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A Content Analysis of Jihadist Magazines: Theoretical Perspectives

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A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF JIHADIST MAGAZINES:
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

by

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ABSTRACT

During its violent spread across the Middle East, the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) amassed both a local and international following in large part due to its usage of emergent media distribution. Beginning in 2014, ISIS's Ministry of Media published an English-language magazine, *Dabiq*, disseminating its issues through online platforms. *Dabiq* and its successor *Rumiyah* both serve as propagandistic recruitment material for ISIS's international community as well as broadcasting the message of the jihadist movement to ISIS's enemies. This study analyzed ISIS's publications using a qualitative content analysis in order to identify jihadist recruitment strategies through the perspectives of agenda-setting theory, the diffusion of innovations, symbolic convergence theory, and speech codes theory. These communication theories characterize the roles that civilizational conflict, population demographics, narrative themes, and emergent media play in the diffusion of the jihadist movement.

This study samples the textual content and imagery of issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, using thematic analysis to procedurally code the data by recognizing shared characteristics and concepts. The fundamental goal of this study is to gain a greater understanding of the way ISIS, its members, and the jihadist movement communicate their intentions, with the hope of preventing further recruitment and radicalization. The two following research questions drive this study: (1) What themes are present in the ISIS publications of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*? (2) How do the themes of these publications vary over time?

The findings of this study reveal an overarching worldview present in the rhetoric of every theme within the magazines. The themes are as follows: jihad, sharia, the *ummah*, non-Muslims and apostate Muslims, the caliphate, violent militancy, enmity against the West, divine sanction, and final conflict. These themes reflect ISIS's ultimate goal a wide-scale conflict between faithful jihadists and their enemies – the infidels and apostates. This conflict is both physical and ideological; ISIS encourages its members to believe that they are sanctioned by Allah and will triumph culturally over the West and nonbelievers. ISIS's focus on the subjugation of these nonbelievers through violent militancy further pushes the shared group fantasy of total victory over its enemies. The variation in thematic frequency visible within the magazines imply trends in ISIS's shifting priorities over time. However, ISIS's thematic hierarchy still reinforces a black-and-white rhetoric of all-encompassing conflict.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Emergent telecommunications technology provides new opportunities for all communicators to convey their messages. Communicators within the jihadist movement are no exception. The Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) produces a wide array of propagandistic materials in multiple languages and disseminates these communications through online platforms, reaching a wide international audience inaccessible with traditional print media. ISIS's strong online presence broadcasts its message, bolsters the group's international visibility, and may act as the crucial step towards radicalization of potential recruits. Its English-language magazine publications *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* compile ISIS propaganda for readers across the globe. Through a qualitative analysis, this study has identified key themes and issues found within the content of these magazines and has utilized theories of communication to understand their rhetorical and applied significance.

Objective of this Study

The objective of this study is to analyze the theoretical objectives and functions of the content presented within ISIS's magazine publications in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of ISIS's communication strategies. The three following research questions drive this study: (1) What themes are present in the ISIS publications of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*? (2) How do the themes of these publications vary over time? These questions are respectively addressed through agenda-setting theory, the diffusion of innovations and memetic engineering, and speech

codes theory. This study is framed with a content analysis methodology with a focus on thematic analysis.

Rationale for Conducting this Study

Though ISIS's perceived threat level towards the global community is greatly diminished from its militant peak, its pervasive online presence and its adaptation to emerging telecommunications technologies were major factors in the group's international visibility. While the group has failed to maintain its territory and establish an uncontested theocratic Islamist empire, it has succeeded in spawning multiple terror attacks from individual actors inspired by ISIS across the globe. These attacks include the 2016 murders of 86 people and the injury of over four hundred more in Nice, France after an ISIS supporter drove a cargo truck through a crowd, as well as the Pulse massacre in Orlando, Florida, in which 49 individuals were killed by a shooter who claimed allegiance to ISIS ("Attack on Nice", 2016). Both perpetrators, as well as those of multiple other similar attacks, were exposed to ISIS content. The success of small-cell terrorist attacks inspired by ISIS's message may denote significant implications on the future of the jihadist movement and of Islamist terrorism.

ISIS's communication strategy influenced the lethal radicalization of terrorists worldwide. In order to combat this strategy, the group's available content must be understood, thus shedding light on the group's overarching approach to communication. This study utilizes a qualitative analysis approach, sampling the magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, to address the group's intentions, identify recurrent themes in its content, and understand the significance of ISIS's content in terms of the wider jihadist movement.

Preview of the Main Points

The preliminary literature review identifies multiple themes shared in the jihadist movement and evident in the contents of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. These themes follow the narrative of fundamentalist Islamist belief in a unified theocratic Islamist empire and the hostile conflict between the Islamic world and traditionally Judeo-Christian, democratic Western civilizations, culminating in a divinely sanctioned Islamic victory. The dependence of ISIS's content on the traditional belief in an apocalyptic victory of Islam falls in line with Samuel Huntington's 1993 hypothesis of the Clash of Civilizations, which suggests that conflict in the modern world will stem from peoples' cultural and religious identities. Though the magazines espouse the same belief in a struggle against the West (as is found in classical Islamist belief), *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* are unique in their presentation of content that blends traditional jihadist narratives with modern-day communications methods and strategies. These methods include propagandistic persuasion attempts, identified through agenda-setting theory, and memetic engineering within the jihadist movement.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with a description of three major communication theories that drive this thesis project. These theories relate to the communication strategies used in the jihadist publications *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Each theory addresses how groups use communication to influence various audiences.

Agenda-Setting Theory

Developed by McCombs (2004), agenda-setting theory examines how media outlets and news organizations create or shape the relevance of topics for the public at large. When a particular issue in the news is conspicuously featured and heavily covered in magazines, newspapers, websites, or on television, the audience – or a certain percentage thereof – will likely consider that issue more salient (i.e., important). As a definition, “agenda-setting” refers to the diffusion of an issue through the media and the development of public awareness (and public concern as a reaction to the issue). Through this influence, the media creates a hierarchy of prevalence in news issues and topics (Rogers, 1993).

McCombs’s description of agenda-setting includes two basic premises of the media. The first premise is that the media and the press do not reflect an accurate picture of reality, but rather a filtered version of reality shaped to meet their interests. The second premise is that the media’s focus on the issues and subjects they select influences the public to perceive those issues as more important or more relevant than other less-prominent subjects. Therefore, the media establishes a hierarchy of news salience through its coverage.

An important factor in media agenda-setting is the time frame in which a media source features a topic. The speed with which the media covers an issue can affect the issue's prominence, the way the issue is portrayed in the media and the issue itself.

Through their preliminary research on agenda-setting and public perception through political campaigns, McCombs and Shaw (1972) observed that the mass media had little influence on the direction or intensity of attitudes towards different issues. However, they also noted that the mass media set the agenda for political campaign by influencing the salience of attitudes towards specific political issues. This statement is echoed in McCombs's 2004 work and in the work of other researchers. Cohen (1963) observed that the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling readers what to think about. The world will look different to different people... depending on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors and publishers of the paper they read" (p. 13).

In regards to the digitalization of media, McCombs also observed in his 2004 book that emerging communications technology creates a wide variety of sources of information from which consumers can choose. Information consumers can select issues in advance to which they choose to be exposed to. This variety of information sources (available digitally) prevents consonance throughout media, presenting a challenge to agenda-setting, as different outlets set different agendas of their choosing dependent on the issues they perceive as most important.

Framing Theory

Related to agenda-setting, framing theory also discusses how the media affects public salience of a topic, but also asserts that the characterization of an issue in the media influences

the public's perspective of the topic. First developed by Goffman (1974), the term "frame" refers to the framework with which one interprets the world, while the term "framing" describes how a communication source constructs and characterizes information communicated. Goffman suggested that individual people struggle constantly to interpret information, and through applying interpretive schemas, or frameworks, individuals can better understand meaning. Framing theory states that media outlets act as gatekeepers, controlling and communicating the content that the audience consumes (Scheufele, 1999). This affects the way that the audience interprets and understands the content.

Entman (1993) stated that the principles of framing theory involve selection and salience. Framing, Entman defines, refers to the way media outlets select information from a perceived reality, then make that selected information more salient in order to promote a certain perspective. Frames usually ultimately define problems, from the perspective of the media outlet, though they often analyze and evaluate the problem defined and prescribe solutions for the problem. Through highlighting parts of information, media outlets make the information they share more salient, as in agenda-setting theory.

Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) describe multiple framing techniques with which media outlets make the information they highlight affect the audience's interpretation of a situation. These techniques include framing information as metaphors, stories, traditions, slogans, artifacts, contrasts, or spins. Metaphor refers to the framing of an idea by comparing it to something else. Dependent on an audience member's established perspective on what the idea is being compared to, the comparison may affect the audience member's interpretation of the idea itself (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). To frame a topic like a story, such a saga, myth, or legend, means to convey the topic with the drama of a memorable narrative. Referencing tradition or ritual in framing is a

technique where media outlets tie culturally significant ideas to their content, changing the way the audience understands the meaning of the content.

Slogans, jargons, and catchphrases are all framing techniques that increase the memorability of a topic. The slogan may also include a descriptor of the topic that frames it with a certain perspective. Artifacts, like traditions, hold cultural value. Framing content through artifacts makes use of the symbolic significance of established concepts, applying it to the content of a media outlet (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). To contrast is framing through comparison, in which the media outlet describes a topic by what the outlet perceives the topic is not. Lastly, spin is a framing technique that subtly conveys value judgment on an issue, creating an inherent bias.

While agenda-setting addresses what the public think is most important, framing describes how the public views issues made salient by the media. As communication gatekeepers, media outlets consciously and unconsciously stress specific facts, perspectives, and opinions when describing issues, altering the way an audience interprets the subject at hand. The information the media presents on a topic to the public changes the data with which the public uses to pass judgment on the issue.

Persuasion

The media's ability to influence public agenda on issue salience also ties into the broad study of persuasion. Persuasion is an umbrella term referring to the power of influence over a person's beliefs, attitudes, intentions, motivations, or behaviors (Gass & Seiter, 2010). According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), as developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), the degree of persuasion a person is susceptible is affected by multiple variables of the source, message, recipient, and context of a persuasion attempt. These variables can serve as

persuasive arguments or peripheral cues and can also affect relatively objective or biased consideration of arguments. The ELM describes how different individuals process stimuli and how likely an individual is to mentally elaborate or reflect on an argument through these variables.

Petty and Cacioppo (1986) state that there are two “routes” to persuasion: central and peripheral. The central route to persuasion consists of thoughtful consideration of the arguments within the content of the message. When a receiver processes a message centrally, he or she is actively engaging in the process of persuasion rather than passively letting persuasion occur. The prerequisites required for central processing is that the receiver has both the motivation and the ability to thoughtfully reflect upon a message. If the listener has no stake in the content of the message, he or she will likely lack the motivation to process the message centrally. Likewise, if the listener is distracted from the message or cannot understand the message, he or she will also lack the ability to process the message centrally. The peripheral route to persuasion is the superficial decision whether to agree with a message based on heuristic cues other than the strength of the message’s arguments. These heuristics may include variables from the perceived authority of the persuader to the social proof of the reactions of other listeners. The placement of an issue on the public agenda news hierarchy may depend on how the news media utilizes the two routes of persuasion to influence public perception of a topic’s importance.

Cialdini (2001) describes these heuristics in depth, calling them “click, whirr” processes that serve as mental shortcuts for individuals to make decisions. Heuristics allow message receivers to form decisions based off of generalizations when the message contains more information than the receiver is willing to process. Persuaders can also exploit these heuristics to strengthen the persuasive ability of their messages.

The heuristics Cialdini (2006) describes are reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity. Reciprocity is a societal norm found across cultures in which a person feels obliged to reciprocate gifts or favors to the giver. Commitment and consistency describe the social tendency of people to wish to appear consistent, particularly in fulfilling commitments, and to value consistency in others. This tendency may also extend to justifying and escalating commitments. Social proof is conceptually similar to groupthink and refers to the act of looking to the choices of one's peers when making decisions. Liking refers to the tendency for individuals to be more susceptible to persuasion if the individual likes the persuader and can be influenced by multiple factors such as similarity and common goals. The heuristic of perceived authority is another major factor of persuasion and may include the perceived expertise of the persuader. Lastly, scarcity describes the tendency of people to want things or concepts more the less available the item in question seems to be. These heuristics may be employed by media sources to support the propagation of the agenda set through their issue coverage.

The media's ability to persuade the public of a topic's salience can also be addressed through inoculation theory. Inoculation theory, as described by McGuire (1961), refers to how attitudes and belief may change due to persuasion attempts and how such change is preventable. McGuire's theory compares inoculation against persuasion to medical inoculation, in which antibody production is triggered by the exposure of a body to a weakened virus, building the body's resistance and strengthening it against stronger viruses. In terms of persuasion, attitudinal inoculation exposes an individual to weakened arguments of a persuasive message in order to trigger a process of counterargument, eventually creating resistance to stronger arguments of that message. Reinforcing preexisting attitudes and beliefs prevents persuasion in the future and the understanding of possible counterarguments to existing beliefs initiates defenses for

future attacks (McGuire, 1964). McGuire also notes that these counterarguments should be strong enough to initiate an active defensive response but not so strong as to persuade the receiver. Though media outlets may utilize methods of persuasion in order to set the public agenda, they may also use attitudinal inoculation to prevent the propagation of counterarguments.

Lastly, another method of persuasion with which the media can utilize to influence public agenda is narrative transportation. Narrative transportation, as developed by Green and Brock (2000), proposes that when individuals are fully and personally invested in a story or narrative, their attitudes and intentions change to reflect that story. In order for transportation to occur and for there to be observable attitudinal change in the message receiver, the receiver must interpret a story, experience empathy for the narrative and apply it to his or her personal experience (Van Laer et al., 2014). Unlike analytic persuasion such as the ELM, narrative persuasion does not require careful reflection and consideration of a persuasive message and may often apply to media that does not overtly seem persuasive. However, both narrative persuasion and the ELM require the full mental engagement of the message receiver.

Propaganda

Propaganda is communication which endeavors to create a response in an audience that promotes the desired intent of the communicator (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2014). According to psychologists Pratkanis and Aronson (2001), propaganda is defined as “mass ‘suggestion’ or influence through the manipulation of symbols and the psychology of the individual” (p. 11). It is a major aspect of the study of history, journalism, political science, and other disciplines, particularly in regards to how the ideology of a propagandist is received by an audience,

disseminates throughout a population and impacts public opinion. Propaganda is commonly perceived as negative; Pratkanis and Aronson (2001) also stated that propaganda is the abuse of persuasion and that propaganda withholds vital information, invokes heuristic devices and employs ethically questionable methods. The usage of propaganda emphasizes an intent and purpose for communication and implies a conscious attempt to achieve a balance of influence and power that falls in the propagandist's favor (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2014).

According to Roloff and Miller (1980), there are three different responses to persuasion attempts through propaganda: response shaping, response reinforcing, and response changing. In response shaping, propaganda communication may encourage positive inclinations towards the ideas the communication is espousing. Response reinforcing is the strengthening of positive opinions towards the propaganda's ideology and is particularly used to encourage the actualization of a positive attitude. Lastly, Roloff and Miller (1980) identify response changing as the most difficult outcome of persuasive propaganda to achieve, as it requires an attitudinal change from one opinion to another. Though propaganda is used in large part to alter public opinion, the ultimate goal of propaganda is to manipulate behavior and behavioral patterns in its audience, such as joining an organization, fighting for a cause and exposing others to an ideology (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2014).

Diffusion of Innovations (DoI) Theory

Developed by Rogers (1962), the theory of diffusion of innovations describes the way new ideas and technology disseminate throughout a population. Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) state that diffusion is a time-consuming process by which an innovation is communicated among members of a social system. The term "innovation" broadly refers to ideas, practices, or objects

that adopters perceive as new. Rogers studies four main elements that affect how innovations spread: the innovation itself, the communication channel in which the innovation is disseminated, the time frame of dissemination and the social system, particularly human capital, and opinion leadership. Successful, widely adopted innovations are capable of sustaining themselves. The moment in the time frame of diffusion in which an innovation becomes self-sustaining is referred to as critical mass. When an innovation reaches critical mass, it is capable of causing future innovation beyond itself.

There are five categories of adopters, or members of a population who come to accept the innovation: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (Rogers, 1962). Innovators are individuals willing to take risks and who possess the financial liquidity and high social status to do so. They are members of strong social networks and have access to close contact with research sources. Innovators also have the greatest amount of interaction with other innovators. As their tolerance for risk and financial safety net is greater than that of other adopters, they are capable of adopting innovations that may ultimately fail.

Early adopters have the highest amount of public influence amongst the adopters and often have a higher social status, financial liquidity, education and social prominence than late adopters. They generally have the greatest degree of opinion leadership within a society. However, unlike innovators, they are more selective and judicious in adopting ideas to help them maintain their prominence in communication. To preserve face, they take risks discreetly. The early majority adopt an innovation after a degree of time significantly longer than the innovators and early adopters and often have above average social status. They are more often in contact with early adopters, but they seldom hold positions of public influence and great opinion leadership.

The late majority approaches innovations with high degrees of skepticism and adopts innovations after the average participant, once the majority of the society has already adopted the innovation. They generally have below-average social status, opinion leadership and influence as well as lesser financial liquidity. Laggards are the last to adopt an innovation and often show little to no public influence or opinion leadership. Laggards typically have an aversion to change-agents and tend to focus on traditions.

Opinion leadership, described by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1961), refers to leadership by an active user of media, who interprets the meaning of media messages or content for lower-end media users. As not all individuals exert an equal amount of influence over others, opinion leaders, who can exert higher degrees of influence, are influential in spreading both positive and negative information about an innovation. They are often held in high esteem by those who accept their opinions. Katz and Lazarsfeld also note that opinion leaders express one or more of three factors: an expression of their values, professional competence and an extensive social network.

Memetic Engineering

The theory of memes and memetic engineering, developed by Dawkins (1976), further addresses how ideas disseminate and lead to the innovation of further ideas. Memetic engineering refers to the process of developing so-called memes through meme-splicing and memetic synthesis, eventually leading to the alteration of the attitudes, beliefs or behaviors of others in a society. Dawkins's original concept of the meme describes any cultural entity which one may consider a replicator of a certain idea. The idea itself may undergo refinement, change, combination or other alteration over time between iterations. Memes are also otherwise described

as self-replicating ideas or thought contagion. Because memes are replicating units of behavior, they are not isolated and are connected to other iterations and alterations, forming intricate complexes known as memplexes.

Dawkins intended the word “meme” to be the behavioral equivalent of a gene and described memes as units of cultural inheritance. Dawkins also asserts that members of a population more culturally inclined towards following trends are more susceptible to inheriting and adopting memes. As Dawkins (1976) continues, “individuals who are predisposed... towards imitation are on a fast track that have may taken others a long time to build up” (p. 65). Memes may also be manipulated to develop chosen behaviors within an organization and to achieve desired outcomes (Pech & Slade, 2004). In this way, the concept of the meme can be weaponized, as a meme is the dissemination of a self-replicating idea.

Pech and Slade (2004) further suggest that memetic engineering can be utilized as a process for embedding desirable cultural traits into the collective minds of members of an organization. Meme mapping is a process that identifies levels of memetic fidelity, susceptibility of potential hosts and resonance within each meme with the aim of constructing a diagnostic tool in order to facilitate attitudinal and behavioral change. Within an organization, Pech and Slade state that using a meme mapping framework can allow organization leaders to identify memes inherent in the social structure of organization members. Identifying these memes can allow organization leaders to manipulate them into developing a desired organizational culture and outcomes that suit the organization's greater mission.

Symbolic Convergence Theory

As the diffusion of innovations describes how ideas are propagated throughout a population, symbolic convergence theory (SCT), proposed in Bormann's 1972 work, addresses how common ideological themes and fantasies are shared through a collective, strengthening or creating group bonds. Groups create meaning by interpreting shared experiences into symbols, and these symbols in turn reinforce the group's ideas. This occurs through commonplace conversation, stories, and rituals which group members partake in (Deetz, 2001). Fantasies, as defined in reference to symbolic convergence, means "creative and imaginative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need" (Griffin, 2006, p. 38). SCT essentially addresses how and why group identities are constructed and how the resultant shared consciousness assigns meaning within the group.

The term "symbolic convergence" refers to how groups of people create a common consciousness, ultimately developing common beliefs in the forms of symbols and fantasies. According to Vaughan (2009), SCT consists of two premises: communication creates the reality people experience, and that through communication, individuals can share their reality throughout their group. This results in the convergence of meaning.

Bormann, Cragan, and Shields outlined three principles that allow groups to create shared rhetorical vision in their 1996 work: novelty, explanatory power, and imitation. According to the principle of novelty, the authors assert that established shared rhetorical visions within a group may fail to attract future members without an element of novelty to the shared group fantasy. This necessitates new additions to the shared group fantasy over time. The principle of explanatory power is the ability of symbolic fantasies to provide satisfying explanations of certain experiences. For an example, when a group is presented with a traumatic event, symbolic

convergence may allow a group to rationalize the event and see how the event affects the group from a holistic perspective, rather than an experiential perspective. Lastly, the principle of imitation states that people may apply familiar symbols and fantasies to past events and experiences, creating a dramatized product (Bormann, Cragan, and Shields, 1996).

Sanctioning agents are figures of authority that legitimize a rhetorical vision and its symbols (Bormann, 1992). These figures may be individuals with esteem within a group. Conversely, sanctioning agents may also be higher powers, such as God, a religion, or an ideology. They may also be generally accepted doctrines or codes of law.

The result of the shared rhetorical visions established by symbolic convergence is mutual understanding throughout a group of group ideology, particularly in reference to further group experience. Bormann (1972) asserted that groups attribute meaning to signs and fantasies in order to understand shared experiences. This is achieved through the tools of symbolic convergence Bormann lists: fantasy themes, symbolic cues, fantasy types, and sagas.

Fantasy Themes

Fantasy themes dramatize events that may have already occurred, are currently occurring, or will occur in the future, and they include individual words, phrases, or statements (Jackson, 2000). These themes may contribute to a group's overall rhetorical movement. Jackson (2000) states that fantasy themes refer to three different aspects of a narrative: setting, character, and action. Setting themes refer to the location of the fantasy, while character themes describe the characteristics and motivations of actors within the fantasy. Lastly, action themes, also referred to as plotlines, address the narrative plot of a fantasy.

The analysis of fantasy themes shared by a group is a form of rhetorical criticism that allows for the evaluation of the values of the group consciousness (Bormann, 1985). Within a group consciousness, one can identify heroes and villains within the actors of a shared fantasy theme. The heroes of a rhetorical vision are figures lauded for their actions throughout a group and supported by the group as a champion of the group's members, while the villains oppose the group and are reviled by it.

Symbolic Cues

Symbolic cues, which include words, phrases, nonverbal gestures, and slogans, evoke fantasy themes and may serve as tools for building group cohesion (Cragan & Shields, 1992). These cues act as heuristics which remind members of the group of the group's shared ideology, emotions, and past experiences. Cues trigger responses for the listener, regardless of whether the listener is party to the meaning of a cue. Jokes may act as symbolic cues, to which the response would be laughter or smiling, reminding members of the group of shared group humor. A listener unaware of the symbolic value of a cue may respond to the cue with confusion.

A symbolic cue adopted by ISIS is a single raised index finger, commonly understood as the symbol for the number one, but also used as a cue of the jihadist movement. According to Zelinsky (2014), the gesture refers to the Islamic principle of the *tawhid*, referring to the oneness of Allah and the unity of the *ummah*, the worldwide Muslim community. Within ISIS, the gesture refers to the unilateral destruction of pluralism and western civilization, to be abrogated by a unified Islamic empire. The raised index finger is not only a cue of ISIS as a group, but also a cue of ISIS's ideology of world domination.

Fantasy Types

Bormann's 1985 work describes fantasy types as recurring fantasy themes applicable to common concerns and situations the group face. Because fantasy types are relevant to shared issues within the group, they provide references for the group with which to understand and assign meaning to similar situations and experiences. Bormann, Cragan, and Shields (1996) state that fantasy types are the driving forces of rhetorical visions, and their recurrent application to new experiences and events showcase the principle of imitation of symbolic convergence. By imitating a recurring fantasy theme and applying it to a shared experience, a group creates a new symbol in the dramatized version of the experience.

A common fantasy type is the prevalent type, *fetching good out of evil*, which is often used to explain the outcomes of adversity, particularly in the face of calamity (Bormann, 1977). By applying this type, people attempt to rationalize grave issues and find beneficial experiences within difficult situations.

Sagas

Another tool of symbolic convergence theory is the saga, described by Cragan and Shields (1992) as the retelling of significant events relevant to the group and its figures. The detailed accounts of the life of a person, community, organization, or state, sagas describe achievements, representing the symbolic consciousness of an entire group (Bormann, 1985). Sagas construct emotional narratives that strengthen the rhetorical vision of a group, and are repeated, appended, and changed in order to reflect the group's principles. A saga reflects a

shared group consciousness within a rhetorical community, particularly rhetorical communities that physically exist, such as organizations (Cragan & Shields, 1992).

Through these aspects of symbolic convergence, a group's rhetorical vision is developed. Rhetorical visions refer to the structure of communication within a group, from which the group's shared identity coalesces, affecting the perspectives on reality of the group members (Bormann, 1985).

Speech Codes Theory

Developed by Philipsen (1992), the process of speech codes theory allows observers to analyze different forms of communication through identifying and coding socially-constructed symbols, meanings, premises and rules. The theory builds off from Bernstein's concept of coding principle in his 1971 work as well as Hymes's 1962 discussion on analyzing communication systematically. Philipsen and Hart (2015) treat communication as a human activity deeply rooted in culture. Speech codes theory demonstrates how communication characterizes, interprets and rationalize information in reference to a societal culture. The theory thus provides an established framework for integrating culture with communication (Ward, 2010). The distinctive communicative record of conversations throughout a community is interpreted through speech codes theory as implicating a specific and observable code (Philipsen, 1992). Philipsen also argues in his 1992 work that speech codes theory is applicable to the study of all discursive forms and the analysis of self, society and strategic action within a population.

A tool used in speech codes research is the SPEAKING model by Hymes (1974). The letters in the word "speaking" stand for different aspects relevant to speech codes: situation, participants, ends, acts, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genre. Hymes (1974) refers to a

situation as the scene or setting of communication. This can also refer to the context in which a written communication is transmitted. Analyzing the participants in a communication scenario requires an understanding of the social positions and relationships between communicators and members of an audience. Hymes (1974) identifies ends as the goals and outcomes of communication and defines acts as the form a message is communicated in and the content of a message. Identifying the key in a speech codes analysis is recognizing the tone or manner of communication and understanding instrumentalities is distinguishing the channels or modalities of the message. Norms are the framework for producing and processing the message. Lastly, Hymes (1974) identifies communication genre as the type of interaction the communication takes place in.

In summarizing speech codes theory, Philipsen (1992) outlines several key statements. Philipsen argues that each distinctive culture and community has its own speech codes that are foreign to outsiders. These include normative symbols, meanings, premises and rules about communicative conduct. Philipsen (1992) also notes that multiple speech codes exist in any given speech community; individuals may engage in multiple codes concurrently. Speech codes also have a distinctive psychology, sociology, and rhetoric. Analyzing these aspects, Philipsen argues, unveils insight into the structure of the community or culture a communication takes place in. Lastly, Philipsen (1992) asserts that the speech community assess and analyzes its own codes and meanings, which are inextricably woven into the speech itself.

Islam

The religion of Islam descended from Abrahamic tradition and shares a monotheistic belief in one all-powerful deity with Judaism and Christianity. Followers of Islam believe that

Allah revealed sacred truth to the prophet Muhammad and called the prophet to take leadership of men. According to Islamic tradition, this sacred truth was scripturally recorded in the Quran. The Quran and the Hadith, the traditions or sayings of Muhammad, describe Muhammad's journeys in the cities of Mecca and Medina (Sinai & Ringgren, 2017). The major teachings of Islam include obligatory acts of worship, following traditional Islamic law and believing strictly in a single deity (Esposito, 2014). Muslims consider the Quran the unadulterated, definitive, final revelation of Allah (Bennett, 2010).

A study by the Pew Research Center states that Islam has about 1.8 billion adherents, or about 24 percent of the world population (Lipka & Hackett, 2017). Islam is the world's second largest religion, only dwarfed by Christianity. In the same report, the Pew Research Center notes that Islam is the world's fastest growing religion in large part due to the higher rate of fertility of Muslim women than non-Muslim women. The median age of the Muslim population, 24, is notably younger than that of the non-Muslim population, 32 (Lipka & Hackett, 2017). Significant majorities of the population of Muslim countries in the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia favor the establishment of *sharia*, traditional Islamic law, as the official law of their country (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2013). This includes 71 percent of Nigerian Muslims, 72 percent of Indonesian Muslims, 74 percent of Egyptian Muslims and 89 percent of Muslims in Palestinian territories (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2013).

