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Visual Jihad: Constructing the 'Good Muslim' in Online Jihadist Magazines

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Abstract:

Images are known to have important effects on human perception and persuasion. Jihadist groups are also known to make strategic use of emotive imagery and symbolism for persuasive ends. Yet until recently studies of the online magazines published by violent jihadist groups largely focused on their textual, not their image, content and, whilst the image content of these magazines is now the subject of a burgeoning number of studies, few of these compare the images used by different groups. This article accordingly offers a cross-group comparison, examining the image content of a total of 39 issues of five online magazines published by four different jihadist groups. Starting with a content analysis, it shows that the images' most common focus is non-leader jihadis. Using a news values analysis, it then shows how these images of non-leader jihadis are used to visually construct the identity of a 'good Muslim'. This construct is characterised by three traits, each corresponding to a different news value: fulfilled (personalisation); active (consonance); and, respected (prominence). Moreover, these traits are intertwined: fulfilment comes from responding actively to the call to violent jihad, which in turn promises respect. The article concludes by highlighting some subtle differences between how the news values of personalisation, consonance and prominence are realised in the different magazines, and by discussing the implications of the 'good Muslim' construct for efforts to develop counter-messages.

Keywords: terrorism, counterterrorism, images, identity

Introduction

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There is a growing body of research into the information operation (IO) machinery operated by violent jihadist ideology groups and, specifically, the content of the messages that they disseminate for propagandistic purposes.[1] This literature agrees on the need to avoid generalisations, given these groups' heterogeneity and constant evolution.[2] It also acknowledges the need for detailed analyses of their discursive strategies in order to contribute to crafting more nuanced and effective counter-messages.[3] Whilst undoubtedly a positive development, this relatively recent interest in the study of jihadists' propagandistic *discourse* is still lacking in two key areas,[4] to which this article seeks to contribute. One concerns self-(jihadi) identity construction, as opposed both to other-identity construction (including of jihadists' enemies) and institutional (e.g. media or government) constructions of jihadi identities. The other refers to the visual – rather than linguistic – aspects of these groups' identity construction. Whilst there is a burgeoning number of visual studies of online jihadist magazines, few of these have adopted a comparative approach.

Given the above, the study reported in this article sought to identify and examine the visual representation strategies used in five online magazines published over a period of six-and-a-half years by four groups that follow a violent jihadist ideology. The five magazines are *Azan* (published by the Taliban in Khurasan), *Dabiq* (published by the so-called Islamic State (hereafter "IS")), *Gaidi Mtaani* (published by Al Shabaab), *Inspire* (published by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)) and *Jihad Recollections* (also published by AQAP[5]). The period under consideration spans 1st January 2009 to 30th June 2015. Jihadist groups, including the four considered in our study, are known to rely upon varying combinations of pragmatic and perceptual factors in their propaganda messages. The former include references to stability, security and livelihoods, which the groups use both to promote their politico-military campaigns and to denigrate the politico-military efforts of their enemies. The latter seek to leverage "logic of appropriateness" decision making processes, that is, choices made according

to jihadists' perceived self- and other- identity.[6] Such choices are typically presented in the groups' online propaganda as polarised, us-versus-them argumentative structures, in which the out-group (the 'they') is othered and the in-group (the 'we') becomes the only solution for the in-group's perceived crisis.[7] Whereas there are a number of studies that examine out-group constructions, including through othering, within jihadi groups' online propaganda,[8] research into their in-group constructions is comparatively less developed. This is particularly significant given that there is evidence that suggests that it is the values a group attributes to itself – and not the values a group attributes to its opponents – that is predictive of the group's willingness to engage in terrorist activity.[9] Specifically, and given the groups' polarised argumentation tactics, we focus on how they construct visually the identity of 'the good Muslim' – someone worth emulating – within their online magazines. As for our focus on jihadi *visual* identity, this reflects both the salience that images have on human perception and persuasion in mediated communication (see below) and the fact that jihadist groups are known to make strategic use of emotive imagery and symbolism for persuasive ends.[10]

The article is structured as follows. First, we review the literature on jihadist groups' IO machinery, with a focus on their online propaganda communications. We then review the role played by images and other visual resources within jihadist propaganda, explaining the link between them and ideology and identity construction processes in digital environments. In the next section, we introduce our methodological approach, which integrates content and news values analysis of all the images in our corpus. We then report and discuss the main findings of our two strands of analysis, explaining how these magazines visually construct the 'good Muslim' identity. Finally, we conclude by briefly identifying some implications of our findings.

Identity Construction in Online Jihadist Magazines

In the days before the internet, terrorist groups generally had to rely on traditional news media outlets to depict their justifications and motivations, and the details of their attacks.[11] Today, by contrast, such groups are able to produce propaganda, with direct control over its contents, and disseminate it widely online.[12] It is thus unsurprising that the dissemination of propaganda has been found to be one of the primary uses of the internet by terrorist groups.[13] A wide variety of multimedia have been used, including literature, videos, songs, images, comics and video games.[14] Terrorist groups also utilise social media, including both high-profile platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and lower-profile ones such as Telegram and SoundCloud.[15] An important part of these efforts has been the production of online magazines. These publications seek to articulate a comprehensive message and vision, as well as serving as an outreach tool to incite or recruit new followers.[16]

Since the first issue of AQAP's English-language magazine *Inspire* was published in 2010, there have been several analyses of its contents.[17] Pointing to how *Inspire* seeks to normalize the jihadist message by shoehorning "otherwise disturbing content … into a familiar visual and textual format that stylistically suggests a lighter tone and popular-culture content",[18] coupled with the way in which the magazine conveys an impression of "coolness and popularity",[19] Sivek concludes that it may aid readers through the stages of self-radicalization by making "altering personal beliefs and social norms seem reasonable and socially acceptable".[20] Droogan and Peattie's analysis of *Inspire*'s narrative themes found that these could be grouped into four broad categories – anti-Western, call to arms, religion and local issues – with the global theme "Islam is at War".[21] Whilst the low-level themes within these four categories underwent shifts in response to real-world events, these four categories remained constant across all fourteen issues analysed. Lemieux et al examined eleven issues of *Inspire*, assessing the extent to which its contents corresponded with the Information-Motivation-Behavioral

skills model of behavioural change. They concluded that the information, motivation and skills elements of this model are all present in the magazine's pages (deliberately or otherwise), and that "Taken together, these elements significantly enhance the potential efficacy of *Inspire* to engender terrorism".[22] Lastly, Kirke has emphasised the importance of political myth in *Inspire*, in terms of both simplifying complex realities and constructing in-group and out-group identities.[23]

There have also been analyses of *Dabiq*. First published in 2014, *Dabiq* was the flagship English-language magazine of IS until September 2016 (when it was abandoned in favour of a new magazine, *Rumiyah*). Colas states that understanding of *Dabiq* may be advanced by investigating its implied audiences, which he argues were English-speaking second generation Muslims or converts, Western policymakers and current or would-be members of IS who were not integrating with the organization itself.[24] Colas also observes that articles aimed at the third of these audiences were "astonishingly frank" about the organizational challenges IS faces and thus provide information that may be used against it.[25] Christien's analysis focuses specifically on the representation of youth. She concludes that children and youth are portrayed predominantly in passive roles – as weak or victimized and as objects or commodities – and that IS displays children in ways that foster state building and glorify the group, though she notes an evolution in the later issues in which youth are increasingly empowered and portrayed in active roles, especially violent ones.[26] Macdonald has examined how the producers of *Dabiq* seek to induce behavioural change in its readers. Using the framework of responsive regulation, he argues that the magazine uses a variety of persuasive techniques that are analogous to those used by regulators: promises of (physical and spiritual) benefits; issuing warnings that punishment for non-adherents is inescapable, yet simultaneously avoiding resort to the use of bare threats that would generate reactance; and, reinforcing sympathizers' willingness to self-identify with IS by portraying the group as fair, in both a substantive and a procedural sense.[27]

