshimī al-Qurashī and his mother was a Sindī slave-girl whom his father himself possessed and took as a concubine.

Indeed, from the slave-girls are those that after saby turned into hard-working, diligent seekers of knowledge after she found in Islam what she couldn't find in kufr, despite the slogans of "freedom" and "equality." Indeed it is our pure Islam, which upraises every lowly-one and puts an end to every deficiency.

Abū Hurayrah (radiyallāhu 'anh) said that Allah's Messenger (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "Allah marvels at a people who enter Jannah in chains" [Reported by al-Bukhārī].

Ibnul-Jawzī (rahimahullāh) said, "This means that they were captured and enchained. Once they realized the truth of Islam they entered it voluntarily, and thus they entered Jannah. So the coercion into captivity and chains was the first cause. It is as if he referred to coercion (into slavery) with the word chains. And because this was behind them entering Jannah, he regarded it as the cause" [Fath al-Bārī – Ibn Hajar].

So whoever thinks that the ultimate aim of saby is pleasure, then he is a mistaken ignoramus. Otherwise, why did the Sharī'ah urge kindness towards slaves as well as good treatment of them even if they are kuffār whom Allah humiliated by making them into slaves owned by the people of Islam. Yet He (subhānah) made their liberation from the lands of kufr a way for their salvation and guidance towards the straight path.

Abū Dharr (radiyallāhu 'anh) reported that Allah's Messenger (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "Your brothers whom were placed by Allah into your hands, feed them of what you eat, dress them of what you wear, and do not hold them to account for what they can't bear. If you hold them to account, then assist them!" [Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim]

Abū Mas'ūd (radiyallāhu 'anh) said, "I struck a young slave of mine and then heard a voice from behind me saying, 'Know, O Abū Mas'ūd, that Allah has more power over you than you over him.' Then I turned and saw it was Allah's Messenger (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). I then said, 'O Messenger of Allah, he is free for Allah's sake.' So he said, 'If you hadn't done so, the fire would've surely scorched you' or 'the fire would've surely touched you' [Reported by Muslim].

Yes, this is our – as they allege – "savage" Islam, ordering us with kindness even towards slaves. This is demanded even if they were to remain upon their kufr. And I swear by Allah, I haven't heard of nor seen anyone in the Islamic State who coerced his slave-girl to accept Islam. On the contrary, I saw all of those who accepted Islam had done so voluntarily, not against their will. Once she bears witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and begins performing what has been prescribed for her of rites, then we say, "Come and be welcomed." As for her heart, then we defer it to Allah (ta'ālā).

As for those who appeared on the screens of falsehood, claimed to have run away from the Islamic State, made up lies, and wrote false stories, then I say, whoever has read history and studied the Sīrah knows that throughout the times there were devious and wicked slave-girls with stories that would turn a newborn's hair grey. Hafsah, the Mother of the Believers, (radiyallāhu 'anhā) ordered the killing of one of her slave-girls who had performed sorcery on her, so 'Abdur-Rahmān Ibn Zayd Ibn al-Khattāb killed her. The slave-girl of Ibn 'Umar (radiyallāhu 'anhumā) ran away. Will we thus vilify the people of that time and blame them?!

They criticize us for a divine, praiseworthy law and ignore that over which the mountains almost crumble in shock. So woe unto the deceivers, woe unto them!

Are slave-girls whom we took by Allah's command better, or prostitutes – an evil you do not denounce – who are grabbed by quasi men in the lands of kufr where you live? A prostitute in your lands comes and goes, openly committing sin. She lives by selling her honor, within the sight and hearing of the deviant scholars from whom we don't hear even a faint sound. As for the slave-girl that was taken by the swords of men following the cheerful warrior

(Muhammad – sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam), then her enslavement is in opposition to human rights and copulation with her is rape?! What is wrong with you? How do you make such a judgment? What is your religion? What is your law? Rather, tell me who is your lord? Never did the Khilāfah's soldiers revive a Sunnah or extinguish a bid'ah except that you shouted with lewdness and heresy! Leave us alone with your burping and wait for a Khilāfah that Obama comes to you with or whose landmarks Abū Kurdūs (Iblīs) draws up for you! I swear by Allah, O you who feign to be knowledgeable and shout with falsehood in every gathering, surely the slave markets will be established against the will of the politically "correct"!

And who knows, maybe Michelle Obama's price won't even exceed a third of a dīnār, and a third of a dīnār is too much for her!

Our last supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah the Lord of the creation and may peace and blessings be upon our leader Muhammad and all his family and companions.





They Are Not Lawful Spouses for One Another

By Umm Sumayyah al-Muhājirah

In the Name of Allah, the Mighty, the Strong. May blessings and peace be upon the truthful and trustworthy one, and upon his family, his companions, and those who follow him in righteousness until the Day of Judgment. As for what follows:

Following the war in Shām that exposed the hypocrites, the matter reached a point where there were only two camps with no third remaining – a camp of īmān with no kufr therein, and a camp of kufr with no īmān therein – and the ranks were sifted, differentiating between a mujāhid for the cause of Allah – and these, by Allah's permission, belong to at-Tā'ifah al-Mansūrah (the Victorious Group), which will not be harmed by those who oppose it nor by those who desert it – and between a "mujāhid" for the cause of many different concepts: the civil state, patriotism, nationalism, secularism, democracy, socialism, etc. They are all kufrī goals for which Allah has not sent down any authority, and that will bring their followers nothing more than disgrace in the dunyā and a blazing fire that they will enter in the Hereafter.

And it is known to every impartial person with vision that those who fight as proxies on behalf of the dog of the White House and his puppets as well as those who ally with the proxy factions against the Islamic State while falsely claiming that they are fighting for the cause of Allah and His Sharī'ah yet you don't find them implementing this Sharī'ah in any span of territory over which Allah has given them control, and their only concern is to please "the people" even at the expense of angering Allah, as is the case with the Jawlānī front – it is known that all such groups are Sahwāt (may Allah destroy them). They have gathered all the scum and filth upon one matter, and that is to fight the Islamic State – may Allah support it. They are right in holding enmity towards it, for it is the Islamic State whose 'aqīdah is pure, and whose manhaj is upright, and whose goals are clear, and whose soldiers have placed their trust in Allah and shown resolve after swearing that war will not lay down its burdens until Islam rules every land and region, and until the Muslims are honored and leadership returns to them.

With the situation having reached this point, I decided to write an article offering advice and guidance to the wives of the Sahwah soldiers, in order for me {to be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him} [Al-A'rāf: 164].

We write this for the wives of the secular-oriented Sahwāt who have stated explicitly or implicitly their intent to rule with democracy, or according to what the people desire, or with division of powers. Allah ﷻ said, {And He shares not His legislation with anyone} [Al-Kahf: 26].

We also write this for the wives of the Sahwāt who superficially claim Islam and stuck out their necks for their secular-oriented brothers and supported them with their lives and with everything precious to them against the muwahiddīn.

Allah ﷻ says, {And whoever is an ally to them among you – then indeed, he is [one] of them} [Al-Mā'idah: 51].