The Quran

The Quran, Arabic for "Recitation" and alternatively spelled Qur'an or Koran, is the sacred scripture of Islam. Islamic tradition states that the angel Gabriel revealed the divine

knowledge of the Quran to the prophet Muhammad in separate passages in the cities of Mecca and Medina from the years 610 AD until Muhammad's death in 632 AD. In conventional Islamic belief, the Quran is the literal transcript of Allah's word; Quranic scripture itself refers to the Quran as "the well-preserved tablet" (Sinai & Ringgren, 2017). The Quran is the foundation of Islamic law alongside extra-Quranic verses and quotes attributed to Muhammad. Utterances accredited to Muhammad and accounts of Muhammad's life not recorded within the Quran are referred to as the *Hadith*. As Islamic belief assert that the revelation of the Quran was often revealed in singular verses or isolated verse groups, Islamic history contains many reports and sources about the context of the occasion in which different verses or *surahs*, or chapters, were reportedly revealed.

Pre-modern Muslim scholars discuss the revelation of the Quran as inseparably associated with events within Muhammad's life, as reported by Islamic literature and history outside the Quran. Western scholars, however, generally approach narratives of Islamic history other than the Quran with skepticism and caution due to a lack of historical source credibility and the distance in time between their recording and the factual lifetime of Muhammad (Sinai & Ringgren, 2017). Notable within the Quran, however, are the literary and doctrinal changes and developments between Muhammad's Meccan and Medinan period, particular in its statements concerning the treatment of members of other faiths.

Salafism

Multiple sects of Islam interpret the Quran in different ways. Of prominent importance to jihadist terrorism is the Salafi reformist movement, which grew within the late nineteenth century in response to the impact of European economic growth and heightened military power

on Muslim nations and peoples (Campanini, 2011). Salafi thinkers identify Western, Judeo-Christian nations and cultures as political, economic, and cultural subjugators of Islamic peoples and countries. Salafi commentaries on the Quran focus on a revival of traditionalist, literalist interpretations of the Quran; rather than modernizing Islam, Campanini (2011) states that Salafi thinkers stress the “Islamization of modernity” (p. 9).

Salafism asserts that Islam is capable of subsuming and assimilating modernity into its own values and beliefs, as laid out by a traditionalist interpretation of the Quran. The original founding principles of Salafism are thus summarized: Islam should return to and revive the Quran and the teachings of Muhammad, believers should renew Islamic traditions, science and modern knowledge should assimilate into Islam and the history of Islam and Arab peoples should take the place of European colonial history (Campanini, 2011). Salafists reject the idea of religious innovation and adaptation and support the widespread implementation of sharia law (Amman, 2015).

The Principle of Abrogation

Scholars of the Quran identify conspicuous differences of doctrine and literary format between Quranic passages reportedly revealed in the city of Mecca to those revealed in the city of Medina. At the beginning of Muhammad’s religious ministry, he founded Islam in the city of Mecca. During his time in Mecca, Muhammad’s actions, teachings, and beliefs were primarily peaceful, inspired in part by the teachings of Jesus in the Bible. Hence, the verses in the Quran which espouse nonviolence, peace, and tolerance came from Muhammad’s teachings in Mecca. In 622 AD, at the age of 52, Muhammad fled Mecca to go to Medina, where he became a political and military leader. Islamic conquests and wars originated from his time in Medina.

Therefore, most violent verses in the Quran originated from Muhammad's teachings in Medina (Burton, 1990). The surahs dated to Muhammad's Medinan period exhibit a much greater focus on detailed legal regulations and on militant action on the part of believers in the service of Allah than surahs dated to Muhammad's Meccan period (Sinai & Ringgren, 2017). Medinan surahs also identify the target of this militant action as unbelievers in Islam and those who associate with unbelievers.

This shift between Quranic Meccan verses and Medinan verses is identifiable in multiple passages throughout the Quran. The Meccan verse 8:61 asserts, "If your enemy inclines toward peace, then you too should seek peace and put your trust in Allah," whereas the Medinan verse 47:35 firmly states, "Do not weaken and call for peace." Though the Quranic verse 2:256, "Let there be no compulsion in religion," was allegedly revealed in Medina, it was offered by Muhammad in his first year in Medina, in which he required the support of the Jews of the city (Bukay, 2007). The Meccan verse 109:6 also promotes tolerance of other beliefs; "To you your religion, and to me my religion." The Medinan verse 2:191, however, asserts of Jews and Christians, "Slay them wherever you find People of the Book." Another Medinan verse, 9:29, further commands, "Fight those who believe not in Allah... the People of the Book, until they pay the jizya (a "tax" for non-Muslims) with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."

The contradictions within the Quran are explained within the Quran itself through the Principle of Abrogation. Particularly in Quranic verses 2:106 and 16:101, it is written that later verses cancel out (i.e. abrogate) chronologically earlier verses. The Principle of Abrogation states that for any controversial topic (e.g., murder, ethics, the treatment of unbelievers) about which a Meccan verse contradicts a Medinan verse, the later Medinan verse abrogates the earlier Meccan verse. Medinan verses and teachings thus have precedence over Meccan verses (Matusitz, 2015). Sharia law, the legal system defined by Islam, implemented the principle of

abrogation of older verses within the Quran or the *hadiths* as an established practice at least by the ninth century (Hallaq, 2009).

The Quran is not organized by chronology, like the Bible's Old and New Testaments. Rather, the Quran is organized by the size of its surahs, within which the order of verses is not consistently chronological (Bukay, 2007). For example, Bukay notes that in the second surah, Islamic tradition and history states that Allah revealed verses 193, 216 and 217 upon his arrival in Medina, but verses 190, 191 and 192 were only revealed six years later. A major aspect of the study of the Quran within Muslim theological scholarship is the determination of which verses abrogate and which others are abrogated, particularly through referencing the accounts of the *Hadith*. The common understanding amongst Islamic scholars is that Muhammad accepted that Allah would invalidate previous revelations (Bukay, 2007).

The amount of verses in the Quran and the *hadiths* recognized by Islamic scholars as abrogated by newer verses is disputed (McAuliffe, Walfish, & Goering, 2010). However, Kadri's 2012 study estimates that 71 of the Quran's 114 surahs contain abrogated verses.

The Principle of Ijtihad

Within Islam, *ijtihad* is the legal practice of independent thought and reasoning upon a question that involves Islamic law (Esposito, 2014). Antonymic to the term *taqlid*, which refers to strictly following and emulating legal precedent within Islam, *ijtihad* allows for personal judgment in matters of law. Masterful understanding of Islamic theology, jurisprudence and the Arabic language is required to perform *ijtihad* according to Sunni convention. Traditionally, *ijtihad* is only performed by qualified Islamic scholars and is not used when Islamic doctrine contains unequivocal ruling. Venkatraman (2007) described *ijtihad* as necessary to interpret the

Quran, particularly for different social, political and economic situations in different time periods. This allows individuals to identify which Islamic teachings they wish to emphasize and comply with.

Because *ijtihad* allows Muslims to interpret, shape, and selectively enforce Islam to their own beliefs and agendas for the sake of following Allah's will, terrorists primarily emphasize the Quran's teachings on violence. Venkatraman (2007) noted that terrorists use *ijtihad* to highlight Quranic verses that sanction force and violence against nonbelievers, particularly through emphasizing the use of violence to propagate Islam. *Ijtihad* is a major principle of Salafism; most Salafists believe *ijtihad* allows modern Islam to return to the principles of Islamic forefathers and that *taqlid* led to Islam's decline (Ungureanu, 2011). Gesnik (2003) notes that the Muslim Brotherhood, a Pan-Islamic radical political organization, was founded with the principle of *ijtihad*. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood believe that *ijtihad* encourages Muslims to better understand the Quran and to form personal conclusions about the teachings of Islam. Osama Bin Laden also supported *ijtihad* and accused the Saudi Arabian government for prohibiting independent thought on Islam (Gesnik, 2003).

Jihad and Islamic Terrorism

Religiously-motivated acts of jihadist terror remain a major issue and theme in global crises and international relations. Jihad is literally translated from Arabic as "striving" or "struggling" and it may refer both to internal struggle against perceived sin, the struggle to better society or a struggle of violence (Esposito, 2014). According to classical Islamic law, jihad is a militant struggle against nonbelievers (Peters & Cook, 2014). This militant struggle remains observable in modern-day Islamic terrorist groups calling for the creation of a Pan-Islamic

caliphate as well as in extremist perspectives of Islam and in the radicalization of individuals across the globe. Support of sharia law is a factor in Islamic militancy. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2013) reported that 86 percent of supporters of sharia in Egypt, 82 percent of supporters in Jordan support executing those who abandon the Islamic faith. Likewise, 79 percent of supporters of sharia law in Afghanistan, 76 percent of supporters in Pakistan and 66 percent of supporters of sharia in Palestinian territories also support executing apostates who deny sharia or leave Islam. A 2005 Populus and Times poll of Muslim youth in Great Britain between the ages of 18 to 24 found that 12 percent of those surveyed believe suicide bombings against civilians are legitimate.

Jihadist terrorist action was not a major concern on the public agenda in the West until the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, argues Mullins (2012). However, international Islamist networks began developing after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, at which point Middle Eastern veterans of the Soviet invasion dispersed internationally (AIVD, 2006). The 1993 World Trade Center bombing was the first major Islamist terror attack against the West; among the terrorists, the majority of whom were Middle Eastern nationals, there was one naturalized American citizen (Blumenthal, Hanley, Mitchell, Treastor, & Tabor, 1993).

From then on, the jihadist terror groups Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, already well-established in the Middle East, intensified their focus on recruitment for attacks on Western nations (Mullins, 2012). The 9/11 attacks shone a spotlight on Islamist terrorism and further popularized the jihadist cause (Pargeter, 2008). Though there have been no jihadist attacks on the scale of 9/11 since the attacks, jihadist terror attacks remain a common news headline. Most recently, eight were killed and 13 injured in New York City on October 31, 2017 when Sayfullo Saipov, an ISIS supporter, drove a vehicle into Halloween celebrators, shouting “Allahu akbar”

(Mueller, Rashbaum, Baker, & Goldman, 2017). Mueller et al. (2017) noted that Saipov followed instructions for a vehicle attack found in the ISIS magazine *Rumiyah* and described Saipov as “a voracious consumer and meticulous student of ISIS propaganda” (p. A1).

Clash of Civilizations

The Clash of Civilizations is a hypothesis created by Samuel Huntington (1993) that argues that the major motivation for conflict in the modern era is cultural and religious identity. Huntington groups cultural identities in broad areas referred to as “major civilizations” through their major religions and cultural history. These civilizations include the West, Latin America, Orthodox, Confucian, Buddhist, Hindu, Japanese, Sub-Saharan African and the Muslim civilization. Due to complex cultural histories, Huntington describes some countries as “lone” members of their own civilizations and others as “cleft” countries, home to large populations which identify to different civilizations. Of particular interest to this thesis is Western civilization and Muslim civilization. Western civilization, according to Huntington, includes the US, Canada, Western and Central Europe, Australia, much of Oceania and parts of Latin America. The Muslim civilization refers to the greater Middle East.

Huntington argues in his 1993 work that in a post-Cold War world, governments and groups will find themselves decreasingly capable to catalyze support on the basis of ideology. Therefore, these groups appeal to common religion, culture, and civilizational identity in order to mobilize support. Huntington predicts that conflict arising from disputes in civilizational power occurs on two levels. Locally, at the micro-level, neighboring groups on opposite sides of civilizational dividing lines compete over territory and territorial influence. Globally, at the macro-level, states from different civilizations compete over comparative military power,

economic power, control of international institutions and influence over third parties. This civilizational rivalry also competitively promotes the political, cultural and religious values of the opposing civilizations (Huntington, 1993). Huntington characterizes the rivalry or competition between civilizations through the extent of violence present in the states' interactions, particularly noting the militant tendency of the Muslim civilization's interactions with other states, citing Muslim conflicts with Orthodox Serbs, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and Catholics worldwide.

Huntington (1993) particularly notes the conflict between the Muslim civilization and “the efforts of the West to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values” (p. 29). A major point in Huntington's work is that the West's next global conflict is most likely to be with the Islamist civilization. Akbar (2003) affirms this sentiment: “The West's next confrontation is definitely going to come from the Muslim world. It is in the sweep of Islamic nations from the Maghreb to Pakistan that the struggle for a new world order will begin” (p. 272). Civilizational conflict between the West and the Islamic world is further echoed by Islamist and jihadist groups. The radical Pan-Islamic party Hizb ut-Tahrir (2002) released a response to Huntington's 1993 hypothesis, titled *The Inevitability of the Clash of Civilization*, calling unequivocally for war against the Christian and capitalist West. The response echoes Huntington's observation that leaders in the Islamic world meet the attempted propagation of Western values with enmity, identifying the dominance of Western education, media and influence as cultural attacks (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2002). The work concludes by saying that “the clash of civilizations is an inevitable matter” and it calls for the Muslim population to rise against the West; “Do not be deceived, O Muslims, by the callers to the dialogue who place their heads in the sand and condone humiliation and defeat. Make the preparations required for the conflict,

since the Capitalist Western civilization has knocked you down militarily, politically and economically. However, they will never defeat you intellectually” (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2002, p. 62).

Jihadist Motivations

The word “jihad,” Arabic for “struggle,” refers to two forms of jihad, the greater jihad and the lesser jihad (Silke, 2008). The greater jihad is an individual, internal, nonviolent effort to live a good life as defined under the Islamic code. The lesser jihad is the militant, external, violent struggle on the behalf of Islam as a whole. In the modern age of Islam, the catalyst of engaging in the violence of the lesser jihad is radicalization. Radicalization generally refers to a process whereby ordinary practices of tolerance and dialogue with an opposing group break down in favor of conflict, particularly through acts of violent extremism (Schmid, 2013). The process of radicalization may include coercion and acts of political violence other than explicit terrorism. Applied to Islamist terrorism, Mullins (2012) describes radicalization as the process of adopting and internalizing militant Islamist ideology.

The process of Islamist radicalization also includes a shift towards religious fanaticism and towards an extremist interpretation of Islamic doctrine. Sageman’s (2004) survey on jihadist terrorist backgrounds notes that 99 percent of Islamist extremists describe themselves as very religious prior to entering a jihadist organization and committing acts of terrorism. Though committing violence is not an inevitability of radicalization, radicalized jihadist individuals generally believe that Islam is under attack from Western civilization, that the Islamic world is divided into true Muslims and infidels and, lastly, that jihad is violence necessary to defend Muslims from oppressors (Mullins, 2012).

According to Silke (2008), scientific assessment of the psychological and sociological reasons ordinary individuals become jihadist terrorists remains limited in size and evidence, but past research identifies no psychological abnormality in the majority of radicalized jihadists: “Despite the indiscriminate and extreme violence of many terrorist attacks, the vast majority of research on terrorists has concluded that the perpetrators are not psychologically abnormal” (p. 104). Sageman’s (2008) survey on the background of Islamist terrorists support the lack of evidence of psychological abnormalities in jihadist terrorists. Rather, according to Sageman (2004), a major constant in jihadist motivations is a sense of societal isolation, particularly among jihadist terrorists in the West. Silber and Bhatt’s (2007) study noted that Muslims in Europe are on average less wealthy than the general population, have higher rates of unemployment and imprisonment and are politically under-represented.

Schmid (2013) states that radicalization creates ideological abnormalities through “an ideological socialization away from mainstream... towards more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view” (p. A1). The process of radicalization capitalizes upon social detriments Muslims may experience and furthers the sense of social isolation Sageman described. The ideological socialization of radicalization also fosters a jihadist identity. As Silke (2008) explains, “within the context of jihadi terrorism, the perception of a strong shared identity and link with the wider Muslim world – the umma – has serious consequences” (p. 114). In an analysis of individual terrorist motivations, Clifton (2017) observed that “the struggle is de-territorialized, it is ideological: western democracy against Muslim theocracy and true believers against infidels” (p. 467). Taarnby (2005) characterizes issues of personal and group identity as major factors in radicalization, particularly in terms of Muslims who harbor “deep resentment” against the West. Mullins (2012) notes that throughout past research into jihadist motivations,

the common theme throughout different studies is the “dissatisfaction and disillusionment with life in the West” (p. 119).

The Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS)

Designated as a terrorist organization by the United Nations and many other countries worldwide, the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) is a Salafi jihadist militant group known for war crimes, destruction of cultural heritage sites, human rights offenses, and ethnic cleansings (Irshaid, 2015). ISIS declared itself a caliphate in June 2014, functioning as a theocratic state unbound by the Westphalian principle of sovereignty with the explicit goal of expanding and subjugating other lands (Caldwell & Williams, Jr., 2016). The brutality of its methods, which include systematic violations to human life and the ethnic cleansing of the Yazidi minority in Iraq, caused Al-Qaeda to denounce the organization (Shany et al., 2014). The growth of ISIS and its proclamation of a caliphate coincided with a sharp increase in the amount of foreign fighters travelling to Syria and Iraq: the UN Security Council (2015) reported that between 20,000 and 30,000 foreign fighters travelled to Syria and Iraq between 2011 and 2014. In the thirty-year span between 1980 and 2010, this number was only between 10,000 and 20,000 foreign fighters (United Nations Security Council, 2015). According the Soufan Group (2015), the number of foreign fighters travelling to join ISIS doubled between June 2014 and December 2015.

Its acronym, originally translated to the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham, often causes confusion during translation; the word *Sham* may be variously interpreted, its translations including “the Levant” and “Syria” (Irshaid, 2015). Some Western sources use the Arabic

abbreviation *Daesh* in reference to ISIS as a way to challenge the group's legitimacy and its roots in Islam, as the term is similar to an Arabic verb meaning "to trample" (Irshaid, 2015). In 2014, ISIS declared itself an international caliphate and shortened its name to "Islamic State," dropping its regional labels to reflect its expansionist intentions (Irshaid, 2015). However, this paper will only refer to this group as ISIS, in order to denote its original name and to avoid the confusion of its other translations.

ISIS came into international focus after its victories in the summer of 2014 against the government of Iraq, Kurdish forces, the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, and rival regional jihadist groups (Hashim, 2014). The organization originated from the little-known militant group in Afghanistan and Iraq, *Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad* (JTJ), which differed significantly from other Iraqi militant groups through its reliance on suicide bombers and its indiscriminate targeting (Hashim, 2014). Founded by a Jordanian jihadist, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, in 2004, JTJ exhibited an understanding of group identity, recruitment, networking and the Internet; Hashim (2014) notes that Zarqawi,

was very adept at using the Internet to promote his message, recruit personnel and terrorize his enemies... Through creating a worldwide network, Zarqawi's volunteers posted messages from their leader and videos of violent acts, like beheadings, on multiple servers. This avoided delays in downloading and made it difficult for the material to be removed from the World Wide Web (p. A1).

Milton (2016) observes that from ISIS's early stages, it is evident that "the organization understood the necessity of using its media branch to cultivate some level of popular support... while the military side of the war essential, the ability to justify its actions to the people of Iraq was crucial" (p. 3). This theme of recruitment, propaganda, and communication through digital resources continues throughout ISIS's evolution from JTJ to the group that it is today.

After a short-lived merger with Al-Qaeda, Zarqawi's death, years of unexceptional leadership and a decline, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took control of ISIS in 2010, fundamentally restructuring the organization while continuing Zarqawi's legacy of a focus on online recruitment and social media (Hashim, 2014). In June 2014, when ISIS proclaimed itself a caliphate, it named Baghdadi its caliph (Caldwell & Williams, Jr., 2016). Baghdadi spearheaded the online release of ISIS recruitment materials and propaganda. ISIS infamously released three online videos in 2014 documenting the beheadings of American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff and British citizen David Haines (Shany et al., 2014). In every video, each victim was forced to denounce U.S. or British military action against ISIS and warn against future action at the peril of other captives. These graphic videos drew international attention towards ISIS and its online presence.

Online Social Media

The information operations and online presence of ISIS are controlled by the organization's Ministry of Media, through which Gambhir (2016) states that ISIS "activated and garnered support from a dispersed online community that believes Muslims should immediately unite under the governing authority of ISIS's rightful caliph rather than remain dispersed throughout the world" (p. 9). ISIS's Ministry of Media controls multiple radio services, 35 regional media bureaus throughout the Middle East and Africa and a production branch for English translations and non-Arabic language magazines, Al Hayat Media Center (Milton, 2016). In large part, the goal of ISIS's media presence is to maximize radicalization in order to gain potential recruits; much of its content is therefore externally-focused, created to foster radicalization and to recruit individuals both regionally and abroad (Gambhir, 2016).

A report by the Quilliam Foundation describes ISIS's media branch as a "behemoth, which produces on average 38 individual batches of propaganda each day – videos, photo essays, articles and audio programs" (Winter, 2015, p. 3). Milton's (2016) analysis of ISIS online media releases observes that at its peak in August 2015, ISIS released more than 700 pieces of visual media in a month; the release of visual media and governance statements since then declined. Milton also notes that official ISIS content released on its main webpages are amalgamations of content released from the multiple media bureaus across ISIS territory.

The online content released by ISIS plays an instrumental role in the propagation of its message, particularly in the recruitment of foreign fighters. In an analysis of American militants drawn to the Syrian conflict and involved with ISIS or other Syrian-related militants, Bergen (2015) observes that the only profile that draws these militants together is their activity in online jihadist circles. The Soufan Group (2015) states that ISIS's social media outreach is particularly effective in spreading the group's message and fostering radicalization, laying the foundation for recruitment. Gambhir (2016) also notes that the media information operations of ISIS are particularly responsible for ISIS's success in worldwide notoriety and international recruitment.

Propaganda dissemination through the Internet and social media provides many benefits to extremist groups. Unlike open online forums, easily susceptible to law enforcement, Klausen et al. (2012) states that it is simpler to outnumber illegal, violent content with social media posts protected through a platform's policy and through. Functions to re-share posts and content allow that content to memetically disseminate and social media attracts a much wider breadth of potential recruits than invitation-only private websites (Klausen et al., 2012). Though some social media platforms, such as Facebook, impose stringent user limitations in order to expel jihadist propaganda groups, other platforms, such as Twitter, remain popular for jihadist groups and ISIS supporters (Winter, 2015). No single account on a major social media platform such as

Twitter is currently responsible for the release of propaganda; however, the organization uses designated hashtags to identify supporters (Winter, 2015). For example, in June 2014, ISIS supporters began distributing graphic or disturbing images praising ISIS on Twitter, featuring the hashtag “#AllEyesOnISIS.” The number of tweets using the hashtag numbers at over 30,000 tweets (Katz, 2014). Aside from its distribution of materials on social media platforms, ISIS produces multiple monthly magazines translated to several languages.

Dabiq

Produced by the Al Hayat Media Center of ISIS’s Ministry of Media, *Dabiq* was an English-language digital magazine series that focused on the propagation of jihadist ideas, radicalization and recruitment (Wignell et al., 2017). The magazine’s title refers to a small town in Syria where a well-known *hadith* states that the Muslim world and “Rome,” usually interpreted to signify the West, will battle during Armageddon (Gambhir, 2014). The first installment of *Dabiq* was released digitally on July 5, 2014, a month after the fall of Mosul, focusing on organizational reports, battlefield updates, and extremist ideology (Gambhir, 2014). Due to the magazine’s online distribution and English language, Gambhir notes that the magazine was likely not only intended for possible ISIS supporters in the West, but was also created to communicate ISIS ideology to ISIS’s Western enemies. Publications of *Dabiq*’s issues were aborted in 2016.

The magazine uses multiple approaches to ISIS ideology in order to convey its worldview. Past research identifies the heavy emphasis in *Dabiq* on in-group religious identity, crisis reinforcement, regional consolidation and emotional, zealous language. A study by Ingram (2016) concluded that *Dabiq* primarily used the methods of stressing in-group identity, the

concept of the Other, crisis constructs and solution constructions in order to reinforce a cultural dichotomy between Islam and the West. In a content analysis, Ingram identified values-reinforcing, dichotomy-reinforcing and crisis reinforcing messaging used throughout the magazine's publication. Ingram (2016) states that *Dabiq* constantly refers to Western civilization with hostile language, drawing upon cultural and religious differences between the Islamic civilization and the Western civilization to further polarize its readers. It refers to Western involvement in the Middle East and the spread of Western civilization as a "crisis" and describes Sunni Islam and ISIS as the "solution" (Ingram, 2016).

Inspire

Dabiq was not the first widely-known jihadist magazine disseminated worldwide. It follows the precedent of *Inspire*, an English-language magazine reportedly published by Al Qaeda to convey its propagandistic messages over the internet. First published in January 2010, its origin as Al Qaeda's official publication was unconfirmed, though US officials stated it appears to be authentic (Ambinder, 2010). There have been sixteen published issues of *Inspire*, the most recent of which was released in November 2016 (Daftari, 2016). The magazine included several structural elements similar to the format of *Dabiq*, including transcribed speeches from Al Qaeda leaders, descriptions of successful acts of terror associated with Al Qaeda, and instructions on how to build devices of terrorism. The first issue of *Inspire* featured an article on how to "make a bomb in the kitchen of your mom" (Ambinder, 2010).

Multiple attempted bombers in the United States in the years of *Inspire*'s publication admitted to having read the instructions within *Inspire* to begin their bomb construction. Naser Jason Abdo and Jose Pimentel were respectively arrested in Texas and New York in 2011, both

for attempted bombing, and both were found with copies of *Inspire*'s instructions on bomb assembly ("Inspire magazine: A staple of domestic terror", 2013). In 2012, brothers Raees and Sheheryar Qazi and Adel Daoud were arrested for separate attempted bombings, all admitting their instruction came from *Inspire* ("Inspire magazine: A staple of domestic terror", 2013).

Apocalyptic Language

Ingram (2016) also notes that, while reinforcing a cultural and religious dichotomy, *Dabiq* uses apocalyptic language: "The mutually reinforcing narratives within and across *Dabiq*'s issues plunge its readers into a bipolar world, characterized by cosmic war and on the verge of End times, that demands Sunnis choose between the forces of good or evil" (p. 474). To reinforce the legitimacy of its eye-catching imagery, *Dabiq* cites Islamic doctrine directly and heavily. Ingram (2016) describes,

Central to *Dabiq*'s stylistics is its extensive use of direct quotations from *suras*, *hadiths* and prominent Islamist figures. This strategy is used so extensively that the author's words often play a secondary role in *Dabiq* articles. For example, an article titled 'The Islamic State before al-Malhamah'... literally reads as a series of quotations from speeches and *hadiths*. The style has the effect of portraying *Dabiq*'s narrative as inherently legitimate because its wording is taken directly from revered sources (p. 472).

To foster radicalization and encourage action even further, as Ingram states, *Dabiq* draws upon its apocalyptic messaging to trigger "awakening" in its readers. As Ingram (2016) continues, First, eschatological triggers are used to remind *Dabiq*'s readership of Armageddon and [ISIS's] role... Second, *Dabiq* draws upon jurisprudential triggers, for instance, to frame jihad as an individual obligation for all Muslims... Third, *Dabiq* uses triggers designed specifically for

Western audiences such as existential anxieties associated with the banality of Western life (p. 472).

Lastly, Ingram's 2016 study concludes that though *Dabiq* does not give operational commands to its readers, "its message unequivocally demands that every Muslim engages in violence against Islam's enemies" (p. 473). Through extensive use of Islamic text and dichotomous messaging, the magazine encourages radicalization and violence against the West.

A content analysis by Vergani and Bliuc (2015) using a computerized text analysis program, Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), investigated the evolution of language and identified several key themes in the first year of *Dabiq*'s publication. The study observed that affiliation with ISIS is a primary psychological motive exhibited within the magazine, and that *Dabiq* relies heavily upon the strategic use of emotions to encourage mobilization amongst its readers. Lastly, the analysis showed that internet jargon is increasingly more present within *Dabiq*.

Vergani and Bliuc (2015) identified three core drives and needs within action-oriented literature such as *Dabiq*: achievement, affiliation, and power. Previous literature defined these three factors as motives particularly associated with aggression and terrorist rhetoric (Smith, 2008). The LIWC analysis observed that the motive of achievement peaked in *Dabiq*'s first issue and decreased in subsequent issues, while the motive of power fluctuated. Vergani and Bliuc (2015) argued that their analysis showed that affiliation, the concern with maintaining group cohesion and identity, was the most prominent motive featured in *Dabiq*. Without robust loyalty and cohesion to ISIS, further calls for mobilization in the name of ISIS are less effective.

Emotional Language

Emotional language, Vergani and Bliuc (2015) state, is effective in influencing collective action and mobilization. Their analysis showed that highly emotional language is present throughout the issues of *Dabiq*, particularly in reference to the subject of death and religion. Klausen's (2015) research indicates that ISIS is more comfortable than other terrorist groups with portraying extremely graphic violence. A tendency towards depicting graphic violence is also present within the messaging of *Dabiq*, and Vergani and Bliuc (2015) assert that reminders of death are an important part of ISIS communication. Concerning religion, Vergani and Bliuc also state that their research reinforces Ganor's (2015) study, which observed that religious intransigence is of great importance in ISIS recruitment and mobilization.