And Ingram has explained that *Dabiq* prioritized dichotomy-reinforcing messages, presenting a "competitive system of meaning" in which readers are plunged "into a bi-polar world, characterised by cosmic war and on the verge of End Times, that demands Sunnis choose between the forces of good or evil. Through this lens, becoming a foreign fighter or lone wolf terrorist is obligatory for any true Sunni".[28] Ingram has applied the same theoretical framework to *Azan*, the magazine produced by the Taliban in Khurasan. As well as finding that *Azan* employs a variety of narrative approaches to appeal to diverse readerships at potentially different stages of radicalization, Ingram found that the majority of items in *Azan* were linked to value-reinforcing narratives. The magazine, he concludes, focuses on empowering its readership by positively constructing the in-group identity using values such as piety, honour, courage and love.[29]

The studies referred to hitherto focus on the magazine of a specific group. Whilst useful, a cross-cutting approach enables the identification of subtle differences in the groups' narratives. Our study accordingly adopts such an approach, specifically seeking to ascertain what identity construction features these differences may bring about, and how this is visually achieved. The potential of a cross-cutting approach to advance understanding of these publications, and inform the construction of tailored responses, is illustrated by Novernario's study of the strategic logics used by AQAP in *Inspire* and IS in *Dabiq*. Employing a content analysis methodology, she found that, whilst both groups made significant use of outbidding as a strategy, there were differences in their use of other strategic logics. Attrition was used far more frequently by AQAP to try and compel changes in the West's policy and behaviour, whereas intimidation was scarcely used by AQAP but was a key strategy for IS. These differences, she argues, reflect the differing objectives of the two groups.[30] Similarly, Ingram has compared *Dabiq* with *Inspire*, finding that, whilst *Inspire* relies heavily on identity-choice appeals, *Dabiq* tended to balance identity and rational choice messaging:

By simultaneously compelling readers to perceive the world through bifurcated in- and outgroup identity constructs *and* demonstrating how IS are *tangibly* addressing *real* Sunni crises (e.g., Sunni persecution and disempowerment) with *real* solutions (i.e., IS's politico-military agenda), *Dabiq* seeks to align its readership's identity- and rational-choice decision-making processes as a means to win their support and mobilize them to action as a matter of urgency. [31]

For their part, Lorenzo-Dus and Macdonald examined the discursive strategies used to other 'the West' in *Dabiq* and *Inspire* across a five and a half year period (January 2010 – June 2015).[32] Their analysis shows that, although both magazines employed an othering discourse saliently when referring to 'the West', they did so (i) with different frequencies of use (73.58% in *Dabiq* and 91.79% in *Inspire* of all references to 'the West'); (ii) by associating 'the West' with different extra-linguistic realities (i.e., America, Western troops / armies and Western allies were more frequently referenced in *Inspire* than in *Dabiq* and, conversely, Western leaders and crusaders were more frequently referenced in *Dabiq* than in *Inspire)*; and (iii) by assigning salience to different impoliteness strategies[33] (*Dabiq* favoured the use of threats and condescension over exclusionary discourse, whereas the opposite was the case in *Inspire*).

Images, Identity and Persuasion in Online Jihadist Magazines

The use of images in media discourse is widely known to have several important effects broadly aligned to persuasion. Firstly, images grab audiences' attention more than words do. For instance, the incorporation of photographs into news texts is known to draw attention to the texts and foster more extensive reading of them.[34] And, where agonistic imagery is used (such as photographs depicting victimization), information processing is more extensive.[35]

Secondly, whilst the impact of image content will hinge on the "complex relation between between specific images and the underlying beliefs, narratives and ideologies held to by particular audiences,"[36] there exists the potential for visual content to be taken at face value, especially when embedded within non-fictional media genres such as news photography.[37] It seems that we are less skilled at guarding our judgment against visual than verbal persuasion.[38] Whilst most have been schooled and trained in textual rhetoric and can discern attempts at verbal manipulation, the image can fall beneath notice.[39] Images may be perceived as mere excretions of a technical apparatus, and hence as neutral bearers of truth,[40] such that the authentication of the image trumps the representation of the word.[41]

Thirdly, images can evoke a powerful and lasting emotional response.[42] A study by Huddy and Gunnthorsdottir, which evaluated two different explanations for the persuasive impact of emotional visual appeals within politics, found that it was those most committed to a cause that were most influenced by emotive appeals. The study therefore concluded that emotive appeals are a means by which to arouse one's supporters.[43] Furthermore, visual information is processed more easily and is more memorable than verbal information on its own,[44] the so-called "picture superiority effect".[45]

Fourthly, images may be employed as thematic cues. The iconic ability of images to seemingly reproduce reality makes them powerful persuasive means in support of "commonsensical" ideology and identity claims, whilst also enabling them to "subtly camouflage" the constructed roots of such claims.[46] An image, for example, can provide "transcending frames of cultural mythology or social narratives in which the viewer/reader is led to process and interpret other information on the page or screen".[47] The capacity of *visual frames* to influence interpretation of a news event, such as a terrorist attack, is particularly evident in the context of foreign news, when audiences may have limited knowledge of a place, people, and events.[48] Images can

therefore play a key role in shaping the parameters of public debate following a terrorist attack,[49] and in shaping a nation's collective memory of the attack.[50]

All in all, the persuasive power of images – coupled with states' reduced ability in today's digital sharing era[51] to control messages about the conflicts in which they are engaged – has resulted in their "weaponization".[52] In this "image war" each side attempts to portray its ideas, beliefs and actions as justified and presents itself as the victim, "understanding that this frame attracts more media attention and receives more sympathy from the audience".[53] A politics of identity has ensued, in which images and emotional accounts reinforce the notion that "we" have been targeted and are under threat.[54] Volpato et al detail the various delegitimization strategies that may be employed to communicate prejudiced beliefs, maintain the in-group's sense of superiority and uniformity, and provide the in-group with a justification for negative behaviours towards the out-group.[55] Case studies include Seo's study of the images posted on Twitter by the Israel Defense Forces and Al Qassam Brigades during the 2012 Israeli-Hamas conflict, which focused on the death, injuries and suffering of innocent civilians alongside a framing of the other side as cold-blooded killers,[56] and Spens' study of the Abu Ghraib photographs, which dehumanized the Other for political purposes.[57]

It is unsurprising, then, that terrorist groups seek to utilise visual media in their propaganda and psychological warfare campaigns.[58] As early as the mid-2000s, Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) tasked its photography supervisors with producing monthly work plans and training more people in photography.[59] El Damanhoury et al have explained that IS regards military action and media operations as "two sides of the same jihad coin",[60] pointing out that in the online visual sphere even the weakest side in a military conflict can "define the conflict and the concept of victory moving forward".[61] Kraidy has argued that IS considers images to be operative, not merely representational: in visual warfare "images trigger intensities in addition to conveying ideologies".[62]

Whilst at first scholarship on online jihadist magazines largely focused on their textual content, there is now a growing number of visual studies. These have highlighted how *Dabiq* magazine makes use of images that project a positive image of health and welfare within the Caliphate,[63] as well as derogatory images of IS's enemies to position the group's adherents and opponents within a dichotomous ideological framework,[64] and of the IS flag to construct a brand.[65] Perhaps the most in-depth set of studies are those of Winker et al. These have examined the visual strategies IS used to create and define the community boundaries of the self-declared caliphate in its first two years,[66] the differences between the images contained in *Dabiq* and IS's Arabic-language newspaper *al-Naba'*,[67] and the use in *Dabiq* of the about to die trope.[68] The latter study found that the "reality depicted in *Dabiq* images was that Daesh would determine who would die next, and those at risk of dying would overwhelmingly be those who failed to adopt, adhere to, or otherwise pledge allegiance to the group and its ideology".[69] The study also noted that "the bulk of the published scholarship analysing *Dabiq* largely focuses on the text of the magazine",[70] a point that has been echoed in studies of *Inspire*. For example, Lemieux et al have observed that "Going forward, research in this domain should further examine the imagery used in *Inspire* in a more detailed and systematic manner",[71] whilst in their study Droogan and Peattie state:

> Given its focus on textual narrative themes, this research cannot account for the relative influence that *Inspire*'s images may have on potential radicals over its textual arguments. Indeed, the magazine does make frequent use of captivating, professional imagery. Some of these images are powerful in their own right, and the results of a textual thematic analysis do not capture their pervasiveness or their ability to captivate audiences.[72]

Our work seeks to respond to this call for a detailed and systematic analysis of visuals in online jihadist magazines. In particular, and in contrast to existing visual studies of these publications,

it examines the image content of the magazines published by four different jihadist groups. As the cross-group textual studies outlined above have demonstrated, such a comparative approach is valuable in identifying subtle differences between, and nuances within, the narratives of each group.