From amongst the most beautiful stories found in the books of history is the story of Zaynab, the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, and her husband Abul-'Ās Ibn ar-Rabī', who were united by love and marriage, and split apart by kufr and shirk. Abul-'Ās married Zaynab, who was the daughter of his maternal aunt Khadījah ؓ. When the revelation descended upon the Prophet ﷺ, Khadījah and her daughters believed in him and followed his religion, and this included Zaynab. Her husband Abul-'Ās, however, rejected Islam and remained upon his shirk. At that time, Islam had divided between every married couple where one of them followed other than Islam. Abul-'Ās, however, held his wife with him in Makkah. Then, Allah ﷻ willed that he would fall prisoner to the Muslims in the battle of Badr. The people of Makkah sent ransoms to the Prophet ﷺ. Here, the Mother of the Believers 'Ā'ishah Bint as-Siddīq ؓ will continue the story for us. She said, "When the people of Makkah sent ransoms for their imprisoned relatives, Zaynab the daughter of Allah's Messenger ﷺ sent some wealth as a ransom for Abul-'Ās Ibn ar-Rabī'. She sent a necklace which Khadījah had her wear when she sent her to Abul-'Ās to move in with him after marriage." 'Ā'ishah said, "When Allah's Messenger ﷺ saw it, he felt much pity for her. He said, 'If you would like to free her prisoner and return her wealth to her then do so.' They said, 'Yes, O Allah's Messenger.' So they freed him and returned to her what was hers" [Reported by Imām Ahmad and Abū Dāwūd].

And it's reported that the Prophet ﷺ stipulated on him that he return Zaynab when he reaches Makkah because she was no longer lawful for him as long as he remained a mushrik. Abul-'Ās did so, and Zaynab ؓ left for al-Madīnah, the land of Islam. Zaynab left Makkah out of love for Allah and in submission to His command, and did not put her husband and his companionship above the decree of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, because {it is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error} [Al-Ahzāb: 36].

However, Allah wished to open Abul-'Ās's heart to the truth many long years after his wife's hijrah, so he came to the Prophet ﷺ declaring his Islam, and so the Prophet returned Zaynab to him.

Then there's Umm Sulaym Bint Milhān likewise refusing to marry a kāfir and stipulating that he embraces Islam as her mahr (dowry). It was reported on the authority of Anas ؓ who said, "Abū Talhah proposed to Umm Sulaym, so she said, 'By Allah, one such as yourself cannot be rejected, O Abū Talhah, but you are a kāfir man and I am a Muslim woman, and it is not permissible for me to marry you. So if you embrace Islam, then that will be my mahr, and I will not ask from you other than that.' So he embraced Islam and that was her mahr" [Reported by an-Nasā'ī and Ibn Hibbān].

So then that is Islam. It declares it loudly, clearly, and explicitly: {They are not lawful [wives] for them, nor are they lawful [husbands] for them} [Al-Mumtahanah: 10]. So there is no Islam with kufr, no tawhid with shirk, and no īmān with nifāq. And this small Muslim home is the core of the Ummah, and the parable of these two spouses and their children is like that of a plant that

produces its offshoots and strengthens them, and then they stand upon their stalks. Its appearance is beautiful and its fruit is pleasant. If, however, its soil is polluted with kufr and shirk, then how impossible, how impossible it is for the plant to stand straight and become pleasant!

From amongst the wives of the Sahwah soldiers is she who doesn't care about the condition of her husband's 'aqīdah and īmān. It doesn't matter to her if he goes to sleep as a Muslim and wakes up a kāfir. She sees him swimming in the oceans of apostasy and she doesn't care. And from amongst them is she who knows of his kufr, but remains with him out of fear of his violence. And from amongst them is she who agrees with everything he does. Rather, she may even support and strengthen him.

Concerning the first, I say, know O female slave of Allah that although every accountable slave will alone be held responsible on the Day of Judgment for his deeds – as Allah says, {And all of them are coming to Him on the Day of Judgment alone} [Maryam: 95] – it is not permissible for you in any case to remain under the same roof with someone who has removed the noose of Islam from his neck, and the marriage contract between you and him was nullified the moment when he apostatized from the religion of Islam. So he becomes unlawful for you at that moment and will no longer be lawful for you, and he is not permitted to have from you what a man is permitted from his wife – for you have become a stranger to him – except if he is ordered to repent and returns to Islam anew. As such, any relationship you have with him is a relationship that is impermissible according to the Sharī'ah. Rather, it amounts to zinā (fornication), so beware.

You might say that there are many factors that prevent you from separating from him, the first being the children – that he will take them from you and will prevent you from seeing them, and you have no power in that regard! And you might use the argument of financial maintenance, for he is the one who spends on you and you may not have a family – or perhaps they too follow the banner of the Sahwāt, and you are caught between the hammer of your husband and the anvil of your family, so how can you be saved? I say, even though I understand your emotions, your sense of motherhood, and your fear of breaking up your family, and even though I understand your fear of poverty, I do not find any excuse for you before Allah ﷻ, who says, {Say, "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger"} [At-Tawbah: 24]. If someone is in this condition, what is their recompense? The Knowing and Acquainted answers you, {"Then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah


FSA mujtaddin fighting for the cause of democracy

does not guide the defiantly disobedient people"} [At-Tawbah: 24].

So none of your arguments will absolve you of being questioned before Allah ﷻ. If, however, you fear your Lord and His anger, and abandon this apostate husband in obedience to Him, then He ﷻ will replace him with something better and will provide for you from where you do not expect. And He will return your children to you if there is good in them, just as He returned Mūsā ﷺ to his mother, even if after some time. If, on the other hand, you make light of the issue of remaining with your kāfir husband who is an enemy of Allah and His Messenger and has sold his Hereafter for someone else's dunyā, and who fights the muwahiddīn and seeks to spread corruption in the land, then know that nothing will save you from Allah's punishment.

It was reported on the authority of Ubayy Ibn Ka'b who said, "No slave leaves off something and does so for the sake of Allah, except that Allah brings him that which is better than it from where he does not expect. And no slave makes light of something or attains it in a manner that is not correct, except that Allah brings him that which is worse than it from where he does not expect" [Hilyatul-Awliyā'].

Likewise is the condition of she who remains with her Sahwah husband with the argument that she's afraid of him and fears his violence, while being aware that he is upon other than the guidance of Allah ﷻ. One of the noble muhājirāt who was imprisoned during the days of the Sahwah's treachery towards the Islamic State in Halab speaks to us saying, "I and my husband were stopped at a checkpoint belonging to the Jawlānī front. They then handed us over to the minions of the so-called 'Liwā' at-Tawhid,' and tawhid has nothing to do with them. They took my husband somewhere I didn't know, and threw me into one of the houses they were using as a prison for their enemies. Every day, one of the women would come to us with lunch. At first, she wouldn't speak to me at all, and I noticed that she appeared frightened and confused, so much so that she would place the food down for me and quickly leave. The days went by one after another, and I began to feel her change towards me, such that she began exchanging some words with me and asking me about some issues. So she found out that I was a muhājirah and I found out that she was the wife of the donkey that was coming to me almost every day to rebuke me and to 'teach' me my religion, or so he claimed!"


Fighters from the Jawlani branch of the Sahwah

"One day, she asked me, 'Why are they fighting you people specifically?' So I took advantage of the opportunity and clarified to her the reason for their deep animosity and hatred towards us, and that we desire Allah and the rule of His Sharī'ah in this land and for that reason we were taken as enemies and were fought. I found that she was listening, and she then said, 'I know that my husband is wrong, and I feel that Allah is not pleased with his actions. I even want to help you escape, but I'm afraid that he'll kill me. He's a criminal!'"

Yes, she was afraid of him for herself because she knew he was a criminal! She knew that he was upon falsehood, but fear prevented her from saving herself in the dunyā and the Hereafter! What kind of fear is this that might make you lose your Hereafter, even as Allah ﷻ says, {Do you fear them? But Allah has more right that you should fear Him, if you are believers} [At-Tawbah: 13]? What kind of fear is this that makes you remain with a man that has enmity towards the allies of ar-Rahmān, even as Allah ﷻ says as per the qudsī hadīth, "Whoever shows enmity towards an ally of mine, I have declared war against him" [Reported by al-Bukhārī]?