Celso's 2014 study characterizes the world view ISIS presents in *Dabiq* as "apocalyptic, sectarian and fanatical" based off of Zarqawi's Salafist strategy, which divides the world between Muslims and the West (p. 1). According to Celso (2014), *Dabiq* presents ISIS's ideology through the Salafist themes of mass upheaval, *takfiri* and sectarianism, supported by Islamic doctrine. The theme of mass upheaval after an Islamic victory is present throughout *Dabiq*, particularly in reference to Quranic verses and *hadiths* that describe a sectarian battle between Islam and the West. *Takfir* refers to the practice of excommunicating fellow Muslims, originally used to eject impious leaders, but currently used by jihadists to legitimize killing opposing Muslim groups (Celso, 2014). *Dabiq* identifies several groups as targets for *takfir*, including Shiite and Alawite Muslims. According to Celso (2014), *Dabiq*'s articles also venerate Zarqawi and connect his actions and strategies to Quranic verses and *hadiths*, presenting him as a divinely sanctioned leader and a legitimate religious authority.

Other Propagandistic Themes

Beyond its heavy usage of an apocalyptic narrative, the content of *Dabiq* uses language that strengthens its appeal to its audience of possible recruits. Vergani and Bliuc (2015) identify a heightened presence of internet jargon within the publication. This audience-tailored, propagandistic usage of language showcases ISIS's adaptability to the internet environment, particularly towards the goal of connecting with young people. This falls in line with Zarqawi's legacy of a propagandistic media focus within ISIS (Hashim, 2014).

The subject of religion remained a prominent subject throughout all of the *Dabiq* issues included in the aforementioned study. Vergani and Bliuc (2015) note the unique focus *Dabiq* exhibits on women and female recruits. Over two hundred Western women left their countries to join ISIS, more than in any other jihadist group, states Peresin and Cervone (2015). Vergani and Bliuc (2015) attribute this to the unusual emphasis ISIS propaganda materials, including *Dabiq*, place on women. *Dabiq* also communicates ISIS's explanation of why it is superior to other jihadist groups and its religious justification, for the purpose of convincing potential recruits of ISIS's strength and its ultimate victory.

Gambhir (2014) asserts that *Dabiq* is not merely propaganda, but is rather "an outward-looking articulation of ISIS's caliphate vision... [and] indicates how ISIS will shape its global strategy" (p. 10). The division and evolution of the themes and topics within *Dabiq*'s articles provide insight into ISIS's priorities. *Dabiq* exhibits a heavy emphasis on mandatory *hijrah*, emigration, to areas controlled by ISIS, particularly calling for the emigration of educated Muslims (Gambhir, 2014). This demand echoes Baghdadi's strategy of commanding for the emigration of doctors, engineers, academics and specialists to ISIS-controlled territory. In the second issue of *Dabiq*, Gambhir (2014) notes that an article calling for emigration claimed that

hijrah is a literal requirement for all Muslims and encouraged the relocation of entire families to areas under ISIS control. Gambhir states that this indicates ISIS's plan to repopulate its territory with its followers in order to establish and secure control. The article also states that those who cannot perform *hijrah* should encourage others to emigrate and publicize their allegiances to ISIS in order to normalize loyalty to the group (Gambhir, 2014).

In summary, previous research on *Dabiq* identifies several key themes present within ISIS ideology and provides insight into ISIS's recruitment strategies and its overall global goals. These themes include the apocalyptic anticipation of a sectarian battle against the West, a heavy emphasis on in-group affiliation and loyalty, the excommunication of ISIS's rivals and the consolidation of ISIS's power through emigration to ISIS territory. The thematic changes present between *Dabiq* releases indicate shifts in ISIS outlook and strategy. Virtually all analyses on *Dabiq* content also observe the heavy usage of Islamic doctrine to justify *Dabiq*'s radical themes.

Rumiyah

Rumiyah is the current English-language publication produced by Al Hayat Media Center. The first issue was released on September 6, 2016. No further issues of *Dabiq* have appeared since the first issue of *Rumiyah*, indicating its replacement of *Dabiq* as ISIS's primary non-Arabic propaganda magazine (Wignell, Tan, O'Halloran, & Lange, 2017). In regards to the name change from the doctrinally significant town of Dabiq to the Arabic word for Rome, Shanahan (2016) remarks:

With its hold on territory becoming more precarious by the day, ISIS has possibly decided that naming your social media magazine after a town that will likely soon fall out of your control would not be a good look 'going forward.' Renaming your publication

after the center of Christendom is a way to show what you aspire to, rather than what you have lost (p. A1).

Wignell et al. (2017) note that ISIS lost the doctrinally significant town of Dabiq roughly a month after the first issue of *Rumiyah*, suggesting that ISIS both predicted the loss of Dabiq and prepared accommodations for its loss. The change of name from *Dabiq* to *Rumiyah* implies ISIS's shift of focus from the territory of the caliphate to the ideological goals of continued jihadist action, its ultimate goal victory over Rome, a symbol of Christianity and the West.

Ingram (2016b) states that *Rumiyah*'s content primarily consists of translations of articles ISIS released in its Arabic-language magazine, Al Naba, along with some articles written specifically for Western audiences similar to that of *Dabiq*. According to Ingram, the translation of content from Al Naba suggest that *Rumiyah* is part of ISIS's current strategy to more efficiently convey news from the Middle East to an international audience. Ingram suggests that if *Rumiyah*'s primary content expands beyond translations of Arabic articles into a Western-oriented magazine similar to *Dabiq*, it indicates a shift in ISIS's ideological strategy towards greater dissemination of propaganda in response to its territorial losses. Further use of *Rumiyah* as a simple English translation of Al Naba implies an economized, minimized approach towards propaganda within ISIS, Ingram (2016b) asserts. An analysis by Wignell et al. (2017) shows numerous differences between theme, content, style, and approach between the subject materials of *Dabiq* and *Dabiq*, indicating the fluidity and flexibility of important issues within ISIS. As they further explain,

Changes in focus across issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* appear to closely align with changes in ISIS's circumstances. For instance, the focus was on migration, recruitment and state-building when ISIS was rapidly expanding the territory under its control. ISIS presented itself as an expanding, victorious and administratively competent organization,

successfully carving out an ever-growing ‘promised land’ for their believers. As their territory reached its maximum and no further gains were looking likely, they switched focus to highlight affiliated organizations, particularly in Africa, to present a case that their caliphate was expanding globally. When their home territory started to shrink again they switched focus to [attack] their enemies, far and near (p. 16).

As the impending apocalyptic messaging present in *Dabiq* is not present in *Rumiyah*, ISIS appears to imply a longer time frame for victory over the West.

In terms of content, articles in *Dabiq* that placed more emphasis on political enemies and denouncing the ideology of the West are seemingly replaced in *Rumiyah* by procedural articles, encouraging and instructing direct attacks, such as knife selection and using a vehicle to attack crowds (Wignell et al., 2017). Rather than elaborating on the ideological narratives of articles present in *Dabiq*, *Rumiyah* appears to serve a more functional, instructional role in ISIS propaganda. *Rumiyah* is also considerably shorter than *Dabiq*. This may suggest that whereas *Dabiq* was intended to showcase ISIS’s ideology and recruit individuals into the apocalyptic narrative it espoused, *Rumiyah* serves as a functional transmission of instruction, describing to ISIS’s believers worldwide how to sustain its fight against the West despite ISIS’s apparent defeats. With the apocalypse nowhere in sight, *Rumiyah* instructs believers how to maintain ISIS’s presence worldwide. However, though the apocalyptic messaging present in *Dabiq* cannot be found in *Rumiyah*, both magazines emphasize continued attacks on the West.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

This section will describe the methodology that the study will employ. The three following research questions drive this study:

Research Question 1: How does ISIS affect its readers through *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*?

Research Question 2: What is the significance of the themes found within the magazines within the greater jihadist community?

Research Question 3: What does the rhetoric of the communication of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* reveal about ISIS and the jihadist movement?

Content Analysis

Content analysis is defined as a systematic, replicable procedure for organizing many words of text into fewer categories of content, based off of precise rules of coding (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980; Weber, 1990). By systematically categorizing communication data, one can make replicable and valid inferences on the communication (Krippendorff, 198). Different parts of the text undergoing analysis are labelled with the category that the part of the text was coded as belonging to. Rosengren (1981) adds to this definition by describing content analysis as a family of similar analytical procedures which range from interpretive and intuitive to systematic and strict. Due to this flexibility, researchers approach content analysis as an easily adaptable method for analyzing textual data (Cavanagh, 1997). The primary identifier of content analysis is the categorization of messages through shared characteristics. According to Holsti

(1969), content analysis may include “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying characteristics of messages” (p. 9).

Originally, content analysis objectively examined the manifest content of communication, content that is explicitly stated to the receiver (Berselson, 1952). However, over time, content analysis evolved to interpret the latent content of communication as well. Latent content may include implicit, allusive, or semiotic communication. Researchers can also apply content analysis to non-textual types of communication, such as drawings or actions (Stigler, Gonzales, Kawanaka, Knoll, & Serrano, 1999). The flexibility of content analysis allows for its application throughout different channels of communication.

Conducting quantitative content analysis requires procedurally valid methodology to produce replicable results. McKeone (1995) states that a quantitative content analysis of a written or verbal communication requires the observation of formal properties, including word frequencies, space measurements, time counts, or social media metrics. Quantitative content analysis also typically focuses on manifest content rather than latent meaning and requires a description of methodology to describe the research’s reliability and validity (McKeone, 1995). Lastly, due to modern word processing technology, quantitative content analysis is often computerized.

Krippendorff’s 1980 work describes six questions that must be considered in all content analyses: which data are analyzed, how they are defined, what is the population the content is drawn from, what is the context of the analyzed data, what are the boundaries of the analysis and what is the target of inference. In addition to these questions, Krippendorff (2004) developed an outline of the principles and components of a content analysis. According to Krippendorff, content analysis begins with the design of the analysis, based off of existing theoretical frameworks and previous literature relevant to the research question of the analysis. The next

step of content analysis, unitizing, organizes the object of analysis into discrete units, “wholes that analysts distinguish and treat as independent elements” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 97). These units of analysis may include sentences, phrases, key words, or images.

The uses of content analysis are categorized by Holsti (1969) into three basic purposes: (1) To make inferences about the antecedents of communication, (2) to describe and make inferences about the characteristics of communication, and (3) to make inferences about the consequences of communication. Content analysis can provide insight into the reasons behind communication, including inferences into antecedents such as cultural aspects, traits of individuals, and the political intelligence behind a message (Holsti, 1969). In regards to the characteristics of communication, content analysis is often used to analyze a message’s techniques of persuasion, interpret its style, describe trends in communication content and relate the characteristics of a message to the characteristics of its source (Holsti, 1969). Lastly, content analysis can support further inferences about the consequences of communication. Holsti (1969) states that communication consequences particularly concern the response of the message’s receiver. For example, a possible consequence of jihadist communication to a receiver is the mobilization of the receiver to violent action.

Thematic Analysis

This study focuses on identifying and examining themes that arise during content analysis. Thematic analysis refers to a form of qualitative research that distinguishes patterns within data and develops those patterns into categorical themes, which are then used as categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). According to Guest (2012), the process of thematic analysis identifies both implicit and explicit ideas offered by the data through

coding moments of significance within the data. Through analysis of the themes presented within the data, a researcher can identify the frequency of theme occurrence, the relational co-occurrence of different themes, insights the themes give about the source of the data, and the overall narrative the themes convey (Guest, 2012).

The thematic analysis of the content of this study conforms to Krippendorff's (1980) structural descriptions of content analysis. The data analyzed is the textual and visual content of ISIS's *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* magazines as a whole, defined by the articles and images that appear in every issue of each magazine. The content is drawn from the population of ISIS's greater media publications in the context of propagandistic jihadist material. The boundaries of the analysis are the extent to which each part of the data falls under one of the thematic categories, the target of inference being the motivations and communication strategies of the jihadist movement. Within this study, the units of analysis Krippendorff (2004) identifies will include important key words, phrases, and imagery referencing different themes.

Theme definition is achieved through the process of thematic coding, which consists of identifying parts of data, such as images or lines of text, exhibiting a common theme (Gibbs, 2007). One method of coding is identifying the occurrences of certain words, phrases, or images used in the data which describe a particular concept, including feelings, actions, and beliefs. Depending on the concept's importance, an analyst may define that concept as a theme. For example, an analysis of an article found within the magazine *Dabiq* may identify multiple references to a creating theocratic empire, practicing religious imperialism, and subjugating or converting nonbelievers within the empire. These references share the common theme of the concept of a caliphate. Through this method of defining themes, drawing from an extensive literature review, this study identifies multiple themes present in jihadist communication and in the content of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*.

The primary goal of thematic analysis is to identify and categorize units that correspond to key themes in order to make further inferences about the communication characteristics, its senders, receivers, and possible consequences (Holsti, 1969). Within this study, understanding the communication usage of identified themes particularly lead to inferences on what *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* reveal about the message, communication strategies, and future outcomes of the jihadist movement.

Identified Themes

According to the principles of the methodology of thematic analysis, this study identifies and analyzes multiple key themes in the ISIS magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* based on the reoccurrence of ideas featured within the magazines' articles.

Jihad

Jihad, the conflict between Islamists and nonbelievers, broadly characterizes both the literature assessed in this thesis and the general movement ISIS and similar groups are part of (Peters & Cook, 2014). However, within the scope of the thematic analysis of this study, the theme of jihad will specifically apply to references to a struggle against the non-Muslim world.

Sharia

The legal system defined by Islam, the theme of sharia influences all levels of the Islamist movement, from its definition of jihad as a violent struggle to its definition of a

caliphate (Hallaq, 2009). Sharia is favored by Salafists and Pan-Islamist groups and is linked with militancy (Amman, 2015). All references to Islamic law and its requirements fall under the theme of sharia. References to sharia often tie into the theme of the caliphate and an Islamic governing body, which would institute sharia. This theme is indicative of the jihadist movement's influence in all aspects of life, addressed by the laws of sharia.

Militancy

While the theme jihad may not explicitly call for violence, entreaties within ISIS's magazines for its readers to take up arms, assemble militarily, and wage violence against nonbelievers will fall under the theme of militant mobilization. Militancy is also closely linked with sharia law, supporters of which are more likely to consent to violent action (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2013). Within the texts, graphic descriptions of militant violence, particularly entreaties for readers to carry out such acts, are identified as references towards militancy. The Arabic term *ribāṭ*, meaning military fortification, is referenced often in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, but is not considered a reference towards militancy in this study, as its usage specifically refers to maintaining fortifications on the borders of ISIS territory. References towards *ribāṭ* will therefore fall under the theme of the caliphate.

Caliphate

References within the data to a theocratic Pan-Islamic empire ruled by Islamic law fall underneath the theme of the caliphate, particularly data that endorses the invasion and subjugation of other lands in the name of Islam. This rejection of the Westphalian principle of

sovereignty is found in ISIS's caliphate declaration (Caldwell & Williams, Jr., 2016). This theme is also tied to the theme of sharia law, as a caliphate is governed by classical Islamist law. The act of performing *ribāṭ*, referenced multiple times in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, means manning a defense fortification to maintain the borders of the caliphate. Because this theme references physical territory, it also connects to the theme of *hijrah*, emigrating to Islamic territory.

Hijrah

The sharia concept of *hijrah*, or emigration to traditionally Islamic-occupied lands, is referred to within *Dabiq* as a mandatory requirement for practicing Muslims (Gambhir, 2014). Emigration is of particular interest for a caliphate, which would require a sizeable population of loyal citizens to remain a self-sustaining, powerful militant force. Calls for Muslims to emigrate to ISIS's self-declared caliphate share the theme of *hijrah*.

Enmity against the West

Jihadist texts particularly single out primarily Judeo-Christian Western nations as the major enemy of Islam and the primary target of a militant caliphate, decrying perceived Western concepts such as democracy and the separation of church and state. References to this theme support Huntington's (1993) theory of the Clash of Civilizations. This theme also influences a further theme of the treatment of non-Muslims and is connected to the idea of a ruling caliphate. It also shares the concept of battle against the West with the notion in Islamic texts that the final battle will be between Islam and Christendom (Shanahan, 2016). Language that also refers to perceived Western subjugation of Islamic peoples also falls under this theme.

Treatment of Non-Muslims and Apostate Muslims

A characteristic of Islamic texts, the concept of the caliphate, and sharia law is a consensus in the belief in subjugating or converting nonbelievers: as the Quranic verse 2:191 states of Christians and Jews, “Slay them wherever you find People of the Book.” In modern jihadist groups, this violence also carries to apostates who leave Islam or who deny jihad (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2013). References towards the treatment of perceived enemies of jihad fall under this theme.

Ummah

The theme of *ummah*, the concept of an international, united Islamic community, is a major aspect of jihadist ideology, as it ties into the theme of militancy through organized groups, as well as the theme of the caliphate (Silke, 2008). Data that refers to an organized Islamic community exhibits the theme of *ummah*. References to this theme likely tie in to the jihadist effort to unite Muslims under the Sunni Salafist teachings supported by ISIS. This theme ties into ISIS’s movement to build its worldwide caliphate.

Divine Sanction

Another major theme evident in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* is the affirmation that the actions of ISIS and the jihadist movement are sanctioned by Allah, assuring ISIS members that the violence the movement espouses will achieve an Islamic caliphate. This theme is related to the overall concept of jihad, a holy struggle, as well as the themes of a caliphate born of a final, apocalyptic

conflict. As the vast majority of ISIS recruits report high religiosity, affirmations of divine sanction are likely motivational to the group's members (Sageman, 2004).

Final Conflict

Lastly, the theme of a final conflict, an apocalyptic clash of civilizations, is central to the very names of the magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, indicating that the overarching goal of jihadist groups is the ultimate defeat of nonbelievers and the West by an Islamic caliphate (Shanahan, 2016). The theme of a final conflict is present both in references to the final battle named in Islamic texts as well as in apocalyptic language, common in ISIS publications (Ingram, 2016).

Applying Themes

Currently, there are fifteen published issues of *Dabiq* and thirteen published issues of *Rumiyah*. To obtain appropriate samples of both magazines as to identify possible thematic changes over time in their content, one magazine issue was systematically selected from every year of publication from 2014 to 2017, the third and ninth issue of each magazine. The third and ninth issues of each magazine were arbitrarily selected to account for consistency in the systematic sampling. This totals to four issues: the third and ninth issues of *Dabiq*, published respectively in September 2014 and May 2015, and the third and ninth issues of *Rumiyah*, published respectively in November 2016 and May 2017. From each magazine, data was collected from a sample of the first four articles, inclusive of a foreword if present.

Text from each sampled magazine will account for the amount of occurrences of the individual themes. The table below visually represents the process of thematic analysis for *Dabiq*

and *Rumiyah*; sentences and phrases that reference the themes are identified and categorized. If two or more themes may apply to a single sentence or phrase, the sentence or phrase is counted under both themes.

Data	Key phrases	Themes
<p><i>Dabiq (Issue 1): "A new era has arrived of might and dignity for the Muslims"</i></p> <p>Amirul-Mu'minin said: "Soon, by Allah's permission, a day will come when the Muslim will walk everywhere as a master, having honor, being revered, with his head raised high and his dignity preserved. Anyone who dares to offend him will be disciplined, and any hand that reaches out to harm him will be cut off. So let the world know that we are living today in a new era. Whoever was heedless must now be alert. Whoever was sleeping must now awaken. Whoever was shocked and amazed must comprehend. The Muslims today have a loud, thundering statement, and possess heavy boots. They have a statement to make that will cause the world to hear and understand the meaning of terrorism, and boots that will trample the idol of nationalism, destroy the idol of democracy, and uncover its deviant nature."</p> <p>Shayk Abu Muhammad al-'Adnani said: "The time has come for those generations that were drowning in oceans of disgrace, being nursed on the milk of humiliation, and being ruled by the vilest of all people, after their long slumber in the darkness of neglect – the time has come for them to rise. The time has come for the Ummah of Muhammad... to wake up from its sleep, remove the garments of dishonor, and shake off the dust of humiliation and disgrace, for the era of lamenting and moaning has gone, and the dawn of honor has emerged anew. The sun of jihad has risen. The glad tidings of good are shining. Triumph looms on the horizon. The signs of victory of appeared."</p>	<p>"by Allah's permission"</p> <p>"sun of jihad"</p> <p>"Triumph looms on the horizon"</p> <p>Victorious ISIS militants portrayed in images</p> <p>"will walk everywhere as a master"</p> <p>"Anyone who dares to offend him will be disciplined, and any hand that reaches out to harm him will be cut off."</p> <p>"living today in a new era"</p> <p>"must now be alert... must now awaken"</p> <p>"Muslims today have a loud, thundering statement"</p> <p>"Ummah of Muhammad"</p> <p>"understand the meaning of terrorism"</p> <p>"trample the idol of nationalism, destroy the idol of democracy"</p> <p>[democracy's] "deviant nature"</p> <p>"disgrace... humiliation"</p> <p>"ruled by the vilest of all people"</p>	<p>Divine sanction</p> <p>Final Conflict, Caliphate</p> <p>Caliphate, Treatment of Non-Muslims</p> <p>Militancy, Ummah</p> <p>Ummah</p> <p>Enmity Against the West</p>

Table 1: Thematic Application Process

Through identifying the frequencies with which different themes appear in issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, this study addresses the degree of importance ISIS and the jihadist movement places on these themes. This provides observers a better understanding of the jihadist

movement and its goals. Furthermore, this study also addresses the connections these themes have to the communication theories of agenda-setting theory, the diffusion of innovations, and speech codes theory. These communications theories will provide insight on the strategies with which the jihadist movement uses the identified themes to communicate with their audiences and mobilize potential recruits.

Despite ISIS's physical decline in the Middle East, its presence remains on the world stage due to its network of associates, its continuing online publications, and militants who commit ISIS-inspired acts of terror. Whether ISIS remains the world's primary Islamic terrorism threat, its media and publications reflect the motivations of the jihadist movement at large. This study seeks to understand how ISIS uses those motivations to wage their media war.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

This study sampled data from the third and ninth issues of both magazines, processing the texts of the articles and categorizing individual phrases into the described themes. The collected data is visually represented in the following tables and figures. Each magazine is referred to as the year of its publication, in order to showcase variation in thematic frequency over time.

Frequency of Themes from 2014-2017

THEME	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Jihad	25	20	11	5	61
Sharia	6	1	6	3	16
Militancy	4	4	36	28	72
Caliphate	14	42	13	3	72
Hijrah	49	6	4	0	59
Enmity against the West	19	50	38	7	114
Non-Muslims and Apostates	38	57	50	78	223
Ummah	5	3	3	4	15
Divine Sanction	19	12	72	48	151
Final Conflict	14	1	4	1	20

Table 2: Frequency of Themes from 2014-2017

This table shows the number of occurrences of each theme across each sampled magazine. The number of instances of any one theme in one magazine ranged between zero to 78 instances, total references of a theme from 2014 to 2017 ranging from fifteen to 223 occurrences. and the most common theme, by far, was a reference to non-Muslims and apostate Muslims. As

ISIS's primary operations are associated with their opposition to non-Muslims and other Muslims they deem heretical, it follows logically that their most ubiquitous theme is the treatment of non-Muslims and apostates.

The second most common theme was divine sanction, a reference to the religious righteousness of the jihadist movement and affirmation that ISIS's actions are the will of Allah. The theme of divine sanction reoccurred 151 times throughout the magazines. Keen to inspire assurance in its constituency that its actions are supported by Allah, ISIS utilized affirmations of divine sanction with a high frequency throughout the publications of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Through analysis, one may also observe a connection between the theme of divine sanction and the theme of sharia, though sharia was referenced far fewer times than affirmations of divine sanction were made. Sharia was referred to throughout all issues of the magazines as "Allah's rule," the phrase "Allah's rule" appearing five times from 2014 to 2017. By referring to sharia as the divinely sanctioned rules of Allah, ISIS lent further legitimacy to their cause.

The least common theme was the *ummah*, the worldwide Muslim community, with only fifteen appearances from 2014 to 2017. Though the *ummah* is an integral part of Islamic doctrine, references to a global spiritual community were made far less often than references to a physical Islamic empire, the caliphate. The theme of caliphate was referenced 72 times throughout the sampled magazines. Because the themes of caliphate and the *ummah* are similar in their relevance to the Islamic community – the caliphate being a physical community and the *ummah* being a spiritual community – the prevalence of references to the literal caliphate rather than a spiritual *ummah* suggests greater focus on the political, territorial motivations of the jihadist movement rather than the religious motivations.

The theme of sharia, doctrinal Islamic law, was the second least common theme throughout the samples of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, with only sixteen instances. Its absence may

indicate familiarity on the part of the intended reader with the principles of sharia. This suggests that the intended readership of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* primarily consists of individuals already involved enough in Islam to understand sharia without added explanation. In addition, the mentions of sharia present in the magazines tended not to focus on the actual rulings of sharia, but rather on the defense of sharia from western influence and the implementation of sharia in a caliphate. The third issue of *Rumiyah*, published in 2016, asserts that western nations attempt to “prevent the *muwahhidin* from establishing the religion and implementing the *Shari’ah*.” As *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* focused less on the principles of sharia and more on its defense and implementation, the theme of sharia was less present throughout the magazines.

The third least common theme, final conflict, only appeared twenty times throughout the sampled magazines. Despite the fact that an ultimate clash of civilizations ending in the victory of the caliphate is the definitive goal of the jihadist movement, and that the names of the magazines, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, specifically allude to a final conflict, the theme itself is largely unimportant in the content. References to a final conflict in the magazines tend to act as affirmations of the more common theme of divine sanction. When alluding to a final conflict between the Islamic world and nonbelievers, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* write of an Islamic victory as a certainty, the will of Allah. The third issue of *Dabiq*, published in 2014, frames an ultimate Islamic victory on the battlefield as fact, including a short description of a final conflict in an article titled “Islamic State Reports.” Though the rest of the article is composed of military reports of ISIS’s advances in territory at the time, the article describes “the events of *al-Malhamah al-Kubrā*,” literally “the grand battle,” as fact. The article asserts that Allah will grant the Islamic caliphate victory during the grand battle. Juxtaposing the description of a hypothetical, divinely sanctioned final battle with military reports grounded in reality, ISIS appears to attempt to further legitimize their military acts through alluding to a final conflict.

The total occurrences of each theme convey prevalence on average throughout the publications of both magazines from 2014 to 2017. However, to understand the variation in frequency over time of each theme, the themes are represented visually in the following figures.

Frequency of Themes by Year of Publication

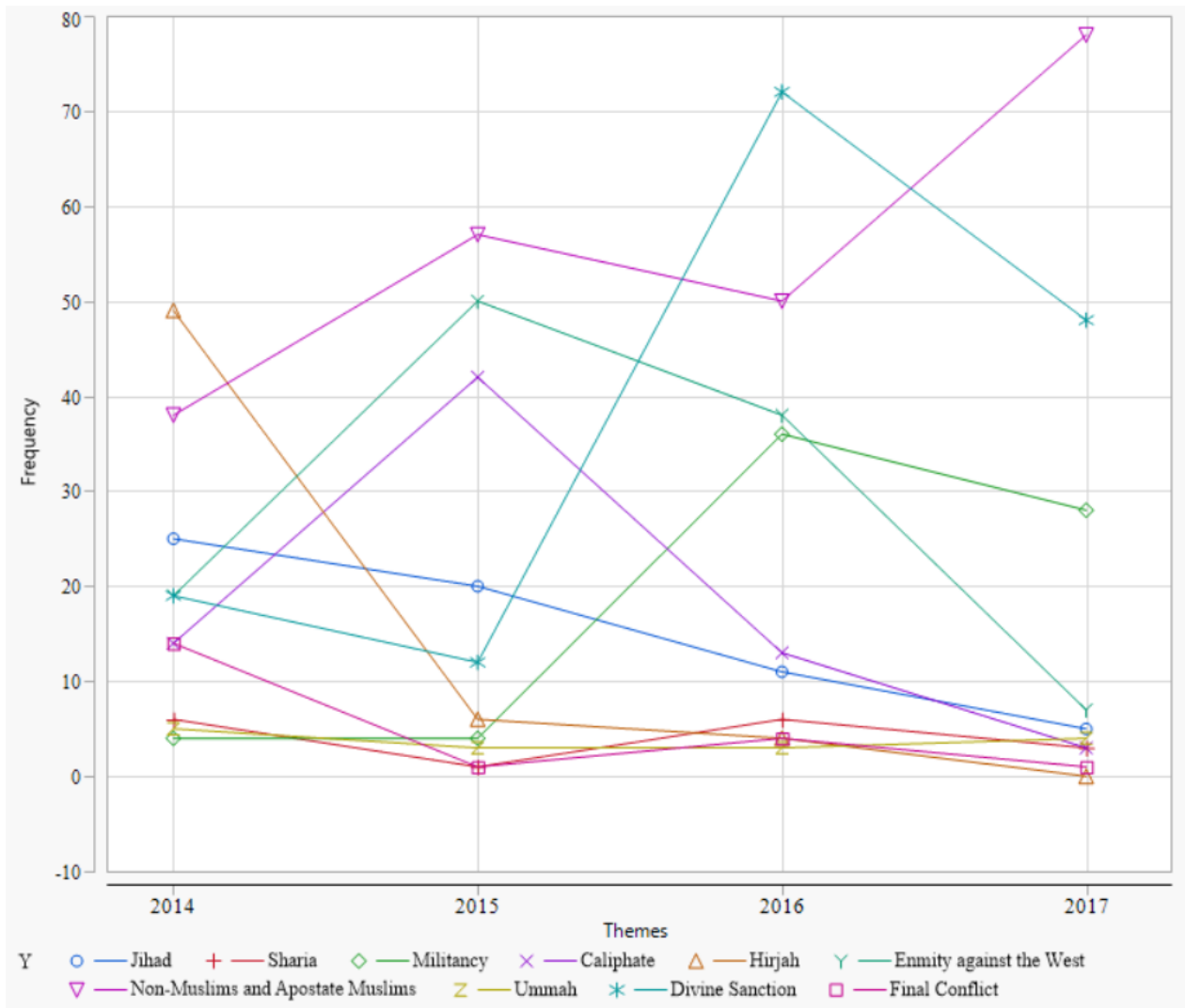


Figure 1: Frequency of Themes by Year of Publication

Figure 1 charts the frequencies of each theme from every year of publication of the sampled magazines, relative to one another. Through this presentation of the data, one can visually compare the frequencies and ranges of multiple themes and how the thematic variation of the magazines changed over time, as ISIS's success peaked and fell. One can observe the most common and least common themes previously discussed, particularly how references to the treatment of non-Muslims and apostate Muslims remain one of the most common themes throughout all four years of publication. However, the second most common theme, divine sanction, is visibly less common than the themes of jihad, caliphate, and enmity against the west during the first two years of magazine publication. In 2016, the number of references to divine sanction spiked higher than all other themes, even overtaking the theme of non-Muslims and apostate Muslims for that year. Between 2015 and 2016, from the ending of *Dabiq* to the beginning of *Rumiyah*, it appears that the needs of ISIS's community changed in a way that called for a drastic increase in religious affirmations of the jihadist movement.