Methodology

Data

Data for this study came from a wider project that examined various aspects of persuasion in online terrorist magazines, such as their othering discourse, the role of religion and politics and gender.[73] Data for the project spanned a five-and-a-half-year period (1st January 2009 – 30 June 2015), the end point of which coincided with the start date of the project. In addition to being published within this period, the following data inclusion were applied: firstly, the publication had to be a magazine (as opposed to some other type of publication, such as a newsletter or a transcript of a speech). Secondly, reflecting our focus on the dissemination of terrorist propaganda via the internet, it had to have been published online. Thirdly, reflecting our focus on cross-group as opposed to cross-language comparisons, it had to have been published in the English language.

Although there was no predetermined intention to focus on a particular form of violent extremism, the five magazines that met the criteria for inclusion were all published by groups that follow a jihadist ideology. The five magazines were: *Jihad Recollections*, published by AQAP (four issues, all published in 2009); *Inspire*, also published by AQAP (13 issues, published from 2010-2014); *Gaidi Mtaani*, published by Al Shabaab (seven issues, published

from 2012-2015); *Azan*, published by the Taliban in Khurasan (six issues, published in 2013-2014); and, *Dabiq*, published by IS (nine issues, published in 2014-2015).

To the best of our knowledge, every issue of each of the five magazines that was published within the relevant time period was included within the dataset. This totalled 39 issues. The magazines contained a variety of different types of item, from creative works and interviews to eulogies and instructional guides. As Table 1 shows, by far the most common type of item in all five magazines was articles. In addition to providing purportedly objective reports of current events, the articles also addressed issues of wider (political, religious and historical) interest and sought to engage in academic discussion and debate.[74]

Table 1: Types of item within the magazines

	Articles	Instructional guides	Editorials	Creative works (e.g., poems)	Statements	Interviews	Eulogies	Total
Inspire	117 (57.4%)	27 (13.2%)	13 (6.4%)	18 (8.8%)	8 (3.9%)	9 (4.4%)	12 (5.9%)	204
Dabiq	84 (82.4%)	0	9 (8.8%)	0	3 (2.9%)	6 (5.9%)	0	102
Azan	74 (73.3%)	0	6 (5.9%)	3 (3.0%)	16 (15.8%)	2 (2.0%)	0	101
Jihad Recollections	54 (76.1%)	7 (9.9%)	4 (5.6%)	4 (5.6%)	2 (2.8%)	0	0	71
Gaidi Mtaani	17 (63.0%)	2 (7.4%)	4 (14.8%)	1 (3.7%)	2 (7.4%)	0	1 (3.7%)	27
Total	346 (68.5%)	36 (7.1%)	36 (7.1%)	26 (5.1%)	31 (6.1%)	17 (3.4%)	13 (2.6%)	505

The 39 issues contained a total of 3869 images.[75] The distribution of these images – which formed the corpus for our study – is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Analytic corpus

	Number of images across all issues	Image / issue ratio	Image / page ratio
Azan	494	82	1.68
Dabiq	760	84	1.52
Gaidi Mtaani	386	55	2.05
Inspire	1719	132	2.76
Jihad Recollections	510	128	1.86
Total	3869	99	2.06

As this table shows, there were significant differences between the magazines. The two AQAP magazines, *Jihad Recollections* and *Inspire*, contained a higher quantity of images, with an average of 128 and 132 images per issue and 1.86 and 2.76 images per page respectively. By contrast *Dabiq* contained 84 images per issue and 1.52 images per page: the lowest images per page ratio of any of the magazines.

Procedure and Framework

Our methodological framework integrated image content and news values visual analysis. The former was informed by a Grounded Theory approach,[76] whereby we identified relevant image content categories in our corpus, progressively funnelling down from the magazine level to relevant image features. These categories included:

a) What was being depicted in focus, e.g. a landscape, a city, a vehicle, human figure/s, etc.; and,

b) In the case of human participants, who was being depicted. This was further divided into those who were jihadis and those who were not. Given our research interest in jihadi identity construction, we proceeded to analyse those images that placed jihadis in focus, noting:

   i. Whether the image placed one or more jihadi in focus; that is whether it individualised or collectivised jihadi representations;

   ii. Whether the jihadi/s in focus held an 'elite' or 'non-elite' status, that is, whether the primary focus of the image was on one or more publicly recognised jihadi leader (e.g. bin Laden, al-Awlaki, al-Zawahiri) or on one or more publicly non-recognised jihadi;[77] and,

   iii. the activity in which the jihadi/s in the focus of the image appeared engaged, e.g., celebrating a military victory, religious observance, saluting, and so forth.

As stated above, by far the most common type of item within the magazines was articles. For our visual analysis, we therefore chose to employ a News Values Discourse Analytic framework.[78] This treats newsworthiness as "a discursive value that is established by language and image in use" - the latter being the focus of our analysis.[79] The framework comprises of ten news values (prominence, proximity, negativity, superlativeness, impact, personalisation, timeliness, novelty, consonance and aesthetics), each of which may be realised by one or more visual devices (see Appendix 1a for news values definitions and a list of visual devices typically associated with each). Both participant-based and photographer-based devices are considered: the former concerns newsworthiness derived from "where and with whom they [participants] are photographed and how much or little of this is included in the image frame".[80] The latter includes photographic techniques such as shutter speed, lens aperture, angle and so forth. Although there is no one-to-one relationship between photographic techniques and news

values, certain photographic techniques are able to construe more than one news value simultaneously, which may explain why they feature so frequently in news texts.[81]

Coding news values visually was an iterative process that resulted in two data-led adaptations of the original framework - see Appendix 1b.[82] Firstly, within the personalisation news value we also examined whether – and, if so, which – emotions were depicted in the images. We thus distinguished between three points in a continuum of emotions: positive (joy, relaxation), neutral (indifference, seriousness) and negative (anger, sadness). Secondly, within the prominence news value, we identified the following markers of prominence: 'artefacts', 'weapons', 'religious status', 'clothing', and 'other'. The 'clothing' marker was then further divided into the use of uniform and other regalia of officialdom. In our corpus, moreover, it was not only the type of 'official' clothing depicted (e.g. military, Islam) but its (un)blemished condition, in the context of images depicting the aftermath of violence, that became relevant for coding purposes.

Coding for the image content and the visual news values was independently conducted by a trained researcher and the paper authors. The visual news values coding resulted in a small number of inter-coder differences regarding the personalisation and consonance news values. These differences were resolved through discussion.

Results

Image content analysis

In this section we report the main findings of our analysis of whether the images placed one or more jihadi in focus, their (non-)leader status and the activities they were portrayed as being engaged in. Our analysis of the main focus of each image resulted in a total of 19 different

'who or what?' sub-categories. Table 3 shows the frequency of use of the 12 sub-categories for which there were at least 100 images.

Table 3: Main focus of images (who/what depicted?)