And what kind of fear is this that keeps you

remaining under the same roof with a man who is not lawful for you, and whom you are not lawful for? Rather, you even give birth to his children! You give birth to the children of an apostate man who is a stranger for you! By Allah, it is obligatory for a woman to feel that the destruction of the entire world is easier on her than to remain in the guardianship of a man who is an enemy of Allah, His Messenger, and the believers.

And how often I wonder to myself, is there not amongst the wives of these tawāghīt and their soldiers a single woman of reason? Is there not amongst them a single Āsiyah?! Yes, Āsiyah Bint Muzāhim, the wife of Fir'awn. The same Āsiyah about whom Qur'an was revealed commending her and will continue being recited until the day Allah inherits the earth and all those upon it. {And Allah presents an example of those who believed: the wife of Fir'awn, when she said, "My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise and save me from Fir'awn and his deed and save me from the wrongdoing people"} [At-Tahrīm: 11]. And she is the same one who the Prophet ﷺ mentioned, saying, "Many have attained completion from amongst the men, but none from amongst the women have attained completion except for Maryam Bint 'Imrān and Āsiyah the wife of Fir'awn. And indeed, the virtue of 'Ā'ishah over all women is like the virtue of tharīd[1] over all other food" [Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

She is the one for whom the dunyā lay thrust before her, but her believing soul disliked and refused it, because she yearned for that which was better and more lasting, in Paradise, whose width is equivalent to the width of the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious! She sought neither authority nor honor in the dunyā, nor did she seek that which her husband possessed of palaces and treasures. She said, {"My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise"} [At-Tahrīm: 11]. So she attained that which she desired as al-Baghawī ﷺ states in his tafsīr, "The mufassirīn said, 'When Mūsā defeated the sorcerers, the wife of Fir'awn believed in him, and when Fir'awn learned of her Islam, he tied her hands and feet to four posts and left her out in the sun.' Salmān said, 'The wife of Fir'awn was tortured by the heat of the sun, but when they left her, the angels shaded her.' {When she said, "My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise"}. So Allah revealed her house in Paradise to her such that she saw it. And in the story, it's mentioned that Fir'awn ordered for a large boulder to be thrown on her, but when they came with the boulder she said, {"My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise"}. Then she saw her house in Paradise, which was made of white pearls, and her soul was taken, so the boulder was thrown onto a body with no soul in it, and she did not suffer any pain. Al-Hasan and Ibn Kaysān said, 'Allah raised the wife of Fir'awn to Paradise, so she is there eating and drinking.' {And save me from Fir'awn and his deed}. Muqātil said, '{And his deed}, meaning: shirk.' Abū Sālih narrated that Ibn 'Abbās said, '{And his deed}, meaning: his intercourse.' {And save me from the wrongdoing people}, meaning: the kuffār."

As for the one who knows her husband's condition of apostasy, and his criminality towards the slaves of Allah, and his allegiance to the kuffār, and his support for them against the Muslims, and despite that she agrees with him concerning what he is upon and defends him, and even supports him at times using her wealth and opinions, then I recite to her the following story. It is the story of the two wives of al-Mukhtār Ibn Abī 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafī, one of the liars who disbelieved and claimed prophethood, after which Allah gave hold of his filthy head to Mus'ab Ibn az-Zubayr ﷺ. His two wives remained thereafter. Imām Ibn Kathīr ﷺ states concerning them, "Mus'ab asked Umm Thābit Bint Samurah Ibn Jundub the wife of al-Mukhtār about him, and she said, 'What can I say about him other than what you say about him.' So he left her and summoned his other wife, 'Amrah Bint an-Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr, and said to her, 'What do you say about him?' So she said, 'May Allah have mercy upon him. He was one of the righteous slaves of Allah.' So he imprisoned her and wrote to his brother saying, 'She says that he is a prophet.' So he wrote back to him saying, 'Take her out and kill her.' So he took her to the city outskirts and she was struck several times until she died" [Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah].

1 Editor's Note: Tharīd is hardened bread broken into pieces with a meat stew poured over it.

So beware, O female slave of Allah. {And for all are degrees from what they have done. And your Lord is not unaware of what they do} [Al-An'ām: 132]. {And never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays them for a Day when eyes will stare [in horror]} [Ibrāhīm: 42].

And do not think – may Allah guide you – that having a beard or wearing a Qandahāriyyah[2] is a factor that prevents takfir and makes your husband infallible. How many bushy beards – that drank from the cup of apostasy down to the last drops, and were laughed at and belittled by the palace scholars, and allied with the kuffār and fought the righteous – were given authority in the land by Allah and then turned their backs on His Sharī'ah, not ruling by what their Lord revealed for even a single hour. Even in the case of a woman who committed fornication, they killed her by shooting her with bullets, while saying she was accused of prostitution! They fear openly speaking the truth lest they are afflicted by a wound! These are beards that have compromised the principles and fundamentals of their religion until they completely cast it off by supporting the murtaddīn against the Muslims, and they recently refused to emerge before the Ummah except in the "folkish Syrian garment," in a message to their allies amongst the factions receiving conditional support, whose meaning was, "We are nationalists. Our concern is Syria, nothing else. We make peace with the Syrian Druze and wage war against the Iraqi muwahhid. So be pleased with us and don't fear us! We will not overstep the Sykes-Picot borders drawn up for you by the crusaders, out of respect for you, and in order to avoid and prevent your anger and seek your pleasure!"[3]

They've deceived you, O female slave of Allah. They said, "We are fighting for the cause of Allah and will establish His Sharī'ah." How is that possible when they've allied with every kāfir and every sinner?! Amongst them are those who don't want the Sharī'ah to begin with, and amongst them are those who want a "Sharī'ah" that is codified for them by the "general interest." So whatever of the Sharī'ah agrees with their interests, they establish, and whatever of the Sharī'ah opposes their interests, they cast behind their backs. And through these coalitions of theirs that they've established, they've become allies to one another, and there is no difference today in their ranks between a bearded person and the clean-shaven person, nor between a memorizer of the Qur'an and a heretic.

Indeed you, may Allah guide you, are associating with a husband who is pleased having the warplanes of the cross flying in his skies in order to pour the lava of death upon the Muslims, upon helpless women and children. And how badly have they been exposed by their walkie-talkies, which revealed their joy and ecstasy at seeing the crusader coalition airstrikes on the lands of the Muslims. Indeed, you are serving a husband concerned with pleasing the Arabs, or the West, or the people, not with pleasing his Lord. You tire yourself, and all your fatigue for his sake will become scattered dust!

Perhaps the wife of a Sahwah soldier will be shocked by my words if she reads them and is faced with the reality of her husband, but I say to her, by Allah, I am only a compassionate adviser. {I only intend reform as much as I am able. And my success is not but through Allah. Upon him I have relied, and to Him I return} [Hūd: 88]. And if you are a seeker of the truth, then search and investigate, and Allah will not forsake your deed. And know that there are two options before you, with no third. You advise your husband and make him fear Allah ﷻ and remind him of Him. If he desists and repents, then that is the grace of Allah, which He bestows upon whom He wills. If, however, he shows arrogance and his pride in his sin takes hold of him, then it's upon you to abandon him in the dunyā so that you may succeed in the Hereafter. And here I call on you to make hijrah to us here in the lands of the blessed Islamic State! Do you not love Allah and His Messenger? Do you not desire to live in a land over which no rule is established other than the rule of Allah ﷻ? Then come, make your way to dārul-islām. And I remind you of the individual obligation on every Muslim and Muslimah to make hijrah from dārul-kufr to dārul-islām.