Another noticeable shift in relative frequency between 2015 and 2016 was the increase in references to the theme of violent militancy. From 2014 to 2015, militancy ranked among the least common of all the themes present within *Dabiq*. Upon *Rumiyah*'s publication in 2016, however, the usage of violent, militant language jumped noticeably, becoming the fourth most common theme. In 2017, references to militancy remained high relative to the other themes, and militancy was the third most common theme in the sampled magazine, by a large margin. The increased usage of violent language present in *Rumiyah* that was not present in *Dabiq* suggests further changes in ISIS's agenda as it declined territorially. By 2016, violent militancy overtook the theme of caliphate, which was the third most common theme in 2015, implying that ISIS turned its focus from building its empire to seeking to damage its enemies.

The steep drop in the relative presence of the theme *hijrah* may also suggest larger implications throughout ISIS as a terrorist organization. In 2014, *hijrah* began as the most common theme in the sampled magazine. However, by 2015, its commonality dropped from 49 instances to six instances, the steepest drop in frequency of all the themes in every magazine. For the rest of the magazines' publications, *hijrah* was hardly referenced at all, and was completely unmentioned in the issue of *Rumiyah* published in 2017. *Hijrah* went from the most common theme in 2014 to the least common theme in 2017. Its drop in frequency may indicate ISIS's changing strategy from 2014 to 2015 in terms of recruitment. As *hijrah* is the doctrinal mandate found in sharia calling Muslims to emigrate to traditionally Islamic lands, ISIS utilized the concept of *hijrah* to recruit radicalized Muslims to its local territory in the Levant (Gambhir, 2014). In 2014, as ISIS neared its territorial peak, it called upon the worldwide *ummah* to emigrate to its territories and take up residence. ISIS believed it was building a new caliphate, and this empire required citizens. However, ISIS suffered several territorial losses in 2015, after U.S. and Arab forces launched air strikes on ISIS operations in Syria in 2014 (Barnard & Shoumali, 2015). These local defeats threatened the establishment of a functional caliphate state, and may have led to the decrease in calls for *hijrah* in the magazines from 2015 to 2017.

Similarly, references to the theme of caliphate peaked in 2015, after ISIS reached its territorial pinnacle, then dropped by 29 points in 2016 and remained relatively uncommon in 2017. Following the drop in calls for *hijrah*, this increase in references to a caliphate may suggest ISIS's focus to defend what was left of the caliphate's territory in lieu of building the caliphate as a functional state through *hijrah*.

Individual Theme Frequency by Year of Publication

The following figures chart the individual frequencies of each theme analyzed in the samples of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* over the years of the magazines' publications. While Figure 1 was useful in analysis of thematic frequencies of multiple themes to one another, Figures 2 to 11 provide a visual representation of single themes, allowing for understanding of the importance of individual themes over time.

Jihad and Sharia

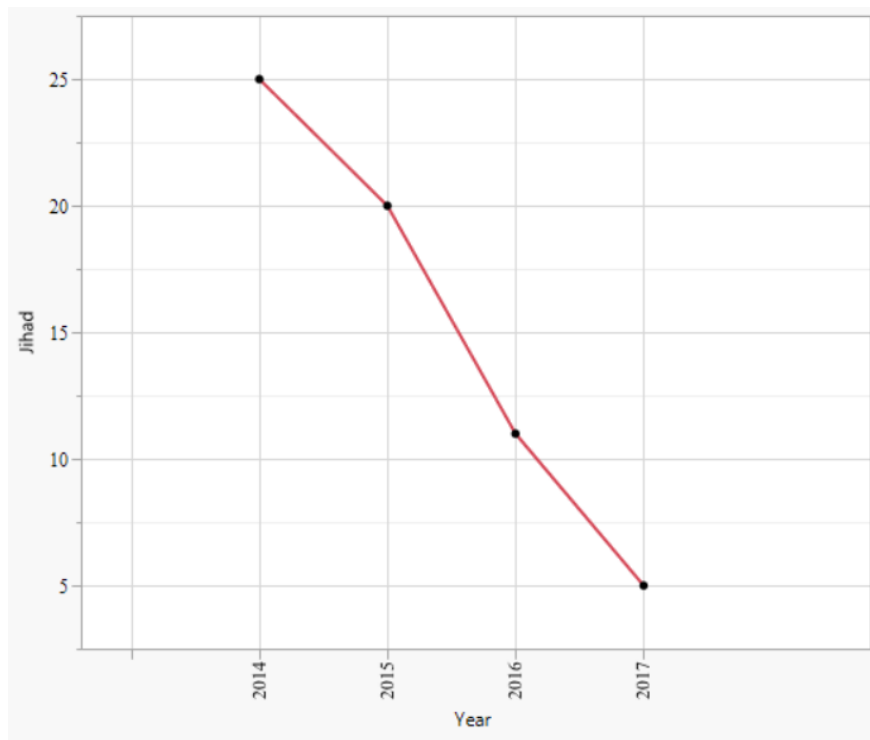


Figure 2: Frequency of Jihad by Publication Year

The frequency of the theme of jihad, as observable in Figure 2, declined steadily from 25 instances in 2014 to five instances in 2017. This downward slope began with higher frequencies during ISIS's most successful years, in 2014 and 2015, but took its steepest drop between 2015 and 2016, as ISIS suffered its greatest strategic losses. As the theme of jihad is representative of the greater jihadist movement, the reduced frequency of references to jihad may suggest a decrease in support of the Lesser Jihad, the struggle against nonbelievers.

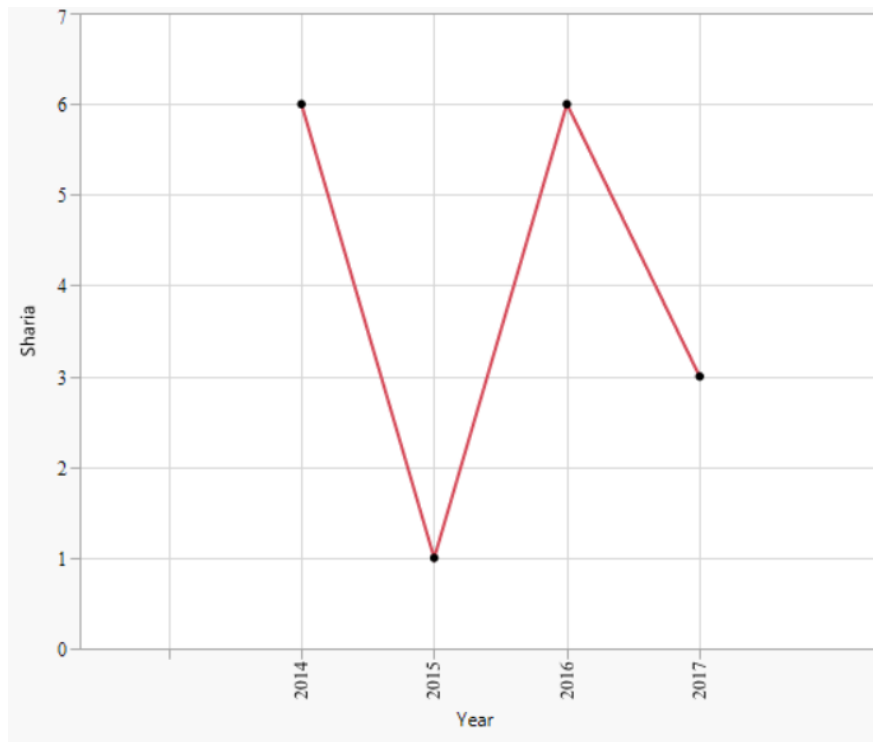


Figure 3: Frequency of Sharia by Publication Year

References to sharia, charted in Figure 3, remained relatively stable from 2014 to 2017, lying within a range of five points, from one instance to six instances. This limited range of instances showcases the consistency with which sharia was mentioned throughout *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*.

Militancy and Caliphate

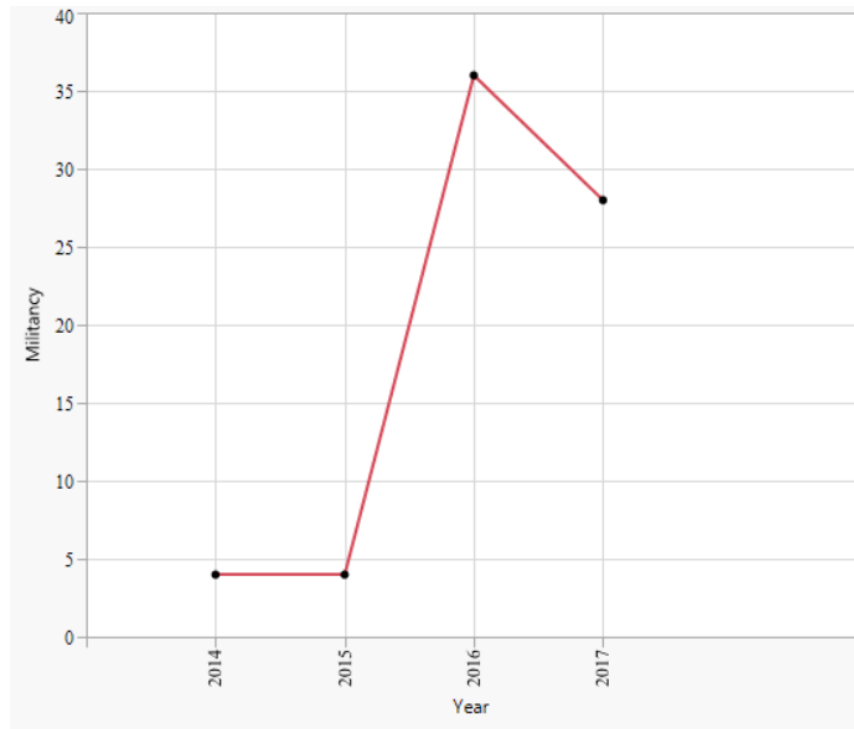


Figure 4: Frequency of Militancy by Publication Year

Militancy, charted in Figure 4, had very few instances in the first two years of magazine publication. In 2016, the usage of violent, militant language increased by 32 points, peaking at 36 instances in that year and remaining relatively high in 2017. With a wide range of four references to 36 references, it appears that violent militancy only became an important theme in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* during ISIS's territorial decline. This may be due to an increased movement within ISIS strategy to focus less on its local empire-building and more on calling its international community to cause violent acts of terror. Many references to violent militancy in 2016 and 2017 come from articles describing the need to perform terrorism regardless of where one is located. In the ninth issue of *Rumiyah*, published in 2017, the phrase "kill the mushrikin wherever you find them" is repeated multiple times, referring to nonbelievers, in an article

discussing the treatment of Christians. Furthermore, the third issue of *Rumiyah*, published in 2016, included a highly detailed, militant article instructing jihadists worldwide to use rental trucks to run over crowds of people. Both these articles suggest a greater emphasis on militancy and violence in the jihadist movement as the territorial caliphate ISIS was intent on building declined.

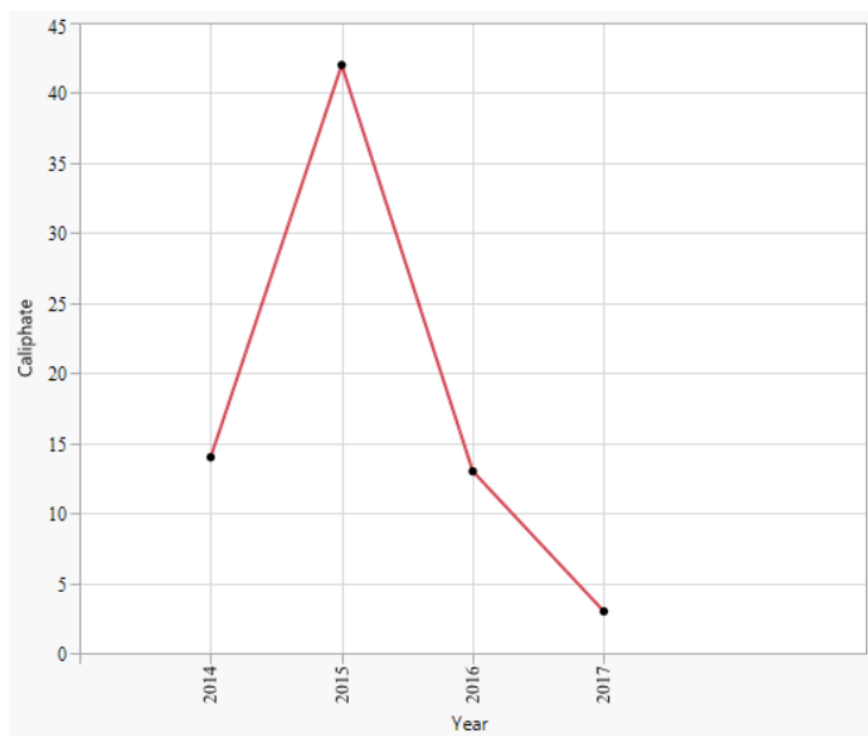


Figure 5: Frequency of Caliphate by Publication Year

The rise in the saturation of militant language in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* coincides with a fall in emphasis on the caliphate. The theme of caliphate peaked to a high of 42 instances in 2015, then fell steeply the next year by twenty-nine points to only thirteen references, finishing at a low of only three instances in 2017. As an emphasis on violence and militancy rose, the importance of the physical caliphate fell. The loss of their territory in the Middle East may have influenced

ISIS leadership to focus less on the caliphate in their rhetoric, as not to draw attention to the local defeats the organization was suffering.

Hijrah and Enmity against the West

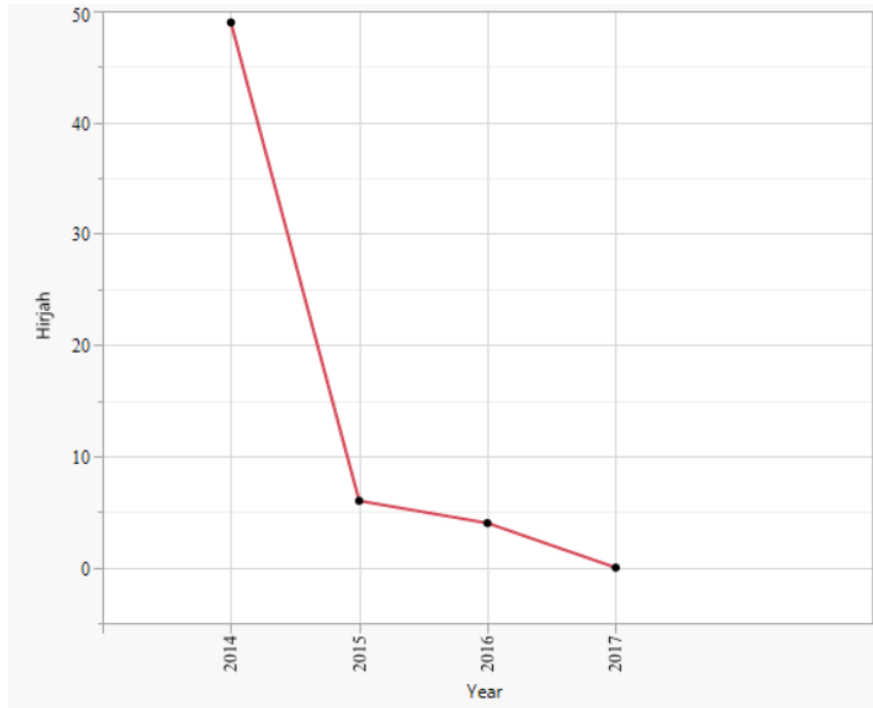


Figure 6: Frequency of Hijrah by Publication Year

The theme of *hijrah* was highly prevalent in the third issue of *Dabiq*, published in 2014, but from 2015 to 2017, the number of references to *hijrah* dropped precipitously. In fact, the ninth issue of *Rumiyah*, published in 2017, included no references to *hijrah* whatsoever. In 2014, there were 49 instances of the theme of *hijrah*, but this number dropped by 43 points by the next year to only six occurrences. The wide range of the amount of references to *hijrah* over the years of the magazines' publications suggest a change in ISIS rhetoric regarding calling individuals to emigrate to traditionally Islamic lands. An article titled "A Call to Hijrah" featured within the

third issue of *Dabiq*, published in 2014, summoned Muslims worldwide to ISIS’s self-proclaimed caliphate, particularly calling the skilled and educated to help serve ISIS’s interests. The article suggested that “every Muslim who lives amongst the mushrikīn” is avoiding his or her sacred duty. Though ISIS rhetoric continued to include references to the caliphate well into 2015, calls to emigrate to that caliphate seem to diminish after 2014. By 2017, as ISIS suffers heavy territorial losses, encouragement of *hijrah* appears to have expired.

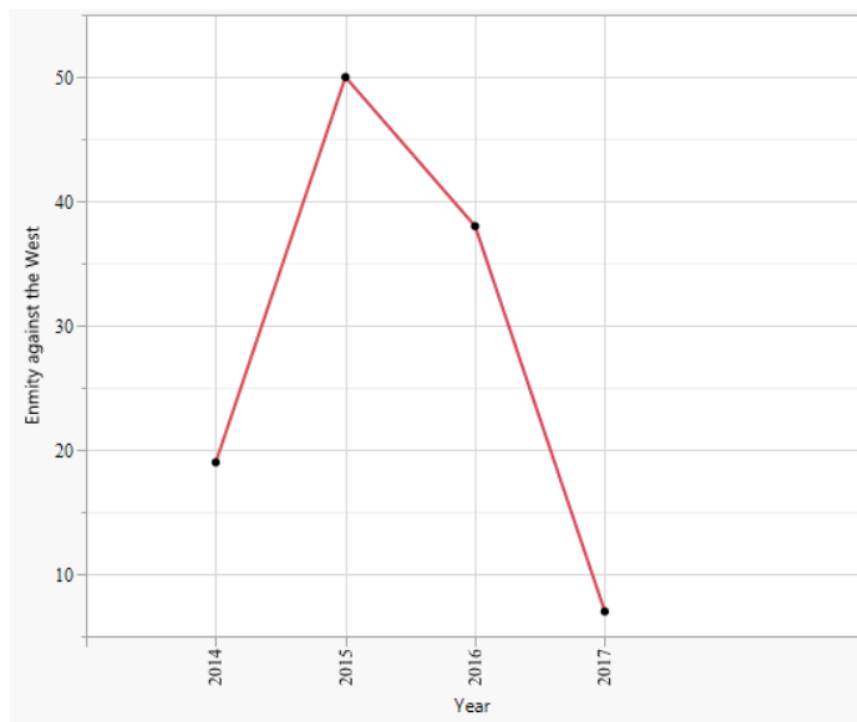


Figure 7: Frequency of Enmity against the West by Publication Year

Though the theme of enmity against the west is the third most common theme in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, its relevance peaked in the 2015 issue of *Dabiq*, at fifty occurrences. It remained a common theme in the third issue of *Rumiyah*, published in 2016, but its frequency dropped to a low of only seven instances in 2017. With a range of 43 points, language that described a hatred of western nations and ideology appeared to be of less importance in the ninth issue of *Rumiyah*,

published in 2017. Notably, the ninth issue of *Rumiyah* had a very high occurrence of references towards non-Muslims and apostate Muslims. The lack of references to a hatred of the West may be due to the fact that the ninth issue of *Rumiyah* may have been written to focus more on non-Muslims and apostate Muslims, and the few occurrences of enmity against the West in 2017 may not reflect any larger trend in ISIS rhetoric.

Non-Muslims and Apostate Muslims and the Ummah

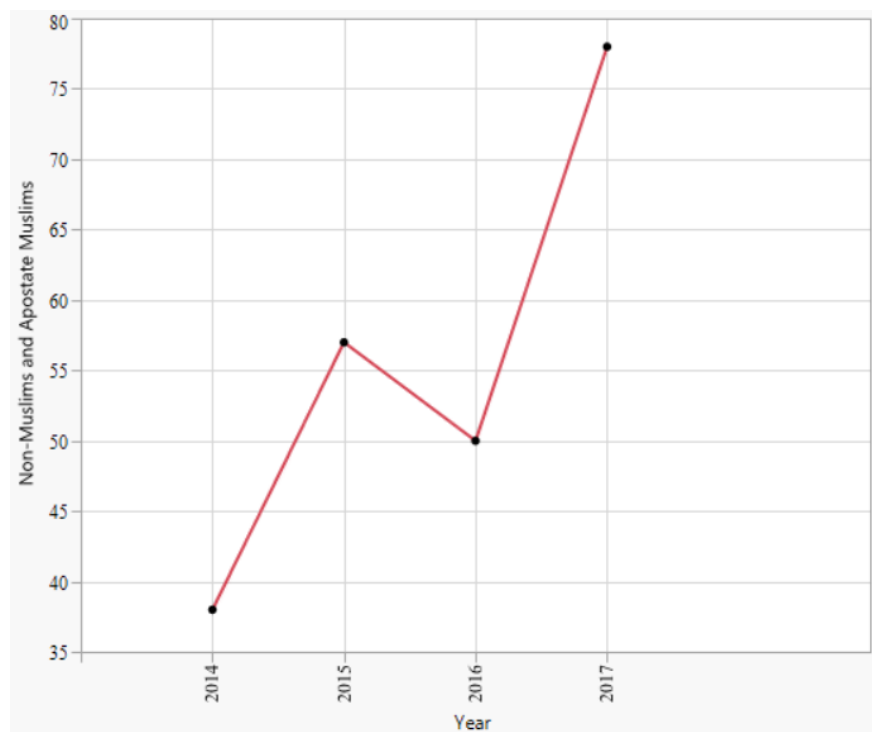


Figure 8: Frequency of Non-Muslims and Apostate Muslims by Publication Year

References to ISIS's religious enemies, namely non-Muslims and Muslims they consider apostates, remained a common theme throughout the publications of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*.

However, their frequency increased greatly from 2014 at a low of 38 occurrences to a high of 78 occurrences in 2017. This overall increase in frequency, with a range of 40 points, may suggest a

trend in the rhetoric of ISIS’s editors of the magazines encouraging material that justified negative sentiment towards ISIS’s targets. The majority of references to non-Muslims and apostate Muslims throughout the publications of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* discuss their treatment under ISIS protocol. An article in the third issue of *Rumiyah*, published in 2016, commanded, “Turn the disbelievers’ night into day, bring destruction to their homes, make their blood flow like rivers” (“*Rumiyah* Issue 3”, 2016, p. 5). Similar statements in reference to non-Muslims and apostate Muslims are present throughout the magazines. As ISIS’s member population grew from 2014 to 2017, the rhetoric of its propaganda may have accommodated for the growing number of ISIS fighters by increasing the repetition of commands to fight against disbelievers.

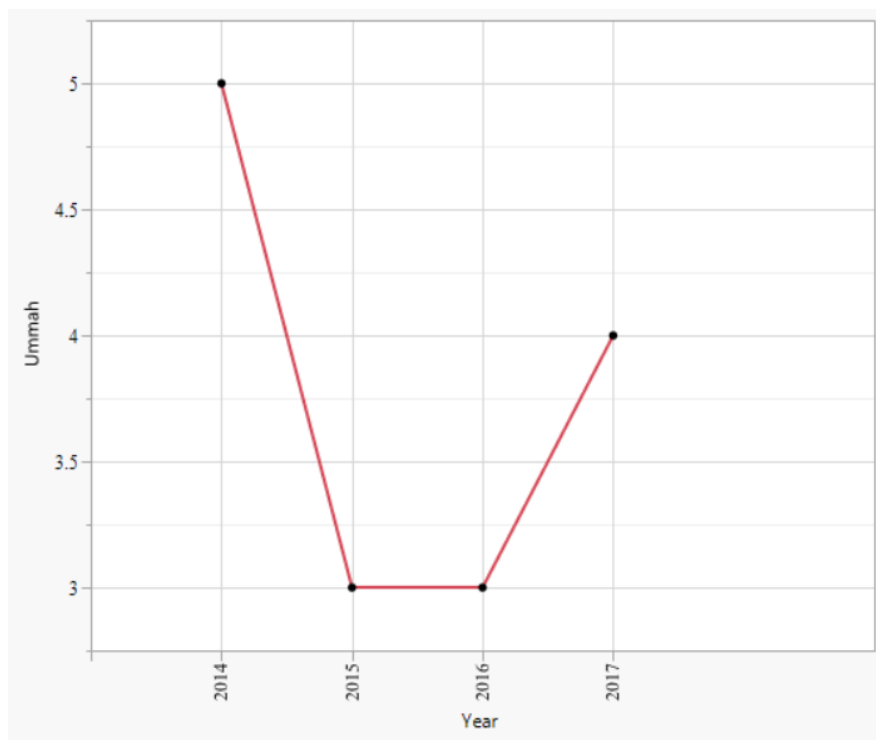


Figure 9: Frequency of the Ummah by Publication Year

The theme of the *ummah*, the worldwide Muslim community, was the least common theme in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, and the variation in the frequency of references to it remain fairly low. The number of occurrences of the theme of *ummah* peaked in 2014 at five instances, with a low of three instances in the magazines sampled from 2015 and 2016. As the range of the frequencies of occurrences was only two points, there was little variation in the repetition of references to the *ummah*.

Divine Sanction and Final Conflict

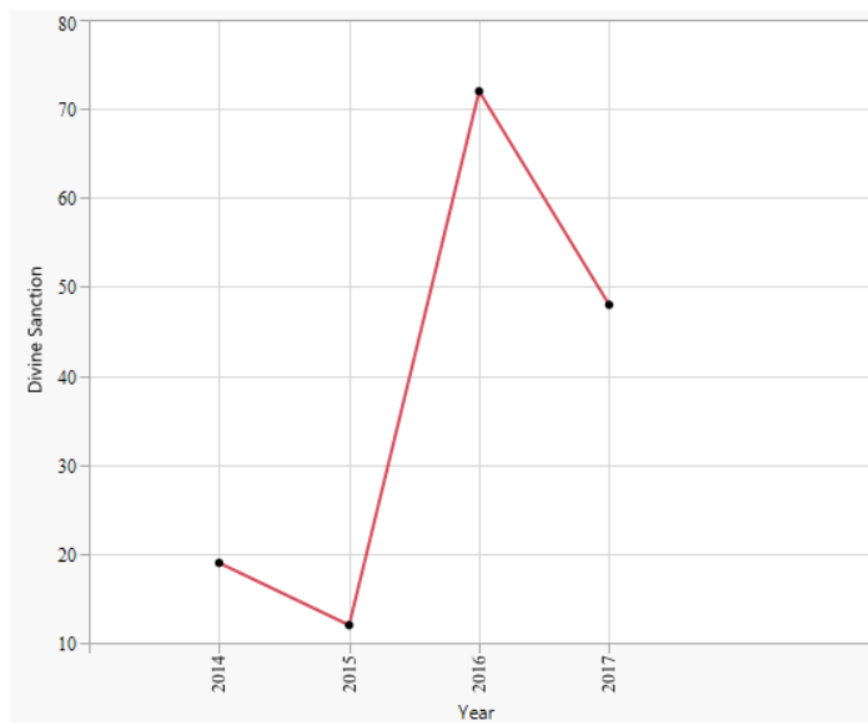


Figure 10: Frequency of Divine Sanction by Publication Year

Divine sanction, the second most common theme throughout *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, had a wide variation in its number of occurrences from 2014 to 2016. In 2014 and 2015, claims that the work of ISIS and the jihadist movement was sanctioned by Allah were relatively infrequent, with

a low of twelve instances in 2015. However, the amount jumped 60 points to a high of 72 occurrences a year later, remaining fairly common at 48 instances in 2017. In the first two years of the publications of ISIS magazines, it appears that, though affirmations of divine sanction were present, their importance increased exponentially between 2015 and 2016. This coincides with the beginning of ISIS's territorial decline in the Middle East. A possible explanation for the huge increase in the frequency of the theme of divine sanction is that the editors of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* may have observed a need within the jihadist community for affirmations that ISIS's operations were the will of Allah as ISIS suffered territorial defeats. Leaders within ISIS may have called for more reassurances that Allah was on ISIS's side to boost community morale. Throughout ISIS's decline in 2016 and 2017, references to divine sanction remained frequent.