Image focus	Number of images
Jihadis	1198 (31.0%)
People regarded as the "enemy"	545 (14.1%)
Instructional guides	362 (9.4%)
Landscapes	224 (5.8%)
Civilians	173 (4.5%)
Corpses	153 (4.0%)
Buildings/landmarks	138 (3.6%)
Vehicles	136 (3.5%)
Flags	122 (3.2%)
Advertisements/media	107 (2.8%)
Weaponry	105 (2.7%)
Religious	100 (2.6%)
Other*	506 (13.1%)

*less than 100 images per category

The most common sub-category was jihadis (n=1198). This had more than double the number of images of the next most common sub-category, which was images of people regarded as the "enemy" (n=545). Together, these two sub-categories accounted for 45.1% of all images. This is illustrative of the othering process reported by studies of these magazines' textual content.[83] Readers are repeatedly presented with images of the in-group and, to a lesser extent, the out-group. These visual cues maintain the salience of the dichotomy these magazines seek to construct, pressing readers to decide which group they self-identify with.

Table 4 shows the combined results of our analysis of the (non-)leader status and individualisation/collectivisation of the images that placed jihadi/s in focus.

Table 4: Breakdown of images focusing on one or more jihadi and their (non-)leader status

	Leader	Non-leader	Leader(s) & non-leader(s)
Azan			
One individual	26.5% (n=40)	47.7% (n=72)	N/A
More than one individual	0%	25.2% (n=38)	0.7% (n=1)
Dabiq			
One individual	10.5% (n=30)	34.7% (n=99)	N/A
More than one individual	0%	51.9% (n=148)	2.8% (n=8)
Gaidi Mtaani			
One individual	6.6% (n=7)	64.2% (n=68)	N/A
More than one individual	0%	29.2% (n=31)	0%
Inspire			
One individual	3.9% (n=17)	70.0% (n=305)	N/A
More than one individual	0%	25.0% (n=109)	1.1% (n=5)
Jihad Recollections			
One individual	9.1% (n=20)	69.5% (n=153)	N/A

More than one individual	0%	20.0% (n=44)	1.4% (n=3)
Total (n=1198)			
One individual	9.5% (n=114)	58.2% (n=697)	N/A
More than one individual	0%	30.9% (n=370)	1.4% (n=17)

Whilst images containing jihadist leaders were present in each magazine, their overall frequency of use (n=131; 10.9%) was much lower than that of non-leadership figures (n=1067; 89.1%). Table 4 also reveals an important difference between *Azan* and the rest of the magazines with regards to this finding. The proportion of images containing leadership figures in *Azan* (n=41; 27.2%) was significantly higher than for each of the other four magazines. This is in keeping with textual analysis of *Azan* that found that it contains a greater proportion of formal statements attributed to the group's leadership structure than the other four magazines,[84] that it contains implied claims to divine truth and authority,[85] and that the justifications employed in its articles are more frequently rooted in traditional sources of religious authority.[86]

Only a handful of images (n=17; 1.4%) contained a jihadist leader with other people. These were not coded within the leader category because the focus was on both participant types. This distance between the leaders and their followers could be interpreted in terms of reverence for the leader, although given the repeated reuse of some images (of, e.g., al-Awlaki) it is probably better explained in terms of the limited number of available images of these individuals and in particular the scarcity of images of them interacting closely with 'ordinary' jihadis. Jihadist leader images tended to show them giving either a speech or interview, with prominent status indicators such as a microphone, flag or rows of books. Their facial expressions conveyed a sense of joy, contemplation, deep-thought and concentration. A sharp

distinction was also drawn with the leaders of rival factions in the Middle East. Images of these rival leaders sought to Westernise them. So, whilst the leaders of the in-group were pictured in Islamic dress or military style clothing, rival leaders were pictured wearing Western clothing (e.g., a suit), often alongside further insignia associated with the out-group (e.g., the Syrian flag).

As Table 4 also shows, across all five magazines the images of jihadis focused overwhelmingly on non-leaders (n=1067; 89.1%). More than half of the images of jihadis in our corpus were of a lone, non-leader jihadi (n=697; 58.2%). This trend was particularly salient in the two AQAP magazines, *Inspire* (n=305; 70.0%) and *Jihad Recollections* (n=153; 69.5%). This is consistent with the former's stated objective – to inspire lone actor attacks against the West – and its other contents, especially its Open Source Jihad section, which contains step-by-step instructions for such things as building a bomb and using a firearm.[87]

Dabiq was the only one of the five magazines that contained a higher proportion of images of groups of (non-leader) jihadis (n=148; 51.9%) than lone (non-leader) jihadis (n=99; 34.7%). *Dabiq*'s greater emphasis on group images is further demonstrated by Table 5, specifically the figures concerning per issue ratios of images containing individual or groups of (non-leader) jihadis. *Dabiq* contained an average of 16.4 images of groups of non-leader jihadis per issue, almost twice as many as the next highest figure (*Inspire*, 8.4 images per issue). So, whilst the image content of the other magazines, especially *Inspire* and *Jihad Recollections*, focussed on presenting (non-leader) jihadis as individuals, the image content of *Dabiq* placed greater emphasis on the individual's status as a member of a group and the prominence of that group.

Table 5: Frequency and ratio of images of individual and groups of non-leader jihadis.

	Number of images		Ratio: Number of images per issue	
	Individual	Group	Individual	Group
Azan	72	38	12	6.3
Dabiq	99	148	11	16.4
Gaidi Mtaani	68	31	9.7	4.4
Inspire	305	109	23.5	8.4
Jihad Recollections	153	44	38.3	11

Table 6 shows the comparative frequencies of the range of activities in which non-leader jihadis appeared to be engaged. In all five magazines, the majority of images of non-leader jihadis were show of strength ones (that is, images that portrayed the group as a formidable force). These images typically pictured one or more individuals in Islamic dress or military style clothing, holding weapons, sometimes standing alongside a tank or other military vehicle or riding horses, with a serious or intimidating facial expression. Others showed groups of jihadis participating in firearms or physical training. Table 6 also reveals another respect in which *Dabiq* differed from the other four magazines. In the other magazines, there were very few images portraying celebratory scenes, community life or religious observance. Of the other magazines, the highest frequency for these three activities combined was 5.1% in *Inspire*. This compares to a figure of 18.2% for *Dabiq*. This supports Ingram's finding that *Dabiq* employs greater diversity in its messaging.[88] Whilst both *Dabiq* and *Inspire* contained images portraying community life (e.g., people embracing or smiling in conversation), *Dabiq* also contained a number of images of groups of jihadis celebrating victories and engaged in acts of religious observance (e.g., praying and listening to religious teaching). So unlike the other four magazines – which all utilised afterlife images to promise spiritual benefits in the hereafter[89] –

Dabiq focussed instead on the group's status in the here-and-now, combining show of strength images with ones celebrating victories, and combining images of religious observance with ones of harmonious community life.

Table 6: Activities in which non-leader jihadis were engaged (individuals and groups)*

	Show of Strength	Celebratory Scenes	Community Life	Religious Observance	Miscellaneous
Azan (110 non-leader images)	93 (84.5%)	0	0	0	5 (4.5%)
Dabiq (247 non-leader images)	164 (66.4%)	23 (9.3%)	15 (6.1%)	7 (2.8%)	6 (2.4%)
Gaidi Mtanni (99 non-leader images)	69 (69.7%)	1 (1.0%)	0	0	1 (1.0%)
Inspire (414 non-leader images)	265 (64.0%)	5 (1.2%)	12 (2.9%)	4 (1.0%)	7 (1.7%)
Jihad Recollections (197 non-leader images)	145 (73.6%)	1 (0.5%)	3 (1.5%)	1 (0.5%)	4 (2.0%)

* Some images were counted in more than one category (e.g. show of strength and celebratory scenes), and some images were not counted in any (e.g. because the image was ambiguous or unclear, or because the individual was not engaged in an activity, such as a headshot image).