2 Editor's Note: The type of thawb worn by men in Afghanistan.

3 Editor's Note: This is referring to the traitor Jawlānī, who appeared in an Aljazeera interview. His stance on the Druze is briefly discussed in the article of this issue titled "The Allies of al-Qā'idah in Shām: Part 3."

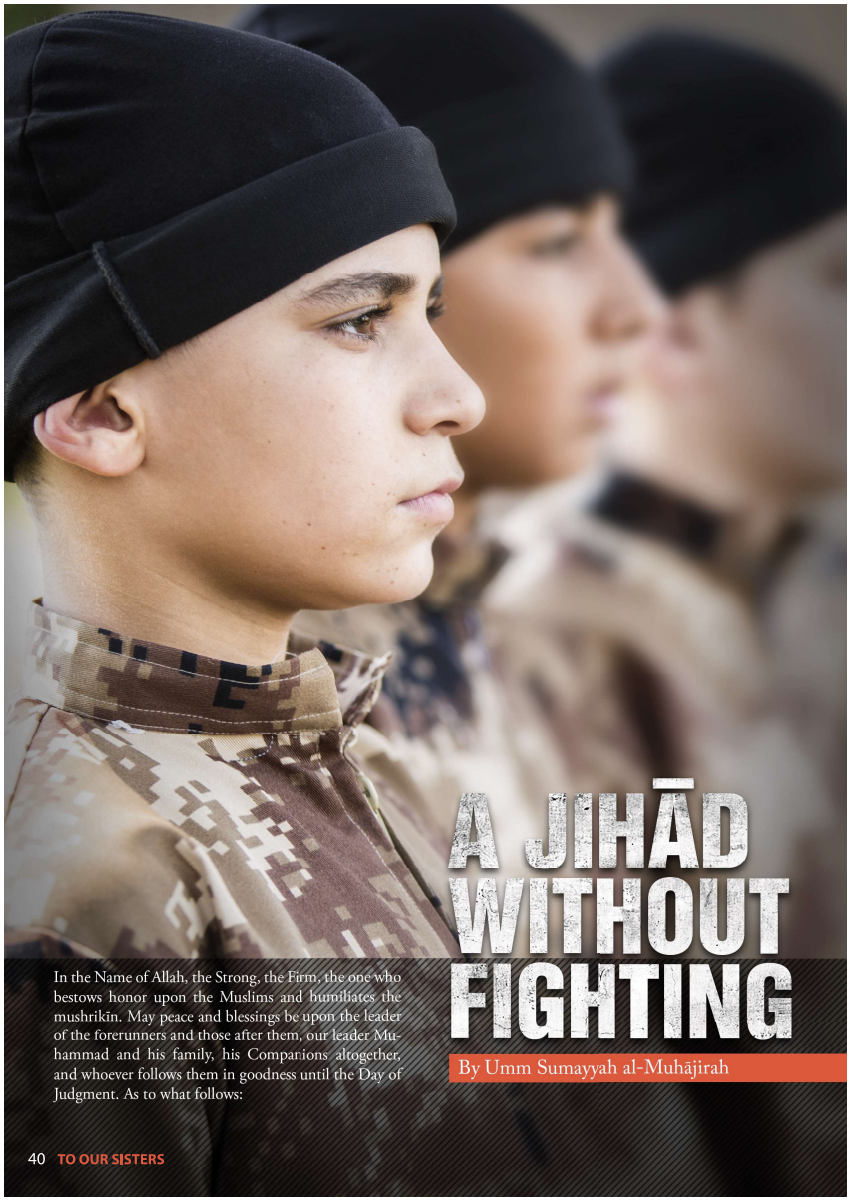
Allah ﷻ says, {Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves – [the angels] will say, "In what [condition] were you?" They will say, "We were oppressed in the land." The angels will say, "Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?" For those, their refuge is Hell – and evil it is as a destination} [An-Nisā': 97]. Imām Ibn Kathīr ﷺ says, "The noble āyah is general and refers to every person who resides amongst the mushrikīn while he is able to make hijrah and is not able to establish the religion. So he is wronging himself and committing a sin according to consensus and according to the text of this āyah where Allah says, {Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves}, meaning: by leaving off hijrah, {[the angels] will say, "In what [condition] were you?"}, meaning: Why did you reside here and leave off hijrah? {They will say, "We were oppressed in the land"}, meaning: We are not able to leave the land, nor travel the earth. {The angels will say, "Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?" For those, their refuge is Hell – and evil it is as a destination.}"

And do not wait for other women from amongst the wives of Sahwah soldiers to make hijrah before you. Rather, be a model and an example for them all, and what a great honor it would be to be the first. The Salaf differed as to who the first muhājirah was during the first hijrah. Some said the first muhājirah from amongst the women was Umm Salamah. Others said it was Laylā Bint Khaythamah, the wife of 'Āmir Ibn Rabī'ah.

And know, may Allah guide you, that today you are following a husband who will disassociate himself from you tomorrow. {When those who have been followed disassociate themselves from those who followed [them], and they [all] see the punishment, and cut off from them are the ties [of relationship]} [Al-Baqarah: 166]. And remember that Allah alone is the Lord of those who are helpless, and the refuge of those in fear, and the aid for those who seek help, so rush to the State of honor even if you have to exchange all your dunyā for your Hereafter.

And the last of our call is praise be to Allah, the Lord of creation. And may Allah's blessings and peace be upon our leader Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions.





A JIHĀD WITHOUT FIGHTING

By Umm Sumayyah al-Muhājirah

In the Name of Allah, the Strong, the Firm, the one who bestows honor upon the Muslims and humiliates the mushrikīn. May peace and blessings be upon the leader of the forerunners and those after them, our leader Muhammad and his family, his Companions altogether, and whoever follows them in goodness until the Day of Judgment. As to what follows:

Indeed, when Allah obligated jihād for His cause upon his male slaves and placed a tremendous reward in it not found in other duties, some women became jealous and envious. So the Mother of the Believers, Umm Salamah ﵂ asked the Prophet ﷺ, according to the hadīth of Mujāhid, "O Messenger of Allah, the men go out to battle and we do not go out to battle…" So Allah ﷻ revealed: {And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others} [An-Nisā': 32], as reported by at-Tirmidhī and others.

Still, the absence of an obligation of jihād and war upon the Muslim woman – except in defense against someone attacking her – does not overturn her role in building the Ummah, producing men, and sending them out to the fierceness of battle.

Therefore, I write this article for my Muslim sister, the wife of a mujāhid and the mother of lion cubs.

Allah ﷻ said, {But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us good in this dunyā and good in the Hereafter and protect us from the punishment of the Fire." Those will have a share of what they have earned, and Allah is swift in account} [Al-Baqarah: 201-202].

According to 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib ﵁, {good in this dunyā} refers to "the righteous wife" [Zād al-Masīr].

Thawbān said, "When the revelation concerning silver and gold came down, they said, 'So what wealth should we seek to possess?' 'Umar said, 'I will find out for you.' He then rode quickly on a camel and reached him while I was on his heels. So he said, 'O Messenger of Allah, what wealth should we seek to possess?' He said, 'Let one of you possess a thankful heart, a tongue that remembers Allah, and a wife that helps him in the matter of the Hereafter'" [Hasan: Reported by Imām Ahmad and Ibn Mājah].