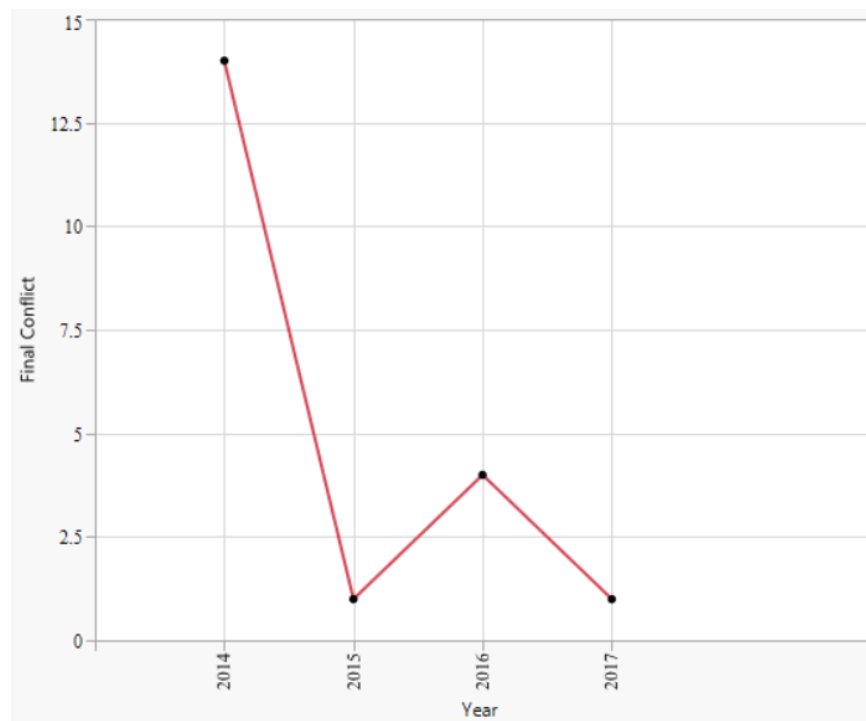


Figure 11: Frequency of Final Conflict by Publication Year

The theme of a final conflict, an ultimate clash of civilizations resulting in an Islamic victory, had a minor presence in the first magazines sampled, the third issue of *Dabiq*, published in 2014. Its presence peaked at fourteen references in 2014, dropping to only a few occurrences in the next three years, with lows of one instance in both 2015 and 2017. Though the number of references to a final conflict over the course of the magazines' publications was relatively low, the drop of thirteen points from 2014 to 2015 may suggest a change of perception in ISIS rhetoric. As ISIS reached its peak of success in 2014, organization leaders may have perceived that a prophesized final victory over disbelievers was within conceivable reach, after further expansion of the self-proclaimed caliphate. However, as ISIS's presence declined in the Middle East, this final conflict became hypothetical once more, rather than a prophesized inevitability.

Symbolic Convergence in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*

Throughout the samples of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, ISIS's overall rhetoric and the worldview it espouses are evident, accomplished by the usage of numerous rhetorical devices and symbols throughout the texts. The principles of symbolic convergence theory (SCT) are reflected in ISIS's attempts to shape reality through the communication within its publications, as SCT is the synthesis of a thematic narrative through communication, particularly within groups. The group can affect the reality individuals experience; likewise, individuals can affect the shared reality of the group (Vaughan, 2009). These shared worldviews are described within SCT as shared group fantasies.

The reality that *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* puts forth is one of a violent battle against hated enemies, so-called disbelievers, which affects every aspect of the lives of the members of the group. According to the magazines, ISIS's battle is supported by Allah, and the descriptive

language used within its texts evoke an epic, dichotomous narrative of civilizational conflict. The third issue of *Rumiyah* describes ISIS's conflict as a "fiery battle, all-encompassing war, and major jihad which the Islamic State is engaged in today" ("Rumiyah Issue 3", 2016, p. 4). Readers of the publications are exposed to a shared militant worldview that clearly indicates organizational goals and ideology. "Show them your strength, burn them with the fire of your wrath, and take revenge for your religion," commands the text ("Rumiyah Issue 3", 2016, p. 6).

As both magazines are official ISIS publications, developed by the Al Hayat media center and edited by group leaders, ISIS members and affiliates consider the magazines reputable and authoritative. This authority, as described by SCT, is granted by a sanctioning agent (Bormann, 1992). ISIS acts as the sanctioning agent of the ideology proposed in the magazines. Because *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* were created to communicate ISIS's group vision, they reflect the rhetoric of authorities within ISIS.

Fantasy Themes

The magazines exhibit multiple instances of the symbols of fantasy themes, which include words, phrases, or statements that describe different elements of a narrative. These may be elements related to a narrative's setting, its actions or plotlines, and its characters. Within *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, the usage of fantasy themes is primarily associated with describing characters and plotlines. As a group with a dichotomous worldview, one that describes saintly believers and evil disbelievers, ISIS casts many heroes and villains as symbols throughout the publications. These characters may be groups of people, historical and religious figures, or real people relevant to modern-day occurrences.

The primary heroes described in the magazines within ISIS are its own leadership and the Islamic figures the group members aspire to become akin to. Both magazines mention and quote at length known ISIS leaders and Salafist thinkers, such as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Following a mention of al-Baghdadi's name, the third issue of *Dabiq* adds, "may Allah support him and keep him firm" ("Dabiq Issue 3", 2014, p. 5). By giving al-Baghdadi such a degree of reverence, to the extent of calling upon Allah to protect him, the magazines cast al-Baghdadi as a heroic champion of Allah. The magazine also identifies the heroes of Islamic doctrine as symbolic heroes, but goes even further by comparing ISIS's own members to traditional Islamic heroes. The third issue of *Rumiyah* encourages readers to take up arms against nonbelievers, saying, "O men of the Arabian Peninsula, O grandsons of the Sahabah, attack them, following one attack with another" ("Rumiyah Issue 3", 2016, p. 6). The term *Sahabah* refers to the companions of the prophet Muhammad, followers who interacted personally with him during his lifetime ("Companions of the Prophet", 2006). The *Sahabah* is held in high esteem throughout the Muslim world, and by asserting that ISIS members are the descendants and heirs of the companions of Muhammad, heroes within Islam, the magazines cast ISIS members as heroes as well.

Dabiq and *Rumiyah* also characterize the enemies of ISIS as complete, irredeemable villains. Related to the theme of non-Muslims and apostate Muslims, as developed within the thematic analysis, disbelievers are not only painted in an unflattering light in the magazines, but in an unforgiving light. The text of the third issue of *Rumiyah* states that "Jews, Christians, atheists, Rafidah, apostates, and all the nations of disbelief" are "the enemies of Allah" who have "dedicated their media, wealth, armies, and vehicles to wage war against the Muslims" ("Rumiyah Issue 3", 2016, p. 5). By stating that the many disbelievers who fall under these identities are the enemies of Allah, ISIS not only vilifies non-Muslims and apostate Muslims, it

demonizes them. The magazines also describe villainous deeds done by disbelievers, who “extinguish the light of Allah, in enmity towards His religion and methodology on the earth” (“Rumiyah Issue 3”, 2016, p. 4). The third issue of *Rumiyah* states that the armies of the disbelievers “raid your lands under the pretext of waging war against the Islamic State, then they don’t depart until they’ve... killed your men and taken your women and children prisoner” (“Rumiyah Issue 3”, 2016, p. 5).

Less generally, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* also characterize smaller groups of people as villains, particularly the religious and ethnic minorities within the Middle East that ISIS targeted in the past. This includes groups such as Christians, Yazidis, and Jews. The ninth issue of *Dabiq* states, “The Jews are humiliated in all the lands” (“Dabiq Issue 9”, 2015, p. 17). Lastly, individual people deemed enemies of ISIS are also vilified in both magazines. The third issue of *Rumiyah* in particular identifies the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, as a villain. He is referred to within the magazine as “the wicked Erdogan,” ruling over “the secular, apostate state of Turkey,” which ISIS deems “despicable and cowardly” (“Rumiyah Issue 3”, 2016, p. 2). The magazine also calls Turkey “vile.” The usage of descriptors like “wicked,” “despicable,” “vile,” and “cowardly” paints an unequivocal portrait of President Erdogan as a villain.

Fantasy themes also address the action or plotline of a narrative. In the case of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, the plotlines referred to within the magazines include minor terrorist incidents, major attacks, and overarching actionable themes important in the jihadist movement. The two action themes primarily present in the magazines are the themes of *hijrah* and militancy. *Hijrah* as a plotline merely describes the emigration of a Muslim to traditionally Islamic lands or a caliphate, but it is an important plotline mentioned multiple times in *Dabiq*. As it is an action which plays into the larger shared group fantasy of a modern-day caliphate, it reflects ISIS’s larger narrative. The third issue of *Dabiq* strongly encourages *hijrah*: “The best people on earth will be those who

keep to the land of Ibrahim's hijrah," the magazine states, further emphasizing that "those who left their tribes" are "the best of Allah's slaves" ("Dabiq Issue 3", 2014, p. 10-11).

The action fantasy theme of militancy acts as a plotline both at the individual level and at an organizational level. Individual terrorist plots are reflected in the articles of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* which detail battlefield updates and discuss attacks carried out by ISIS affiliates. At an organizational level, ISIS's militant action is a plotline that was intended to conclude with the establishment of a true caliphate. Repeated descriptors of ISIS's militant action contributes to normalizing a shared group vision of constant warfare with the enemy and integrating violence into the group consciousness. Words and phrases like "harvesting," "smashing," "crushing," "blood bath," "carnage," "destruction," and "reaping casualties" are often used and repeated in the magazines in reference to ISIS's victims, further describing the action fantasy theme of militancy ("Rumiyah Issue 3", 2016, p. 10-12).

The three principles of shared rhetorical vision, as defined by SCT, are fully observable within *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. The principle of novelty states that the shared group fantasy must evolve over time in order to suit the group members.

Symbolic Cues

Heuristics for shared group emotion, symbolic cues include words, phrases, nonverbal gestures, and slogans that evoke fantasy themes. The textual symbolic cues used within *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* remind readers of concepts shared within ISIS and widely in the greater Muslim world. Mentions of the themes of jihad, *hijrah*, caliphate, and *ummah* allow readers to understand the larger ideologies associated with the words, building group cohesion through shared understanding. The symbolic cue of the word "jihad" already evokes both the internal

Islamic struggle to do good and the external conflict against nonbelievers. For members of ISIS, the phrase “performing jihad” generally refers to committing acts of terrorism.

The symbolic cue of the word “caliphate” evokes the shared understanding of an Islamic empire, and its application to ISIS, a self-styled caliphate, indicates ISIS’s ultimate goal. The related term of *ribāṭ*, referring to military border fortifications, cues a reader to the concept of the caliphate, which *ribāṭ* would protect the frontiers of. The term *ribāṭ* also refers to the action of manning a border fortification. ISIS members would understand the shared group knowledge that the call to “perform *ribāṭ*,” a phrase repeated eight times in the ninth issue of *Dabiq*, is a request for troops guarding ISIS’s territorial borders.

Ummah, referring to the wider Muslim community, is a symbolic cue of the fantasy of a unified Islamic world: unified under creed and interest and undivided by sectarianism. The ninth issue of *Dabiq* states that ISIS’s goals were to “achieve the Ummah’s interest” and “defeat the enemies of the Ummah” (“Dabiq Issue 9”, 2015, p. 7). The shared group fantasy of the *umamah* evokes unity both within the Muslim community and within ISIS, as symbolic cues build group cohesion.

Fantasy Types

Within *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, themes reoccur frequently, and are applied to situations and concerns ISIS faces as a whole. These recurrent fantasy themes are referred to in SCT as fantasy types. Fantasy types act as references for a group on how to assign meaning to happenings, and their reapplication drives shared rhetorical visions within a group, allowing the group to achieve internal consistency. Multiple themes addressed in the thematic analysis portion of this work act as fantasy types. The theme of divine sanction is a recurrent theme applied frequently in ISIS’s

rhetoric, as the idea that Allah is on their side affirms the members' cause and encourages them to continue to wage war. The second most common theme analyzed, divine sanction occurs many times over the magazines' publication. Phrases like "the enemies of Allah," "the cause of Allah," and "Allah is with us" are repeated throughout *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. The third issue of *Rumiyah* states that ISIS is "supporting the religion of Allah and making His word supreme," while also saying that "killing [disbelievers] is the greatest of rewards, by Allah's permission" ("Rumiyah Issue 3," 2016, p. 9). Each reference to the fantasy type of divine sanction was applied to different scenarios addressed by ISIS. Reapplication of a theme to different situations is a key characteristic of the fantasy type.

Dabiq and *Rumiyah* contribute to a shared fantasy within ISIS and the jihadist movement that they wage an all-encompassing war of an epic scale. This is related to the theme of a final conflict. Like the theme of militancy when applied to a large scale, the idea of apocalyptic warfare is repeated throughout the magazines and is applied to multiple different situations. Referring to ISIS's enemies in the ninth issue of *Dabiq*, the magazine states ominously of disbelievers, "We have cast among them animosity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection" ("Dabiq Issue 9", 2015, p. 17). Within the text, the previous quote simply refers to the chaos caused by a minor ISIS attack, but the usage of apocalyptic language implies that the minor attack was a step on the path to a final conflict. Similarly, ISIS's rhetoric in reference to historical western influence suggests that the current wars and a final conflict are the results of western encroachment in Islamic lands. In the third issue of *Rumiyah*, the magazine asserted that one of ISIS's final goals in an ultimate battle would be to dismantle the borders of the Middle East drawn after World War II. The texts state that Islamic forces would fight Western nations "until its borders met the fate of other Sykes-Picot borders that the mujahidin had removed with their own hands" ("Rumiyah Issue 3", 2016, p. 2).

Lastly, the concept of just killing of disbelievers resurfaces throughout the sampled magazines. Tied closely to the theme of non-Muslims and apostate Muslims, the idea of just killing is a fantasy type applied to many different groups of nonbelievers throughout *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Referring to Christians in the Middle East, the ninth issue of *Rumiyah* had multiple instances of the phrase “kill the mushrikin wherever you find them,” further stating that “the blood of mushrikin is that it is permissible to shed” (“Rumiyah Issue 9”, 2017, p. 5). The phrase “permissible to shed” is repeated several times. The magazine goes further to state that the killing of any armed disbeliever, regardless of age, gender, or physical condition, is justified and praised by Allah. The sentiment is repeated in reference to Jews in the ninth issue of *Dabiq*, which said, “the accursed Jews are always in humiliation and overpowered” (“Dabiq Issue 9”, 2015, p. 18).

Sagas

The SCT concept of sagas is of special importance to ISIS, as the retelling of significant events relevant to the group and its figures is a major aspect of the Salafi jihadist movement. Because Salafism refers to a reversion to the old ways of Islam and its figures, such as Muhammad and his *Sahabah*, sagas play a huge role in building shared group understanding in the jihadist movement. Sagas construct emotional narratives that bolster the group’s rhetorical vision, and the most important saga of Islam, Muhammad’s life as presented in the Quran and the *Hadith*, is highly present throughout *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. ISIS connects its own narrative to the saga of Muhammad and his successors’ conquests, saying that it fights a “Modern crusade against the usurped Muslim lands” (“Rumiyah Issue 3”, 2016, p. 2).

The overall saga of Islam and its final conclusion are of major importance to *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, and a reminder of the saga is repeated on the cover of every issue of the magazine. The town of Dabiq and the city of Rome are references to the final, apocalyptic battle prophesized in Islamic doctrine in which the caliphate triumphs over the West. The third issue of *Dabiq* addresses this, noting that “the name of our magazine was taken from the area named Dābiq in the northern countryside of Halab, due to the significant role it will play during the events of al-Malhamah al-Kubrā (The Grand Battle) against the crusaders” (“Dabiq Issue 3”, 2014, p. 15). By repeating a reference to the saga of Islam and its apocalyptic conclusion, the magazines strengthen the group’s shared fantasy of a victorious caliphate, simply through the titles alone.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This study expands the study of communication in terrorism through analyzing jihadist publications from multiple facets of theory, utilizing thematic analysis to identify possible rhetorical trends over time in a terrorist organization. The thematic variation in the sampled magazines from 2014 to 2017 showed clear, significant movement in ideological concepts important to ISIS's identity as a leader in the jihadist movement. The three most frequent themes – (1) non-Muslims and apostate Muslims, (2) divine sanction, and (3) enmity against the West – each play a different role in forming ISIS's communication culture. However, all the themes present within *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* suggest an ultimate worldview promoted by ISIS: an ongoing, dichotomous battle between righteous jihadists and their enemies (comprising of both the infidels and the apostates). The theme of non-Muslims and apostate Muslims showcases the uncompromising stance ISIS takes against every person who does not subscribe to jihadist Islam. By forming a coherent picture of “the enemy,” ISIS shows its audience the target of its acts of terror through frequent references to them across the magazine issues. References to divine sanction act as reaffirmations for ISIS members that ISIS is on Allah's side. Thus, victory for ISIS will be inevitable, despite the territorial defeats it suffers. Lastly, the theme of enmity against the West promotes the concept of a Clash of Civilizations, a concept supported by Salafist interpretations of Islamic doctrine.

Agenda-Setting Theory

The theory of agenda-setting identifies the establishment of public salience of different issues; this is how media outlets choose to reflect a version of reality. Within *Dabiq* and

Rumiyah, ISIS chooses specific issues, some more than others, as visible in the frequency of themes from the magazine samples from 2014 to 2017. The order of thematic occurrence in each sample reflected McCombs's (2004) hierarchy of news salience, with the most frequently reappearing themes as the most important for the magazines' audiences. This is due to the fact that a media outlet's – i.e., ISIS's Al Hayat Media Center – selection of which issues to select leads the public to perceive those subjects as more significant and relevant. The changes over time in thematic frequency suggest (1) changes in priority within ISIS, reflected in the decisions that Al Hayat Media Center made when editing *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* and (2) changes in perceived salience of topics for the readers of the magazines.

Overall, as the theme of non-Muslims and apostate Muslims was the most common theme throughout all four years of magazine samples, ISIS's attitude towards so-called disbelievers was of significant importance to the readers of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, reflecting the rhetoric of the terrorist organization at large. As ISIS's perspective of disbelievers is arguably one of the group's most important motivators, as its members carry out acts of terror against non-Muslims and apostate Muslims, it follows logically that the theme remained at the top of the hierarchy of thematic significance. Without analyzing the perceived importance of the themes analyzed (in this study) from the perspective of actual ISIS members or sympathizers, we could not identify the real-world salience of the themes as felt by the primary audience of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. However, through agenda-setting theory, it is likely that the most common themes of non-Muslims and apostate Muslims, divine sanction, and enmity against the West have the greatest salience for the readers of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* and ISIS members. Conversely, one may assume that the least common themes of the *ummah*, sharia, and the final battle have the least relevance for ISIS members and other readers of the magazines.

Through agenda-setting theory, the variation over time of thematic frequency also suggests variation in thematic salience from 2014 to 2017. The theme of violence and militancy, which displayed a steep increase in frequency from 2015 to 2016, likely became more important to readers of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* over the same time span. References to divine sanction also exhibited a similar jump in frequency between 2015 and 2016. Perhaps presented as reassurance for the territorial defeats ISIS suffered during the time, affirmations of ISIS's divine sanction may have become more important for the group's members during that time. The theme of *hijrah*, meanwhile, decreased greatly in frequency between 2014 and 2015, until it was not mentioned at all in the sample of the issue published in 2017. Following agenda-setting, *hijrah* was likely a priority for ISIS members in 2014, then faded to irrelevance in the subsequent years.

Though the primary audience of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* was ISIS members and affiliates, one cannot disregard the fact that the magazines were also published for ISIS's enemies, allowing other parties to see ISIS's vision. Because agenda-setting theory states that media outlets do not necessarily affect the direction or intensity of attitudes towards issues, exposure to ISIS's agenda would not change the feelings of anti-terrorism reader towards the jihadist movement. However, the hierarchy of issue relevance displayed within *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* may influence how we can perceive the importance of the themes within the magazines, just as jihadist readers of the magazines do.

Framing Theory

While the application of agenda-setting theory to *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* implies that the magazines reflect issue salience for the magazines' readers, framing theory suggests that the way the magazines characterize their themes shape the audiences' perceptions of the topics. As the

magazines mirror wider ISIS rhetoric, the way ISIS frames the various themes may also reflect the attitudes of ISIS members to the themes. For example, both *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* display harshly negative language in reference to non-Muslims and apostate Muslims, often describing them with words like “enemies,” “criminal,” “traitors,” and “hatred.” In third issue of *Dabiq*, the magazine states, in reference to disbelievers, “Their lands will cast them out, Allah will hate them, and the fire will gather them together with the apes and swine... there will remain the worst of the people, having intercourse as donkeys do” (“Dabiq Issue 3”, 2014, p. 15). This intensely negative, vivid language frames disbelievers as subhuman. According to Fairhurst and Sarr’s (1996) framing techniques, this instance is an example of framing metaphor, in which non-Muslims and apostate Muslims are compared to apes, swine, and donkeys.

Another example of framing techniques used throughout *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* is framing through stories and tradition – specifically, the sagas and traditions of Islamic doctrine. One can expect frequent invocations of the Quran, the life of Muhammad, Islamic tradition, and caliphate history throughout the magazines. In addition, the magazines often combine framing through stories and tradition with framing through metaphor, by comparing ISIS, a self-proclaimed caliphate, with the historical caliphates: ISIS conducts a “modern crusade against the usurped Muslim lands” (“Rumiyah Issue 3”, 2016, p. 2). This quotation not only uses the well-known concept of crusades, holy wars, but also denotes that ISIS is fighting to reclaim “usurped Muslim lands,” referencing Islamic history and implying that lands rightfully controlled by Muslims were forcibly taken away from them by disbelievers.

In nearly every issue of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, a section is devoted to “battlefield updates,” reports from ISIS’s physical troops in the Middle East detailing current terrorist operations. The sections were usually titled “Islamic State Reports.” The presentation of these updates, under the guise of factual reports, implies that ISIS is more territorially successful than it actually was, as

the reports never detailed the territorial defeats the group suffered. Because of the subtle value judgment conveyed in these sections, an inherent bias was likely conveyed to the readers of the magazines who took these reports as actual fact – an example of the framing technique, spin. Though *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* likely influence the perception of issue significance for its readers, its usage of framing techniques characterizes the issues, shaping the readers' interpretation to follow ISIS's worldview.

Persuasion

The study of persuasion identifies multiple heuristics that communicators use to influence the audience peripherally, without assuming that audience members will centrally process the content of the communication. Much heuristics detailed in Cialdini's 2006 work is unique to interactive communication and does not apply to publications like *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. However, the persuasion heuristics of commitment, consistency, and authority is used throughout the magazines, particularly in reference to ISIS's faith-based motivations. As ISIS rhetoric is rooted in the Salafi jihadist movement, which stresses a highly traditionalist interpretation of Islam, the magazines take advantage of the religiosity of its members by calling on "true Muslims" to partake in ISIS's operations. Righteous, pious Muslims, the magazines argue, should take up arms against disbelievers. As the ninth issue of *Dabiq* points out, "the true men will step forward, and the [Western nations] will have no peace and no security" ("Dabiq Issue 9," 2015, p. 17). This type of narrative plays into the social tendency of commitment and consistency, which is the tendency for people to appear consistent in their commitments with others. In this case, the commitment exploited by the magazines is between a devoted Muslim and Allah.

Narrative transportation, another method of persuasion, is also observable throughout *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. ISIS uses vivid language to describe an ongoing, all-encompassing battle between two civilizations. The framing of ISIS operations and terrorist activities, as part of a great continuous war for the sake of Islam, creates a symbolic saga. The third issue of *Rumiyah* calls ISIS's operations "fiery battle, all-encompassing war, and major jihad" ("Rumiyah Issue 3," 2016, p. 4). This apocalyptic framing invites ISIS members and admirers to become invested in this greater narrative and to take part in it personally through militant mobilization. Green and Brock (2000) assert that people become fully invested in a narrative when applying the narrative to their personal experience, thereby changing their attitudes to reflect the story. Similar to the technique of saga framing, narrative transportation persuades people to adopt a worldview through identification with a story. Individuals who identify with the jihadist drama showcased in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* may go on to identify with jihadist intentions.

Propaganda

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (2014), propaganda specifically implies intentional communication that consciously attempts to exert influence over the communication recipient. As *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* are ISIS's official English-language publications and actively call for its readers to take up arms and fight for ISIS's cause, the magazines are active attempts on ISIS's part to exert influence over its readership. The magazines especially exhibit two of the three different responses to persuasion attempts through propaganda – as defined by Roloff and Miller (1980): response shaping and response reinforcing. Particularly through its theme of divine sanction, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* encourage positive inclinations towards ISIS's ideology by asserting that Allah supports ISIS and wants Muslims to join the jihadist movement. Promoting

positive inclinations towards the ideas the communication is espousing the primary characteristic of response shaping. The magazines also capitalize on enmity that their readers may hold against western nations and ideology, reinforcing positive emotions towards ISIS by encouraging further hatred of the West.

Following response shaping, response reinforcing refers to strengthening the positive inclinations developed through response shaping, with the ultimate goal of actualizing a positive attitude towards the ideologies offered by the communication. The magazines consistently describe ISIS and its operations positively, if not superlatively. For example, in an article in the ninth issue of *Rumiyah* addressing women in the Islamic State, the text states, “Every woman to whom Allah has granted the blessing of giving birth in the Islamic State should take advantage of this tremendous grace” (“Rumiyah Issue 9”, 2017). Such positive description of the Islamic State is a clear attempt to reinforce positive emotions towards the organization.

Diffusion of Innovations

The theory of diffusion of innovations addresses the dissemination of new ideas or technology among members of a social system who, essentially, act as a conduit. In the case of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, the magazines are a communication channel in which the innovations of jihadist ideology are communicated from ISIS leaders to the worldwide public. Because ISIS and the jihadist movement have inspired isolated terrorist cells overseas, through the power of digital outreach, one can argue that the jihadist movement has already reached critical mass. Critical mass is the point at which an innovation becomes self-sustaining, capable of causing further innovation. Because ISIS has inspired “lone wolf” terrorist attacks like the Pulse shooting in

Orlando, it is currently self-sustaining, despite the fact that it is not widely adopted and that it has lost large amounts of its physical territory.

By publishing articles in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, ISIS takes the role of an opinion leader. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1961) define opinion leadership as the interpretation of content by active media users for lower-end media users. As an opinion leader in the jihadist movement, ISIS interprets Islamic doctrine and the beliefs of Islamic scholars throughout history and broadcasts its interpretation through its media publications. The group utilizes the widest social network in history, the internet, to disseminate its ideology.

In its ideological dissemination, ISIS also takes part in memetic engineering within the minds of its members, affiliates, and admirers. Memetic engineering, the process by which ideas are repeated and disseminated, referred to as “memes,” may be used to foster advantageous traits in members of an organization. This process, called meme mapping by Pech and Slade (2004), is used by ISIS to further foster positive attitudes towards the organization. Again, using the example of the theme of divine sanction, ISIS leadership may have increased the saturation of references to divine sanction from 2014 to 2017 to foster positive attitudes towards ISIS within its members. ISIS may use the theme of divine sanction to meme map and foster religious affirmation for the group ideology within its members.

Symbolic Convergence Theory

As described in Chapter 4, fantasy themes, symbolic cues, fantasy types, and sagas are prevalent throughout *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. As the magazines are ISIS’s channel of broadcasting its inner rhetoric, it follows that ISIS communication outside its published magazines also reflects SCT. The shared group fantasies identified in the SCT analysis of the magazines are

likely present across the entire ISIS *ummah*. Throughout the analysis, a recurring symbol was present: a dichotomous, black-and-white conflict between enemies – the infidels and apostate Muslims – and ISIS, the self-styled caliphate. Central to ISIS’s ideology is a perceived irreconcilable difference between “true” Muslims, sanctioned by Allah, and nonbelievers. All of the themes present in the thematic analysis are shaped by the shared group fantasy of a Clash of Civilizations. The goal of jihad is to form a caliphate from the *ummah*, by conquering through militancy and through successful *hijrah*, ruled by sharia. Non-Muslims and apostate Muslims would be subjugated in this caliphate. This goal is divinely sanctioned, but is opposed by the West, and will culminate in a final conflict between the two civilizations.

Because the caliphate promulgated by ISIS explicitly states its supreme goal must be established by defeating disbelievers, particularly the West, the ultimate shared group fantasy exhibited by ISIS is that of the Clash of Civilizations. Huntington (1993) proposed the Clash of Civilizations as the result of clashes in cultural values between Islam and “the rest,” but ISIS and the jihadist movement elevate the Clash of Civilizations into a goal, in which the Islamic civilization triumphs completely over nonbelievers and the West. As exhibited in the analysis based on SCT, the Clash of Civilizations is ISIS’s greatest fantasy theme.

Speech Codes Theory

This study utilized speech codes to identify and analyze the themes within *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Speech codes theory is the process by which observers can analyze communication through identifying symbols, meanings, premises, and rules. The theory provides a framework with which to understand all forms of communication, including ISIS’s communication methods. Combined with the theories of agenda-setting, framing, diffusion of innovations, and symbolic

convergence, the symbols and meanings within ISIS's publications were identified and interpreted over time through frequency and context.

According to the SPEAKING model put forth by Hymes (1974), the situation of communication for *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* was the digital magazine medium. The participants were ISIS and its publication wing and the various audiences of the magazines, from ISIS members and its admirers to academics. In the eyes of ISIS, the magazines carry authority, as they are the organization's official published materials. The comprehensive ends of the magazines are unknown, as the magazines may cause various outcomes dependent on a reader's interpretation of the material. The key of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, as defined by speech codes theory, refers to recognizing the manner of the communication and its underlying instrumentalities. This was achieved through the literature review background of the magazines. The communication genre of the magazines refers to the way the audience consumes *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, as relatively one-sided communication with little capability to send feedback without being an inner member of ISIS's speech community.

Through the distinctive rhetoric and ideology presented within *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, speech codes theory asserts that analysis sheds light on group culture. Using agenda-setting, framing, diffusion of innovations, and symbolic convergence, this study identifies ISIS's principle concern: a dichotomous worldview culminating in a civilizational conflict.

Further Research

This study focused on three research questions: (1) How might ISIS affect its readers through *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*? (2) What is the significance of the themes found within the magazines within the greater jihadist community? (3) What does the rhetoric of the

communication of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* suggest about ISIS and the jihadist movement? Through a thematic analysis and speech coding of sampled material from 2014 to 2017 and the application of multiple theories of communication, the study addressed the influence that the jihadist magazines may exert over the readership using agenda-setting theory, framing theory, persuasion, and propaganda. Through the diffusion of innovations, the study identified how ideas and influence spread from ISIS to its audience through outlets like its English-language magazines. The study also identified significant themes that reinforced ISIS's shared group fantasies. Lastly, through addressing the implications of the content of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* on a wider organizational scale, this study discussed what the rhetoric found in the magazines may suggest about ISIS as a whole.

This study was able to identify possible rhetorical trends, aspects of group identity, frames of communication, and fantasy themes that may be present within ISIS and the jihadist movement at large. However, whether these details exist beyond the theoretical is unknown due to limited information available on rhetorical decisions within ISIS, its group culture, and the attitudes of its members. Without reliable access to insider information on ISIS and the jihadist movement, this study was only capable of addressing ISIS's outward rhetoric. Future research should cross-reference the theoretical findings of this study with provable data garnered from more direct observations of the terrorist organization. This would allow for the conjecture posited in this study to be compared alongside reported rhetorical trends in the organization.

Further research could also identify connections between ISIS's thematic rhetoric within its publications and its real-world military actions by comparing the date of publication of articles with particular thematic focuses to the dates of known ISIS military action. By comparing past ISIS action with its past publications, researchers may be able to identify how the

themes present within the group's publications reflect the group's physical actions and the greater jihadist movement.

Another area of further research should entail a more comprehensive analysis of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Due to research constraints, this study consistently sampled large portions of four issues of the magazines: the third and ninth issues of *Dabiq*, published in 2014 and 2015, and the third and ninth issues of *Rumiyah*, published in 2016 and 2017. By sampling content from all four years of the magazines' publication, this study was able to identify trends in thematic variation in the magazines over time. However, applying the methods of analysis of this study through a more comprehensive examination would provide more detailed results. By analyzing all published issues of the magazines, one could more accurately see the trends in thematic variation between the publications.

Finally, more research on ISIS publications outside the magazines of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* would allow for greater understanding of ISIS's rhetoric across platforms and its usage of different aspects of media to convey its worldview. A comparison of the thematic frequencies across platforms – for example, by comparing the thematic variation found within *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* with the topical themes present in ISIS videos – would also create a more comprehensive picture of ISIS's rhetorical intentions. Through ISIS's magazine platforms, the group presents an apocalyptic worldview and a dichotomous, irreconcilable conflict between jihadists and disbelievers. Further research could address whether this thematic conflict is reflected in ISIS's other media platforms and in ISIS's real-world group rhetoric. Nonetheless, despite its territorial losses, the group took a leadership role in the jihadist movement, and its future influence will be observable in continued research.

TABLES

Dabiq Issue 3: Shawwal 1435

Theme	Data	Frequency
Jihad	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “there is no real jihād in Iraq except with the presence of the muhājirīn” 2. “pleasure of jihād” 3. “We cannot adopt the mindset that jihād is acceptable without da’wah, or that the hudūd cannot be established during defensive jihād, or that we are living in an era similar to the Prophet’s time in Makkah and must therefore focus on da’wah because there is no jihād “ 4. “It is for this reason that the Islamic State has long maintained an initiative that sees it waging its jihād alongside a da’wah campaign that actively tends to the needs of its people” 5. “It fights to defend the Muslims, liberate their lands, and bring an end to the tawāghīt, while simultaneously seeking to guide and nurture those under its authority and ensure that new pledges of allegiance in both their religious and social needs are met” 6. “incite the people to jihād” 7. “every Muslim professional who delayed his jihād... claiming he would contribute to Islam later with his expertise, should now make his number one priority to repent and answer the call to hijrah” 8. “abandoning hijrah – the path to jihād – is a dangerous matter” 9. “one is thereby deserting jihad” 10. “pray daily for an escape from the lands of qu’ūd (abandonment of jihād) to the lands of jihād” 11. “searching for a path to jihād” 12. “This is the Sunnah of Allah concerning the qā’idīn (those who sit back and abandon jihād).” 13. “This love [of jihād], for those who don’t know it, embitters the life of the qā’id (one who sits back and abandons jihād) and destroys his delights” 14. “If the love of jihād enters a man’s heart, then it will not abandon him, even if he wishes so” 15. “He will find himself surrounded by everything that reminds him of jihād” 16. “this love will either kill you with sorrow if you decide to sit 	25

	<p>and abandon jihād, or it will kill you, making you a martyr fi sabīlillāh if you decide to answer the call”</p> <p>17. “the verses of jihād”</p> <p>18. “when you compare the situation of the Sahābah after hijrah and jihād”</p> <p>19. “Jihād not only grants life on the larger scale of the Ummah, it also grants a fuller life on the scale of the individual”</p> <p>20. “This life of jihād is not possible until you pack and move to the Khilāfah”</p> <p>21. “living amongst Muslims who reside amid kuffār and abandon jihād”</p> <p>22. “of the worst of sins in modern times is that of qu’ūd (abandonment of jihād), for jihād now is fard ‘ayn (an obligation upon each individual)”</p> <p>23. “Then how can one be pleased with the company of the jihād abandoners?”</p> <p>24. “one who abandons jihād – the deed without which he can achieve no maslahah – should be punished by hajr”</p> <p>25. “And so, the zunāh (fornicators/ adulterers), lūtiyyah (sodomites), abandoners of jihād, ahlul-bida’ (people of religious innovations), alcoholics, are all harmful for the religion of Islam, and intermingling with them is also harmful”</p>	
Sharia	<p>1. “if the tribe does not act as a group in opposing the Sharī’ah, it would be obviously wrong to apply this ruling to its members”</p> <p>2. “submit to the rule of the Sharī’ah with the condition they hand over all heavy weaponry”</p> <p>3. “All these crimes were carried out in opposition to the enforcement of the Sharī’ah”</p> <p>4. “All those able-bodied men remaining would be treated in accordance with the Sharī’ah”</p> <p>5. “the soldiers of the Islamic State found men hateful of the Sharī’ah, drowning in fāhishah, alcoholism, and drugs, some of them married to more than four wives!”</p> <p>6. “the Islamic State actively works to educate its citizens, preach to and admonish them, enforce their strict adherence to Islamic obligations, judge their disputes, implement the shar’ī hudūd, eradicate all traces of shirk and heresy”</p>	6
Militancy	<p>1. “Matters will run their course until you become mobilized armies: an army in Shām, and an army in Yemen, and an army in Iraq”</p> <p>2. “This month, the soldiers of the Islamic State launched a swift and brutal offensive in the northern Halab countryside”</p> <p>3. “And why should we not fight in the cause of Allah when we have been driven out from our homes and away from our children?”</p>	4

	4. “He then took advantage of their plot to blast it in their own faces, killing a number of American crusaders and their apostate agents”	
Caliphate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Were the muwahhid to search every book authored by the historians, he would not find mention of any state similar to the Islamic State, particularly as it exists following its revival under the wing of Amīrul-Mu’minīn Abū Bakr” 2. “For has any state ever been established in human history in the manner that the Islamic State was revived with its expansion into Shām?” 3. “This phenomenon is something that has never occurred in human history, except in the case of the Islamic State!” 4. “this state, which has gathered the bulk of the muhājirīn in Shām and has become the largest collection of muhājirīn in the world, is a marvel of history” 5. “the bulk of at-Tā’ifatul-Mansūrah (the victorious group) will be in Shām near the end of times, because the Khilāfah will be there” 6. “pledged allegiance to the Khilāfah, promising to die defending it” 7. “call them to unite behind the Khalīfah” 8. “especially after the establishment of the Khilāfah” 9. “This Khilāfah is more in need than ever before for experts, professionals, and specialists” 10. “now there is a Khilāfah prepared to accept every Muslim and Muslimah into its lands” 11. “successfully reached the Khilāfah” 12. “Allah brought them safely to the Khilāfah” 13. “the Khilāfah is a state whose inhabitants and soldiers are human beings” 14. “remember that the Khilāfah is at war with numerous kāfir states and their allies” 	14
Hijrah	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “emigration of poor strangers from the East and the West, who then gathered in an alien land of war” 2. “war waged by the nations of the world against their religion, their state, and their hijrah” 3. “soldiers and the commanders to be of different colors, languages, and lands: the Najdī, the Jordanian, the Tunisian, the Egyptian, the Somali, the Turk, the Albanian, the Chechen, the Indonesian, the Russian, the European, the American and so on” 4. “They left their families and their lands to renew the state of the muwahhidīn in Shām, and they had never known each other until they arrived in Shām” 5. “gathered the bulk of the muhājirīn in Shām and has become the largest collection of muhājirīn in the world” 6. “the Prophet... said, ‘... glad tidings to the strangers... 	49

	<p>“Those who break off from their tribes”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. “the muhājirīn who’ve abandoned their homelands and migrated to Allah” 8. “muhā- jirīn who’ve abandoned their homelands for the sake of Allah” 9. “those who leave their homelands to establish the sunan (traditions) of Islam” 10. “the one who leaves his tribe is a muhājir that parts from his family, his wealth, and his homeland, and who believes in Allah” 11. “strangers are those who left their families and their lands, emigrating for the sake of Allah and for the sake of establishing His religion” 12. “in the era of ghuthā’ as-sayl (the feeble scum), they are the most wondrous of the creation in terms of faith” 13. “There will be hijrah after hijrah” 14. “The best people on earth will be those who keep to the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah.” 15. “the best of the people on the earth are those who keep to the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah” 16. “this hijrah of theirs is equal to the hijrah of the Companions of Allah’s Messenger to Madīnah, because hijrah is made to wherever the Messenger is and left an impact” 17. “And the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah, has been made for us equal to the land of our Prophet’s hijrah, because hijrah to Madīnah was discontinued after the conquest of Makkah” 18. “So those who left their tribes – the best of Allah’s slaves – rallied together” 19. “an unkept promise of hijrah to Allah could result in a devastating ending for the slave” 20. “repent and answer the call to hijrah” 21. “This Khilāfah is more in need than ever before for experts, professionals, and specialists, who can help contribute in strengthening its structure and tending to the needs of their Muslim brothers” 22. “Otherwise, his claims will become a greater proof against him on Judgment Day” 23. “Muslim students who use this same pretense now to continue abandoning the obligation of the era, then they should know that their hijrah from dārul-kufr to dārul-Islām and jihād are more obligatory” 24. “abandoning hijrah – the path to jihād – is a dangerous matter” 25. “one is thereby deserting jihād and willingly accepting his tragic condition of being a hypocritical spectator” 26. “sincere Muslims would weep and pray daily for an escape from the lands of qu’ūd (abandonment of jihād) to the lands 	
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	<p>of jihād, even if to live only as a soldier in constant wait for the opportunity to battle”</p> <p>27. “They would dream of going to Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Chechnya, Algeria, Somalia, and Waziristan”</p> <p>28. “the only way for a man claiming a mustard seed of faith in his heart to preserve his faith would be to leave the West”</p> <p>29. “now there is a Khilāfah prepared to accept every Muslim and Muslimah into its lands and do all it can within its power to protect them while relying on Allah alone”</p> <p>30. “when you compare the situation of the Sahābah after hijrah and jihād”</p> <p>31. “This life of jihād is not possible until you pack and move to the Khilāfah”</p> <p>32. “Living amongst the sinful kills the heart, never mind living amongst the kuffār!”</p> <p>33. “Go to the land of such and such, for in it there are people who worship Allah”</p> <p>34. “Worship Allah with them and do not return to your land, for it is a land of evil”</p> <p>35. “I disassociate myself from every Muslim who lives amongst the mushrikīn”</p> <p>36. “living amongst Muslims who reside amid kuffār and abandon jihād”</p> <p>37. “Thus, the sinful company affects you whether you desire so or not”</p> <p>38. “Then how can one be pleased with the company of the jihād abandoners?”</p> <p>39. “The crux of hijrah is to abandon sin and its people”</p> <p>40. “Whoever does not abandon them has thus left an obligation and fallen into a prohibition”</p> <p>41. “Are you pleased to intermingle with those who Shaykhul-Islām mentioned after the zunāh and lūtiyyah, and before ahlul-bida’ and the alcoholics?”</p> <p>42. “Before you make your trip, keep in mind the following hadith of the Prophet”</p> <p>43. “do not say to yourself, ‘I will never succeed in my hijrah””</p> <p>44. “Most of those who have tried, have successfully reached the Khilāfah”</p> <p>45. “Amongst them are those who travelled by land, sometimes on foot, from country to country, crossing border after border, and Allah brought them safely to the Khilāfah”</p> <p>46. “fear is unsure and the obligation of hijrah is certain”</p> <p>47. “do not let the achievement of hijrah nullify your deeds by allowing pride to enter your heart”</p> <p>48. “hijrah is a great deed but it is not a license to view yourself better than others”</p> <p>49. “We ask Allah to facilitate your hijrah”</p>	
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<p>Enmity against the West</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “the USA decided to officially get involved... by conducting airstrikes against the Islamic State and its people” 2. “number of related events that the Obama administration and western media tried to ignore when discussing the strikes and the consequential execution of James Foley” 3. “US had already interfered in Iraq... regular air reconnaissance missions” 4. “The US had interfered in Shām by supporting groups allied to it and to “Saudi Arabia” against the Islamic State” 5. “The US had killed women, children, and the elderly, during its direct occupation of Iraq prior to its withdrawal” 6. “There are countless accounts of American soldiers executing families and raping women under the sanctity of the US military and Blackwater” 7. “Muslim families were killed under the broad definition of ‘collateral damage,’ which the US grants itself alone the right to apply” 8. “Therefore, if a mujāhid kills a single man with a knife, it is the barbaric killing of the ‘innocent’... if Americans kill thousands of Muslim families all over the world by pressing missile fire buttons, it is merely ‘collateral damage’” 9. “The US was informed of James Foley’s status as a prisoner held by the Islamic State... demands made prior to the US strikes, for the release of Muslim prisoners held by the US in exchange for Foley’s release... were arrogantly ignored” 10. “The US attempted a rescue mission in Wilāyat ar-Raqqah, which failed when some of the members of the mission were injured and possibly killed, so they carried their fallen away with disaster” 11. “This threat was received with typical American indifference” 12. “Upon receiving the threat and prior to the execution, Obama scurried to prevent knowledge of the affair from reaching his citizenry” 13. “Obama completely avoided mention of Steven Sotloff, again showing his ‘people’ that the number one interest of the American government is the sanctity of Israel and its allies, which include the Zionist Peshmerga forces” 14. “These are more important than the lives of his citizenry” 15. “bring about the complete collapse of the modern American empire” 16. “prostituted themselves to America and its regional puppets” 17. “al-Malhamah al-Kubrā (The Grand Battle) against the crusaders” 18. “killing a number of American crusaders and their apostate agents” 19. “numerous kāfir states and their allies” 	<p>19</p>
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<p>Non-Muslims and Apostate Muslims</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “These same groups now beg the US for further support and aid, which, by Allah’s grace, will end up as ghanīmah for the Islamic State” 2. “war waged by the nations of the world against their religion, their state, and their hijrah” 3. “Even the apostates cannot ignore its threat, let alone the cross worshippers and the Jews” 4. “Yet those who are falsely associated with jihād turn away from the Islamic State, even publicly declaring their enmity against it in bizarre competition with the crusaders and the apostates” 5. “declaring enmity and hatred towards the mushrikīn and their tawāghīt” 6. “Then there will remain on the earth the worst of its people” 7. “Their lands will cast them out, Allah will hate them, and the fire will gather them together with the apes and swine” 8. “And there will remain the worst of the people, having intercourse as donkeys do” 9. “Then there will remain the worst of the people, who have the agility of birds (in their haste to commit evil and satisfy their lusts” 10. “announced their enmity and hatred for the cross worshippers, the apostates, their crosses, their borders, and their ballotboxes” 11. “any tribe or party or assembly whose involvement and collaboration with the crusaders and their apostate agents are confirmed, then by He who sent Muhammad with the truth, we will target them just as we target the crusaders, and we will eradicate and distinguish them” 12. “there are only two camps: the camp of truth and its followers, and the camp of falsehood and its factions” 13. “what has occurred with some of the traitors in al-Qā’im is the best proof for this” 14. “everyone whose affiliation with the pagan guards, police, and army is confirmed, or his collaboration and espionage for the crusaders is verified, then his ruling is execution, and not only that, his house also will be destroyed and burnt” 15. “This is in retribution for his treachery towards his religion and ummah, and so that he becomes a manifest lesson and a deterring example” 16. “the tribe... acts like a body with some kind of bigoted head or like a gang maddened by the mob mentality of tribal arrogance” 17. “They might move like a flock of birds or school of fish, albeit less gracefully due to their extreme ignorance” 18. “They ambushed Islamic State soldiers, and then tortured, amputated, and executed prisoners taken from the 	<p>38</p>
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	<p>ambushes”</p> <p>19. “perpetuators of the crimes against Islam and the Muslims”</p> <p>20. “men hateful of the Sharī’ah, drowning in fāhishah, alcoholism, and drugs, some of them married to more than four wives”</p> <p>21. “[Muhammad] ordered their hands and their feet be cut off, their eyes be put out with hot iron, and they be thrown out on al-Harrah (an area covered with black stones near Madīnah), so they would ask for water to drink, but not be given any water, until they died”</p> <p>22. “These people thieved, killed, disbelieved after their faith, and waged war against Allah and His Messenger”</p> <p>23. “the severity of the prophetic punishment against the treacherous, false claimants of Islam”</p> <p>24. “treacherous sahwāt murtaddīn who prostituted themselves to America and its regional puppets, stabbing the mujāhidīn in the back and subsequently imprisoning and even raping many of the muhājirāt”</p> <p>25. “Then one third of them will flee; Allah will never forgive them”</p> <p>26. “The religion of Allah will only be supported by someone who protects all of its sides”</p> <p>27. “the Peshmerga, who fled upon hearing of the Islamic State’s approach”</p> <p>28. “the devil worshipping Yazīdiyyah”</p> <p>29. “As for those who insisted upon their shirk, then they fled with the Peshmergan apostates”</p> <p>30. “an unkept promise of hijrah to Allah could result in a devastating ending for the slave”</p> <p>31. “Allah mentions that He punished the hypocrites with further hypocrisy as a result of them breaking a previous covenant to Him”</p> <p>32. “Living amongst the sinful kills the heart, never mind living amongst the kuffār”</p> <p>33. “They can destroy the person’s fitrah to a point of no return, so that his heart’s doubts and desires entrap him fully”</p> <p>34. “Muslims who reside amid kuffār and abandon jihād”</p> <p>35. “the jihād abandoners”</p> <p>36. “zunāh (fornicators/ adulterers), lūtiyyah (sodomites), abandoners of jihād, ahlul-bida’ (people of religious innovations), alcoholics, are all harmful for the religion of Islam”</p> <p>37. “Are you pleased to intermingle with those who Shaykhul-Islām mentioned after the zunāh and lūtiyyah, and before ahlul-bida’ and the alcoholics?”</p> <p>38. “Wallāhi, they destroy the religion of the person until he finds himself in Hellfire!”</p>	
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Ummah	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “the affairs of the Muslim Ummah” 2. “the sons of the generous ummah” 3. “The last part of this ummah believes in what the first part of the ummah believed in of the unseen, and believes in what the first part of the ummah believed in as eyewitnesses” 4. “retribution for his treachery towards his religion and ummah” 5. “Jihād not only grants life on the larger scale of the Ummah, it also grants a fuller life on the scale of the individual” 	5
Divine Sanction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “by Allah’s grace, will end up as ghanīmah for the Islamic State” 2. “And with Allah’s permission, Obama will continue to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, Bush” 3. “all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation” 4. “may Allah accept him” 5. “I swear by the One to Whom I will return” 6. “those who bring victory to Allah and His Messenger” 7. “Abū Bakr (may Allah support him and keep him firm)” 8. “nothing like it will ever occur thereafter except in relation to it; and Allah knows best” 9. “what a tremendous favor it is from Allah to guide one to the Islamic State and grant him companionship with its muhājirīn, those who plunge into the malāhim (the great battles prior to the Hour)” 10. “Allah has praised the believers for their belief in the unseen” 11. “They [the caliphate] will continue to be there clearly upon the truth until Allah sends the pleasant breeze” 12. “Allah will hate them” 13. “taking the soul of every believer and every Muslim” 14. “three major military conquests for the Islamic State, which only came about by Allah’s grace, power, and might” 15. “an achievement Allah saved for the Islamic State by His grace” 16. “We ask Allah to accept the shuhadā’ and heal the wounded” 17. “Allah gives His sovereignty to whom He wills” 18. “relying on Allah alone” 19. “by Allah’s grace – placed him upon that path” 	19
Final Conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “a marvel of history that has only come about to pave the way for al-Malhamah al-Kubrā (the grand battle prior to the Hour)” 2. “companionship with its muhājirīn, those who plunge into the malāhim (the great battles prior to the Hour)” 3. “he will be gathered with them on the Day of Resurrection” 4. “they believed in Allah and the Day of Judgment without 	14

	<p>seeing either of them”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. “So it is upon them that the Hour will be established” 6. “the name of our magazine was taken from the area named Dābiq in the northern countryside of Halab, due to the significant role it will play during the events of al-Malhamah al-Kubrā (The Grand Battle) against the crusaders” 7. “The Hour will not be established until the Romans land at alA’māq or Dābiq” 8. “Then an army from Madīnah of the best people on the earth at that time will leave for them” 9. “One third of them will be killed; they will be the best martyrs with Allah” 10. “And one third will conquer them; they will never be afflicted with fitnah” 11. “Then they will conquer Constantinople” 12. “preparing for battle and filing their ranks” 13. “When the enemy of Allah sees [Jesus Christ], he will melt as salt melts in water” 14. “We ask Allah to place us in the camp of the believers on the day of al-Malhamah and keep us firm until he grants us either victory or shahādah” 	
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Table 3: *Dabiq* Issue 3

Dabiq Issue 9: Sha’ban 1436

Theme	Data	Frequency
Jihad	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “the virtues of jihād” 2. “steps to make hijrah to the lands of jihād” 3. “the obligations of hijrah, jihād, and bay’ah” 4. “perform jihād against both of them” 5. “Be patient upon jihād” 6. “jihād to be exerting oneself in obedience to Allah” 7. “a Muslim who cares for a mujāhid’s family during his absence achieves reward for the mujāhid’s jihād” 8. “ribāt becomes the best jihād” 9. “nothing is equal in reward to jihād and ribāt” 10. “ribāt is the root and branch of jihād” 11. “Jihād is better than it because of its hardship and fatigue” 12. “jihād – on the personal level – consists of strides on a roadmap towards shahādah” 13. “One first performs hijrah to the lands of jihād... and finally achieves shahādah” 14. “living jihād on a day to day basis” 	20

	<p>15. “maximize the fruits of his jihād”</p> <p>16. “Their evil became most apparent in issues related to jihād”</p> <p>17. “If one desired to perform jihād, these leaders would warn that jihād now was a conspiracy to kill off the sincere Muslim youth and thereby leave the Muslims’ lands to the secularists”</p> <p>18. “If one wanted to join a jihād jamā’ah, they would warn that it was the creation of the kuffār so as to aid in achieving kāfir interests”</p> <p>19. “If jihād operations – like those of September 11th – were carried out against the kuffār, they would claim these operations were conspiracies by the kuffār to justify their aggression against Muslims”</p> <p>20. “Conspiracy theories have thereby become an excuse to abandon jihād, to have great awe for the kuffār”</p>	
Sharia	<p>1. “the very crusaders who belittle the Sharī’ah on their news and entertainment programs, who arm the secularists and Rawāfid in Muslim lands, who imprison and torture Muslim men and women, and on top of all who burn the Qur’an and mock the Prophet”</p>	1
Militancy	<p>1. “The two mujāhidīn came armed and ready to wage war, ignited a gun battle with the policemen guarding the center, and attained a noble shahādah”</p> <p>2. “Many of those who attained shahādah fighting the crusaders in their own lands”</p> <p>3. “the kuffār will have no peace and no security”</p> <p>4. “trains (i’dād) for the purpose of jihād, then patiently spends months of rībat, serves countless hours of guard duty (hirāsah), then fights (qitāl) in battles and kills (qatl) whom he can from amongst the kāfir enemy, and finally achieves shahādah”</p>	4
Caliphate	<p>1. “two lions of the Khilāfah”</p> <p>2. “perform ribāt and fear Allah that you may be successful”</p> <p>3. “perform ribāt” (8 instances)</p> <p>4. “perform the well-known ribāt for Allah’s cause at the frontier posts”</p> <p>5. “He is a murābit even if the frontier post he defends is quiet, although the reward for defending a dangerous front is greater”</p> <p>6. “A day of ribāt for Allah’s cause is better than the world and everything it contains”</p> <p>7. “Ribāt for a day and night is better than fasting and performing night-prayer for a month”</p> <p>8. “And if he dies during ribāt, he will go on receiving his reward for his deeds perpetually”</p> <p>9. “A day of ribāt for Allah’s cause is better than a thousand days spent elsewhere”</p>	42