In summary, the content analysis has shown that the most common focus of the images in these magazines is people, with images of the in-group (jihadis) more common than ones of the out-group (the "enemy"). The images of jihadis were overwhelmingly of non-leaders. In four of the five magazines, images of individual (non-leader) jihadis were more common than ones of groups, and images that portrayed an activity were almost exclusively shows of strength. In *Dabiq*, by contrast, there were more images of groups of (non-leader) jihadis than individual ones, and there was a higher frequency of images portraying collective activities (although show of strength images were still more common) – which is consistent with the emphasis *Dabiq* placed on the caliphate, coming together under a single leadership and working for the ummah. In terms of furthering our analysis of the 'good Muslim' identity via examination of news values embedded within those images, these findings therefore provide us with a logical analytic focus on images of non-leader jihadis.

News values visual analysis

The results of the news values analysis of the images containing (in focus) non-leader jihadis (both individuals and in groups) are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: News values for images of non-leader jihadis (individual and groups)

	Negativity/Impact/ Superlativeness	Prominence	Consonance	Proximity	Personalisation	Aesthetics
Azan (110 non-leader images)	7 (6.4%)	82 (74.5%)	87 (79.1%)	14 (12.7%)	97 (88.2%)	4 (3.6%)
Dabiq	0	187 (75.7%)	162 (65.6%)	0	203 (82.2%)	36 (14.6%)

(247 non-leader images)						
Gaidi Mtaani (99 non-leader images)	3 (3.0%)	58 (58.6%)	59 (59.6%)	9 (9.1%)	93 (93.9%)	7 (7.1%)
Inspire (414 non-leader images)	7 (1.7%)	231 (55.8%)	219 (52.9%)	23 (5.6%)	350 (84.5%)	21 (5.1%)
Jihad Recollections (197 non-leader images)	10 (5.1%)	85 (43.1%)	170 (86.3%)	103 (52.3%)	193 (98.0%)	9 (4.6%)

Table 7 shows that a total of six news values were used in the images across the five magazines.[90] Of these six, three displayed considerably lower frequencies of use: aesthetics, proximity and negativity/superlativeness/impact. The latter had the lowest percentages of use overall.[91] In *Azan*, *Inspire* and *Jihad Recollections* this value was mostly used in images that appeared to show damage that the jihadis had inflicted on their enemies, such as a jihadi standing in close physical proximity to the flames of a burning building. In *Gaidi Mtaani* it was used in images that showed jihadis physically present at sites of destruction (e.g. standing alongside a large pile of rubble), apparently lamenting a loss that they had suffered.

As for the news values of aesthetics and proximity, their percentages of use were also comparatively low. The latter was only used in more than 10% of the images in two magazines – *Jihad Recollections* (52.3%) and *Azan* (12.7%) – whilst aesthetics was used in less than 10% of the images in all but one of the magazines: *Dabiq* (14.6%). Many of the images coded under aesthetics displayed a poor photographic quality, that is, images that were unfocused, blurry and unclear. Although this is at odds with the common descriptions of *Dabiq* as 'slick' and 'glossy', it is likely that (in some instances at least, such as action shots) the magazines used

this "rough, unpretentious look"[92] deliberately given that apparent absence of any sophisticated meddling with the reality being photographed creates the impression of naturalness and authenticity.[93] In addition, the aesthetics value was at times realised via stereotypical 'Western' social media style filters or animations edited onto/around the image.[94]

The remainder of this section examines the three news values that had the highest percentages of use across the five magazines, namely (and in decreasing order of frequency): personalisation, consonance and prominence. Each of these news values points towards a characteristic of the aspirational identity that these magazines visually construct for non-leader jihadis, as we discuss next.

The 'Fulfilled Muslim'. As noted earlier, coding for the news value personalisation also entailed examining whether – and, if so, which – emotions were depicted in the images. The findings are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Personalisation and emotions across the magazines (non-leader jihadis)

		Azan (110 images)	*Dabiq* (247 images)	*Gaidi Mtaani* (99 images)	*Inspire* (414 images)	*Jihad Recollections* (197 images)
Positive/ happy emotions (joy, relaxation)	One jihadi	16 (14.5%)	25 (10.1%)	19 (19.2%)	106 (25.6%)	36 (18.3%)
	More than one jihadi	6 (5.5%)	67 (27.1%)	3 (3.0%)	34 (8.2%)	9 (4.6%)
	Combined	22 (20%)	92 (37.2%)	22 (22.2%)	140 (33.8%)	45 (22.8%)
Neutral emotions	One jihadi	47 (42.7%)	52 (21.1%)	40 (40.4%)	150 (36.2%)	105 (53.3%)

(indifference, seriousness)	More than one jihadi	27 (24.5%)	58 (23.5%)	28 (28.3%)	56 (13.5%)	34 (17.3%)
	Combined	74 (67.3%)	110 (44.5%)	68 (68.7%)	206 (49.8%)	139 (70.6%)
Negative /unhappy emotions (anger, sadness)	One jihadi	1 (0.9%)	1 (0.4%)	3 (3.0%)	4 (1.0%)	5 (2.5%)
	More than one jihadi	0	0	0	0	4 (2.0%)
	Combined	1 (0.9%)	1 (0.4%)	3 (3.0%)	4 (1.0%)	9 (4.6%)

The first point that emerges from Table 8 is the infrequency of images of non-leader jihadis displaying negative emotions.[95] For all five magazines, less than 5% of the images of non-leader jihadis displayed negative emotions. This, we suggest, may be understood as an effort to present religious fulfilment as part of the aspirational identity these magazines seek to visually construct. Non-leader jihadis are overwhelmingly presented either as experiencing positive emotions such as joy, or neutral emotions such as seriousness. The latter tended to be linked to shows of strength, as detailed above.

Also significant was the differing balance between positive and neutral emotions across the magazines. In *Azan*, *Gaidi Mtaani* and *Jihad Recollections* the proportion of these non-leader jihadi images that displayed neutral emotions was considerably higher than the proportion displaying positive ones (67.3%, 68.7% and 70.6% compared to 20%, 22.2% and 22.8% respectively). Whilst *Dabiq* and *Inspire* also had a higher proportion of images displaying neutral than positive emotions (44.5% and 49.8% compared to 37.2% and 33.8% respectively), the proportion displaying positive emotions was markedly higher than in the other three magazines. *Dabiq* and *Inspire* thus placed greater emphasis on the positive emotions of joy and

relaxation as the fruit of religious fulfilment. In addition, *Dabiq* was the only one of the magazines that contained more group images displaying positive emotions (n=67; 27.1%) than images of individuals (n=25; 10.1%). In contrast to the other magazines, then, *Dabiq* presented the feelings of joy and relaxation that come from religious fulfilment as a communal, not an individual, experience.

The 'Active Muslim'. As Table 7 showed, all five magazines also used the news value consonance frequently in images of (non-leader) jihadis. These images depicted jihadis acting in according with the group's principles and teachings, and in particular with the call to violent jihad. Table 9 examines the frequency of images portraying (non-leader) jihadis as engaged in three specific types of consonant behaviours: saluting, an intimidating pose, and military formation.