May my father, mother, and myself be sacrificed in defense of Allah's Messenger, who was bestowed with comprehensive speech: "A wife that helps him in the matter of the Hereafter," the Hereafter, the important matter, the ultimate goal, and the concern of the intelligent, discerning believer. How eloquent is the statement of the woman who said to her spouse when she saw him worried one day, "Why are you sad? Is it because of the Dunyā, then Allah has finished decreeing it. Or is it because of the Hereafter? In which case may Allah increase you in worry!"

And you, O sister in Islam, O wife of a mujāhid, your husband is one whom the world today agreed upon waging war against. My sister, do you know who the mujāhid is? A man who turned his back on the Dunyā and went out seeking his death so that the Ummah may live. And I think that on the day he came forward to marry you, if he was not a mujāhid then, he was a mujāhid in the making. At the very least, you were aware of his methodology and creed, and you knew what type of life he sought to live. And if he was a deviant sitting back from jihād at the time, he has repented to Allah, and Allah is more joyed by the repentance of His slave than a man who wakes up and finds his camel next to him after losing it in the desert! So why do we find some of the mujāhidīn's wives complaining about their lives? If she hears of an imminent battle that he will be in, she gets angry. If she sees him putting on war armor, she gets upset. If he goes out for ribāt, she gets in a bad mood. If he returns late, she complains. O my sister, who deluded you and told you that the life of jihād is one of comfort and ease? Do you not love jihād and its people? Please listen. Indeed you are in jihād when you await the return of your husband patiently, anticipating Allah's reward, and making du'ā' for him and those with him to attain victory and consolidation. You are in jihād when you uphold your loyalty to him in his absence. You are in jihād when you teach his children the difference between the truth and falsehood, between right and wrong. Indeed, you, my precious sister, are today the wife of a mujāhid, and tomorrow you might be the wife of a shahīd, or an injured fighter, or a prisoner – so how ready is your supply of patience and steadfastness? If you are discontent and complain in times of ease and comfort, how will you be in times of hardship and affliction?! Will you be patient if he returns to you being carried with his blood pouring, or do you want your husband only when he is well?

Ibn Kathīr ﵀ said, "The scholars of tafsīr and history, as well as others, said that Ayyūb ﵇ was a wealthy man who possessed many different types of wealth, including livestock, slaves, cattle, and ample land in the region of al-Buthaynah in the land of Hūrān. And Ibn 'Asākir narrated that all of it belonged to him and that he had sons and many relatives. Then he was bereaved of these things altogether and his body was afflicted with various illnesses and no healthy organ remained in him except for his heart and his tongue, with which he remembered Allah ﷻ, and throughout all that he was patient, anticipating reward from Allah and remembering Allah ﷻ day and night. His illness was so long, that even his friends and companions deserted him. He was expelled from his land and cast onto a garbage heap outside of it. The people cut ties with him and none remained having



mercy on him except for his wife. She would uphold his rights and acknowledge his history of good behavior towards herself as well as his compassion for her. Thus, she would frequent him, tend to his affairs, help him take care of his needs, and look out for his interests. Her condition became weaker and her wealth depleted until she served people for money in order to feed him and take care of his sustenance, may Allah be pleased with her and make her pleased. She was patient with him in what happened to them of loss of money, children, and what she specifically endured, including her being afflicted through her husband, the harsh financial situation, and having to serve the people after having enjoyed happiness, comfort, service, and security. And to Allah we belong and to Him we will return" [Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah].

Ibn Kathīr ﷺ then said, "As-Suddī said that Ayyūb's flesh fell off until nothing remained except for the bones and nerves. His wife used to come to him with ash, spreading it under him. Then, when this went on for a long time, she said, 'O Ayyūb, if you would call upon your Lord He would surely relieve you.' So he said to her, 'Indeed I lived seventy years in good health. Shall I not at least be patient for Him for seventy years, and yet I consider this to be little for Him.' She became distressed by that speech. She used to serve the people for money and feed Ayyūb ﷺ. After that, the people would not employ her because of their knowledge that she was Ayyūb's wife, fearing that something of his affliction might strike them or that she might infect them due to her being in his company. Therefore, when she could not find anybody to employ her, she set out to sell one of her braids to some of the daughters of nobles for food. Then she came to Ayyūb with it, so he asked her, 'From where did you get this?' and refused it. She said, 'I worked in the service of people for it.' On the next day, she did not find anybody to work for so she sold her other braid for food. Then she came to him with it and he refused it as well, swearing not to eat it until she informed him from where she got the food. Thereupon, she removed her scarf from her head. When he saw her head shaven, he said in his du'ā', {"Indeed, adversity has touched me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful"} [Al-Anbiyā': 83]'" [Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah].

Such was the wife of the Prophet of Allah, Ayyūb, may blessings and peace from our Lord be upon him and upon our Prophet and upon all the Messengers. She remained patient in the face of her husband's affliction and endured, and she never gave up on him when his Lord afflicted him. My sister in religion, remember the statement of Allah ﷻ, {Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account} [Az-Zumar: 10].

Will you then remain steadfast if you one day are informed that your husband was captured or will you hasten to seek separation? How sad, very sad, for our prisoners! How often have their close ones forsaken them before the distant ones in this Dunyā? Nevertheless, the wife's desertion is the most bitter and hardest. Imagine, O Muslimah, O wife of a prisoner, O you who claimed one day that you divorced your worldly life three times, imagine him staying in his narrow, dark dungeon with a wandering mind, and a sad smile rises on his face. Maybe he was thinking of you and his children at that moment and of when the ordeal would end and when Allah would join him with you? A mixture of memories and hopes comes, nothing breaks it except the call of the prison guard and his detested voice mixed with the sounds of the door creaking while he opens it. "So-and-so, you have a visitor." So he hastens to exit with his heart racing. He sees you from afar so his injured heart smiles – this is based on the assumption that you two were not able to perform hijrah to the Islamic State, so he gave bay'ah from where he was and waged jihād in his land, and that there is no fear of evil in visiting him. He reaches you and gives you salām, and begins by asking about your situation and the loved ones. So you reply to him briefly, while you are troubled today, unlike your usual self. Your words come out sporadically and rightly so… You should stammer and be tense, rather you should wish that the ground beneath your feet splits open to swallow you before you are able to state what you've come to say! "Forgive me, but I want divorce, for my patience has run out." Yes, just like that, and with every bit of simplicity. Then you depart and leave that man sitting in front of you stunned and confused. My Muslim sister, did you see the wall that separates between the two of you? Did you see those chains that bind him? All the torture that he has seen since he was imprisoned, and all the bitterness that he drank is nothing compared to your overbearing decision, and we seek refuge with Allah from the subjugation in prison by men!

I recall now one of these sisters as she came to take my counsel about requesting divorce from her imprisoned husband due to her family's pressure on her and her son. However, after days it reached me that she herself could not tolerate hardship, that she wanted divorce, and that her family were not involved in this issue at all. Some people might say this is her right if she fears for herself. So I tell them, yes this is her right, but between this right and patience are levels and meanings which none comprehends except for souls made of pure gold, that don't change in the face of adversity and difficult circumstances!

In contrast with this sister, I know a prisoner's wife who is a school of patience, faithfulness, and steadfastness. Lofty as a high mountain, she raised his children and made of them lions and lionesses. She lives on his memory and waits to meet him. Ten years have passed while he is in prison. Yes, ten complete years, and she has neither changed nor wavered; I consider her such and Allah is her judge. When she sees us, she says, "Have you supplicated that Allah breaks the chains of Abū So-and-so?" How good she is, and her reward is with Allah.