	<p>10. “A day of ribāt for Allah’s cause is more beloved to me”</p> <p>11. “murābitīn defending the frontier posts”</p> <p>12. “If the murābitīn abandoned their positions, leaving them defenseless, all Muslim cities, towns, and villages would be under the threat of being attacked and ransacked”</p> <p>13. “when one performs ribāt it is best (not obligatory) that he does so for at least forty days or even more before returning for rest”</p> <p>14. “The deeds of every dead person come to a halt with his death except the one who is a murābit for Allah’s cause”</p> <p>15. “If he (the murābit) dies during ribāt, he will go on receiving his reward for his deeds perpetually, he will receive his provision, and he will be saved from the tribulation (of the grave) “</p> <p>16. “This death is of the noblest deaths and this reward is guaranteed for the murābit who passes away during ribāt even if his death is due to disease, elderliness, or some accident”</p> <p>17. “How much more noble is his death when it is shahādah caused by the airstrikes of the crusaders and their apostate allies”</p> <p>18. “the reward for dying while on ribāt continues to grow independent of any other condition, and this is only for the murābit”</p> <p>19. “This reward is not mentioned for the battleground shahīd but for the murābit who might have died during his ribāt due to old age and while sleeping for rest”</p> <p>20. “how noble of a death is this”</p> <p>21. “supplicate for the noblest death – shahādah – while on ribāt”</p> <p>22. “ribāt becomes the best jihād”</p> <p>23. “Ribāt defends the Muslims and their families”</p> <p>24. “It is strength for the people of the frontier posts and the people of battle”</p> <p>25. “ribāt is the root and branch of jihād”</p> <p>26. “The best ribāt is the fiercest”</p> <p>27. “one performed ribāt in general and returned to it after battle, then fighting in battle would be better because of what it contains of dangers and hardship”</p> <p>28. “fighting in battle to avoid ribāt is improper for the true mujāhid to merely consider”</p> <p>29. “In general, living on the frontiers, performing ribāt, and concerning oneself with ribāt is a great matter”</p> <p>30. “Everyone who wanted to dedicate himself to the worship of Allah, devote himself to Him, and achieve the best zuhd, worship, and awareness, then the scholars would direct him towards the frontier posts”</p>	
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	<p>31. “The opportunity for good deeds while on ribāt is greater than that during battle”</p> <p>32. “ribāt will also multiply the blessings in other acts of worship he performs while at the frontier posts”</p> <p>33. “One first performs hijrah to the lands of jihād (now, dārul-Islām), then gives bay’ah, pledging what it entails of obedience (sam’ and tā’ah) to the amīr (now, the Khalīfah) and commitment to the jamā’ah (now, the Khilāfah)”</p> <p>34. “be patient on the fearsome battlefield while not enduring the hardships of ribāt”</p> <p>35. “May Allah (ta’ālā) grant every Muslim the blessing of ribāt at the Khilāfah frontier posts and the patience needed to keep him firm until he meets Him”</p>	
Hijrah	<p>1. “steps to make hijrah to the lands of jihād”</p> <p>2. “they were granted shahādah without facing the difficulties of hijrah”</p> <p>3. “the obligations of hijrah, jihād, and bay’ah”</p> <p>4. “hijrah to be abandoning what Allah dislikes”</p> <p>5. “One first performs hijrah to the lands of jihād”</p> <p>6. “One first performs hijrah to the lands of jihād (now, dārul-Islām), then gives bay’ah, pledging what it entails of obedience (sam’ and tā’ah) to the amīr (now, the Khalīfah) and commitment to the jamā’ah (now, the Khilāfah)”</p>	6
Enmity against the West	<p>1. “crusaders continue to reveal their intense hatred and animosity towards Islam through their relentless bombing and drone campaigns on the Islamic State”</p> <p>2. “a new breed of crusader continues shedding light on the extent of their hatred towards the religion of truth”</p> <p>3. “Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is greater”</p> <p>4. “This breed of crusader aims to do nothing more than to anger the Muslims by mocking and ridiculing the best of creation, the Prophet”</p> <p>5. “rather than deterring or disheartening the Muslims, serve as further incitement, spurring them into confronting the forces of kufr with whatever means they have available”</p> <p>6. “they choose to wage war on Islam”</p> <p>7. “inspiration to those residing in the lands of the crusaders who are still hesitant to perform their duty”</p> <p>8. “Many of those who attained shahādah fighting the crusaders in their own lands”</p> <p>9. “the very crusaders who belittle the Sharī’ah on their news and entertainment programs, who arm the secularists and Rawāfid in Muslim lands, who imprison and torture Muslim men and women, and on top of all who burn the Qur’an and mock the Prophet”</p> <p>10. “the true men will step forward, and the kuffār will have no</p>	50

	<p>peace and no security”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. “airstrikes of the crusaders” 12. “all the frontier posts are the priority for the crusaders and apostates in their attempts and plans to advance on the lands of the Khilāfah” 13. “the kuffār had the near absolute knowledge, power, and ownership to plot and execute any grand conspiracy of their desire” 14. “If one wanted to join a jihād jamā’ah, they would warn that it was the creation of the kuffār so as to aid in achieving kāfir interests” 15. “If jihād operations – like those of September 11th – were carried out against the kuffār, they would claim these operations were conspiracies by the kuffār to justify their aggression against Muslims” 16. “If a mujāhid leader achieved shahādah, they would say that the kuffār used him up and needed to dispose of him just in case he decided to come out and expose the ‘conspiracy’ of which he was supposedly a part” 17. “If the mujāhidīn liberated territory occupied by the kuffār, they would say that the kuffār allowed them to do so because kāfir interests necessitated a prolonged war” 18. “If the mujāhidīn announced an Islamic state, they would say that the kuffār facilitated such so as to justify their continued interference in Muslim affairs” 19. “And so, according to these theorists, almost all the events of the world were somehow linked back to the kuffār, their intelligence agencies, research, technology, and coconspirators” 20. “Conspiracy theories have thereby become an excuse to abandon jihād, to have great awe for the kuffār” 21. “different Sawhah factions openly and publically meeting with Qatar, Turkey, Āl Salūl, and the Americans and discussing their plans for cooperation against the Islamic State, while claiming that the muhājirīn and ansār are allies and agents of foreign states” 22. “As for when the cooperation with the kuffār against Muslims is clearly public, it suddenly becomes ‘maslahah’ (the greater “good”)” 23. “It is a ‘maslahah’ to cooperate with the Americans against the Islamic State, not a conspiracy of kufr and treachery” 24. “It is a ‘maslahah’ to cooperate with those factions backed by the tawāghīt and crusaders against the Islamic State, not deviance nor apostasy” 25. “It is a ‘maslahah’ to advance under the cover of crusader and apostate planes against the Islamic State, not a gate to the deepest levels of Hellfire” 	
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	<p>26. “It is a ‘maslahah’ to use the words ‘civil law,’ ‘civil state,’ and ‘self-determination,’ not submission to the demands of one’s crusader and apostate backers”</p> <p>27. “The extreme belief in conspiracy theories varies between minor and major shirk depending on the degree of power, knowledge, and ownership attributed by its believer to the kuffār”</p> <p>28. “the kuffār may appear united whereas their hearts are actually full of animosity and enmity for each other”</p> <p>29. “animosity and enmity between the followers of the different kufri religions [Christianity and Judaism] is manifest in their words”</p> <p>30. “the hypocritical allies of the kuffār are too unreliable to execute the orders of the kuffār”</p> <p>31. “This explains the great partisan hatred the various Jewish parties have for each other”</p> <p>32. “division and differing of the Jews and Christians and the animosity present between the two religions and their sects”</p> <p>33. “The Jewish state itself was established for the Jews primarily by the British crusaders”</p> <p>34. “And it was through Jewish-Crusader relationships and the self-degradation of the Arab apostates that the Jews gained mastery over the Arab tawāghīt”</p> <p>35. “The knowledge, power, and ownership of the kuffār are weak and limited”</p> <p>36. “The kuffār are divided, hold animosity and enmity towards each other, carry out violence against each other, humiliate and degrade each other, yet they unite against the Muslims, their common enemy”</p> <p>37. “the kuffār’s unity is fragile and superficial”</p> <p>38. “They often divide after unity and betray each other”</p> <p>39. “The kuffār undoubtedly do plot out conspiracies, but these plots are weak due to the fragile relationships the kuffār have with each other, the unreliability and cowardice of their hypocritical allies and agents, the kuffār’s fear of the Muslims more than their own fear of Allah, and the kuffār’s fear of death and love of the Dunyā”</p> <p>40. “The mujāhidīn against the communist Russians were not agents of the crusader Americans”</p> <p>41. “different apostates waging nationalist wars always had open relationships with their kāfir allies”</p> <p>42. “The Iraqi Sahwah openly met with Bush, the Iraqi regime, and Rāfidī leaders”</p> <p>43. “The Americans openly discuss their backing of the Syrian Sahwah and the support granted to its ‘Islamic’ factions by American allies – Qatar, Turkey, and Āl Salūl”</p> <p>44. “And long ago, the agents of the “Arab Revolt” would</p>	
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	<p>openly meet in Europe, Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Shām, and Iraq with different crusader officials from amongst the British”</p> <p>45. “How many members of the crusader government would have to be under permanent watch to prevent news of the operation getting out before its execution”</p> <p>46. “Does America have control over so many factors”</p> <p>47. “The attack was against America itself, and according to the conspiracy theorists, it was executed by the Americans”</p> <p>48. “the mujāhidīn under the leadership of Shaykh Usāmah (rahimahullāh) carried out the blessed attack and thereby humiliated America in a manner it never experienced before”</p> <p>49. “The purpose of conspiracy theories is to exaggerate the power of the kuffār and thereby the Muslims become paralyzed by analysis of current events and eventually fear the kuffār more than they fear Allah”</p> <p>50. “May Allah expose the real conspiracies of the kuffār and erase the shirkī conspiracy theories from the hearts”</p>	
<p>Non-Muslims and Apostate Muslims</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “execute the agenda of the tawāghīt in the region” 2. “when the apostates (the Tawāghīt and the Rāfidah) fight each other, it is not permissible for the Muslim to support one party of apostates against the other by fighting under the leadership of one party or fighting in its defense” 3. “If he does fight under the leadership of the tāghūt in defense of his kufrī regime, he apostatizes from Islam” 4. “declare his barā’ah from both apostate parties and – if he is able – to perform jihād against both of them for Allah’s sake” 5. “it is the addiction of these factions to tāghūt aid” 6. “they slide down a slippery slope of concessions ending with blatant apostasy” 7. “the jihād claimants of the Jawlānī front wage ‘jihād’ against their allies, the shameless slaves of Āl Salūl” 8. “endless excuses prepared for each blatant statement of apostasy made by them” 9. “May Allah expose the hypocritical and apostate allies of “al-Qā’idah” in Shām” 10. “outlast the kuffār in patience and to perform ribāt against the mushrikīn” 11. “perform ribāt for Allah’s cause against your enemies and your religion’s enemies from amongst the people of shirk” 12. “their apostate allies” 13. “the apostate tawāghīt’s era, whose era is ended” 14. “all the frontier posts are the priority for the crusaders and apostates in their attempts and plans to advance on the lands of the Khilāfah” 	<p>57</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. “Sadly, this shirkī attitude (both minor and major) entered the hearts and minds of many supposedly ‘Islamic’ leaders, scholars, and callers – in imitation of the Arab nationalists before them” 16. “the kuffār had the near absolute knowledge, power, and ownership to plot and execute any grand conspiracy of their desire” 17. “Their [apostates] evil became most apparent in issues related to jihād” 18. “If one desired to perform jihād, these leaders would warn that jihād now was a conspiracy to kill off the sincere Muslim youth and thereby leave the Muslims’ lands to the secularists” 19. “If one wanted to join a jihād jamā’ah, they would warn that it was the creation of the kuffār so as to aid in achieving kāfir interests” 20. “If jihād operations – like those of September 11th – were carried out against the kuffār, they would claim these operations were conspiracies by the kuffār to justify their aggression against Muslims” 21. “If a mujāhid leader achieved shahādah, they would say that the kuffār used him up and needed to dispose of him just in case he decided to come out and expose the ‘conspiracy’ of which he was supposedly a part” 22. “If the mujāhidīn liberated territory occupied by the kuffār, they would say that the kuffār allowed them to do so because kāfir interests necessitated a prolonged war” 23. “If the mujāhidīn announced an Islamic state, they would say that the kuffār facilitated such so as to justify their continued interference in Muslim affairs” 24. “And so, according to these theorists, almost all the events of the world were somehow linked back to the kuffār, their intelligence agencies, research, technology, and coconspirators” 25. “Conspiracy theories have thereby become an excuse to abandon jihād, to have great awe for the kuffār” 26. “these conspiracy claimants are themselves involved in real kāfir conspiracies” 27. “Iraqi Sahwah fighting alongside the Iraqi army – openly backed by Iran – while claiming that the mujāhidīn are agents of Iran” 28. “Sahwah factions openly handing over territory to the Nusayrī regime, while claiming the mujāhidīn cooperate with the Nusayrī regime” 29. “different Sawhah factions openly and publically meeting with Qatar, Turkey, Āl Salūl, and the Americans and discussing their plans for cooperation against the Islamic 	
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	<p>State, while claiming that the muhājirīn and ansār are allies and agents of foreign states”</p> <p>30. “Syrian National Coalition considering meetings in Geneva with the Nusayrī regime, while claiming that the Islamic State strives to serve regime interests”</p> <p>31. “As for when the cooperation with the kuffār against Muslims is clearly public, it suddenly becomes ‘maslahah’ (the greater “good”)”</p> <p>32. “It is a ‘maslahah’ to cooperate with the Americans against the Islamic State, not a conspiracy of kufr and treachery”</p> <p>33. “It is a ‘maslahah’ to cooperate with those factions backed by the tawāghīt and crusaders against the Islamic State, not deviance nor apostasy”</p> <p>34. “It is a ‘maslahah’ to advance under the cover of crusader and apostate planes against the Islamic State, not a gate to the deepest levels of Hellfire”</p> <p>35. “It is a ‘maslahah’ to use the words ‘civil law,’ ‘civil state,’ and ‘self-determination,’ not submission to the demands of one’s crusader and apostate backers”</p> <p>36. “The extreme belief in conspiracy theories varies between minor and major shirk depending on the degree of power, knowledge, and ownership attributed by its believer to the kuffār”</p> <p>37. “If one were to reinterpret the history of the Muslims in accordance to the conspiracy theories of these theorists, he would come out with grave deviance”</p> <p>38. “the kuffār may appear united whereas their hearts are actually full of animosity and enmity for each other”</p> <p>39. “animosity and enmity between the followers of the different kufri religions is manifest in their words”</p> <p>40. “the hypocritical allies of the kuffār are too unreliable to execute the orders of the kuffār”</p> <p>41. “that which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them [the Jews] in transgression and disbelief”</p> <p>42. “We have cast among them animosity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection”</p> <p>43. “This explains the great partisan hatred the various Jewish parties have for each other”</p> <p>44. “division and differing of the Jews and Christians and the animosity present between the two religions and their sects”</p> <p>45. “The Jews are humiliated in all the lands”</p> <p>46. “They [the Jews] have been put under humiliation wherever they are overtaken”</p> <p>47. “And they have drawn upon themselves anger from Allah and have been put under destitution”</p> <p>48. “the accursed Jews are always in humiliation and</p>	
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	<p>overpowered”</p> <p>49. “And it was through Jewish-Crusader relationships and the self-degradation of the Arab apostates that the Jews gained mastery over the Arab tawāghīt”</p> <p>50. “Whoever believes that has fallen into shirk”</p> <p>51. “do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies”</p> <p>52. “different apostates waging nationalist wars always had open relationships with their kāfir allies”</p> <p>53. “The Iraqi Sahwah openly met with Bush, the Iraqi regime, and Rāfidī leaders”</p> <p>54. The ‘Islamic’ Sahwah factions of Iraq would openly fight alongside the tribal Sahwah against the Islamic State and would have public political representation under the shade of regional tawāghīt”</p> <p>55. “The Americans openly discuss their backing of the Syrian Sahwah and the support granted to its ‘Islamic’ factions by American allies – Qatar, Turkey, and Āl Salūl”</p> <p>56. “And long ago, the agents of the “Arab Revolt” would openly meet in Europe, Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Shām, and Iraq with different crusader officials from amongst the British”</p> <p>57. “rival parties of the kuffār forming real alliances – like the Crusader-Safawī- Nusayrī coalition – to wage war against the Islamic State and thereby achieve their mutual kāfir interests”</p>	
Ummah	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “achieve the Ummah’s interest” 2. “this sectarian mission aims at dividing the Ummah” 3. “defeat the enemies of the Ummah” 	3
Divine Sanction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “vengeance for the honor of our beloved Prophet” 2. “Their determination to support the cause of Allah and punish those who insult the Prophet” 3. “Allah will surely support those who support Him” 4. “May Allah expose the hypocritical and apostate allies of “al-Qā’idah” in Shām” 5. “the enemies of Allah” 6. “for the cause of Allah” 7. “by which Allah erases your misdeeds and raises your ranks” 8. “stayed up guarding for Allah’s cause” 9. “Allah’s cause” (3 instances) 10. “May Allah (ta’ālā) grant every Muslim the blessing of ribāt at the Khilāfah frontier posts and the patience needed to keep him firm until he meets Him” 	12
Final Conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Day of Resurrection” 	1

Table 4: Dabiq Issue 9

Theme	Data	Frequency
Jihad	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Since the beginnings of the jihad in Sham” 2. “the soldiers of the Khilafah” 3. “This fiery battle, all-encompassing war, and major jihad which the Islamic State is engaged in today” 4. “lengthy history of this Ummah’s jihad against its enemies” 5. “faith will not be complete in the soul of the Jama’ah of the Muslims until the Jama’ah is exposed... jihad against mankind” 6. “Throughout our jihad and struggle against the coalitions of kufr” 7. “lions of jihad” 8. “waging jihad against your enemy” 9. “join the jihad” 10. “resume his jihad” 11. “supporting the cause of Allah” 	11
Sharia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “prevent the muwahhidin from establishing the religion and implementing the Shari’ah” 2. “supporting the religion of Allah and making His word supreme” 3. “topple anything that can be counted as being from the signs of the Shari’ah and its people” (referring to the Al Salul government) 4. “in order to establish Allah’s rule on earth” 5. “implementation of Allah’s Shari’ah” 6. “memorizing the Quran” 	6
Militancy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “the Islamic State calls Muslims to fight their enemies as much as they are able to” 2. “this call... answered by dozens of hidden soldiers of Allah, sending fear into the east and west using their knives... any other weapons” 3. “you must strike the Turkish taghut” 4. “Fight them; Allah will punish them” 5. “Start with the imams... Attack the police... Attack the scholars of the taghut and the supporters of Erdogan’s political party (AKP) as 6. well as other murtadd parties allied to him” 7. “do not forget to kill the citizens of Crusader nations” 8. “Therefore, O men of the Arabian Peninsula, O grandsons of the Sahabah, attack them, following one attack with another” 9. “Know that today you are the armor and strong fort of Islam” 	36

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. "He has burdened you with protecting it, defending it, and establishing Allah's rule therein" 11. "multitude of weapons and techniques" 12. "harvest a large kill count" 13. "reaping large numbers of casualties" 14. "harvesting through his attack" 15. "smashing their bodies" 16. "crushing their heads, torsos, and limbs" 17. "leaving behind a trail of carnage" 18. "comprehensive methods of attack" 19. "lethal methods of attack" 20. "harvesting large numbers of the kuffar" 21. "granting the level of carnage that is sought" 22. "causing a blood bath" 23. "ensuring the destruction" 24. "giving victims less of a chance to escape" 25. "Applicable Targets" 26. "not conditional to target gatherings restricted to government or military" 27. "parades and gatherings are fair game and more devastating" 28. "I am a soldier of the Islamic State" 29. "ensure utmost carnage" 30. "until he is martyred" 31. "the kill count can be maximized" 32. "spending both his wealth and life" 33. "to be allowed to defend the prophet" 34. "battles... wide scale offensive" 35. "several major towns were liberated" 36. "fight for the cause of Allah, to kill and to be killed" 	
Caliphate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "prevent the muwahhidin from establishing the religion" 2. "the soldiers of the Khilafah" 3. "burdened by seeing an example of Islamic rule being realized for the people, one that they could see and live" 4. "a state wherein you can either live with glory or die with dignity, without the lowly Rafidah, wicked Nusayriyyah, and vile atheists daring to touch your honor" 5. "Verily you will be victorious [over your enemy], will achieve [ghanimah], and will conquer [many lands], so whoever witnesses that must fear Allah, command virtue, and forbid vice" 6. "He has burdened you with protecting it, defending it, and establishing Allah's rule therein." 7. "To the soldiers of the Khilafah in Khurasan, Bengal, Indonesia, Qawqaz, the Philippines... West Africa: Know that today, you are the supports of Islam and the pegs of the Khilafah in the earth" 8. "You have enraged the nations of kufr with your coming" 	13

	<p>together and waging jihad, just as they have equally been enraged by the rise of the Khilafah”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. “soldiers of the Khilafah” 10. “the cradle of the Khilafah and fortress of Islam in Iraq and Sham” 11. “the Khilafah did not stumble on account of their deaths” 12. “The Islamic State will remain” 13. “revival of the Khilafah” 	
Hijrah	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “O you whose path to performing hijrah to Dar al-Islam has been blocked by the murtadd” 2. “O Muslims in the east and the west!” 3. “if the roads for making hijrah to Iraq and Sham are closed or confined, then Allah has made an open path for them to make hijrah to one of those other blessed wilayat, where they might uphold another solid structure of Islam” 4. “left for the blessed land of Sham to join the jihad” 	4
Enmity against the West	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Modern crusade against the usurped Muslim lands” 2. “harmonious with the jahili American vision for the world, which they named the ‘New World Order’” 3. “following the path of democracy and accepting secularism” (referring to Erdogan’s presidency) 4. “assisted the Crusaders in hiding their embarrassing defeat” 5. “hook up with the Crusader nations” 6. “until its borders met the fate of other Sykes-Picot borders that the mujahidin had removed with their own hands” 7. “the battle intensified between the Islamic State and the Crusader coalition” 8. “did not heed the lesson of their Crusader allies, whom the mujahidin attacked and engaged in their own cities... as occurred in Paris and Brussels” 9. “do not forget to kill the citizens of Crusader nations wherever you find them. Make examples of them for those behind them to be terrorstruck and take revenge by killing them for the crimes perpetrated against your brothers.” 10. “here is the disbelieving world today having mobilized, called out, formed coalitions and parties... to wage war against Islam and its people and to plot against the believers and their religion with all means available and with everything it can muster of military equipment” “extinguish the light of Allah, in enmity towards His religion and methodology on the earth, and due to their fear and terror that the people of Islam and Sunnah” 11. “Indeed, the enemies of Allah – the Jews, Christians, atheists, Rafidah, apostates, and all the nations of disbelief – dedicated their media, wealth, armies, and vehicles to wage war against the Muslims” 12. “Seeing the Muslims living in honor and security therein 	38

	<p>deprived them of sleep”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. “And this is what they fear most, because it is the path to spreading the authority of Islam and expanding its territory” 14. “O soldiers of the Khilafah, if you stand before America’s planes and allies, then stand with steadfastness” 15. “humiliation and disgrace... Do you not see the Rafidah, every day, afflicting you with the worst of torment?” 16. “They raid your lands under the pretext of waging war against the Islamic State, then they don’t depart until they’ve either killed your men and taken your women and children prisoner” 17. “Iraq having its cities emptied of Ahlus-Sunnah and filled with the most despicable of Allah’s creation and the most evil” 18. “contemplate their deeds when they expel you from your land” 19. “Here are your territories being divided up by the disbelieving” 20. “Here is Halab, facing the most tyrannical and vicious Nusayri campaign with kafir, Magian, and Russian support, through which they aim to establish an alternative, Nusayri entity” 21. “for the sake of the interests of their masters and backers from among the nations of kufr” 22. “And the plots and schemes of the Romans continue to proceed forth... to put the Rafidah in power” 23. “they took part – through actual military participation – with the nations of kufr in waging war against Islam and the Sunnah in Iraq and Sham” 24. “Indeed, they are the head of every tribulation and the reason for every calamity” 25. “Therefore, O men of the Arabian Peninsula, O grandsons of the Sahabah, attack them, following one attack with another” 26. “Remember the final will of your prophet ﷺ that “there cannot exist two religions in the peninsula of the Arabs” 27. “supported by Crusader coalition warplanes” 28. “Crusaders in their war against the Khilafah” 29. “a firm, military arm of the Crusader coalition against Islam and its people, an arm the Crusaders could not dispense with on the ground” 30. “They are fighting with obscenity and infidelity in their hearts” 31. “Crusader Europe has not ceased in their ambition to attack the cradle of the Khilafah and fortress of Islam in Iraq and Sham” 32. “hardheaded, obstinate kafir nation that wishes to engage in 	
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	<p>war on the Islamic State”</p> <p>33. “harvesting through his attack the slaughter of 86 Crusader citizens”</p> <p>34. “more devastating to Crusader nations”</p> <p>35. “harsh towards the kufar... inspiration for many Muslims around the world”</p> <p>36. “growing up in the lands of the Crusaders... ills of society are glamorized”</p> <p>37. “life of humiliation, living under the rule of the kuffar”</p> <p>38. “fight against the Crusader coalition forces”</p>	
Non-Muslims and Apostate Muslims	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “found no better than the Murtadd Brotherhood to be the role model” 2. “realized the corruption of their creed and their allegiance to enemies of the religion” (referring to the Muslim Brotherhood) 3. “most disgraceful school of the Murtadd Brotherhood” 4. “swamp of shirk” 5. “most loyal of them to the mushrikin” 6. “the wicked Erdogan” 7. “given an aura needed to deceive the fools of mankind” 8. “helped them establish the foundations of the Rafidi government in Baghdad” 9. “Erdogan... strived to drag the various militant factions into relationships with him” 10. “with the backing of Erdogan’s army” 11. “Erdogan and his vile state attempted to keep their war on the Islamic State ‘under wraps,’ hiding behind the murtadd factions” 12. “muwahhidin would turn on turkey, igniting it in a blazing war that would not be extinguished” 13. “the Turkish taghut revealed his prepared role” 14. “commanding his artillery to pound the villages and cities of the Muslims” 15. “his own evil” 16. “whoever feels himself safe from vengeance, has only himself to blame” (referring to Erdogan’s complacency”) 17. “did not heed the lesson of other murtadd governments, upon whom Allah has sent the soldiers of the Islamic State” 18. “the mujahidin destroyed their buildings and demolished their foundations” 19. “The Turkish government today, by entering into an open war with the Islamic State, is only cutting its own throat with its own knife... hanging itself with its own ropes” 20. “the murtadd, Turkish border patrol forces!” 21. “strike the Turkish taghut and his murtadd followers” 22. “Start with the imams of kufr and the pillars of taghut therein. Attack the police, judges, and military. Attack the 	50

	<p>scholars of the taghut and the supporters of Erdogan’s political party (AKP) as</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. well as other murtadd parties allied to him” 24. “So We thus removed them from gardens, springs, treasures, and an honorable station” 25. “We drowned the others” 26. “Our punishment cannot be repelled from the people who are criminals” 27. “Turn the disbelievers’ night into day, bring destruction to their homes, make their blood flow like rivers” 28. “You have made the disbelievers taste horrors and have rubbed their noses in swamps” 29. “your rulers in the region have practiced the lowest and most despicable form of treachery history has known” 30. “all in the midst of the treachery of the apostate factions, which are busy fighting the Islamic State” 31. “extensive corruption the government of Al Salul engages in to secularize the land, turn all its people into disbelievers, spread immorality among them” 32. “Before you are the enemies of Allah... Before you are their cronies and their journalists. Before you are their leaders, their ministers, and their media trumpets” 33. “the secular, apostate state of Turkey had been despicable and cowardly” 34. “only to retract out of fear that the mujahidin would engulf its lands with fiery operations and scorching battles” 35. ”Indeed, their heedlessness will be their destruction” 36. “Turkey today has become a target for your operations and priority for your jihad, so seek Allah’s assistance and attack it” 37. “Turn their security into panic and their prosperity into dread, and add it to the scorching zones of your combat” 38. “the Turkish kafir soldier has come to you while his blood is vile like that of a dog” 39. “Show them your strength, burn them with the fire of your wrath, and take revenge for your religion” 40. “the brothers of Shaytan, role models for the murtaddin, and allies of the atheists” 41. “Indeed, the Murtadd Brotherhood has emerged as a poisoned spearhead carried by the Crusaders in their war against the Khilafah” 42. “kufir of this deviant sect did not stop at their committing shirk with Allah” 43. “a firm, military arm of the Crusader coalition against Islam and its people” (referring to the Muslim Brotherhood) 44. “Their brothers increase them in deviance, then they do not stop” 	
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	<p>45. “They are fighting, and they shall end in the Fire”</p> <p>46. “Do not be like those nations who passed before you, who took a portion and left another, so Allah put enmity and hatred between them”</p> <p>47. “enemies of Allah” (3 instances)</p> <p>48. “stabbed a kafir in the back of the head with a pen for insulting the prophet”</p> <p>49. “these people were upon falsehood”</p> <p>50. “join the fight against the Crusader coalition forces”</p>	
Ummah	<p>1. “lengthy history of this Ummah’s jihad against its enemies”</p> <p>2. “Be patient with the bitterness, for it is as if the Ummah’s division will be healed soon”</p> <p>3. “for the religion and the Ummah”</p>	3
Divine Sanction	<p>1. “soldiers of Allah”</p> <p>2. “by Allah’s permission”</p> <p>3. “Allah will punish them at your hands, He will disgrace them, He will support you against them, and He will heal the breasts of a believing people”</p> <p>4. “as perhaps Allah will restrain them through you”</p> <p>5. “And Allah is mightier than them and more severe in torment”</p> <p>6. “it is the promise of Allah that He has made and His news that He has affirmed”</p> <p>7. “precursor to the solid victory and a sign of the clear conquest that Allah has promised His slaves”</p> <p>8. “Allah, His Messenger, and His religion... which belongs to Allah and which He makes whom He wills of His slaves inherit”</p> <p>9. “Allah defends His slaves and the effects of His strength, His might, and His power appear”</p> <p>10. “Allah intended to establish the truth by His words and to eliminate the disbelievers, that He should establish the truth and abolish falsehood”</p> <p>11. “relying upon Him in whose hand is the domain of the heavens and the earth”</p> <p>12. “Indeed, my Lord is on a straight path”</p> <p>13. “if the sky were to clamp down on the earth, Allah would make an opening for the believers”</p> <p>14. “go forth with Allah’s blessing, for indeed, this war is your war”</p> <p>15. “you will find the richest share of reward and means for achieving great success, attaining the companionship of those upon whom Allah has bestowed favor”</p> <p>16. “May Allah reward you with good on behalf of Islam and the Muslims”</p> <p>17. “You were, and continue to be – after Allah – the best source of support, strength, and aid”</p>	72

	<p>18. “which strive to remove Allah’s rule from the earth”</p> <p>19. “After Allah, you have nothing but the Islamic State to protect your religion”</p> <p>20. “so seek Allah’s assistance and attack it”</p> <p>21. “And verily Allah is with the people of taqwa”</p> <p>22. “This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us”</p> <p>23. “who strive for Allah’s cause in order to establish Allah’s rule on earth”</p> <p>24. “May Allah kill them! How deluded they are”</p> <p>25. “beware – may Allah have mercy upon you – that Islam and Muslims be hurt from your direction, for the sunan of Allah are not partial to anyone”</p> <p>26. “Allah has employed you and has made you inheritors of the earth in order to see how you act”</p> <p>27. “practice fear of Allah and obedience to Him to gain His support and promise”</p> <p>28. “in all conditions, for indeed fearing Allah is the best weapon against the enemy and the strongest strategy of war”</p> <p>29. “Truly, the Muslims are only supported because of their enemy’s disobedience to Allah”</p> <p>30. “if we do not defeat them due to our virtue, we will not overcome them by our might”</p> <p>31. “there are angels from Allah who know what you are doing, so have shame before them and do not act in disobedience to Allah while you are fighting for his cause”</p> <p>32. “Ask Allah for help against yourselves just as you ask Him for support against your enemy”</p> <p>33. “If you have left a land due to your sins, reclaim it by repenting and fearing your Lord, for it is only right that you do so”</p> <p>34. “Remember that your enemy is fighting for the cause of taghut, while you are fighting for Allah’s cause”</p> <p>35. “They are fighting, and they shall end in the Fire”</p> <p>36. “declaring the tawhid of your Lord, waging jihad against your enemy, and striving to make Allah’s word supreme in the land”</p> <p>37. “When you encounter an enemy, stand firm and remember Allah much that you may be successful”</p> <p>38. “Allah is with the patient”</p> <p>39. “Listen to them as a means to get closer to Allah, and obey them as an act of worship for Allah” (referring to ISIS leadership)</p> <p>40. “Know that if some of your leaders are killed, then Allah will replace them with those who are equal or better than them”</p> <p>41. “Allah will not neglect you, so do not be disheartened”</p> <p>42. “Truly, Allah is with us”</p>	
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	<p>43. “you can expect from Allah that for which they cannot hope”</p> <p>44. “We ask that Allah make your liberation at our hands and the destruction of your prisons through our weapons”</p> <p>45. “Allah is preparing you for a day on which you will support your religion and your state”</p> <p>46. “for your brothers in the Islamic State, that Allah gives them right guidance in their affairs, that He provides them with the best of His provision”</p> <p>47. “Yet we give you glad tidings, by Allah’s grace and favor, that the Khilafah did not stumble on account of their deaths”</p> <p>48. “offerings before Allah, seeking His pleasure and requesting clear victory and near conquest, by Allah’s permission”</p> <p>49. “O Allah, Revealer of the Book, Mover of the Clouds, Vanquisher of the Factions! Vanquish them and support us against them!”</p> <p>50. “O Allah, punish the criminal kuffar, those who avert from Your cause, who belie Your messengers, and who fight against Your awliya”</p> <p>51. “O Allah, eradicate them, kill them while dispersed, and do not leave any of them alive!”</p> <p>52. “O Allah, scatter their multitudes and divide their unity!”</p> <p>53. “O Allah, whoever seeks to harm us, our religion, and our jihad, then make his harm come back at him, until he is destroyed by his own hands!”</p> <p>54. “O Allah, plot for us and not against us!”</p> <p>55. “Guide us, facilitate our guidance, and support us against those who transgress against us!”</p> <p>56. “destruction upon the enemies of Allah”</p> <p>57. “terrorizing the enemies of Allah”</p> <p>58. “allegiance to the Khalifah... making Allah’s word supreme”</p> <p>59. “carnage upon the enemies of Allah”</p> <p>60. “remembrance of Allah and the sincerity of intending the attack solely to please Him”</p> <p>61. “repeat du’a for His assistance and acceptance”</p> <p>62. “Exalted is Allah, who subdued this for us”</p> <p>63. “seeking Allah’s contentment”</p> <p>64. “spending both his wealth and his life for the sake of Allah”</p> <p>65. “loved Allah... more than anything or anyone else”</p> <p>66. “he did not lose hope in Allah’s mercy”</p> <p>67. “by Allah’s grace”</p> <p>68. “the religion of Allah”</p> <p>69. “supporting the cause of Allah”</p> <p>70. “fight for the cause of Allah, to kill and to be killed” “I did this for You, my Lord”</p> <p>71. “Allah had something else destined for him”</p>	
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	72. “May Allah elevate his status”	
Final Conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “clear sign of our enemy’s destruction and eradication being near is the day they embark on war and declare it against Allah” 2. “the beginning of our victory” 3. “Remember the final will of your prophet ﷺ that “there cannot exist two religions in the peninsula of the Arabs” 4. “Verily you will be victorious [over your enemy], will achieve [ghanimah]” 	4

Table 5: Rumiyah Issue 3

Rumiyah Issue 9: Sha’ban 1438

Theme	Data	Frequency
Jihad	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “a man would be put into a hole dug into the ground, then a saw would be brought to him, put onto his head, and then he would be cut into two parts – and that would not avert him from his religion” 2. “His skin would be flayed with metal combs, tearing his flesh from his bone and nerves – and that would not avert him from his religion” 3. “jihad will continue as a constant factor on the earth” 4. “watching the mujahidin’s video releases and following their written and recorded news nurtures within the lion cub the love of jihad and the mujahidin and hatred towards their enemies” 5. “We ask Allah to grant us righteous offspring and to bring forth from us a generation that will wage jihad for His cause and bring victory to His religion” 	5
Sharia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “through their blessed deeds – not just their words – revived shar’i rulings which the taghut and their allies endeavored to either wipe out or replace” 2. “through their membership in the taghut’s army, security and intelligence agencies, and police force, which wage war against the Muslims and guard the shari’ah of the taghut” 3. “And in killing them there is the greatest of rewards, by Allah’s permission” 	3
Militancy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “So Kill the Mushrikin Wherever You Find Them” 2. “kill the mushrikin wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush” 3. “I was commanded to fight the people until they say ‘La ilaha illallah’” 	28

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. "As such, they are from the leaders of kufr whom Allah c has commanded us to fight" 5. "they are killed by a weapon that has a wide range of damage, as is the case when conducting artillery bombardment, or detonating explosive belts or car bombs in places where the fighters are present and they are mixed together with them" 6. "the evidence for the permissibility of targeting them with such weapons is the action of the Prophet g in setting up a catapult against the people of Taif even though there were those inside their fortresses who were not to be intentionally killed and who were mixed with the fighters in a manner in which it wasn't possible to distinguish between them" 7. "if they are inside a fortress, it is permissible to set up catapults against them, shoot fire at them, and drown them" 8. "the priests who serve as caretakers over their churches... are to be killed and enslaved" 9. "one should seek closeness to Allah by targeting the priests, monks, and others (those who serve as caretakers over the churches of the belligerent Christians, including the Christians of Misr), harming them and killing them" 10. "As for the monk who aids the people of his religion with his hand and his tongue, such as one who has an opinion which they seek when it comes to fighting or incites them, he is to be killed by the agreement of the scholars if he is subdued... even if he secluded in solitude in his place of worship" 11. "Then, When You Have Inflicted a Massacre, Secure Their Bonds" 12. "'So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens'" 13. "Muslims in Misr and elsewhere from among the lands of kufr can imprison the Christians, after having inflicted a massacre on them, their old and their young, and their men and their women" 14. "lands taken by force" (3 instances) 15. "'They destroyed their houses by their [own] hands and the hands of the believers'" 16. "targeting these churches with ruin and destruction is a matter that is permitted in the Shari'ah, and it is allowed to use this as a means of attaining closeness to Allah" 17. "Christians – including the Christians of Misr – do not have any sanctity with regards to their blood and their wealth because they are belligerent and do not have dhimmah" 	
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	<p>18. “If anyone from among them is killed, his blood is waste, and likewise their wealth is permissible for the Muslims to take”</p> <p>19. “And from among the greatest means of causing them detriment is to harm and kill their fighters”</p> <p>20. “target their churches and monasteries with destruction and ruin, until they believe in Allah the Almighty or give the jizyah willingly while humbled”</p> <p>21. “And sufficient was Allah for the believers in battle, and ever is Allah Powerful and Exalted in Might”</p> <p>22. “shahadah (martyrdom) according to Allah is of the highest ranks for His allies”</p> <p>23. “The shuhada are His special people, those brought close from amongst His slaves”</p> <p>24. “He loves to take His slaves as shuhada, having their blood shed for His love and contentment, while they prefer His pleasure and love over their own selves”</p> <p>25. “There is no way to achieve this rank except through those means that would lead to dominating the enemy”</p> <p>26. “Allah says, ‘Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you... But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you’”</p> <p>27. “they grow up with their eyes becoming accustomed to seeing weapons and equipment, including rifles, tactical vests, bullets, grenades, and explosive belts.”</p> <p>28. “The first thing that ‘Abdullah Ibn az-Zubayr said when he was little was ‘the sword, the sword’”</p>	
Caliphate	<p>1. “Every woman to whom Allah has granted the blessing of giving birth in the Islamic State should take advantage of this tremendous grace”</p> <p>2. “such is the likes of what the generation of the Khilafah must be raised upon so that it becomes a firm and course generation”</p> <p>3. “among the greatest of Allah’s blessings upon the lion cubs in the Khilafah – which the mother should recognize and take advantage of, and for which she should thank Allah – is that they are raised in the home and under the wing of a mujahid father”</p>	3
Hijrah	None	0
Enmity against the West	<p>1. “Muslims are being killed in the east and in the west – men, women, children, and the elderly altogether”</p> <p>2. “mushrikin and murtaddin are deploying all manner of destructive weaponry against them, raining devastation on their villages and towns”</p> <p>3. “[apostates are] disavowing themselves of every attack carried out against their Crusader allies, claiming that Islam does not permit such deeds and accusing those who carry</p>	7

	<p>them out of tarnishing the religion’s image”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. “the souls of the Christians are precious to [the tawaghit], and the Crusader nations behind them would seek them and defend them” 5. “This is what we are certain of in our war with the boastful cross-bearing American taghut” 6. “Even though they have their force and their tyrannical use of weapons and equipment, they face psychological degradation and a collapse of morale, the likes of which would crush mountains” 7. “beware of comfort and of the clothing of the non-Arabs” 	
<p>Non-Muslims and Apostate Muslims</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “evil scholars, the preachers of misguidance, and the tawaghit of the democratic parties are busy weeping over every mushrik struck by the hands of the mujahidin” 2. “[apostates are] disavowing themselves of every attack carried out against their Crusader allies, claiming that Islam does not permit such deeds and accusing those who carry them out of tarnishing the religion’s image” 3. “Their sinful tongues and filthy pens even go so far as to give those harbi (belligerent) kuffar protection with respect to their blood and their wealth, and to defame the noble muwahhidin” 4. “through their blessed deeds – not just their words – revived shar’i rulings which the tawaghit and their allies endeavored to either wipe out or replace” 5. “From among these blessed deeds were the successive attacks which the soldiers of the Islamic State in Misr and Sinai carried out against the Christians in those lands, targeting them with killings and assassinations, and afflicting their churches with burning and explosions” 6. “they brought upon them tremendous detriment and deepened their wounds” 7. “The last of the blessed attacks against them were the simultaneous explosions at two of their largest churches” 8. “More than 200 of the Christian mushrikin and their supporters from among the murtadd soldiers of the taghut were killed and wounded, and to Allah belongs all praise” 9. “the condition of the Christians in Misr, as well as the ruling of Islam concerning their blood, their wealth, their honor, and their churches, so that those who live may live upon evidence and those who perish may perish upon evidence” 10. “So Kill the Mushrikin Wherever You Find Them” 11. “default with regards to the blood of mushrikin is that it is permissible to shed” 12. “kill the musrhikin wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush” 	<p>78</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. "Committing shirk with Allah is a sin that makes one permissible to be killed, and believing in Him gives one protection, as the Prophet g said" 14. "I was commanded to fight the people until they say 'La ilaha illallah'" 15. The mushrikin cannot render their blood inviolable except through a dhimmah contract, or a covenant of security or safety" 16. "The inviolability of their blood in such cases would be an exceptional ruling, and whenever that ruling is terminated... their blood would go back to the default ruling of it being permissible to shed, and there is no disagreement among the Muslims in that regard" 17. "No Protection for Their Blood Except through Faith or a Covenant of Security" 18. "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture – [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled" 19. "The Christians residing in Misr today are belligerent kuffar" 20. "The belligerent (i.e. harbi) kafir is the one The aftermath of an attack on the belligerent Christians of Misr 7 who is neither a dhimmi nor one who's been granted security, regardless of whether he is a combatant or non-combatant, or whether he defames Islam or does not, or whether he transgresses against the blood, wealth, and honor of the Muslims or does not" 21. "the Christians of Misr... commit all of these transgressions" 22. "The Christians of Misr possess weapons in preparation to fight the Muslims" 23. "they are engaged in fighting the Muslims through their continuous transgressions against any Christian who embraces Islam, kidnapping them, killing them, and putting them through trial and tribulation in order to make them return to shirk" 24. "through their membership in the taghut's army, security and intelligence agencies, and police force, which wage war against the Muslims and guard the shari'ah of the taghut, and they are among the most sincere supporters of the taghut Sisi in Misr, and among his closest allies and most loyal partners in his war against Islam and the Muslims" 25. "they, their priests, and their monks are among the people most active in defaming the religion of Islam, the Noble 	
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	<p>Quran, and the Messenger g”</p> <p>26. “As such, they are from the leaders of kufr whom Allah c has commanded us to fight”</p> <p>27. “Allah c said, ‘And if they break their oaths after their covenant and defame your religion, then fight the leaders of kufr, for indeed, they have no covenant; [fight them that] they might cease””</p> <p>28. “With the permissibility of shedding the blood of belligerent Christians in general, including the Christians of Misr, it is the fighters among them who are to be targeted, and they are those who are capable of carrying a weapon, even if they don’t actually do so, and likewise those of them who support the fighters with their opinion and counsel”</p> <p>29. “As for those who don’t normally carry weapons, such as women, children, the elderly, and the infirm, the default with them is that they are to be taken as slaves, not that they are to be killed”</p> <p>30. “This is despite their blood not being protected since they continue to remain upon their shirk, and in that regard, children take the ruling of their fathers”</p> <p>31. “Furthermore, anyone among them who carries a weapon – regardless of whether they are a child or a woman – is to be killed, and whoever participates in the fighting by offering his opinion and counsel is likewise to be killed, even if he is from the elderly and infirm”</p> <p>32. “With regards to those of the non-combatant women and children from among the belligerent Christians who are killed unintentionally, their blood is waste – just like the blood of the combatants – because their blood is not protected since they neither embraced Islam nor do they have a covenant”</p> <p>33. ““Allah’s Messenger g was asked about the children of the mushrikin who are raided at night and [as a result], they (i.e. the Muslims) strike their women and children [in the raid]””</p> <p>34. “the killing of their women and children occurs as a consequence and is not deliberate, such as when they are killed in a raid by the mujahidin where it is difficult to distinguish between the fighters and the non-fighters”</p> <p>35. “they are killed by a weapon that has a wide range of damage, as is the case when conducting artillery bombardment, or detonating explosive belts or car bombs in places where the fighters are present and they are mixed together with them”</p> <p>36. “the evidence for the permissibility of targeting them with such weapons is the action of the Prophet g in setting up a catapult against the people of Taif even though there were those inside their fortresses who were not to be intentionally</p>	
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	<p>killed and who were mixed with the fighters in a manner in which it wasn't possible to distinguish between them"</p> <p>37. "in this is evidence for the permissibility of night raids and the killing of mushrikin in negligence and inattentiveness – even if it leads to their women and children being struck – and that the prohibition of killing their women and children applies to situations when they can be distinguished and separated"</p> <p>38. "if they are inside a fortress, it is permissible to set up catapults against them, shoot fire at them, and drown them"</p> <p>39. [referring to monks] "As for the one who mixes with them, or calls to their false religion, or advises and counsels them, his ruling does not differ from the ruling on the rest of their fighters"</p> <p>40. "Rather, he is even more severe in kufr and in waging war than they are"</p> <p>41. "the fuqaha differentiated between the monks who are secluded in the monasteries and the deserts, and the priests who serve as caretakers over their churches, for the latter are to be killed and enslaved, in contrast with the former, even though the blood of these monks has no sanctity due to them remaining upon their shirk and kufr of Allah the Almighty"</p> <p>42. "one should seek closeness to Allah by targeting the priests, monks, and others (those who serve as caretakers over the churches of the belligerent Christians, including the Christians of Misr), harming them and killing them"</p> <p>43. "As for the monk who aids the people of his religion with his hand and his tongue, such as one who has an opinion which they seek when it comes to fighting or incites them, he is to be killed by the agreement of the scholars if he is subdued, and he has jizyah taken from him even if he secluded in solitude in his place of worship"</p> <p>44. "Then, When You Have Inflicted a Massacre, Secure Their Bonds"</p> <p>45. "If we know that the blood of the Christians is permissible to shed, we know that taking them as slaves is also permissible, and likewise taking them prisoner and ransoming them for our prisoners or for wealth after having inflicted a massacre on them, due to the statement of Allah c"</p> <p>46. "So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens"</p> <p>47. "Muslims in Misr and elsewhere from among the lands of kufr can imprison the Christians, after having inflicted a massacre on them, their old and their young, and their men</p>	
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	<p>and their women”</p> <p>48. “There is no sanctity for the Christians’ churches in and of themselves, as they are places in which shirk and kufr are practiced”</p> <p>49. “Concerning the churches of the Christians, Imam Ibn Taymiyyah r said, ‘They are not the houses of Allah – the houses of Allah are only the masajid””</p> <p>50. “they are houses in which the kufr of Allah is practiced, even if He is mentioned therein [with reverence]”</p> <p>51. ““Houses take the ruling of their people, and the people of these houses are kuffar, so they are houses for the kuffar’s worship””</p> <p>52. ““If a person believes that churches are the houses of Allah, or that He is worshiped therein, or that what the Jews and Christians do is worship of Allah and obedience towards Him and towards His Messenger, or that He loves that or is pleased with it, then he is a kafir, because this entails believing that their religion is correct, and that is kufr””</p> <p>53. ““if he helps them in opening it – meaning: the churches – and in establishing their religion, and believes this to be a means of attaining closeness to Allah or an act of obedience, then he is a kafir, because this entails believing that their religion is correct””</p> <p>54. ““in any land which the Muslims have taken from them by force, then the Muslims are allowed to demolish or take the churches found there, even if they were to have agreed to these churches being present in some previous era of time””</p> <p>55. ““when they breach their covenant, the sanctity of the churches ceases to exist and it is permissible for the Muslims to demolish them and remove them, as the sanctity is for the covenant, not for the churches””</p> <p>56. ““The Muslims have taken many churches from them – in lands taken by force – after the presence of the churches were previously agreed to, during the khilafah of ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdil-‘Aziz and others from among the khulafa, and there was no one from among the Muslims who condemned that””</p> <p>57. ““Therefore, it was known that demolishing churches in lands taken by force is permissible if it does not lead to harm befalling the Muslims””</p> <p>58. “the churches... become like the rest of their wealth, which the Muslims are allowed to make use of in that which is permitted for them”</p> <p>59. ““it becomes permissible to take the churches of [the lands taken through a] treaty, let alone the churches of [the lands taken by] force, just as the Prophet g took what belonged to [the Jews of the tribes of] Quraydhah, and Nadir when they violated their covenant””</p>	
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	<p>60. “The Prophet g and his companions ruined and destroyed the wealth and homes of the mushrikin”</p> <p>61. ““They destroyed their houses by their [own] hands and the hands of the believers””</p> <p>62. “[Allah] also said, ‘Whatever you have cut down of [their] palm trees or left standing on their trunks – it was by permission of Allah and so He would disgrace the defiantly disobedient””</p> <p>63. “burn or ruin it”</p> <p>64. “targeting these churches with ruin and destruction is a matter that is permitted in the Shari’ah, and it is allowed to use this as a means of attaining closeness to Allah”</p> <p>65. “Christians – including the Christians of Misr – do not have any sanctity with regards to their blood and their wealth because they are belligerent and do not have dhimmah”</p> <p>66. “If anyone from among them is killed, his blood is waste, and likewise their wealth is permissible for the Muslims to take”</p> <p>67. “And from among the greatest means of causing them detriment is to harm and kill their fighters”</p> <p>68. “target their churches and monasteries with destruction and ruin, until they believe in Allah the Almighty or give the jizyah willingly while humbled”</p> <p>69. “He was killed and the mushrikin had mutilated his body”</p> <p>70. “the enemy of truth, however arrogant and excessive he may be, will taste all sorts of mental anguish before he harms his opponent”</p> <p>71. “among those things that are hidden from people lacking insight is the complete true life promised by Allah to His allies and pure worshiper”</p> <p>72. “the believers recognized that they had an enemy amongst them, an enemy that would not leave them; so they prepared for them and took their guard against them”</p> <p>73. “Say, ‘I believe in Allah and disbelieve in taghut””</p> <p>74. watching the mujahidin’s video releases and following their written and ‘recorded news nurtures within the lion cub the love of jihad and the mujahidin and hatred towards their enemies””</p> <p>75. “he is a mushrik, as Allah c made clear in His statement, ‘They have taken their scribes’ meaning their scholars, ‘and monks’ meaning their devout worshipers ‘as lords besides Allah, and [also] the Messiah, the son of Mary””</p> <p>76. “So let those beware who dissent from his (i.e. the Prophet’s) order, lest fitnah strike them”</p> <p>77. “but not the ignorant and rough-mannered blind followers, as their likes are not from the people of knowledge”</p> <p>78. “Whoever turns away from it, then indeed, he will bear on</p>	
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	the Day of Resurrection a burden, [abiding] eternally therein and evil it is for them on the Day of Resurrection as a load”	
Ummah	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “There will not cease to be a group from my ummah, standing by the command of Allah – not harmed by those who betray them or oppose them – until Allah’s command comes and they are as such” 2. “painstakingly endeavor to raise her children in a manner that pleases her Lord and brings benefit to her ummah” 3. “ensure that her children speak the Arabic language and ensure that their Arabic is correct and free of linguistic errors, and for her to strive to teach them the Arabic language if they are not Arabs, so that they can learn the affairs of their religion and mix and associate with the Jama’ah of the Muslims” 4. “concern they showed towards the language in which the Book of Allah was revealed” 	4
Divine Sanction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “noble muwahhidin, who carried out Allah’s judgment on the mushrikin” 2. “and to Allah belongs all praise [for the attacks]” 3. “it is Allah who guides to the straight path [of attack]” 4. “As such, they are from the leaders of kufr whom Allah c has commanded us to fight” 5. “their shirk and kufr of Allah the Almighty” 6. “And in killing them there is the greatest of rewards, by Allah’s permission” 7. “If we know that the blood of the Christians is permissible to shed, we know that taking them as slaves is also permissible, and likewise taking them prisoner and ransoming them for our prisoners or for wealth after having inflicted a massacre on them, due to the statement of Allah c” 8. “target their churches and monasteries with destruction and ruin, until they believe in Allah the Almighty or give the jizyah willingly while humbled” 9. “These were those who found pleasure in joining him, as if they were joyful in offering their souls as ransoms for their religion” 10. “Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah” 11. “And sufficient was Allah for the believers in battle, and ever is Allah Powerful and Exalted in Might” 12. “And if you are patient and fear Allah, their plot will not harm you at all” 13. ““There will not cease to be a group from my ummah, standing by the command of Allah – not harmed by those who betray them or oppose them – until Allah’s command comes and they are as such”” 14. “Victory and the fate of this religion is in the hand of Allah 	48

	<p>c. He has vouched for it and has promised it”</p> <p>15. “If He wills, He will support it and make it dominant, and if He wills, He will delay that from happening”</p> <p>16. “So if He causes a delay, then it is due to a decreed wisdom for the welfare of iman and its people – and no one is more ardent in their support for the truth and its people than Allah”</p> <p>17. “He gives victory to whom He wills”</p> <p>18. “Allah does not fail in His promise, but most of the people do not know”</p> <p>19. “For indeed Allah c – magnificent is His ability, mighty is His grandeur – grants victory to the believers sometimes, and sometimes He tests them, restricting them of this blessing so that they taste tribulations”</p> <p>20. “for indeed after Allah gave victory to the Muslims over their enemies”</p> <p>21. “Allah’s β wisdom came to bring about a test for His slaves”</p> <p>22. “if Allah c always supported the believers and gave them victory over their enemy in every battle, giving them consolidation over their enemies in every case, their souls would transgress and become arrogant and proud”</p> <p>23. “Allah manages the affairs of His slaves according to His wisdom – and He is Aware of them and Watchful over them”</p> <p>24. “the servitude of His allies and His party is brought out during good times and bad times, during that which they love and that which they hate, in the state of their victory and that of their enemies”</p> <p>25. “if they remain steadfast upon worshipful obedience in what they love and hate, they are truly His slaves, unlike one who worships Allah only during good, blessed, and healthy times”</p> <p>26. “He tests them with defeat and being conquered, they are humiliated, divided, and subdued, until they seek His might and support”</p> <p>27. “if He c wants to bolster, support, and mend His slave, He breaks him first”</p> <p>28. “His mending him, bolstering him, and support for him, is all in accordance with how much he faced of humiliation and division”</p> <p>29. “Of them is that Allah c prepared for His believing slaves homes in the abode of His generosity – their deeds will not reach them, but they will only come to them through trial and tribulation”</p> <p>30. “He will send to them the means by which they will reach these homes by ordaining tests and trials for them”</p> <p>31. “He grants them success in accomplishing righteous deeds”</p>	
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	<p>32. “He decreed for them to be tested and tried as a treatment to that impairing sickness”</p> <p>33. “trials and tribulations are like the physician who gives his patient some unpleasant medicine in order to remove his ailments”</p> <p>34. “shahadah (martyrdom) according to Allah is of the highest ranks for His allies”</p> <p>35. “The shuhada are His special people, those brought close from amongst His slaves”</p> <p>36. “He loves to take His slaves as shuhada, having their blood shed for His love and contentment, while they prefer His pleasure and love over their own selves”</p> <p>37. “There is no way to achieve this rank except through those means that would lead to dominating the enemy”</p> <p>38. “Allah knows, while you know not”</p> <p>39. “Allah knows what the slave does not know”</p> <p>40. “there is nothing more beneficial for him than complying with the command, even if that is difficult for him at first”</p> <p>41. “he does not choose anything over his Lord’s decision, but only asks Him to choose what is best for him and asks that He makes him content with what He chooses for him – as there is nothing more beneficial for him than that”</p> <p>42. “he entrusts his affair entirely to Allah and is content with whatever He chooses for him, asking Him to give him the strength, resolve, and patience to see it through”</p> <p>43. “which Allah has not granted to many other women”</p> <p>44. “painstakingly endeavor to raise her children in a manner that pleases her Lord and brings benefit to her ummah”</p> <p>45. “Allah is with His slave”</p> <p>46. “he learns to fear Allah β, internally venerates the affair of his Creator, and perceives that He is watching him in secret and in public”</p> <p>47. “We ask Allah to grant us righteous offspring and to bring forth from us a generation that will wage jihad for His cause and bring victory to His religion”</p> <p>48. “obedience to Allah in accordance with that which He has ordered upon the tongues of His messengers”</p>	
Final Conflict	1. “Whoever turns away from it, then indeed, he will bear on the Day of Resurrection a burden, [abiding] eternally therein and evil it is for them on the Day of Resurrection as a load”	1

Table 6: Rumiya Issue 9

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