Table 9: Consonance across the magazines (non-leader jihadis)*

		Azan (110 images)	*Dabiq* (247 images)	*Gaidi Mtaani* (99 images)	*Inspire* (414 images)	*Jihad Recollections* (197 images)
Saluting	One jihadi	4 (3.6%)	11 (4.4%)	0	10 (2.4%)	6 (3.0%)
	More than one jihadi	5 (4.5%)	21 (8.5%)	1 (1.0%)	13 (3.1%)	3 (1.5%)
	Combined	9 (8.2%)	32 (13.0%)	1 (1.0%)	23 (5.6%)	9 (4.6%)
Intimidating pose	One jihadi	47 (42.7%)	50 (20.2%)	29 (29.3%)	133 (32.1%)	64 (32.5%)
	More than one jihadi	27 (24.5%)	110 (44.5%)	28 (28.3%)	73 (17.6%)	32 (16.2%)
	Combined	74 (67.3%)	160 (64.8%)	57 (57.6%)	206 (49.8%)	96 (48.7%)
Military formation	One jihadi	0	1 (0.4%)	1 (1.0%)	0	0

		4 (3.6%)	6 (2.4%)	4 (4.0%)	4 (1.0%)	0
	More than one jihadi	4 (3.6%)	6 (2.4%)	4 (4.0%)	4 (1.0%)	0
	Combined	4 (3.6%)	7 (2.8%)	5 (5.1%)	4 (1.0%)	0

* Some images contained more than one display of consonance (e.g. saluting and military formation) and so were counted in more than one category.

Of these three consonant behaviours, military formation appeared infrequently. The highest figure was for *Gaidi Mtaani*, in which 5.1% of the non-leader jihadi images depicted them in military formation. Saluting images (military salutes/arms aloft in celebration) appeared more frequently, although *Dabiq* (n=32; 13.0%) was the only magazine in which more than 10% of the images of non-leader jihadis showed them saluting. By far the most common consonant behaviour was an intimidating pose (intense staring/holding weapons/assertive stance), with the frequency of such images ranging from 67.3% (in *Azan*) to 48.7% (in *Jihad Recollections*). Once again, it was noticeable here that – in contrast to the other four magazines – *Dabiq* placed greater emphasis on the collective than the individual. It contained 110 (44.5%) images of groups of non-leader jihadis in an intimidating pose, compared to a total of 50 (20.2%) such images of individuals.

Overall, then, the cumulative visual force of these images was to include as part of the aspirational identity being constructed an active response to the call to violent jihad. However, the portrayal of this active response varied. Whilst all five magazines tended to focus on the intimidatory force of the individual(s) engaged in violent jihad, *Dabiq* again placed greater emphasis on the collective nature of this activity than the individual.

The 'Respected Muslim'. The last of the three most frequent news values across the magazines was that of prominence. This was indexed visually via the use of five sub-categories: artefacts (e.g. flags, microphone, laptop, mobile); weapons (e.g. guns, tanks, armoured vehicles, explosives); religious status (e.g. portrayal of being saintly and/or in heaven); clothing (military or prison[96]) and other (e.g. horses, camels, motorbikes). The results for all but the 'other' category, which displayed very low frequency of use across the magazines, are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Prominence across the magazines (non-leader jihadis)*

		Azan (110 images)	*Dabiq* (247 images)	*Gaidi Mtaani* (99 images)	*Inspire* (414 images)	*Jihad Recollections* (197 images)
Artefacts	One jihadi	4 (3.6%)	23 (9.3%)	10 (10.1%)	21 (5.1%)	13 (6.6%)
	More than one jihadi	9 (8.2%)	59 (23.9%)	13 (13.1%)	28 (6.8%)	3 (1.5%)
	Combined	13 (11.8%)	82 (33.2%)	23 (23.2%)	49 (11.8%)	16 (8.1%)
Weapons	One jihadi	36 (32.7%)	48 (19.4%)	21 (21.2%)	112 (27.1%)	24 (12.2%)
	More than one jihadi	34 (30.9%)	109 (44.1%)	24 (24.2%)	74 (17.9%)	34 (17.3%)
	Combined	70 (63.6%)	157 (63.6%)	45 (45.5%)	186 (44.9%)	58 (29.4%)
Religious status	One jihadi	8 (7.3%)	0	3 (3.0%)	34 (8.2%)	3 (1.5%)
	More than one jihadi	0	0	0	0	0
	Combined	8 (7.3%)	0	3 (3.0%)	34 (8.2%)	3 (1.5%)
Clothing	One jihadi	10 (9.1%)	27 (10.9%)	13 (13.1%)	14 (3.3%)	19 (9.6%)
	More than one jihadi	7 (6.4%)	46 (18.6%)	16 (16.2%)	11 (2.7%)	11 (5.6%)
	Combined	17 (15.5%)	73 (29.6%)	29 (29.3%)	25 (6.0%)	30 (15.2%)

* Some images contained more than one display of prominence (e.g. clothing, weapons and artefacts) and so were counted in more than one category.

Within the artefacts sub-category, flags were the main object depicted in these images. Flags were used in all five magazines to nurture a sense of group identity and as indexes of significance for those in their presence. This was particularly prevalent in *Dabiq* in which 32.0% (n=79) of the images of (non-leader) jihadis contained the IS flag. In the other magazines, the proportion of (non-leader) jihadi images that contained a flag associated with the group were considerably lower: *Gaidi Mtaani* 15.2% (n=15); *Azan* 10.9% (n=12); *Inspire* 8.9% (n=37); and, *Jihad Recollections* 5.6% (n=11).Whilst this is consistent with Simons' suggestion that the IS flag is used in *Dabiq* to construct a brand,[97] when viewed alongside the other prominence markers detailed in Table 10, the repeated use of images that combine the IS flag with armed fighters dressed in military style clothing is perhaps better understood as an attempt to use national insignia (a flag and armed forces) to reinforce IS's claim that it had achieved the status of a state.

Across all five magazines, weapons were the most frequently used marker of prominence and thus contributed to the construction of the aspirational identity of jihadis as individuals, or groups of individuals, who were significant and worthy of respect. The proportion of (non-leader) jihadi images that used the prominence news value and contained weapons was particularly high in *Azan*, *Dabiq*, *Gaidi Mtaani* and *Inspire* (63.6%, 63.6%, 45.5% and 44.9% respectively). The prominence of the individual holding the weapon was frequently accentuated still further by the angle of the photograph – looking upwards at the individual – and the individual's body language (e.g., raising an arm or saluting).

Whilst prominence markers such as artefacts and weapons focus on the here-and-now, the religious status marker focused instead on the hereafter, using effects such as superimposing

blue sky and clouds and/or giving the individual a heavenly glow to portray their status in the afterlife. This indicator of prominence was used in four of the magazines, in particular *Inspire* (n=34; 8.2%). This allusion to spiritual benefits in the afterlife is consistent with *Inspire*'s stated objective of inciting attacks in which the perpetrators would be martyred.[98]

Finally within the indexes of prominence contributing to the visual construction of an aspirational jihadi identity was the use of clothing that marked significance within the jihadist groups' ideology: military and prison clothing (see Table 10 for combined figures). Military clothing was either camouflage or black and appropriate for the battlefield; prison clothing was usually the stereotypical orange jumpsuits or other obvious prison attire. The low percentages of use of clothing that portrayed prominence, especially in *Inspire*, made us look more closely into this category. Table 11 shows the frequency of use of the different clothing types in our corpus.

Table 11: Clothing types across the magazines (non-leader jihadis)

	Military	Prison	Casual	Business	Unknown*
Azan (110 images)	16 (14.5%)	1 (0.9%)	82 (74.5%)	0	11 (10%)
Dabiq (247 images)	72 (29.1%)	1 (0.4%)	147 (59.5%)	0	27 (10.9%)
Gaidi Mtaani (99 images)	29 (29.3%)	0	54 (54.5%)	0	16 (16.2%)
Inspire (414 images)	24 (5.8%)	1 (0.2%)	312 (75.4%)	1 (0.2%)	76 (18.4%)
Jihad Recollections (197 images)**	26 (13.2%)	4 (2.0%)	166 (84.3%)	2 (1.0%)	0

* The principal reasons why the clothing type was unknown in some images were that (a) some photos were headshots, and so the clothing was not visible, and (b) the lighting in some images made it impossible to see the clothing type.