My Muslim sister, this is about a sister whose husband is a prisoner, so what if he were killed? It is narrated in "Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah" from Ismā'īl Ibn Muhammad Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqās that he said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed by a woman from Banī Dīnār whose husband, brother, and father were injured with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Uhud. When she was consoled regarding them she said, 'How is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ doing?' They said, 'He is doing well, O Umm So-and-so. He is as you love to see him, praise be to Allah.' She said, 'Show him to me so that I might see him!'" He said, "So they pointed him out to her, and when she saw him she said, 'Any calamity is insignificant as long as you're not harmed'" [Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah].

Here I dedicate my speech to my muhājirah sisters, for how often have we heard of sisters whose husbands are killed, so the earth with all its vastness becomes constricted for them and they turn towards the lands of kufr, where their families and relatives are. And there is no ability nor strength except with Allah! I tell them, you are sinful if you leave the land of Islam and return to the land of kufr. Whoever made hijrah for the sake of her husband, then know that he is indeed departing, without doubt, if not today then tomorrow. And whoever made hijrah for the cause of Allah, then know that Allah will remain, ever-living, and He does not die. So remain steadfast, my sisters, may Allah make us steadfast, and hold onto the Islamic State with all your strength!

O my sister, equip yourself with obedience and worship so that it may be your help and assistance at the time of calamities and hardships! Allah ﷻ said about Yūnus ﷺ, {And had he not been of those who exalt Allah, He would have remained inside its belly until the day they are resurrected} [As-Sāffāt: 143-144].

Ibnul-Jawzī said, "The majority of the scholars are of the opinion that He means: If it weren't for what he put forth of worship before being swallowed by the whale, he would have lingered in its belly until the day on which mankind is resurrected. Qatādah said, 'The whale's belly would have become his grave until the Day of Judgment. But he used to pray much in times of ease, so Allah ﷻ saved him because of that'" [Zādul-Masīr].

Maymūn Ibn Mihrān said, "I heard ad-Dahhāk Ibn Qays saying, 'Remember Allah in times of ease, then He will remember you in times of adversity. Indeed Yūnus was a pious slave, remembering Allah, so when he fell into the whale's belly, Allah said, {And had he not been of those who exalt Allah, he would have remained inside its belly until the Day they are resurrected} [As-Sâffât: 143-144], whereas Fir'awn was a tyrannical slave, neglectful of the remembrance of Allah, so when {drowning overtook him, he said, "I believe that there is no deity except that in whom the Children of Isrā'īl believe, and I am of the Muslims." Now? And you had disobeyed Him before and were of the corrupters?} [Yūnus: 90-91]'" [Reported by Ibn Abī Shaybah in his musannaf].

As for you, O mother of lion cubs… And what will make you know what the mother of lion cubs is? She is the teacher of generations and the producer of men. I inform you of the statement of the Prophet ﷺ, "Every one of you is a shepherd and everyone is responsible for his herd … And the woman is a shepherd in her house and is responsible for her herd." So have you understood, my Muslim sister, the enormity of the responsibility that you carry? O sister in religion, indeed, I see the Ummah of ours as a body made of many parts, but the part that works most towards and is most effective in raising a Muslim generation is the part of the nurturing mother. And for that reason, you are in need of a lot of patience and goodness and what suffices of beneficial knowledge in order to build a generation capable of bearing a trust that the heavens, the earth, and the mountains have all declined to bear.

You know that acquiring knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim and every Muslimah, and Allah has blessed the Islamic State, which has not been stingy towards its women in providing institutions and courses on the entirety of the Sharī'ah sciences. So shake off the dust of laziness and procrastination and come forth, free yourself from ignorance and learn the matters of your religion. And our state – may Allah strengthen it – does not want from us neither praise nor thanks, neither dirham nor dīnār, so may Allah reward them on our behalf and on behalf of the Muslims with the best of rewards.

My Muslim sister, indeed you are a mujāhidah, and if the weapon of the men is the assault rifle and the explosive belt, then know that the weapon of the women is good behavior and knowledge. Because you will enter fierce battles between truth and falsehood. Therefore, either it is them with a corrupted generation in terms of creed and methodology – I'm referring to the enemies of our religion – or it is you with a generation that sees honor in



the pages of the Qur'ān and the muzzle of a rifle. Because of this let your motivation be the motivation of an Ummah, and so that you see in the eyes of all of your lion cubs a deeply knowledgeable scholar and a conquering leader. Hope for them what Hind Bint 'Utbah ؓ hoped for her son Mu'āwiyah ؓ, "For Abū Sufyān ؓ looked to him while he was crawling and said to his son's mother, 'Indeed this son of mine has a large head and he deserves to rule his people.' So Hind said, 'His people only? May I be bereaved of him if he does not not lead the Arabs altogether'" [Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah]. Hind ؓ got what she had hoped for. Mu'āwiyah ؓ led the Arabs altogether with the Sharī'ah. And, O sister, let all your children be like the three sons of Afrā': Mu'ādh, Mu'awwadh, and 'Awf ؓ.

And what a great statement was made by Asmā', the daughter of Abū Bakr ؓ, on the day Ibn 'Umar entered upon her when her son 'Abdullāh Ibn az-Zubayr ؓ was crucified, killed by al-Hajjāj. He said to her, "This body is nothing and the souls are with Allah, so fear Allah and be patient." So she said, "And what prevents me from patience while the head of Yahyā, the son of Zakariyyā, was offered to a prostitute from the prostitutes of Banī Isrā'īl?" Allāhu akbar! These are the women of our Ummah! The first Khansā' women!

My beloved sister, indeed from the blessings of Allah upon you is that He honored you with the life on the soil of the Khilāfah. So take advantage of that as much as you can to give your children a righteous upbringing upon clear tawhīd, a correct 'aqīdah, kufr bit-tāghūt and worship of Allah alone, teaching them the heart-softeners, the remembrance of Allah, the Prophet's biography, and the fiqh of jihād. And if the claimants of Islam in the lands of kufr raise their children on the stories of Cinderella and Robin Hood, you should make use of the stories in "Mashārī' al-Ashwāq ilā Masārī' al-'Ushshāq" of Ibn an-Nahhās ؒ as stories for your lion cubs before they sleep. And here before you are the Sharī'ah institutions, training camps, and even the kindergartens. All of them in our state – may Allah support it – are upon the methodology of prophethood, inshā'allāh, and to Allah belongs all praise.

Furthermore, my sisterly advice to you as you are preparing the lion cubs of the Khilāfah is that first comes knowledge, then the weapon. The danger of a weapon without knowledge is great and very rarely does it get things right. My noble sister, be like the mother of Sufyān ath-Thawrī, that imām, muhaddith, jurist, hāfidh, zāhid, and worshipper, to whom Umm Habībah – his mother – one day said, "O my son, seek knowledge and I will suffice you with my spindle." Look at her, may Allah have mercy on her and gather us with her in the gardens of our Lord! What did she wish for her son except that he study the Sharī'ah and gain mastery in it, while she covers his provisions and subsistence with what she earns from the spindling of wool. So Allah blessed her son until Abū Ishāq as-Sabī'ī saw him approaching one day and said, {And We gave him judgment while he was a boy} [Maryam: 12].

To conclude, I remind myself and I remind you, O my precious sister, that we must purify our intentions and take them to account in all of our deeds. Those whose deeds were for the sake of Allah ﷻ have succeeded and won, and those whose deeds were for other than Allah ﷻ have failed and lost. And our final call is, "All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the creation." May peace and blessings be upon our leader, Muhammad, and upon his family and companions altogether.





TWO THREE OR FOUR

BY UMM SUMAYYAH AL-MUHĀJIRAH

In the Name of Allah, the Lord of all things, who permitted marriage and prohibited fornication, created us from a single soul, created from that soul its mate, and dispersed from the two of them many men and women. May blessings and peace be upon the Prophet and Messenger who disciplined and taught his companions, and upon those who are guided by his Sunnah and follow him with excellence until the Day of Judgment. As for what follows:

Indeed, when the Sharī'ah of our Lord was eliminated, the laws and rulings of the kuffār gained power in the lands of the Muslims, Islam was shamefully abandoned, and faces turned towards promiscuous Europe, the voice of falsehood rose and with it the voices of those hostile towards the people of the religion, and the cancer of those who legislate besides Allah ﷻ ate away at the Ummah's body. They prohibited what He permitted, and permitted what He prohibited, and one of the most manifest things that they ruined and defamed in defense of women and their rights – as they claimed – was polygyny. They utilized their podiums to that end, including the podiums of the kufrī parliaments and the secular TV channels, and placed on these podiums howling dogs, fools who do not perceive nor know their foolishness. Their poisoned words crept into the hearts of women from the lands of the Muslims, to the point that we almost couldn't find a single woman that is accepting of this issue, except for those whom Allah protected.

Allah ﷻ said in His clear-cut revelation, {And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice]} [An-Nisā': 3]. This is a verse as clear as the sun that does not require extensive explanation or interpretation. Therefore, O slaves of Allah, you may marry two, three, or four women, unless you fear that you will have shortcomings in your fairness towards them or will fail to fulfill their rights, in which case you suffice with one wife. Ibn Kathīr ﷺ said, "His statement {two or three or four} [An-Nisā': 3] means marry any women you wish apart from the orphans. If one of you wishes he may marry two, and if he wishes, three, and if he wishes, four."

Indeed, Islam was not the first to introduce polygyny. Rather, it was present in the sharī'ah of those before us. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "Sulaymān Ibn Dāwūd ﷺ said, 'I will surely have intercourse with a hundred women tonight, or ninety nine, and every one of them will give birth to a knight who will wage jihād for the cause of Allah…'" [Reported from Abū Hurayrah by al-Bukhārī].

What's strange is that the Jews and the Christians taunt the Muslims with respect to polygyny, yet if they were to look into their own books they would've known that it was something present in their religions, for it is stated in their books that Ya'qūb ﷺ had two wives and two concubines, and that Dāwūd ﷺ had a number of wives and concubines, as mentioned in 2 Samuel [5: 13] and 1 Samuel [25: 42 – 44]. They also stated that Sulaymān ﷺ had 700 wives and 300 concubines, as mentioned in 1 Kings [11: 3].

They also stated Rahba'ām (Rehoboam) Ibn Sulaymān, who according to them succeeded his father in kingship, had 18 wives and 60 concubines. Thus, the men of the previous nations used to take many wives, and doing so was permitted in the sharī'ah of those before us. Then the Sharī'ah of Islam came and defined a specific number of wives that no Muslim is allowed to exceed, that number being four. As for concubines, then there is no limit.

Sālim reported from his father that Ghaylān Ibn Salamah ath-Thaqafī embraced Islam while married to ten women. So the Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Choose four of them" [At-Tirmidhī reported it in "The Book of Marriage" and titled the subsection, "Chapter: What Has Come Concerning a Man Who Embraces Islam While Having Ten Wives;" Ibn Mājah also reported it in "The Book of Marriage" and titled the subsection, "Chapter: A Man Embraces Islam While Having More than Four Wives"].

Indeed, the legislation of polygyny contains many wisdoms. Amongst them is that women are greater in number than men, who face many dangers and hardships in their lives, such as war, hazardous work, and disasters. Likewise, young men tend to prefer virgins and abstain from marrying widows and divorcees, so who then would look after this group of women?

Furthermore, Allah might afflict a woman with infertility, but instead of divorcing her Islam has permitted the man to marry another woman while keeping his infertile wife honored and supported.

Also from the wisdoms of polygyny is that the woman, by her nature, has her life interrupted by phases in which she is unable to fulfill the rights of her husband, as is the case with menstruation, childbirth, and postpartum bleeding. So during such phases he can find in his other wives what should prevent him from falling into forbidden or suspicious matters. But, by Allah, if there were no virtue in polygyny other than the fact that it's a prophetic Sunnah from the best of mankind, we would have sufficed with that as a proof with which we would deafen the ears of the stubborn opponents.

How much does it eat at my soul to openly mention a reality that makes the heart of a muwahhid bleed, that reality being that the opposition to polygyny, whether directly or indirectly, has gone beyond the blind women and now sits in the hearts of some of the female seekers of knowledge and women who adhere to the bulk of the shar'ī rulings. This became so after the calls of the enemies of Allah, the religion, and His Messenger ﷺ found their way towards them through the doubts that these enemies propagate, doubts that effectively state, "No to polygyny. Polygyny is oppression towards women." And Allah is sufficient for us and the best disposer of affairs.

And it saddens me to say that with some of them, the matter may reach the point of pronouncing a statement of kufr – and Allah's refuge is sought – or a statement that could imply kufr, and Allah's help is sought. You find her saying, with the Shaytān having inflated her with falsehood, "Anything but polygyny, anything but this ruling. O Allah forgive me, but I can't handle it, neither for myself nor for others." One woman even said to me when I was talking to her, "Do you want me to commit kufr and thereby apostatize? If I saw him with another woman it would be a fitnah for me with respect to my religious adherence, and I would leave my home and wander about in loss!" And another woman asked her friend, "What would you prefer? That Allah frees your husband after being imprisoned for years and he would then marry a second woman, or that he remain imprisoned and not do do?" So she answered her saying blatantly, "I prefer that he remain imprisoned, for that is easier on me than for him to marry a second wife!" My Lord, have mercy on us! For a Muslim, muwahhid husband to remain imprisoned by the Rāfidah or other kuffār and be subjected to the worst kinds of torture is easier on the jealous woman than for him to come out of prison and practice a law from the laws of Allah?! This is all in addition to other dangerous statements which the woman doesn't really think much about, but which may cast her into the fire of Hell, and Allah's refuge is sought.

And how many women in the lands of the Muslims display their "discontent" towards polygyny! I sat with some such women and advised them, and I found that with many of them the tone of their speech bears witness that this "discontent" is in fact a hatred of the ruling itself, even if the cursed Iblīs has sugarcoated it for the woman and downplayed it for her, saying, "It's only that you don't want it for your husband, so you can't be blamed!" So here I warn her, and I remind her of the statement of Allah ﷻ, {But no, by your Lord, they will not believe until they make you judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in submission} [An-Nisā': 65]. So where is your submission and where is your obedience to the command of your Lord and and His wisdom? You were not named a "Muslimah" to to begin with except because you've submitted to Allah with tawhīd and yielded to Him with obedience!

And how many muhājirāt there are who are seekers of knowledge and whom I would consider to be from the best

of women, except that as soon as you mention this issue they completely flip and almost promote the slogans of secularism without even realizing it. And there is no ability nor might except with Allah. Rather, from amongst them is she who praises Allah that her husband was killed before taking multiple wives, and to Allah we belong and to Him we will return! To her likes I say: Why did you make hijrah? Wasn't it to establish the Sharī'ah of Allah in the land? And isn't polygyny a part of this Sharī'ah? Know then that the One who has honored the Muslim woman and has given her rights that protect her from the plots of the wicked is the very One who has permitted for the man to marry those that please him of women. And based on that, it is not permissible for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to argue concerning the Sharī'ah of Allah, accepting what pleases her and rejecting what goes against her desires. Bishr al-Hāfī ﷺ (died 227AH) said, "All calamities lie in following your desires, and all cures lie in opposing them" [Sifat as-Safwah].