** The five columns in this row add up to 198, because one image in this magazine contained some jihadis in casual clothing and others in military clothing

As Table 11 shows, the proportion of jihadis wearing military style clothing was noticeably higher in *Gaidi Mtaani* and *Dabiq* (29.3% and 29.1%) than in the other magazines, particularly *Inspire* (5.8%). This is in keeping with the emphasis placed on territorial objectives by IS and Al Shabaab.[99] In all five magazines, however, the most common clothing type was casual (t-shirts, polo shirts, jeans, etc.), with the proportion of images of (non-leader) jihadis showing them in casual clothing ranging from 84.3% in *Jihad Recollections* to 54.5% in *Gaidi Mtaani*. Whilst weapons such as guns, tanks and explosives may seem distant and unfamiliar to Western readers of these magazines, the prevalence of casual clothing may, we believe, be understood as an attempt to make it easier for these readers to identify with – and aspire to – the magazines' construction of the 'good Muslim'.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the clothes worn by the jihadis, across all five magazines, was that they were almost invariably unblemished. We did not find a single image of a (non-leader) jihadi wearing military or prison clothing that was blemished; and across all 39 issues of the five magazines there were only twelve images in total in which a (non-leader) jihadi was wearing blemished casual clothing. In this sanitised construction, the jihadis' clothes were hardly ever soiled by blood, dirt or even sweat – even when the individuals photographed were purportedly celebrating a victory over an enemy group or when the image formed part of a eulogy. This is a stark contrast to the images from within these magazines' pages that claim to show Muslims (often children) as victims of violence from enemy groups, which present the unsanitised, horrific reality.

Conclusion

Our image content analysis found that the most common type of image in the online jihadist magazines we examined was images of non-leader jihadis. The most commonly used news

values in this subset of images were personalisation, consonance and prominence. There were subtle differences in how these news values were employed. For example, *Gaidi Mtaani* had a relatively greater emphasis on military clothing, military formation and neutral emotions, with relatively few saluting images, whilst *Inspire* had a relatively greater focus on images of individual (non-leader) jihadis and used as markers of prominence (military) clothing less and religious status more than the other magazines. The most distinctive of the five magazines was *Dabiq*, which had a greater emphasis on positive emotions, (celebratory) salutes and its own flag and – above all – focused on the communal over the individual. Common to all the magazines, however, was the visual construction of the aspirational identity of the 'good Muslim'. This construct is both a respected figure, indexed by markers of prominence that include weapons and other artefacts, and a fulfilled one, who rarely experiences negative emotions. Importantly, this fulfilment and respect flows from the active response of the 'good Muslim' to the call for violent jihad. The three traits are thus inter-connected: fulfilment comes from being active, which in turn promises respect. This presents readers with a straightforward binary choice: actively respond to the call for violent jihad and enjoy the associated blessings of respect and fulfilment; or, by failing to respond, not know this fulfilment and not enjoy this respect. The implication for counter-narrative campaigns is the importance of challenging this simplistic dichotomy.

We conclude by offering one suggestion for how this might be done. Analysis of the textual content of these magazines has shown how they other the West, creating a dichotomy between Muslims and Westerners.[100] When this dichotomy is combined with the one that has been uncovered in this article – between the 'good Muslim' who responds to the call to violent jihad and the 'bad Muslim' who does not – a more complex set of possibilities is revealed that upsets the simplicity of the "bi-polar"[101] world these magazines seek to create. There is not only the non-Western 'good' Muslim and the Western 'bad' Muslim who, as part of the out-group, is

an enemy and faces punishment. There is also the non-Western 'bad' Muslim – the member of the in-group whose faith is waning and whose backsliding has led him to the verge of apostasy.[102] And, finally, there is the Western 'good' Muslim – a notion that these magazines use the claimed incompatibility of Western values and Islamic teaching to dismiss as an impossibility, but which counter-narrative campaigns should proactively seek to construct. In so doing, our findings have shown that, for such campaigns to be effective, they should not only set out what it means to actively live out the Islamic faith but also show that respect and fulfilment follow as a result. At a time when Islamophobia features regularly in the media, this presents a significant challenge.

Appendix 1: news values

Appendix 1a: Photographic devices for the construction of news values; adapted from Bednarek and Caple (2012: 106) and Caple (2013:52-53).

Photographic device	News value	Realisation in the image
Evaluative elements	Prominence (indicate high status of individuals/organisations/ nations)	Showing elements like microphones / cameras, media scrum, being flanked by entourage; Images depicting easily recognisable key figures, people in uniform or with other regalia of officialdom; low camera angle indicating status of participant in image

	Negativity (the negative aspects of an event)	Images of negative events and their effects – disaster/accident/injured/arrests, etc. High camera angle, putting viewer in dominant position
	Proximity (the geographical and / or cultural nearness of an event)	Images of landmarks, natural features or cultural symbols
	Timeliness (the relevance of a story in terms of time)	Indicated through season/cultural artefacts/signage
Intensification	Superlativeness (the maximised or intensified aspects of an event)	Repetition of key elements; e.g., many boats, protest signs, police shields Extreme emotions in participants Placement of elements of different sizes together
	Superlativeness/ Negativity / Impact	Camera movement and blurring, combined with camera-people moving around, running, etc.
Comparison	Superlativeness / Novelty	Placement of elements of different sizes next to each other; use of specific lens and angle settings to exaggerate or condense differences
References to emotion	Impact (the effects or consequences of an event)	Images showing the after-effects (often negative) of events, e.g., scenes of destruction/results of Emotions caused by an event.
	Novelty (the unexpected)	Depictions of people being shocked/surprised Juxtaposition of elements in the frame that create a stark contrast
	Personalisation (the personal or 'human interest' aspects of an event	Images of individuals, especially when using close-up and showing an emotional response, when not acting in a professional role

Consonance (the stereotypical aspect of an event)		Stereotypical imagery of event/person/country
Aesthetic elements	Aesthetics	Well-composed/aesthetically pleasing images; use of variations in shutter speed, aperture, colour, contrast, lighting effects, time of the day

Appendix 1b: News values (visual) coding framework for current study

News value	Description
Prominence	Status indicators – Assets that appear in the image and which contribute to the appearance of high status in the world of violent jihad. Status indicators are further split into the following sub-categories: (1) artefacts (e.g. flags, microphone, laptop, mobile); (2) weapons (e.g. guns, tanks, armoured vehicles, explosives); (3) religious status (e.g. portrayal of being saintly and/or in heaven); (4) clothing (military, prison); and, (5) other (e.g. horses, camels, motorbikes).
Negativity Superlativeness Impact	Whether or not the jihadi(s) in the image are close to conflicts, accidents, damage, injuries, disasters or wars. Destruction is shown by dead/injured bodies, smoke, fire, rubble and explosions (or a mix of these). The destruction is mostly large-scale to emphasise strength and power.
Proximity	As the magazines' target audience includes those in the West, inclusion of Western landmarks or cultural symbols. This 'close to home' effect could be part of a psychological strategy to intimidate the enemies of the terrorists, and could also have a 'relatable' effect for potential Western sympathisers. Proximity was shown by one or a combination of images of Western cities/countries, Western symbols/landmarks, and Western attacks (e.g., 9/11 or the Boston Bombing).

Novelty	The unexpected aspects of an event. Depictions of people being surprised.
Timeliness	The relevance of a story in terms of time.
Personalisation	The emotion conveyed by the jihadi(s) in the image, if identifiable. Three main emotion groups were identified: positive, neutral, negative.
Consonance	Body language or positioning conveyed by the jihadi(s) in the image that are (stereo)typical of violent jihadism, including (1) saluting (including military salutes and arms aloft in celebration); (2) intimidating pose (one or a combination of: intense staring, holding weapons, and assertive stance); (3) standing in military formation.
Aesthetics	Images that are well-composed and aesthetically pleasing: use of variations in shutter speed, aperture, colour, contrast, lighting effects, time of day.

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[1] Examples include: Jason Burke, "The Age of Selfie Jihad: How Evolving Media Technology is Changing Terrorism," *CTC Sentinel* 9, no. 11 (November/December 2016): 16-22; Harleen Gambhir, *The Virtual Caliphate: ISIS's Information Warfare* (Washington DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2016); Daniel Milton, *Communication Breakdown: Unraveling the Islamic State's Media Efforts* (West Point, NY: CTC, 2016); Craig Whiteside, *Lighting the Path: The Evolution of the Islamic State Media Enterprise (2003-2016)* (The Hague: ICCT, 2016); Charlie Winter, *The Virtual 'Caliphate': Understanding Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy* (London: Quilliam Foundation, 2015); Charlie Winter, *Media Jihad: The Islamic State's Doctrine for Information Warfare* (London: ICSR, 2017)

[2] Julian Droogan and Shane Peattie, "Reading Jihad: Mapping the shifting themes of *Inspire* magazine," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30, no. 4 (2018): 684-717; Stuart Macdonald, "Terrorist Narratives and Communicative Devices: Findings from a Study of Online Terrorist Magazines" in Sara Zeiger (ed.), *Expanding Research on Countering Violent Extremism* (Abu Dhabi: Hedayah, 2016), 127-141; Gunnar J. Weimann, "Competition and Innovation in a Hostile Environment: How Jabhat Al-Nusra and Islamic State Moved to Twitter in 2013–2014," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (advance access) https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1513692 (25 November 2018).

[3] Haroro J. Ingram, *A "Linkage-Based" Approach to Combating Militant Islamist Propaganda: A Two-Tiered Framework for Practitioners* (The Hague: ICCT, 2016); Nuria Lorenzo-Dus, Anina Kinzel and Luke Walker, "The Role of Discourse Analysis in Terrorism Studies" in Maura Conway, Lee Jarvis, Orla Lehane, Stuart Macdonald and Lella Nouri (eds.), *Terrorists' Use of the Internet: Assessment and Response* (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2017), 158-169; Nuria Lorenzo-Dus and Stuart Macdonald, "Othering the West in the Online Jihadist Propaganda Magazines *Inspire* and *Dabiq*," *Journal of Language, Aggression and Conflict* 6, no. 1 (2018): 79-106.

[4] There are some notable exceptions, which we review below.

[5] All four issues of *Jihad Recollections* were published in 2009 under the editorship of Samir Khan. Khan moved to Yemen and began work on *Inspire* in October 2009, publishing the first issue in 2010. This timeline – plus the fact that a biography of Khan published by AQAP after Khan's death described *Inspire* as "an extension of *Jihad Recollections*, a magazine he described as 'America's Worst Nightmare'" – suggest that, at the very least, *Jihad Recollections* was endorsed by AQAP even if it was not technically an AQAP publication.

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[7] J. M. Berger, "Deconstruction of Identity Concepts in Islamic State Propaganda: A Linkage-Based Approach to Counter-Terrorism Strategic Communications," paper presented at the 1st European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) conference on online terrorist propaganda (2017) <https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/bergerjm_deconstructionofislamicstatetexts.pdf> (8 January 2018); Ingram, "An Analysis of *Inspire* and *Dabiq*" (ibid); Lorenzo-Dus and Macdonald (see note 3 above).

[8] Lorenzo-Dus, Kinzel and Walker (see note 3 above); Lorenzo-Dus and Macdonald (see note 3 above); Kenneth Payne, "Winning the Battle of Ideas: Propaganda, Ideology, and Terror," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 2 (2009): 109-128.

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[17] For an analysis of *Sada al-Malahim*, AQAP's Arabic-language magazine, see: Michael Page, Lara Challita and Alistair Harris, "Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Framing Narratives and Prescriptions," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, no. 2 (2011): 150-172.

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[28] Ingram, "An analysis of Islamic State's *Dabiq* Magazine" (see note 6 above), 474.

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[74] Macdonald et al, "Online jihadist magazines and the 'religious terrorism' thesis," (see note 74 above).

[75] Here a distinction was drawn between collages and composite images. For collages, each image within the collage was counted separately. When two (or more) images had been merged into one composite image, the composite was counted as one image.

[76] See Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967) and further developments, e.g. Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, "Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview," in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1st edn.)(London: Sage, 1994), 273–284; Kathy Charmaz, "Shifting the grounds: Constructivist grounded theory methods," in Janice M. Morse, Phyllis Noerager Stern, Juliet Corbin, Barbara Bowers, Kathy Charmaz and Adele E. Clarke (eds.), *Developing Grounded Theory: The Second Generation* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2009), 127-154.

[77] Where the image was of a jihadi that would have been known only to a specific local audience, and not more widely, the jihadi was deemed to be publicly non-recognised.

[78] Monika Bednarek and Helen Caple, "'Value added': Language, images and news values," *Discourse, Context and Media* 1, nos. 2-3 (2012): 103-113; Helen Caple, *Photojournalism: A Social Semiotic Approach* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Nuria Lorenzo-Dus and Philippa Smith, "The visual construction of political crises. A news values approach," in Marianna Patrona (ed.), *Crisis and the Media: Narratives of crisis across cultural settings and media genres* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2018), 151-176.

[79] Bednarek and Caple (ibid), 105.

[80] Bednarek and Caple (ibid): 105.

[81] Bednarek and Caple (ibid).

[82] Adapted from Bednarek and Caple (see note 79 above) and Caple (see note 79 above).

[83] See in particular Lorenzo-Dus and Macdonald (see note 3 above).

[84] Macdonald et al, "Online jihadist magazines and the 'religious terrorism' thesis," (see note 74 above).

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[87] For analysis of the instructional guides found in *Inspire*, see: Maura Conway, Jodie Parker and Sean Looney, "Online Jihadi Instructional Content: The Role of Magazines," in Maura Conway, Lee Jarvis, Orla Lehane, Stuart Macdonald and Lella Nouri (eds.), *Terrorists' Use of the Internet: Assessment and Response* (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2017), 182-193.

[88] Ingram, "An Analysis of *Inspire* and *Dabiq*" (see note 6 above).

[89] These images of lone, non-leader jihadis alluded to the afterlife, usually by superimposing blue sky and clouds and by giving the individual a heavenly glow. They appeared most frequently in *Inspire* (n=34; 8.2%) – a finding which is again in keeping with the magazine's stated objective – but were also present in *Azan* (n=8; 7.3%), *Gaidi Mtaani* (n=3; 3.0%) and *Jihad Recollections* (n=3; 1.5%). Significantly, this type of image was not employed in any of the nines issues of *Dabiq*. (See further Table 10).

[90] Note also that no instances of the news values of novelty or timeliness were identified in the corpus.

[91] Although not the focus of our article, it is worth noting that when this news value was used in images of jihadist leaders (n=4) the images tended to be edited (for example, *Inspire* and *Azan* each contained images of the 9/11 destruction that included a superimposed, partially translucent image of Osama Bin Laden).

[92] John Caldwell, *Televisuality: Style, Crisis and Authority in American Television* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995)

[93] Nuria Lorenzo-Dus, *Television Discourse: Analysing Language in the Media* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[94] For example, *Inspire* contained images that had been 'cartoonized' using an editing filter.

[95] By contrast, images of Western leaders frequently displayed negative emotions. Images of President Obama, for example, repeatedly pictured him looking tired, anxious and stressed (Otterbacher (see note 65)).

[96] Prison clothes were included as an indicator of prominence when used to portray martyr-like attributes.

[97] Simons (see note 66 above).

[98] Macdonald et al, "Online jihadist magazines and the 'religious terrorism' thesis," (see note 74 above).

[99] On the objectives of Al Shabaab, see: David Mair, "#Westgate: A Case Study: How al-Shabaab used Twitter during an Ongoing Attack," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 1 (2017): 24-43.

[100] Lorenzo-Dus and Macdonald (see note 3 above).

[101] Ingram, "An analysis of Islamic State's *Dabiq* Magazine" (see note 6 above), 474.

[102] Colas (see note 24 above).