And indeed, this religion is a whole that cannot be divided. Allah ﷻ said, {So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do} [Al-Baqarah: 85]. So beware, my sister, of being from amongst such people, and beware of letting your blind jealousy lead you to disliking this shar'ī ruling, for it is feared that you would thereby fall into apostasy, as Allah ﷻ said, {That is because they disliked what Allah revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds} [Muhammad: 9]. Imām Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah ﷺ stated when commenting on the āyah, {O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not} [Al-Hujurāt: 2], "So if raising their voices above his voice was a cause for rendering their deeds void, then how much more so is advancing and raising their opinions, intellects, personal tastes, politics, and experience over that which he came with? Is this not more befitting of being a cause for rendering their deeds void?" [I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn].

And every Muslimah should know that it is normal for her to be jealous and feel sad if her husband marries another woman, and we are not better than the Mother of the Believers, the pure siddīqah, daughter of as-Siddīq, 'Ā'ishah, of whose jealousy much has been narrated. However, she never opposed what Allah had permitted and did not prevent her husband – the Prophet ﷺ – from marrying another woman. Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her and with her father) never stood in his way saying, "It's either me or her. Divorce me and marry her." Far be it from her to do so!

The Shaytān – and it may be a human shaytān from amongst the women – will say to you, "If he loved you, he wouldn't have married another woman while being married to you." So say to him or her, "Our Prophet ﷺ married seven women after 'Ā'ishah while she was the most beloved person to him, and his love for her did not weaken or decrease, until our Lord allowed him to pass away in her room with his head between her chest and her neck. May my mother and father be sacrificed for him!"

He will also say to you, "You never had any shortcomings in any of your dealings with him, so where does he get the right to marry another woman while being married to you?" So say to him, "Even if I were from the most perfect of women, and the best of them in character, beauty, knowledge, and manners, the Legislator has not exempted me from amongst other women, and has given the man the right to marry a second, a third, or a fourth woman!"

The whisperer, whether human or jinn, will also say to you, "You can prevent him, make things difficult for him, make his life unpleasant, and incite the children against him." So say to him, "Yes, I can, and indeed the schemes of women are tremendous, as our Lord has described, but where would I be with respect to having fear of my Lord ﷻ? And where would I be with respect to Him making things difficult for me in the Dunyā, and His questioning of me in the Hereafter, if I oppose what He has allowed and hate what He has permitted?!"

He will also say to you, "You will not bear seeing your husband with another wife, and it'll inevitably be a fitnah for you with respect to your religious adherence!" So say to him, "It will not be a fitnah for me, and Allah is my protector. Allah will not abandon me when I have submitted to His wisdom and yielded to His law!" Then with the statement of Allah ﷻ, cut off from them the channels through which they try to blow and inflate you with falsehood: {It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error} [Al-Ahzāb: 36].

And my advice to you, my sister, O wife of a man who practices polygyny: I know with certainty that there is no jihād more difficult for a slave than jihād against one's inner self. Indeed, Ibnul-Qayyim ﷺ said, "The most obligatory jihād is to wage jihād against one's inner self, against one's desires, against the Shaytān, and against the Dunyā. So whoever wages jihād against these four things for the sake of Allah, Allah will guide him upon the paths to attain His pleasure, which lead him to His Paradise" [Al-Fawā'id]. So if you wage jihād against this inner self that persistently incites you to do evil, place a barrier between you and the whispers of the retreater (Shaytān), restrain your jealousy with the reins of the Sharī'ah, and remain patient and forbearing and anticipate Allah's rewards – for what is with Allah is better and more lasting – then you will be at ease, enjoy relief, and have a pleasant life.

So pay no attention to the statements of unprincipled women whose sources of reference are vile plays and soap operas. Rather, let your example be the women of the prophetic household ﷺ. And every sister should know that when her husband wants to marry another woman, it's not obligatory for him to consult her, nor to seek her permission, nor to try and appease her. If he does that, it is an act of generosity on his part and a means of preserving the companionship between the two of them. So be content, my sister, submit to Allah with obedience, and yield to His law. And if a woman does this, then it is fitting for the Most Generous to increase her rewards in the Dunyā and the Hereafter.

Here, I also wish to address the men, both those who have multiple wives and those who intend to take multiple wives, and remind them of two matters. The first is that the woman, as is known, was created from a curved rib, so if you, our brother, have made the decision to marry a second, then I remind you by Allah to be gentle with her and speak softly to her, and be extremely patient and tolerating when you inform her of your intent. Don't be afraid of her initial reaction, be patient with her, and use in your advice the words of Allah ﷻ and the hadīth of His Prophet ﷺ. And if she's stubborn, then frighten her with the Almighty and remind her that this is a part of this Sharī'ah, and that we are in a state whose system of rule is khilāfah upon prophetic methodology inshā'allāh. If, however, she refuses and is arrogant then I say to you what Allah ﷻ said addressing the best of those who walked the earth: {O Prophet, why do you prohibit [yourself from] what Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the approval of your wives? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful} [At-Tahrīm: 1]. Imām at-Tabarī ﷺ says, "The people of knowledge differed over which lawful matter Allah had permitted for His Messenger and His Messenger then prohibited himself from. Some of them said that it was Māriyah, his Coptic slave-girl, whom he prohibited for himself with an oath that he would not come near her, thereby seeking to please his wife Hafsah Bint 'Umar, because she had become jealous of Māriyah being alone with Allah's Messenger ﷺ on her day and in her room. Others said that it was something he used to drink and which he liked. The correct statement on this issue is to say that what the Prophet ﷺ prohibited for himself was something that Allah had made lawful for him, and it's possible that it was his slave-girl, and it's possible that it was a type of drink, and it's possible that it was something other than that, but whatever it was, he prohibited for himself something that was lawful for him so Allah admonished him for prohibiting something that He had made lawful for him and declared the dissolution of the oath which he had taken and that it was forbidden for him to make this prohibited for himself." For this reason, don't make it prohibited for yourself to help preserve the honor of a widow or become the guardian of an orphan because you seek to please your wife!

As for the second issue, then I wish to remind the men, both those who have multiple wives and those who intend to take multiple wives, to fear Allah ﷻ, and also remember that oppression will be darkness on the Day of Judgment, and that the crooked side of your body will not be rectified by the wife whom you crookedly inclined to in the Dunyā, thereby oppressing another of your wives in the process and falling short in your duties towards her and mistreating her. That day {a man will flee from his brother and his mother and his father and his wife and his children} ['Abas: 34-36].

Furthermore, the frontiers of the Islamic State – may Allah grant it victory – have increased in number and its frontlines have multiplied after all the paths of kufr and nifāq allied together to wage war against it, and no war takes place except that there are people killed on both sides, as Allah ﷻ said, {Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed} [At-Tawbah: 111].

How many a shahīd ascends from this Dunyā – we consider him so, and Allah is his judge – and leaves behind a grieving wife and orphaned children. So who after Allah ﷻ is willing to take care of them? If one of the Sahābah ﷺ were killed and he had a wife, the others would race one another to propose to her once she had completed her 'iddah, each one wanting to help preserve her honor and become the guardian of an orphan, knowing that his reward is with the Master ﷻ. And I used to always say to my Muslim sisters, "Allah ﷻ says, {Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend from that which you love. And whatever you spend – indeed, Allah is Knowing of it} [Āli 'Imrān: 92], and the husband is from amongst that which the wife loves, so why doesn't she spend from him, seeking the face of her Lord, by being content with him marrying another woman?" Let every sister just put herself in the shoes of the wife of a shahīd and sacrifice some of the selfishness that is a part of our nature!

And our final call is: Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all creation. May Blessings and peace be upon our leader, Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions.