Successful Jihadi Propaganda

Demographics and preferences behind the appeal of Salafi-Jihadist propaganda in Jordan

Tarja Kinnunen
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Professor: Hannu Juusola

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI		
Faculty Faculty of Arts – Department of Cultures		
Author Tarja Kinnunen		
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Abstract

This thesis explores how background variables such as age and gender, different socio-cultural factors, social status, and personal preferences affect the valuation of violent visual Salafi-Jihadist propaganda in the Kingdom of Jordan. An Internet-based questionnaire is used to examine whether different background variables, or combinations thereof, can predict predispositions to accepting or rejecting violent Salafi-Jihadist propaganda in Jordan. This study also examines whether personal media use preferences or the self-assessed religiosity of Muslims negatively or positively affect the appreciation of Jihadist propaganda. This thesis compares the Jordanian results with previous research data on predispositions and susceptibility to propaganda such as cognitive maturity and identity formation stages.

Social movement theory is used to illustrate the structural vulnerabilities of the Jordanian society and their connection to the willingness of individuals to respond to grievances by unconventional means. The social network theory outlines the importance of Salafi-Jihadist networks operating in Jordan in the process of radicalisation. These theories are used to analyse differences observed in the survey responses and their relation to the background factors of individuals. The study also utilises the picture theory of language in selecting the survey images from the Salafi-Jihadist propaganda images published by the "Islamic State" (ISIL) and Al Qaeda, while also considering the symbols, icons, and cultural features they contain.

A questionnaire is created in the University of Helsinki E-lomake service to survey respondents. Participants are asked to indicate their age cohort, gender, place of residence, employment situation, educational background, marital status, and religion as background information. In addition to these, participants are asked to rate their personal media use based on which media they use most frequently and what type of content they mostly consume in them. The research material of the questionnaire consists of 25 images divided into four content categories. This thesis focuses on analysing those valuations, which concern images portraying violent Salafi-Jihadist propaganda.

In Jordan, men in age cohorts 19–26 years and women in age cohorts 15–22 years rate violent Salafi-Jihadist propaganda images most positively. Out of all respondents, those with a secondary or tertiary education diploma appraise Salafi-Jihadist images more positively than those with only a primary school education. Respondents who have spent most of their lives in small villages or towns evaluate Salafi-Jihadist images more positively than those who have lived in larger settlements. Very high levels of self-assessed religiosity potentially contribute to the positive appreciation of violent Salafi-Jihadist images, especially among women. From a media consumption perspective, women of all ages who consume predominantly religious content mostly rate Salafi-Jihadist propaganda images negatively, whereas corresponding men, especially those aged 15–22 and 27–30, are more likely to assess these images positively. Employment situation or marital status do not significantly affect how violent Salafi-Jihadist images are assessed by either gender.

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HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta/Osasto – Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty

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Tekijä – Författare – Author

Tarja Kinnunen

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

Tutkimus selvittää, miten taustamuuttujat kuten ikä ja sukupuoli, erilaiset sosiokulttuuriset taustatekijät, sosiaalinen asema ja henkilökohtaiset mieltymykset vaikuttavat väkivaltaisen ja visuaalisen salafi-jihadistisen propagandan arvottamiseen Jordanian kuningaskunnassa. Internet-pohjaisen kyselykaavakkeen avulla kartoitetaan, voidaanko eri taustamuuttujien tai niiden yhdistelmien avulla ennakoida alttiutta väkivaltaisen salafi-jihadistisen propagandan hyväksymiselle tai hylkäämiselle Jordaniassa. Tutkimuksessa selvitetään myös, vaikuttavatko henkilökohtaiset mediakäyttömieltymykset tai muslimien itsearvioitu uskonnollisuus negatiivisesti tai positiivisesti jihadistisen propagandan arvostukseen. Tutkielma vertaa Jordaniasta saatavia tuloksia aikaisemmin tehtyihin tutkimuksiin, joissa käsitellään propagandan vaikutuksille altistavia tekijöitä ja taipumuksia kuten kognitiivisen kehityksen ja identiteetin muodostuksen asteita.

Sosiaalisen liikkuvuuden teoria havainnollistaa Jordanian yhteiskunnan rakenteellisia haavoittuvuuksia sekä niiden yhteyttä yksilöiden halukkuuteen reagoida vääryyksiin epätavanomaisin keinoin. Sosiaalisten verkostojen teoria määrittelee Jordaniassa toimivien salafi-jihadististen verkostojen tärkeyttä radikalisoitumisprosessissa. Näiden teorioiden avulla analysoidaan kyselytutkimuksen vastauksissa havaittavia eroavaisuuksia ja niiden yhteyksiä yksilöiden taustatekijöihin. Näiden lisäksi tutkimus käyttää hyväksi kielen kuvateoriaa, jonka perusteella valitaan kyselytutkimuksen varsinainen, ”Islamilaisen valtion” (ISIL) ja al-Qaidan salafi-jihadistisesta propagandasta koostuva kuva-aineisto niissä esiintyvät symbolit, ikonit ja kulttuuripiirteet huomioiden.

Helsingin yliopiston E-lomakepalveluun luodaan tutkimusta varten kyselykaavake. Kyselyssä osallistujia pyydetään ilmoittamaan taustatiedoiksi ikäkohorttinsa, sukupuolensa, asuinalueensa, työllisyystilanteensa, koulutustaustansa, siviilisäätynsä ja uskontonsa. Näiden lisäksi osallistujia pyydetään arvioimaan henkilökohtainen mediankäyttönsä sen mukaan, mitä medioita he käyttävät eniten ja minkälaista sisältöä he kuluttavat niissä eniten. Kyselyn kuvallinen tutkimusaineisto koostuu 25 kuvasta, jotka on jaettu neljään sisältökategoriaan. Tutkimus keskittyy analysoimaan ne vastaukset, jotka käsittelevät erityisesti väkivaltaista salafi-jihadistista propagandaa esittäviä kuvia.

Jordaniassa asuvat miehet ikäkohorteissa 19–26-vuotta ja naiset ikäkohorteissa 15–22-vuotta arvottavat väkivaltaiset salafi-jihadistiset propagandakuvat kaikkein positiivisimmin. Kaikista vastaajista ne, jotka ovat saaneet toisen tai kolmannen asteen koulutuksen arvottavat salafi-jihadistisia kuvia positiivisemmin kuin pelkän peruskoulun käyneet. Pienissä kylissä tai kaupungeissa suurimman osan elämästään viettäneet arvioivat salafi-jihadistiset kuvat positiivisemmin kuin isommissa asutuskeskuksissa asuvat. Itsearvioitu erittäin korkea uskonnollisuus mahdollisesti vaikuttaa väkivaltaisten salafi-jihadististen kuvien positiiviseen arvottamiseen erityisesti naisten keskuudessa. Mediankäytön näkökulmasta kaikenikäiset naiset, jotka seuraavat sosiaalisessa mediassa pääasiallisesti uskonnollista sisältöä arvottavat salafi-jihadistisia propagandakuvia pääosin negatiivisesti, mutta vastaavat miehet, erityisesti 15–22-vuotiaat ja 27–30-vuotiaat miehet, arvottavat todennäköisemmin kuvat positiivisesti. Työllisyystilanne tai siviilisääty eivät merkittävästi vaikuta siihen, miten väkivaltaisia salafi-jihadistisia kuvia arvotetaan.

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1. Introduction

It is almost impossible to estimate how many radicals or extremists there are in the world. Most likely there is a sizeable, invisible contingent of people, embedded within their communities, who remain inaccessible to deradicalization or hidden from governmental activities. At the same time, there is a distinct lack of academic knowledge on how radicalisation, and its tools such as propaganda, works in different cultural spheres or regions. My thesis attempts to bridge some of this data gap by offering an analysis based on systematically collected primary data. By collecting data through an image-based survey, I will look at how background variables such as age and gender, different socio-cultural factors, social status, and personal preferences affect the valuation of violent visual Salafi-Jihadist propaganda. I will focus more specifically on the Muslim-majority country of the Kingdom of Jordan and examine how predispositions for vulnerability to violent Salafi-Jihadist propaganda can be quantified and later on, possibly even predicted.

Scholars and officials agree that there is not enough information on how radicalisation works in general, let alone in specific socio-cultural environments. There is a lack of comparable radicalisation analysis depending on ideologies, cultures, and living situations. The youth identity crisis is a worldwide problem facilitating the adoption of extremist, most often Salafi-Jihadist, right-wing, and left-wing, ideas. Other than comparability between different ideologies, there is insufficient research oriented towards gender and different age groups; the socialisation and identity-formation processes between genders and ages differ, and thus, also the persuasiveness of propaganda differs in various stages of life. More information is also required on the role of religion and religiosity in radicalisation, for example in the cases of Islamist propaganda and Salafi-Jihadist extremism.

Regardless of the ideology behind it, extremism rises from a very common practise of dividing groups of people into “Us” and “Them”, the in-group and the Others. These divisions can first spawn hostility and racism, but also acts of violence often rationalised and morally sanctioned as defence of one’s own in-group. In situations where individuals do not accept the values and practises of their society, they may attempt to change the existing political system through radicalism. Often, radicalism does not include violence, but in some instances, the of process of radicalisation leads a person or a group, through several phases, to adopt an extreme mindset or an ideology where violence is seen as acceptable or even mandatory to achieve political goals. In short: extremism is always radical, but radicalism is not always extremism. Extremism rationalises the insistence of violence to achieve political change; extremists believe that the success of “Us” (their in-group) is inseparable from committing violent acts against the Others (the out-group). Violent extremism or terrorism includes

the psychological willingness, preparation, and actual conduct of violent acts against civilians as well as representatives of the state.

Even though the ideological content of extremist groups can vary significantly from one another, they all still share similar structural components. Despite similarities, the process of radicalisation, extremism, or terrorism cannot be condensed into clear-cut steps or pathways, which could be invariably used to identify at-risk persons. Once again, these differences mean that even though all terrorists are extremists, not all extremists are necessarily terrorists: extremists are also capable of expressing extreme dissent through non-violent means.

What draws or pushes people to take part in violent extremism?

This thesis will look at root causes, drivers, or permissive factors, which somehow indirectly allow conditions for violent extremism and even terrorism to be established. Root causes can be seen to contribute to increased risk of violent extremism in individuals. At this point, it is also important to explicitly note that very few individuals who share a feeling of injustice radicalise or turn to extremism; even fewer move to terrorism. Most individuals either ignore their grievances or turn to legitimate political means to correct them.

Radicalisation which sometimes leads to violent extremism has some common drivers including global, sociological, and political causes but also individual, psychological ones. Global factors such as geopolitical affairs or globalised media, the prevalence and accessibility of information, or even the internet or low-cost flight tickets can be facilitation tools for radicalisation. Intra-state factors such as unfairness of social order and socioeconomic disadvantages such as poverty, inequality, and polarisation are structural aspects which may lead to radicalisation. Socio-cultural factors such as issues relating to ideology, identity, and culture can act as motivators. Radical preachers and propagandists in-country or online utilise beliefs, historical events, and ideologies to incite hate, intolerance, and polarisation. Whether injustices and grievances are real or perceived, does not matter. For those looking for something in their lives, extremist ideologies can provide a clear and simplified identity with a set of norms and views which reduce uncertainty. Violent extremism or terrorism can also be a rational choice; this strategy can be seen as the likeliest way to advance a political agenda. Neither mental health issues, certain demographics, nor geographic backgrounds have been identified as etiologically significant traits in terrorists.

Social connections and networks, not necessarily direct contacts with extremist groups, are important to the induction of new members. New inductees may only be aware of some of the key components and grievances of the group, so networks of in-groupers are important in solidifying connections to

extremist viewpoints in advance. One of the more efficient ways of deradicalizing persons is to allow them to interact with people they feel are members of the same in-group. For example, some individuals who think that violent jihad is a religious obligation may respond well to the religious guidance of a respected Salafist scholar. Unfortunately, the same process can be used in the radicalisation process: psychological research has demonstrated that people are more influenced by an argument made by a fellow group member than the same argument made by an out-group member.

1.1. Aim of the thesis

The aim of the thesis is to assess the relative importance of political and socio-cultural backgrounds, statistical personal variables such as age and gender, as well as individual personal preferences in the assessment of violent visual Salafi-Jihadi propaganda. My goal is to see what, if any, the correlation of different background variables is to the positive acceptance of violent Salafi-Jihadi propaganda images in individuals. My thesis also attempts to clarify if personal preferences leaning toward higher degrees of religiosity in Jordanian Muslims have any bearing on seeing violent Jihadi propaganda negatively or positively. The proximity of Jordan to conflict areas and its proportionately high number of foreign fighters made it a good place to conduct this study in.

The reference material on my thesis survey consists of still propaganda images published by Jihadi groups or individuals on various media platforms in 2011–2019. The chosen images will portray several different Salafi-Jihadi groups, not just “Islamic State” (ISIL)[1]. The actual objects of my thesis research are mixed in between other images depicting recent political, religious, sporting, and entertainment topics. My thesis will only analyse the results relating to these four Salafi-Jihadi propaganda images.

My mixed-methods study will quantitively explore the correlates of violent Jihadi media images and qualitatively examine value judgements and possible other motivations of Jordanian respondents to see how why they have rated the images as either positive or negative. The images used in this survey are actual examples of violent Salafi-Jihadist propaganda; however, they are mild compared to actual propaganda available, for example, online or in ISIL magazines. I chose to avoid ethical, legal, and safety concerns by selecting less violent still images. I felt that priming the respondents for the effects of violent imagery through well-known pictures was enough, and this eliminated the need for respondents to watch real, gruesome imagery of violence enacted by Salafi-Jihadi terrorist groups.

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[1] الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام, ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fī 'l-ʿIrāq wa-sh-Shām, or ISIL.

The background data given by respondents, as well as self-assessed individual preferences for various media use, allow me to analyse how, if at all, individual preferences manifest in the assessments and value judgements made of violent Jihadi imagery. In order to avoid any ethical or legal complications, all respondents are asked to complete the survey anonymously. At the end, I hope to have a fuller understanding of possible push factors for radicalisation in Jordan when looked at from the point of view of susceptibility to violent Salafi-Jihadi propaganda.

2. Theoretical frameworks of propaganda and susceptibility

This thesis bases its understanding of violent and agitational Salafi-Jihadi propaganda on several main areas of research. In this chapter, I will explore the theoretical frameworks important to understanding what leads to the success of violent and agitational propaganda. I will examine separately how Salafi-Jihadist groups and organisations utilise vulnerabilities, loopholes, and predispositions to their advantage in waging war against their enemies and spreading fear among people under their rule.

First, it is important to explore the formation of individual identities and the ways in which an individual's environment and life experiences mould identities and personal preferences. An individual's preferences influence every aspect of their life from the values they hold most esteemed to the way they consume media content.

Second, it is important to comprehend the differences between sympathising with an ideology, supporting it, working actively to advance it, and being ready to commit acts of civil disobedience or even violence to ensure the supremacy of the ideology. Also, appreciating which factors lead to radicalisation and beyond, is something government officials combating radicalisation and researchers studying the methodologies must continue to do.

Different ideologies, among which there is also Islamism, have used propaganda and mental image advertising as part of their expansion. ISIL is a next generation Salafi-Jihadi group whose members know how to use social media marketing and recruiting new members most useful to the organisation's needs. One of the most important aspects for successful marketing, or in the case of Salafi-Jihadi groups, ideology-affirming propaganda, is to identify the most suitable target groups for it. The person's age, gender, educational background, area of habitation, and employment status are powerful factors in creating personal preferences, and as such, they are indicators of personal value judgements guiding life choices. Values and preferences are created in the cross-pressures of personal experiences and innate personality characteristics, so to a propagandist, understanding which subgroups of people are most receptive to their message is vital.

After my field research had been concluded, a recent study made in the United States examining those who are most likely to watch beheading videos released by ISIL was published (Redmond et al., 2019). One of its conclusions was that people are both passively and actively exposed to bloody terrorist propaganda due to the proliferation of such material available on traditional and social media outlets. More studies have previously been made on why people view fictional gore by watching, for example, horror films. Earlier results had already confirmed that male viewers with low empathy and with a high sensation-seeking and aggressive personality traits report more enjoyment of terror and violence (Hoffner & Levine, 2005).

2.1. Formation of identity and cognitive maturity

Identities begin to form early on in life: even toddlers and kindergarteners wonder what they are going to be when they grow up. Nowadays, one important tool in identity formation is social media and its influence (Marttinen, 28.3.2019), but actual life experience, familial and social networks, and exposure to different worldviews are also important in identity formation. The formation of identity accelerates during teenage years and culminates in late teens and early 20s. Identity is based on two key components: occupation and ideology (Marcia, 1980). Occupation covers an individual's job or role in the society whereas ideology encompasses a person's beliefs about religion, politics, and world order. Identities can be understood as two-dimensional because one dimension deals with an individual's hopes and dreams for themselves, and the other dimension is their commitment to things that matter most to them.

In the best-case scenario, a person searches and finds their own identity themselves and it feels right. The worst-case scenario is that a person willingly agrees to borrow an identity or conform to someone else's expectations. Especially vulnerable are young persons whose identities can be heavily influenced by others, and this can lead to a crisis of identity. When a young person is in crisis and feeling insecure about their identity, they are often told to talk to someone they trust and be mentored. Extremist groups can take advantage of this vulnerability by presenting a worldview that offers stability in one or more areas in life. Extremist or terrorist organisations are a dangerous example of identity-formers: a young person trying to search for their identity can be persuaded to take on a borrowed identity, which promotes the use of violence against perceived enemies (Marttinen, 28.3.2019).

An identity crisis in adults is usually easier to handle because these crises often relate to only one dimension of an individual's identity such as work, relationships, becoming a parent, or death. Young persons have not solidified any areas of their identities, so they have nothing to fall back on. Another

obstacle for young persons today is global uncertainty and insecure prospects in life (Marttinen, 28.3.2019). A crisis of identity has been recognised as one of the push factors in radicalisation.

Adolescent identity formation and its crises

Marcia (1980) has identified two distinct parts of adolescent identity formation. An identity is in crisis when a person starts to re-evaluate, re-examine, and question their values and choices. The outcome of this crisis comes through searching and finding a role or values they can commit to. Earlier on, Marcia (1966) also identified four different stages of identity formation which correspond to different, relatively stable age stages as well. These stages, called diffusion, foreclosure or early closure, moratorium, and achievement, have been later proven to represent consistent and stable trajectories of identity formation (Meeus et al, 2012).

Identity diffusion is a stage when an adolescent has no sense of having choices; they are also neither attempting nor willing to make a commitment to a role or a value. Early identity closure is a stage when an adolescent seems willing to commit to some roles, values, or goals for their future; they tend to conform to other's expectations and are not aware of the true extent of their options in life. Identity moratorium is a state of crisis for an adolescent: they are ready and willing to make choices but have yet to commit to their own choice of values, roles, or goals in life. An additional status has been suggested here by researchers: searching moratorium is a combination of high commitment, high in-depth exploration, and very high reconsideration, during which adolescents have strong commitments and explore them intensively, but they are also very active in considering alternative commitments. (Meeus et al, 2012). The final stage is identity achievement, in which an adolescent has surpassed their identity crisis and made a commitment to their own sense of identity.

Both with 12–16-year-olds and 16–20-year-olds, a total of 23% are still searching for their identity, respectively. It is noteworthy that in adolescents aged 12 to 16, almost 7% are intensely searching for their identities, thus making them even more susceptible to outside influences. In middle-to-late adolescents the risk of outsider influence is still great, but the intense search has quietened more towards commitment (Meeus et al, 2012). In his original work, Marcia (1966) stated repeatedly that the identity conflict is resolved between the ages of 18 and 22, and that the statuses were intended to measure identity in late adolescence. However, the final phase can extend even further: Kroger et al. (2010) noted that the final stage of identity formation and commitment is 1.6 times higher in emerging adults (ages 23 to 29) as compared to middle adolescents (aged 15). Meeus et al. (2012) found that the final stage of achievement and identity commitment is more prevalent in middle-to-late adolescence (between ages 16 and 20), and that by this age, less people are searching for their identity.

Gender is also important in identity formation. Meeus et al. (2012) found that in 12 to 20-year-olds, females were more often committed to their identities than males. A greater percentage of females represented the final achievement stage (19.8%) whereas in similarly aged males the prevalence here was lower (11.6%)[2]. The number of males searching for their identities at this age was clearly higher (32.2%) than in females (18.4%), which is consistent with findings that girls reach puberty earlier than boys and tend to be ahead of boys in personality development. Males also had higher percentages of being in the moratorium and diffusion phases (46.6%) as females (33.3%): this indecisiveness in males predict higher levels of depressive symptoms and delinquency over time (Meeus et al, 2012).

Reaching cognitive maturity

The ability to assess risks and consequences is lower with young people: young brains require instant gratification at the same time as their cognitive and emotional processes are still underdeveloped (Schiebener et al, 2015, p. 760). The largest part of the brain, the cerebral cortex, is divided into sections which develop from back to front. The last part to develop is the frontal lobe responsible for cognitive processes such as reasoning, planning, and evaluation. The decision-making abilities of 12–15-year-olds are still clearly less developed than those of 16–19 years of age, and this development can continue for up to 30 years of age (Schiebener et al, 2015, pp. 762-771).

The prevalent understanding has been that male and female brains develop according to different timetables. Already in 1999, ten years after an extensive research project had been started at the Bethesda Mental Health Institute in Maryland, Giedd et al. (s. 581) released some initial findings about the maturation of the brain and a of age and gender-related differences in the brain. They concluded that grey matter located at the frontal lobe was at its peak in females at age 11, whereas in males it peaked over a year later. Grey matter is vital for regulating self-control and motivation. According to the study, females reach their peak cerebral cortex grey matter volume at age 10.5, males much later at 14.5 years of age. Later, Lenroot and Giedd (2009, s. 46) posited that functional imaging studies have confirmed that male and female brains reach the same cognitive abilities, just by different means. They still maintained that female brains reach their brain volume peaks earlier than males.

This entrenched idea that male brains are slower to mature has affected attitudes of parents and educators for decades. The gap in school success between boys and girls has been attributed to these gender differences in brains; the common understanding draws a line from behavioural differences

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[2] Meeus et al. comment that this finding might be specific for the Netherlands, because Dutch female adolescent maintain stronger interpersonal and ideological commitments than Dutch male adolescents. (2012).

between genders directly to varying brain development. However, recent studies have contradicted these findings. In 2019, Wierenga et al. (s. 730) found that, after conducting 270 brain measures, their models did not show delayed maturation in boys compared with girls. Instead, they found that there was greater variation among the males within-group than between genders. The differences they found were not related to brain maturity and development but rather to varying strategies and experiences among males and females. The study of Wierenga et al. corroborates evidence shown by seven long-term follow-up studies, which state that male and female brains mature in similar fashion (Helsingin sanomat, 17.2.2020).

2.2. Radicalisation and terrorism

Radicalisation is a unique process in every individual but there are several combinations of push factors. Shared structural grievances, cognitive and behavioural traits can be politicised by a unifying ideology or a rallying cause that encourages a process of "de-pluralisation" – a concept which describes how an individual becomes increasingly narrow-minded in relation to key political concepts and values (Michel & Schyns, 2016). This process is also linked to an exacerbating cycle of strong confirmation bias associated within a specific ideology bubble: alternative interpretations of life, politics, and ideological standpoints cannot penetrate this bubble, thus creating a situation where individuals can no longer be open to other worldviews. This can create a sense of threat within the bubble which has to be urgently addressed, when necessary, even with violence as a legitimate tool.

There are no universally accepted definitions for radicalisation or terrorism. A renowned scholar of radicalisation, extremism, and terrorism, Alex Schmid (2013) argues that both extremism and radicalism must be assessed in relation to what the mainstream political thought at the time is. He adds (2013, p. 6) that global, political, and sociological drivers as well as psychological and ideological ones matter when defining these terms. Another revered scholar of the field, Peter Neumann (2008, p. 4) describes radicalisation in layman's terms as "what goes on before the bomb goes off". Simply stating that the difference between activism and radicalism is (il)legality brings up the question of who defines what is legal, what illegal: a democratic government refers to international law in this whereas an authoritarian ruler does not. Schmid (2013, p. 8) suggests that radicalism means the advocation of sweeping political change, based on a conviction that the status quo is unacceptable while at the same time a fundamentally different alternative appears to be available to the radicals. At the same time, radicalism promotes radical solutions for governments and societies: the goal is often a complete transformation of the system through peaceful and democratic means such as persuasion and restructuring, or violent and non-democratic means such as insurgency and force. To simplify the already complex theoretical framework of my thesis, I have

chosen to use the definition of Cas Mudde (1996, ss. 230-231), which subordinates the terms radicalisation and extremism to democracy: the difference between radicalism and extremism is that radicalism is only opposed to the principles of the constitution, whereas extremism is unconstitutional since it aims to eliminate free democratic order.

Studies confirm that radical thoughts and radical deeds do not directly correlate with each other. Radicals can express substantial opposition without necessarily being violent (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010a, p. 13). In open and liberal societies, being extreme and holding extreme views is recognised as a part of an individual's human rights, which are protected under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and under Article 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Living in a free society with freedom of opinion thus dictates that non-violent forms of extremism must have a right to exist. These kinds of views should be heard and defeated through argument and openness, which will expose them as hollow. However, there are some very specific types of non-violent extremism which aim to prevent others from exercising their democratic and human rights (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010a, p. 5). Schmid (2013, pp. 8-9) draws examples from history for political precedence for extremist political actors: Fascism and Communism were political actors which disregarded the rule of law and plurality in society. Extremists focus on de-pluralisation and the creation of a homogeneous society based on rigid, dogmatic ideological tenets; they seek to make society conformist by suppressing all opposition and subjugating minorities. That distinguishes them from mere radicals who accept diversity and believe in the power of reason rather than dogma (Schmid, 2013, p. 9).

Some researchers such as Moghaddam (2005) argue that radicalisation is a pyramid: on the top, a small number of individuals and groups actively plot and seek to commit acts of terrorism. Below them is a larger group of supporter extremists who do not necessarily commit acts of violence themselves but rather inspire and recruit others to violence. These non-violent acolytes provide cover to the highest tier while propagating their core messages. On the bottom are individuals who are vulnerable to extremist or violent ideologies. However, some argue that radicalisation into terrorism is far more unpredictable and complicated: radicalisation into violence emerges when several key factors such as social and psychological processes are in place (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010a, p. 8).

Other central aspects of radicalisation leading to violence can be explained by the somewhat controversial social movement theory but more importantly, the social networks theory: they recognise the importance of social relationships and networks in the facilitation process of violent extremism. In studies conducted by White (in (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010b, pp. 43-44)) and Sageman (2004), respectively, IRA and Al Qaeda supporters have emphasised the importance of friends and

family connections in inducting new members into terrorist networks; full information on the ideology and goals of extremist groups may, however, remain rather unclear to new members. Members joining terrorist groups from outside pre-existing networks must make substantial changes into their existing social networks to seek out new ones. Creating psychological distinctions between in-group members and outsiders, Us versus Them, also increases hostility towards outsiders and attachment with other group insiders. Social pressure within an extremist group encourages members to accept that true believers must engage, or at least agree with, violence because it is God's will and in the individual's own interest (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010b, p. 44).

Is radicalisation universal or variable?

It would be too simplistic to state that extremist groups are all very similar to each other with the only exception being their underlying ideology. Similarly, it would be too naïve to say that they are fundamentally different from each other. Abbas (2017) posits that at the heart of the issue of radicalisation are the predicaments of marginalised communities. Lack of social mobility, persistent unemployment, political alienation, and growing anomie[3] or lack of moral boundaries set by the society lead to a crisis of masculinity (and femininity). Crisis of identity may occur when, during adolescence, an individual has committed to their given role or goal for the future, but later in life, they realise their life is not as they want it to be (Meeus et al, 2012). This need for self-actualisation applies to all but is perhaps more pronounced in cases where a person has apprehensions over multiculturalism, dislocation, and identity conflict (Abbas, 2017, p. 56).

Naturally, there are local and global variations in identity formations, but similarities are still plentiful. Gender seems to be one crucial aspect in deciphering patterns of vulnerability to radicalisation: men, more specifically, young men are much more exposed to radical thinking. Still, ever greater access to information communications technologies (ICTs), and social media especially, has become a great equaliser and has breached some of the gender gap existing in extremist groups. Like-minded sympathisers and followers can connect with each other with greater ease and in more anonymous circumstances in hidden corners of the internet. ICT tools also alter gender norms online: they make extremist groups more accessible to a wider range of demographics, especially women. and they offer moderated groups which, for example, concurrently offer ways to either reinforce or subvert gender norms set by an extremist organization's leadership (Alexander, 2019, p. 51). Both men and women are equally susceptible to radicalisation even though violent extremist and terrorist

[3] Anomie is a widespread lack of commitment to shared values, standards, and rules needed to regulate the behaviours and aspirations of individuals. (Bernburg, 2019).

groups usually clearly delineate the roles of men and women within the organisation and its ideology. In fact, research has found that women aligned with terrorist groups appear to leverage gender dynamics and stereotypes of women as victims: they can benefit by claiming ignorance in front of officials in an attempt to minimize their culpability. Other violent extremist groups strategically use gender in communications and propaganda to mobilise old and new members (Alexander, 2019).

Lack of hope can lead to a crisis of identity and anxiety in men[4] of all backgrounds, which in turn leaves countless young men pliable to external influences. Challenges caused by limited opportunities are seen more often among the marginalised in the Western countries[5], yet these issues are clearly more prevalent in all strata of societies elsewhere in the world. Both in groups representing majorities and minorities, limited educational and employment opportunities caused by deep-rooted patterns of discrimination and disadvantage lead to uncertain futures for various young men (Sullivan, 2014, pp. 756-758). One suggestion as a reason for the radicalisation of both European-born Muslims and far-right youth is their attempt to come to terms with traditional hegemonic masculinity in the context of the fundamental transformation of work, gender, and class combined with economic insecurity (McDowell, 2000). For many men, the aspirational qualities for a dominant male include notions such as heterosexuality, attractiveness, and high earnings (Abbas, 2017, p. 56). Still, many men feel that their limited opportunities are actually caused by distinctly liberal notions, which challenge the hegemonic notions of masculinity and male superiority (McDowell, 2000, p. 207).

When comparing radicalisation among young Islamist and far-right extremists, commonalities can be found in how they perceive the role of individuals, social structures, and anomie. Many of the recruits joining ISIL coming from the inner cities of Western Europe have been outraged and simultaneously embittered by spiritual or material challenges. They have been mainly young men with limited education, employment, or social status (Abbas, 2017, p. 56). Some cultural characteristics are also relevant in understanding the disconnect, sense of disappointment, and loss of identity in both Muslim minorities and the 'left behind' white working classes. The existence of patriarchy in most cultures and religions acts as a form of dominance over the family, where the father's power over sons, who reproduce patterns of dominant hegemonic masculinity within the home, may lead to greater separation between fathers and sons (Siraj, 2010). However, these same fathers experience

[4] In many scientific texts, the emphasis is still slanted toward the experience and radicalisation in men, like in Abbas (2017). These descriptions of vulnerabilities to radicalisation should also be understood to include women.
[5] I use the term Western countries as a cultural, economic, and political definition relating to countries in the west part of the world, especially North America and countries in the west of Europe, Australia and New Zealand. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020).

racialisation and subjugation in the workplace, which lowers their status, and increases their sense of persecution and identity confusion.

A crucial common feature in the radicalisation of far-right and Islamist extremists was, therefore, the search for an alternative, 'purer' identity. Islamist radicals are anti-globalisation, while far-right extremists are anti-localisation, but both are pro-totalitarian. These groups wish to instil a sense of purist identity politics, and both have a utopian vision of society. Furthermore, both have a narrowly defined vision of the self, which is exclusive of the other. It must, however, be underlined that these clear-cut divisions into white far-right extremists and non-white Muslim Islamist radicals are artificial. The phenomenon of 'convert radicalisation' among white groups is associated with a lack of suitable grounding in community values or the adoption of Islam as a method of rebellion. Similarly, with Muslims such as Ali David Sonboly[6], radicalisation and conversion from a Muslim into a far-right extremist can take place because of insecurities regarding individual ethnic and cultural identity (Abbas, 2017, p. 54).

2.3. Salafism, Islamism, and violent Salafi-Jihadism

Ideologies are links between thoughts, beliefs and myths on the one hand, but also instructions to action. Once a group internalises a given array of beliefs associated with their ideology, that ideology provides a cognitive map that filters the way social realities are perceived, rendering that reality easier to grasp, more coherent, and thus more meaningful. It is for that reason that ideologies offer some measure of security and relief in the face of ambiguity – particularly in times of crisis (Moghadam, A., 2008). Muslim and non-Muslim scholars and theologians have both claimed that Islam is in crisis in the 20th and 21st centuries; the interpretations of why this is and how it can be remedied vary greatly.

The political influence, and sometimes a destabilising force, of Islam began in the 1970s. Due to the heated and on-going political debate surrounding Islam and Muslims, it is important to distinguish between correct terms. Islam, Salafism, Islamism, and Salafi-Jihadism are not interchangeable terms but distinct terms, and their misuse can lead to confusion and loss of important messages.

Salafism

Salafism (*salafiyya*) is the name by which the Muslim reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries referred to their movement of Islamic modernism (Lauzière, 2015, pp. 1-2). One core function of Salafism is to raise awareness among Muslims that Islam is declining. Salafism sees

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[6] Sonboly carried out a mass shooting on 22.7.2016 in Munich, Germany, on the 5th anniversary of the Utøya massacre in Norway (Schmidt, J. et al., 24.7.2016). Sonboly was the son of Iranian refugees who idolised far-right terrorist Anders Behring Breivik and other mass shooters. Sonboly had become radicalised and had turned to violent far-right ideology, subscribing to pure racial identity over his own cultural and historical background (Abbas, 2017).

that Islam was at its strongest during the first few centuries after its inception, and now the steady waning touches upon all spheres of existence of Islamic life. According to Salafism, the most authentic and purest Islam is found in the lived example of the early, righteous generations of Muslims, known as the *Al-salaf al-salih* (السلف الصالح, "the pious predecessors"), who were closest in both time and proximity to the Prophet Muhammad (Hamid & Dar, 2016). Salafis are often described as fundamentalists or ultraconservatives because they believe in the actual letter of the law, not in its spirit or interpretation as most mainstream Muslims. This golden age -thinking also ranges from direct adherence to Prophet Muhammad's *sunna* (words and deeds) to avoidance of *bid'a* (modern innovations) if they do not directly improve religious devotion. Strict faithfulness to the concept of *tawhid* (oneness of God) leads Salafis to reject the biases of human subjectivity and self-interest, thereby leading to only one legitimate religious interpretation; Islamic pluralism does not exist (Wiktorowicz, 2006).

The Salafi need to live life without un-Islamic influences and without human contextualisation of the true Islam of the Prophet is also linked to a principle which divides the society into those who follow true Islam and those who do not. This theological concept of *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* (loyalty and disavowal) focuses on being loyal to persons, deeds, and religious practises seen as righteous, and distancing oneself from (and even having enmity toward) those considered corrupting. Al-wala' wa-l-bara' together with the concept of *hisba* (the commanding of right and forbidding of wrong) are the main principles through which individual Salafis prove their purity and their loyalty. These principles are given meaning not just through references to Islamic scripture, but through communal efforts of enforcing and debating them (Chaplin, 2018, p. 2).

Self-improvement, communal learning, and a focus on continual correction is at the heart of Salafism: the need to enforce *hisba* is a concept that defines Salafi social interactions both inside and outside the movement. In order to be considered a true follower, a true Salafi, the only way is to abide by the Salafi *manhaj* (method) constantly. (Chaplin, 2018, pp. 1-2). These methods have been refined by several Islamic scholars over the centuries. Salafis regard Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) as one of their main scholarly authorities; he criticised popular religious practices such as grave visitations and mystical rituals, and Shi'ism. Ibn Taymiyya's views, among others, guided the reformist ideas of other preachers in the Middle East and North Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries; some of these reformers such as Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792) turned their thoughts into significant religious movements (Olidort, 2015, pp. 7-8).

Political activism of individuals is not particularly encouraged in Salafism, and most observers follow a quietist approach of preaching, religious education, strict obedience to Muslim rulers, and silence

on political matters (Hamid & Dar, 2016). Since all human activities can be categorised as either *sunna* or *bid'a*, many Salafists reject nationalism, political parties, and nation-states because the concepts did not exist during the Prophet Muhammad's time. However, some Salafis have engaged in politics and even formed political parties. Salafists across the Middle East and North Africa have been emerging as important challengers in the new political landscape: for example, new ultra-conservative Salafist parties in Egypt led by the Nour party captured nearly a quarter of the country's parliament (BBC World News, 21.1.2012), and Salafists in other Arab Spring countries have founded political organisations to take advantage of their newfound liberties (Olidort, 2015, pp. 7-8).

Despite recognising common religious creeds, Salafi purists emphasise non-violence and education, and thus they view Salafi-Jihadists and Salafi politicians as deviant and dangerous threats to the purity of Islam. Salafi purists categorise Salafi-Jihadists as Salafis in belief which makes them capable of using its in-group creedal language. Because most followers of Salafi-Jihadists are not well versed in religious affairs and jurisprudence, they cannot identify deviancy from the creed and can be easily corrupted (Wiktorowicz, 2006). Many Salafi theologians such as Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani denounce Salafi-Jihadists such as the self-proclaimed caliphate of ISIL as *takfiri*, as "not being based on God's sunna" (Olidort, 2015, p. 20). Another prominent Salafi shaykh based in Jordan, Mashhur bin Hasan Al Salman, proclaimed (18.6.2014) that the so-called Islamic State is a caliphate established by a group "that kills those whom it excommunicates" and that its call to establish a caliphate is not "based on God's sunna, it cannot be firmly established and cannot last."

Islamism

Islamism is a theocratic ideology according to which a legal system based on Islam should govern people socially and politically. In other words, Islamism is an ideological construct which combines the religion of Islam and all its millennia-long history and culture with a socio-political term, an -ism, coined during the Western Enlightenment era. Islamism differs from many other ideologies because it tends to use religious words, symbols, and values of Islam to sustain itself and grow; typically ideologies are devoid of religious symbols (Moghadam, A., 2008). Defining Islamism as a concept is nonetheless challenging. Until the Islamic revolution of Iran in 1978–79, many understood Islam and Islamism as interchangeable terms: the declaration by Ayatollah Khomeini on the formation of an Islamic society in Iran forced both researchers and journalists to seek a new term and definitions to describe a new political Islam (Mozaffari, 2007, p. 18).

Even some of the most important Muslim ideologues of the 20th century such as the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood Hassan al-Banna or author Sayyid Qutb did not use the term Islamism when referring to their reformist ideas for Islam. A prominent Muslim theologian since the 1970s, Hassan

al-Turabi, used the word Islamism *(islamiyyūn)* to refer to political Muslims to whom Islam is the solution, religion, government, the Constitution, and the law (Mozaffari, 2007, pp. 20-21). An exact scholarly definition of Islamism was not created until after the 2001 terrorist attacks, when scholars Gilles Kepel and Olivier Roy replaced the definitions of 'political Islam' and 'fundamentalist Islam' with the term Islamism (Mozaffari, 2007, p. 19).

From the beginning, leading ideologues and supporters of Islamism have tried to actively get rid of notions of Western democracy and the rule of law, thus liberating the Middle East from Western oppression and colonialism. The birth of the State of Israel in the Middle East and its many victories in wars over the surrounding Arab States increased the popularity of Islamism in the same countries. Some scholars consider Egyptian ideologue Sayyid Qutb, whose work has been published around the world, as one of the main supporters of violent Islamism. He advocated militant Islam as a solution for removing *jahiliyya* (wicked ignorance) not only from Muslim countries but all over the world.

While Islamism is more often associated with Sunni Islam, it also exists within Shias. Sunnis and Shias agree on many basic tenets of Islam[7], but some of their main differences relate to the question of highest authority both politically and spiritually. During the centuries following the split of these Muslim sects, their differences in ideology led to dissimilar interpretations of sharia, the Islamic law, and creations of distinct sectarian identities. In 1979, Iran became a theocracy led by Ayatollah Khomeini, which gave renewed strength for Shias globally. For Sunnis, authority is based on the Quran and the traditions of Mohammed. Sunni religious scholars, who are constrained by legal precedents, exert far less authority over their followers than their Shia counterparts (Council on Foreign Relations, 2016). In the minds of many Sunnis, the transformation of Iran into an agitator for Shiism seemed to confirm their long-held suspicions of divided allegiances and of Shias only answering to Iran and the supreme ayatollah.

Marked differences of Jihadism

Fundamentalist religious beliefs, far-right or far-left ideologies, or even radical political movements are not directly analogous with terrorism. Religious terrorism is one of the oldest forms of terrorism, and religions have had a symbiotic relationship with violence for several millennia. In the context of Islam, Islamist terrorism as a concept covers terrorist acts committed by any violent Islamists who claim that their actions have religious motivations. In comparison with religions, which tend to

[7] Monotheistic God and Mohammed as his messenger, daily prayers, charity to the poor, fasting during Ramadan, and performing hajj to Mecca.

support existing orders, ideologies (sometimes violently) oppose the current status quo and demand complete control over the thoughts, words, and deeds of their supporters (Moghadam, A., 2008).

Under the umbrella term of Islamist terrorism is Jihadism, which is driven by the idea that jihad is an individual obligation (*fard ʻayn*) incumbent upon all Muslims, rather than a collective obligation carried out by legitimate representatives of the Muslim community (*fard kifaya*), as it was traditionally understood in the pre-modern era (Hamid & Dar, 2016). Jihadi groups argue that in the absence of a theocratic Islamic caliphate, current Muslim leaders are illegitimate and do not command the authority to ordain justified violence, thus leaving the responsibility for jihad to each individual Muslim. Jihadism could be described as an amalgamation of far-right and far-left ideologies: the rejection of pluralism and multiculturalism in favour of one religious or political truth is similar to a far-right worldview, whereas the goal of creating a utopian internationalist society without classes or borders strongly resembles far-left views.

Most Jihadist groups today can be classified as Salafi-Jihadists, including some of the most notorious ones such as Al Qaeda and ISIL. Salafi-Jihadism combines Jihadism with the observance of Salafi purism. Salafi-Jihadism emphasises the military exploits of the Salaf (the early generations of Muslims) and uses their acts of violence as a divine imperative for terrorism (Hamid & Dar, 2016). In addition to other core Islamic beliefs, Salafi-Jihadists have also appropriated core Salafi theological concepts such as hisba and al-wala' wa-l-bara' to advance their violent interpretations of the creed.

To Salafi-Jihadists, the alleged cause for the decline of Islam is manifold: together with the so-called anti-Islamic alliance of "Crusader-Christians" and "Zionist-Jews", also the apostate-*takfiri* Muslims are to blame for the increasing misery of true, orthodox Muslims. Given their de-pluralist view that their approach to Islam is the only authentic one, Salafi-Jihadists often justify violence against other Muslims by denouncing them as *takfiris*. According to Islamic jurists, Muslims are prohibited from fighting each other; if they do, they are considered to have committed a grave sin. Since Salafi-Jihadists consider most classical Islamic jurisprudence as incorrect, they also consider themselves freed from the confines of the traditional Islamic rules of warfare[8] equivalent to *jus in bello*[9]. For

[8] Classical Muslim jurists distinguish between what they call *harb al-bugha* (war against Muslims) and *harb al-kuffar* (war against unbelievers). The rules which apply to fighting Muslims are different from the limitations set upon the conduct of warfare against non-Muslims. Binding regulations apply to only Muslims fighting Muslims, not necessarily to Muslims fighting non-Muslims or apostates. Nevertheless, the main focus of Muslim jurists has been on the practical rules of treatment, and not on the grounds of justifiability. (Fadl, 1999).

[9] *Jus in bello* regulates the conduct of parties engaged in an armed conflict. The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is synonymous with *jus in bello;* it seeks to minimize suffering in armed conflicts, notably by protecting and assisting all victims of armed conflict regardless of party affiliation to the greatest extent possible. IHL applies to the belligerent parties irrespective of the reasons for the conflict or the justness of the causes for which they are fighting. If it were (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2015).

modern Salafi-Jihadist groups, if Muslims are deemed to be apostates, then violence against them is legitimate. (Hamid & Dar, 2016).

Despite its connection to Islam, Salafi-Jihadism has more in common with other by-product ideologies of the industrialising 19th century than the religion of Islam. It is closely linked to the disjointing and turbulent effects of globalisation, which introduced rapid changes in the social, political and economic realms of life, which challenged established and rooted notions of identity associated with traditional social structures (Moghadam, A., 2008). Violent Islamist extremism has rapidly evolved since its networks started to evolve and groups supporting it began to participate in larger conflicts some 50 years ago. Since then, violent Islamist extremist groups have been implementing their own forms of governance where state-enacted governance has failed: they attempt to intervene in healthcare, education, the criminal justice system, and resource distribution in order to build their own "state" (Munasinghe et al, 2020, pp. 5-6). Naturally, these groups want their so-called states built on their narrow interpretation of Islam, which is then maintained through violence and social conditioning.

Some scholars argue that Muslims and Western converts who have adopted Salafi-Jihadist beliefs suffer from a crisis of identity: they may be disoriented by modernity and disappointed by what life has to offer them (Meeus et al, 2012; Moghadam, A., 2008). The universal aspects of the Salafi-Jihadi ideology provide members with a new sense of self-definition and belonging in the form of membership to a supranational entity. To them, the only identity that matters is the membership in the global Islamic *ummah* community, which offers dignity and honour, well-being, and sanctuary to oppressed Muslims. The use of religiously infused vocabulary to invoke strong feelings in supporters and enemies is a calculated mix of sociological and agitational propaganda. Salafi-Jihadist groups label themselves using religious references such as "Army of Muhammad" (Jaish-e-Muhammad), "Army of the Righteous" (Lashkar-e-Taiba), "Defenders of the Islamic Faith" (Ansar Dine), and "Conquest of Islam" (Fatah al-Islam). At the same time, they describe their enemies in religious terms as well, referring to them as Crusaders, apostates, or infidels (Moghadam, A., 2008).

Change in violent Islamist extremism

Despite their seemingly absolute rejection of Western values and their claims to be purely Islamic in inspiration, several Salafi-Jihadist leaders and ideologues have been strongly influenced by, and indeed borrowed considerably from, modern Western political ideologies and movements such as nationalism, communism and fascism: particularly techniques of organisation (the establishment of

front groups and parallel hierarchies), propaganda, ideological indoctrination and mass mobilisation have been utilised by many, Al Qaeda and ISIL at the forefront (Bale, 2009, p. 85).

After the fall of the so-called and self-proclaimed caliphate in March 2019, ISIL has morphed back into underground insurgency. Other groups outside of the Middle East arena of conflict continue operating across multiple countries; Boko Haram in Nigeria and Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) in Mali are just some of the 97 Salafi-Jihadist groups operating around the globe today (Munasinghe et al, 2020, pp. 6-8). Even though the number of Salafi-Jihadist groups has slightly diminished[10], these groups merge in and out of surrounding Jihadi entities with deceptive ease. ISIL may have lost its predominant position as the global leader in Islamist extremist violence, but in 2019 it nonetheless remained the most active and deadly group in the world. The ability of ISIL to create affiliates around the world and remain a viable working model for Salafi-Jihadism means that its tried and tested techniques will keep spreading. Before being killed in a US raid in October 2019, the ISIL leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, appeared on video advertising the global reach of the group's various affiliates: he confirmed the status of ISIL provinces in Somalia, Yemen, and Turkey. In short: if ISIL built on the foundations laid by Al Qaeda, ISIL has prepared the ground for its return or for the rise of a successor.

2.4. Propaganda: a useful tool for rebels

In the history of mass produced (dis)information, there have been two key advancements, after which the world was not the same. The first was the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, allowing for the wider and faster movement of information, knowledge, and ideas. The second change came with the religious Reformation era of the 16th century, which weakened the Catholic Church: the official opinion propagated by the Church was no longer the only truth and people could form their own opinions based on several sources. The famous theses of Martin Luther and other religious reformists were almost definitely considered as malicious propaganda and subversion by the Catholic Church, but the attention they gained proved the efficacy of propaganda for later rebels. It is noteworthy that their reformist (or purist) views wouldn't have reached such an audience so quickly if the printing press hadn't been invented by then. Their intended audience was not the mostly illiterate masses of Europe but rather the opinion leaders who shared and broadcast a relatively coordinated message; still, recipients were encouraged to think and research topics for themselves without the overbearing influence of the Church. (Edwards, 1994, ss. 5-7).

[10] from 121 groups in 2017 to 97 in 2018 (Munasinghe et al, 2020).

Renowned propaganda scholar Jacques Ellul states that propaganda got a hold of the masses in the early 1800s after the church and family lost their positions of power. People longed for individuality and external approval, which gave opinion manipulators from propagandists to advertisers an opening (Ellul, 1973, p. 91). The battle for the hearts and minds of people has morphed into sophisticated propaganda with an ever-increasing understanding of psychology, human behaviour, and communication methods. The successful propagandist is able to discern the basic beliefs, needs, or fears of the audience and to play upon those (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2005, pp. 50-51).

Religion, folk tales, and even historical facts are important in laying the ground for propaganda; this type of preparatory pre-propaganda is a central stepping stone to more direct propaganda (Brown, J.A.C., 1963, p. 23). Pre-propaganda consists of guiding myths which the target audience unquestioningly accepts (Ellul, 1973, p. 36). Guiding myths become useful when they dominate and guide thinking in a way that becomes automatic: when a myth is accepted, it can be utilised more readily by propagandists as a template for new guidelines. The most convenient guiding myths are those which have emotion attached to them because propaganda itself cannot create feelings but it can take advantage of other emotional contexts (Ellul, 1973, p. 36).

Unsurprisingly, some of the most successful long-term propaganda campaigns have been those taken up by the three great evangelising religions: Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. In the case of Islam, the latest stage of the evolution in the propaganda efforts of fundamentalists is their new visual framing strategies, which are just another iteration of attempts to reach their goals (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2005, p. 56). Fundamentalist groups aim to create unity among the Arab nations and counteract the values the West, mainly materialism and secularism, which are eroding the purist lifestyle fundamentalists aspire to. ISIL, just like its predecessor Al Qaeda, has been a next generation Salafi-Jihadist group whose media squadron knows how to use social media marketing techniques in recruiting new members. The framing of alternative narratives within the Muslim context often builds around altercations between Muslims and Christians, where the non-believer Christians have violently persecuted Muslims. This epic and historical struggle is told through narratives of the Ottoman Empire versus the Hapsburgs, the Bosnian genocide, Israel versus Palestine, the Assad regime's violence and a range of other historical conflicts. (Saltman & Smith, 2015, pp. 11-13).

Taxonomy of propaganda

Propaganda styles can be roughly divided into four opposing pairs: political–sociological, agitational–integrational, vertical–horizontal, and rational–irrational propaganda (Ellul, 1973, pp. 62-88). These categorisations work in unison and can often be different perspectives of a single propagandistic message. Political propaganda is the type of propaganda which we most readily

recognise. The themes and goals of political propaganda can be strategic in establishing a general policy line or tactical in obtaining more immediate results. Sociological propaganda, on the other hand, aims to create a longer-lasting groundwork for an ideology so that it becomes a part of an individual's internal value system and an unconscious way of understanding economic, political, and sociological factors. School education could be categorised as sociological propaganda since schoolbooks are always more or less subjective, and therefore propagandistic (Brown, J.A.C., 1963); naturally, the levels of overt propaganda differ greatly depend on the topic, location, and aim of the authors. Involuntary dissemination of propaganda can also happen through films, magazines, books, and advertisements, which reproduce an ideology without specific guidance. These materials gradually increase conformity to a specific ideal, which the society and individual then adapt to. Eventually, the criteria of a good life changes to accommodate these ideological rules, and individuals are willing to defend it from any threats, disturbances, or criticism. (Ellul, 1973, pp. 66-67).

Propaganda of agitation is the most common form of propaganda, with which a revolutionary force attempts to force great change by offering the target audience adventure, passion, and extraordinary goals. It is always subversive and antagonistic since its focus is to break down psychological barriers of habits, beliefs, and good judgement with fervent rhetoric, imagery, and symbolism. Agitational propaganda can be used as preparatory guiding propaganda because it is short-lived: agitation lifts people out of their normal lives but at the same time, people cannot be perpetually left into a state of tension. Agitation must be eventually phased off and replaced with propaganda of integration: exciting the masses with hatred and action, telling them that all their actions are justified, eventually needs integrational propaganda to calm the situation and reintegrate individuals into the community. This stability is complex to accomplish because use of violence, lawlessness and impunity as well as hatred are difficult to eradicate even when goals have been reached. The newly established order must use propaganda of integration to prevent the continuation of the battle, incorporate individuals into the "new order", and make former rebels into collaborators (Ellul, 1973, pp. 75-77).

Vertical and horizontal propaganda describe two ways of creating and disseminating propaganda. Vertical propaganda is the classical form, which relies on a political or a religious leader with a message: authority transfers the message top-to-bottom to recipients. Vertical propaganda isolates the leader from communicating with the followers while it transforms the recipients into a suggestible mechanised element of the masses. The recipients are, however, not passive; they act vigorously but their actions are not their own even though they believe they have made conscious choices. (Ellul, 1973, pp. 80-81). Oppositely, horizontal propaganda is more egalitarian since individuals are equal and leaderless in its production. The active use of horizontal propaganda is a much more recent

development: propagandists act as discussion leaders, but the propaganda is created by in-group members themselves. The propaganda is self-reinforcing because it traps members by allowing them to believe their convictions are correct and important enough to be propagated. Horizontal propaganda relies on confirmation bias and the isolation of opinions: if an in-group member was influenced by heterogenous opinions, it is more difficult to convince them that a single truth exists.

Rational and irrational propaganda are intertwined in their usage. Propaganda is addressed to feelings and passions, but purely emotive propaganda is disappearing the more knowledgeable humankind becomes. In order for propaganda to work, it has to incorporate facts to make it appeal to the rational side of humans (Ellul, 1973). Modern, educated humans want to be convinced by facts to justify to themselves they are acting reasonably and justly. The challenge for propagandists is to create an irrational, emotional response in an individual by using rational and factual elements. A recipient's critical powers decrease if the propaganda message is more rational and less violent: vast amounts of research findings, statistics, and analyses eliminate personal judgement because the recipient must condense them into a simplistic message in order to digest them all.

Modern propaganda platforms

Modern marketing and advertising tactics have moved away from broadcasting or mass marketing in traditional media. The current model is to focus on narrowcasting or centralised network marketing for small groups and endeavour to connect with a specific audience through targeted ads. Violent extremist groups, ISIL particularly cleverly, rose to employ this effective targeting tactic in order to get their message across to different subgroups such as young people, women, foreigners, and recent converts to Islam (Weimann, 2016, p. 83). Prior to ISIL, Jihadi propaganda on the internet inspired individuals to approach organisations, but groups very rarely solicited new recruits online by using propaganda (Hegghammer, 2013).

The growth of social media as a propagandist tool is based on its popularity particularly among young users. Advertising agencies and media professionals have from the inception of Facebook and Twitter actively used the social media in advertising products and ideas because visitor, sharing, and liking statistics can be created based on the data they provide. The low threshold of participation in activities and discussions, as well as the opportunity to seek further information through links attached to the material, engages visitors with the campaign material and its creators. These are the same reasons why violent extremist groups have utilised webpages, chat groups, and social media to search for suitable recipients for its messages (Weimann, 2016, p. 80).

Even after severe pushback from social media platform operators after 2016, it is still one of the most effective channels of sharing violent extremist ideologies. Twitter and Facebook were an important recruitment and fund-collection tools for operators such as ISIL and other Jihadi groups such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (Organization for the Liberation of the Levant, HTS)[11] (Barrett, 2014). Twitter rose to become one of the favourite platforms of ISIL and its supporters in 2014 (Weimann, 2016, p. 87). The official propaganda of ISIL is still shared on social media by pro-ISIL media channels such as the Al-Hayat Media Center founded in 2014, and the Amaq News Agency, which specialise in the dissemination of Jihadi propaganda. After accounts began to be deactivated and intelligence agencies commenced a hunt of propagandists, ISIL and other violent Salafi-Jihadist groups moved to newer and more anonymous social media platforms such as Telegram, Hoop, and TamTam (Katz, 16.12.2019). ISIL and its associates actively share their ideology, encourage supporters, and recruit new members to join them in their quest. This is a step further from, for example, Al Qaeda, which chose only to publish inspirational propaganda online because their recruiters were reluctant to solicit potential recruits online, preferring to directly target individuals they came in contact with (Hegghammer, 2013, s. 4).

3. Many paths to radicalise: demographic target groups for propaganda

The goal of this thesis is to examine which groups in Jordan are most at risk of being drawn in by thrilling, counter-cultural, and anti-establishment radical ideas. Some young people are drawn to radical ideas, books, and thinkers, which then leads to discussion and arguing about these radical medias. Additionally, violent action has long been advertised to young people as an adventure which brings meaning and purpose to their lives. Exciting and emotionally attractive agitational propaganda spread by violent extremist groups may cause young boundary-pushing and dopamine-hunting, yet psychologically immature, people to imagine that they can change the world for the better by joining a specific group. At least some of the appeal of violent extremist activity is the notoriety, glamour, and status that it brings. Confrontation with authorities can also legitimise the message in the minds of some individuals. Groups and individuals may radicalise further when they start to perceive every action as plots against them; this “sinister attribution error” is often used by recruiters and propagandists to prove that the community is under attack. (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010a, pp. 17-18).

Propagandists for violent extremism must observe several different limitations and be aware optimal conditions for their message to permeate widely. Undecided, people whose opinions are vague, who

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[11] Hayat Tahrir al-Sham was formerly known as Jabhat al-Nusra.

form the majority of citizens, are the most susceptible to dictations of propaganda. A prior interest must exist for propaganda to be effective, so messages must have individual appeal. In the case of religious propaganda, the case of correct timing for agitation must coincide with a shared collective interest because society as a whole is nowadays less interested in religion as before (Ellul, 1973, p. 49). Effectiveness of propaganda is also difficult to assess: a zero start-off point is almost impossible to establish because supporters have become supporters through propaganda (Ellul, 1973, p. 260).

Ellul claimed (1973, p. 74) that the less educated and informed people to whom propaganda of agitation is addressed, the easier it is to agitate them: a few keywords are enough, around which the basic message is easy to create. Alongside with education, the age structure of the most receptive audiences for extremist messages facilitates the permeability of messages on social media. Even though violent extremist groups and their propagandists create in-group – out-group -distinctions to encourage radicalisation, it is important to remember that coming into contact with extremist or violent ideas does not necessarily turn someone into an extremist (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010a, p. 18).

Empirical evidence on those who are most likely to be radicalised by violent extremist propaganda is sparse. Despite this uncertainty, there are several things that are considered as relatively well-established universal details about those who have become radicalised towards terrorism. Profiling terrorists simply based on their backgrounds is nearly impossible due to their diversity. Most have no history of mental health issues even though their acts are considered to be outside normal moral terms. Poverty alone does not cause radicalisation towards terrorism but un(der)employment may be a part of the equation. Common grievances are often not important on an individual level but rather as a means of agitating and mobilising the masses. Social networks are crucial in identifying susceptible individuals, especially the young. (Schmid, 2013, p. 21).

In the following chapters, I will examine these liabilities in more detail. I will show how violent extremist groups utilise different strategies in propaganda production and dissemination, and how these strategies enhance the message and its proliferation. I will demonstrate that these groups are cognisant of the complex effects of age and gender variability as well as stages of identity development in their audiences and employ them to their own benefit. Extremist groups, just like advertisement agencies, have learned to use various psychological and socio-political factors to their advantage in changing the mindsets of individuals towards narrow-mindedness and radicalisation.

3.1. Age and gender targeting

When looking for ideal target groups for advertising and propaganda, it becomes apparent that the resources of violent extremist groups are spent most efficiently when propaganda is directed

particularly to teenagers and young adults. The young are more vulnerable to external influences and propaganda due to their more underdeveloped cognitive maturity as well as their incomplete identity-formation process. Today, unlimited social media glorifies, praises, and sometimes defines extreme risk-taking behaviour as safe while, at the same time, it isolates the young from their parents' restrictive influence. Levels of dopamine, the gratification hormone, decrease during teenage years, and as a result, especially young people in high-risk groups will do almost anything to reach a dopamine high (Anderson, 2011). The young brain is therefore looking for excitement and the thrill of risks at a time when the prefrontal cortex is not developed enough to limit high-risk behaviour (Anderson, 2011; Schiebener et al, 2015).

Young and emotionally susceptible people, who are viable future supporters, activists, and even potential terrorists for violent extremist groups, may also be physically and psychologically isolated from the realities outside their immediate social circle. The influence exerted on young individuals by these closed social bubbles is enormous even if decision-makers have been dismissive of their importance (Barrett, 2014). Concurrently, youth of 12–20-years are at the most intense phase of their identity-search. The young often seek information on their own or they can be encouraged by their networks to seek mentoring. However, their psychological and cerebral immaturity makes them even more susceptible to outside influences and superimposed identities (Meeus et al, 2012). After late adolescence, approximately at ages 23–29, the frontal lobe has matured and identity-formation is complete, so by this developmental stage individual values are more difficult to change (Kroger;Martinussen;& Marcia, 2010).

Understanding the additional possibilities given by gender-profiling allows violent extremist groups to style their propaganda and in-group recruitment. In order to narrowcast their messages, propaganda must be modelled according to gender and age. This modelling includes the message itself, how the extremist group is presented as the solution to a specific problem/crisis, and finally, a choice between either the vertical or the horizontal model for dissemination. Research shows (Meeus et al, 2012) that at ages 12–20, females are more committed to their identities than males, which means that male indecisiveness can be influenced more effectively from the outside. A crisis of identity can lead to vacillation in values, worldview, and religious beliefs, so this longer period of uncertainty in males allows for a wider array of propaganda tools to be effective for longer.

Changing world, changing strategies

While it would seem that the core group for violent extremist propaganda recruitment would be young and able-bodied men, groups with archaic gender norms such as ISIL have nonetheless focused on all age groups and genders. The assumption that women do not engage in terrorism as traditionally

defined is historically inaccurate (Gentry & Sjöberg, 2016, p. 184). Even though historically women have acted less as actual terrorists, they have maintained and propagated the violent extremist ideology, supported their husbands, raised their children according to their ideology, recruited others, helped create alliances through strategic marriages, raised funds, and transported messages, weapons and goods (de Leede, 2018; Banks, 2019). This gender gap is being corrected by modelling extremist propaganda to women as well. The contribution of women to extremist causes remains enormous, and they cannot be simply seen as victims of circumstances. Extremist groups may advocate for clearly defined and old-fashioned gender stereotypes, but their activities demand that all supporters are utilised in the fight. In fact, violent extremist groups have learned to strategically use gender in their communications and propaganda to mobilise old and new members (Alexander, 2019, p. 5)

Vertical, top-to-bottom propaganda is still the preferred way of group leaders to pass down messages to their followers. This traditional method of ideology-dissemination is being supplemented by horizontal propaganda, in which in-group members themselves create, discuss, and distribute propaganda materials without direct guidance from the leadership. The inclusion of followers in the propaganda apparatus requires patience from the administration but its benefit is that it does not need a complex communications arsenal to deliver its messages. This inclusive, social media -based form of propaganda is perfectly suited for young people, who get enticed by materials specially designed to them by their peers on platforms they constantly use. In addition to this designer propaganda, the desire of young people to belong to a group, conform to its rules, and be accepted can override common sense and the advice of familial networks. Nowadays, the identity-formation in young people is strongly linked to validation on social media. For digital natives, the Internet is a natural extension of the off-line society, but this anonymous and unguarded platform leaves young people vulnerable to abuse. Propagandists take advantage of these specific times of identity crisis, search, and rebellion in young people to saturate them with extreme thoughts, which may eventually lead to them to radicalise.

Among violent extremist groups, ISIL has been at the forefront of a momentous change in extremist recruitment strategies on Twitter, Facebook, and more recently, on Telegram. To impressionable young people, these platforms feel like a brotherhood or a secret society, which invite in only those few conscious humans who have managed to escape the matrix. On anonymous forums, supporters and acolytes horizontally replicate the original ideological message planted by a propagandist who is closer to the ideological leaders of the group. These narrowcast messages are distributed around the world and on different social media platforms effortlessly. Each target group re-edits propaganda

material into something that appeals to themselves, making it suitable for specific age groups, educational and cultural backgrounds.

Extremist groups have learned to take advantage of freedom of expression, which makes a clear distinction between speech that can be offensive, shocking and disturbing, and forbidden speech that constitutes a threat to national security, or hatred that incites harms, or propaganda for war[12]. A delicate differentiation needs to be struck: freedom of expression must be protected while expressions in the service of violent extremism, intolerance, and arbitrary restrictions on free speech must be properly identified. Currently, far-right extremist propaganda is much more accessible on social media platform than Jihadist narratives, and far-right audiences are often legitimised by political representatives in Western democracies. After the exponential proliferation of pro-Jihadi sites in the early 2010s, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube now work with smaller platforms and other service providers to share data about Jihadist content and automate pre-emptive content moderation (Ganesh & Bright, 2020, pp. 12-13). However, other violent extremist groups and their propaganda do not receive enough attention from service providers or authorities even after the call to action after attacks by Brenton Tarrant, the Christchurch mosque shooter, and a white supremacist.

Psychological preference for violent media contents high in the young

Young brains may crave dopamine and excitement but there are also types of persons and personalities who enjoy watching frightening or violent media content. Suspense and resolution of suspense are two important components of horror and our responses to horror films. The motivations for watching horror, or more specifically, realistic and graphic gore-horror may indicate a preference to violence. The consumption of violent media can cause negative effects and even sexual arousal during viewing, but it can also expose lack of empathy and aggressiveness, and a sensation-seeking personality (Hoffner & Levine, 2005). Personality characteristics such as low empathy, aggressiveness, and sensation-seeking can play a great part in the enjoyment of violent media content. Viewers who are highly empathic most likely dislike horror films because they have strong negative reactions to the pain and suffering of others (Tamborini, 1996). In order to identify what precedes a predilection for enjoyment of violent media content, studies have concentrated on the types of material as well as types of people. Specifically, one study examined the enjoyment of adolescents

[12] The International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) foregrounds the protection of freedom of expression in Article 19. According to Article 19 of the ICCPR, certain expression may be limited by law – if necessary – for the purpose of protection of personal reputation, national security, public order, public health or public morals. All these provisions have a bearing on expression in relation to violent radicalization. Article 20 calls for prohibitions on “propaganda for war”, and on “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence”. (Alava et al, 2017).

when watching graphic violence such as torture and sadistic mutilation, executions, and corpses (Johnston, 1995), while the other concentrated on the enjoyment of violent horror clips that concluded with brutal murders and no satisfactory resolution (Hoffner & Levine, 2005, p. 223). In short, these two studies focused specifically on the enjoyment of victimization seen in horror films. Among adolescents aged 13–16, so-called “gore watching” was the only motivation that significantly contributed to the prediction of preference for graphic violence. In a third of viewers, motivations for gore-watching showed a preference for graphic violence (for example, beliefs that the best movies show torture, random killings, sex, gore, and revenge). Out of all horror genres, motivations for enjoyment of gore horror were the only ones significantly related to biological sex: males are more likely to view graphic horror for gore motivations than are females. (Johnston, 1995, pp. 540–541).

In relation to real-life violence and radicalisation, preferential and exclusive gore-watching may reflect a curiosity or a future inclination towards actual physical violence. In studies, motivations ranged from unspecified curiosity (*"I'm interested in the ways people die*") to a vengeful interest in killing *("I like to see victims get what they deserve"),* and to an attraction to the grotesque *("I like to see blood and guts").* The gore-watcher personality is characterized by low empathy, low fearfulness, and high adventure seeking. This combination of personality traits may lead gore-watchers to seek arousal through graphic portrayals of blood, death, and tissue damage, or to blunt their emotional responses to the psychological terror, physical suffering, and death of the film characters. At the moment, it seems that gore watchers are most at risk for aggression and committing subsequent violence. (Johnston, 1995, pp. 543–546).

Empathy and identifying with victims of excess violence are mostly absent in gore-watchers; instead, they tend to relate strongly with the killers and, especially males, are more likely insensitive toward the victims. One of the results of repeated exposure to media violence is that it may facilitate the adoption of violence as an effective means of solving personal or social problems in real life (Rule & Ferguson, 1986, p. 30). Gore-watching motivations are also related to stereotypical double standard beliefs such as male and female sexuality, which manifested in gore-watchers enjoying female-victim media where “victims get what they deserve” since “[sex before marriage] is all right for males but not for females” (Johnston, 1995).

Individuals who are exposed to violent propaganda imagery may view it either by empathising with the victims or the perpetrators of violence. Even though keenness for gore-watching does not indicate aggression or lowered capabilities for empathy, those groups of people already vulnerable due to their age or developmental stage may be adversely affected by high-sensation violent media. This does not mean that every horror enthusiast is prone to radicalisation but, on the internet, the search for violent

media content can quickly lead to anonymous imageboards and to violent propaganda produced by extremists.

The secret algorithms of Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube are designed to maximise the engagement of users by analysing the content of what has been originally sought and then automatically promoting similar content. In addition to violent media being readily available on YouTube, Facebook live-streaming of terror attacks has become the norm for violent extremists lately[13]; this gamification turns terror attacks into consumables where the attacker tries to out-do the highest score (i.e. death toll) and the acolyte-fans encourage further violence by making the terrorist into a celebrity. Nonetheless, a preference for violence may be linked to the violence itself, not necessarily to the ideology behind it; instead of the perpetrator or the victims, an avid consumer of violence may ignore the suffering and focus on the weapons they see.

3.2. Educational background

The path to radicalisation varies from one individual to the other and is often influenced by the level of education. Education in the developing world, more so than elsewhere, is a means to social advancement – at least for those without special privilege. Concurrently, many Muslim countries such as Egypt and Palestine have suffered development crises and failed to create decent jobs for university graduates looking for social ascension. It is possible that political rebellions grow out of the frustrated expectations of the educated, but it is simplistic to state that dissatisfied ambitions create militants out of university graduates when their hopes and dreams are not met. This relative deprivation, the feeling of inequality and being deprived of desired things in a society compared to others, could explain why more graduates became radicalized, especially in the poorer Islamic countries which have gone through developmental crises since the 1970s (Gambetta & Hertog, 2016, p. 34). Still, Western countries have not experienced similar developmental failures, so the situation should be the opposite in countries where mobility closure, the permeability of class boundaries, is less defined. If social and economic conditions alone explained the overrepresentation of graduates among Salafi-Jihadist extremists, there should be fewer graduates and more socially marginalised among the Jihadis who have radicalised in the West (Gambetta & Hertog, 2016, p. 60).

Ellul (1973, p. 74), somewhat simplistically, argues that the less educated are the easiest to agitate with propaganda because they lack a wide-ranging education, which would enable individuals to

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[13] The first live stream in the midst of a terrorist act was in Magnanville, USA, in June 2016, around 8pm, when a policeman and his family were murdered by Larossi Abballa. Abballa turned to social media to broadcast and justify his actions, dedicating them to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Acts of terror had been live streamed before but always by bystanders or later, via recordings. (Conway & Dillon , 2016).

independently question information provided to them. Also, it has been noted that the lack of education or a specific type of diploma may lead to un(der)employment or low-income levels and poverty, which opens doors for disappointment and possible radicalisation. However, neither of these explanations means that educated or well-off individuals could not become radicalised and join violent extremist groups. If anything, this multitude of contrary possibilities underlines the fact that education is an important factor in understanding radicalisation and the effectiveness of propaganda.

Instead of looking at the level of education, more attention should be directed at what kind of education is given. Education can indoctrinate and develop a fear of others, as well as reinforce attitudes that predispose people to accept monochrome understandings of the world. However, open education involving the construction and dissemination of knowledge and values through dialogue allows for the freedom to question, negotiate, and relate one's personal experiences with learned concepts. A closed system of education, on the other hand, transmits knowledge to learners through practices such as repetition learning, which is closely related to indoctrination because there is no opportunity to question or challenge ideas. (Ghosh et al., 2016, pp. 6, 10). All education is interwoven with ideology and politics: education reflects the ideologies or worldviews of the dominant groups of a society and are shaped by their values. The education strategies based on authoritarian teaching techniques rely on a top-down approach, which conditions individuals to accept what is being said without questioning it. Thus, even wide-ranging education, which Ellul saw as an inoculation to radicalism, does not actually prevent radicalisation if it hasn't allowed for independent thinking.

Universities, Terrorism, and Radicalisation

Bringing young people together en masse at the specific moment in their lives when they are most idealistic and impressionable has many benefits. Sometimes, however, these gatherings can lead to extremist influence and even recruitment. Historically, such as in Russia during the late 19th century, violent extremism and terrorism were often the modus operandi for middle- and upper-class students who tried (and failed) to reach the unresponsive popular masses. These students rebelled against their affluent parents and their social class while trying to force a new way of life into existence. A hundred years later, university graduates who could not find employment despite their diplomas, have also radicalised and became extremists. (Schmid, 2013). After the Second World War, the religions of the Book – Islam, Christianity, and Judaism – have been forced to deal with new constructions of society where religion no longer organises social life. Consumerism, socialism, and atheism had subordinated faith. A religious militancy emerged to fight this new non-believer world order, and its members were young university students and graduates. In Europe, they questioned the society and its secular foundations; in Muslim countries, they challenged the organisation of the society and its secular

policies. They all demanded a return to pure religion through grass-roots organisations but also through politics by evangelising Christianity globally, founding the state of Israel for the Jews, and by Islamising modernity. (Kepel, 1991).

Even before ISIL began to widely attract even the most educated into its ranks, it was known that universities, more than madrassas, are hotbeds of radicalisation (Schmid, 2013, p. 35). Contrarily to Ellul, recent research suggests that the higher the level of education, the greater the likelihood of joining a violent group. Additionally, among those with higher education, students with more demanding professional degrees have a great likelihood of joining violent extremist groups. (Gambetta & Hertog, 2016). Terrorists have also been found to more likely have a technical or applied degree (medicine, applied sciences and, especially, engineering), at least in the Muslim world. Those with a technical education typically exhibited common personal dispositions such as right-wing political views, higher levels of religiosity, and a propensity to combine these in a radicalising way. Arts and humanities, or social sciences majors were found to radicalise as well but the majority of them were non-violent radicals. (Rose, 2017, p. 18). It must be noted, though, that these degrees in technical or applied science degrees are held in high social value especially in developing countries; un(der)employment and feelings of deprivation in relation to peers may, in fact, be a greater reason for radicalisation rather than the exact subject of study.

In the 1980s, the sociological profile of a modern urban terrorist was created, based on a compilation of more than 350 individual terrorists from Argentinean, Brazilian, German, Iranian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Palestinian, Spanish, Turkish, and Uruguayan terrorist groups active during 1966–1976. The study found that approximately two-thirds of those identified terrorists are persons with some university training, university graduates, or postgraduate students. (Berrebi, 2007, pp. 3–4). It can be argued that if education was always an effective shield against radicalisation, the so-called inoculation effect of previous exposure and time to adjust to extremist propaganda would completely eradicate such materials. So, one of the best ways to help people identify misinformation and improve people's abilities to spot and deflect it regardless of their age, gender, educational level, political affiliation, or cognitive style is through extensive preventive training (van der Linden & Roozenbeek, 2019).

3.3. Place of residence and its links to radicalisation

Humans are diverse in their characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, mental and physical health, but they are also diverse in their locales relating to place of birth and long-time residence, which often also designate their socio-economic background (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). All these combined characteristics result in a variety of different experiences and opportunities, which

relate to the formation of identities. Not accepting the existence of inherent differences in backgrounds and the blind homogenisation of a diverse group of individuals perpetuates the problem of the privileged few. The result is a form of oppression where equality may actually be unjust and inegalitarian (Ghosh et al., 2016, p. 33).

The places of residence of known radicalised individuals are very diverse, demonstrating that violent extremism occurs not just in large cities or marginalised neighbourhoods, but everywhere. Contributing factors to radicalisation such as complaints on living conditions, discrimination, negative influence of peer groups, lack of social cohesion, and social networks in urban environments are more common occurrences in cities compared to rural areas. (Johnston et al, 2017). However, the diversity of the urban population in its temperament, values, and ethnicities or familial affiliations discourages extremism more effectively. More homogenous non-urban populations can shift to extremes faster because a lack of exposure to intellectual diversity combined with populist narratives and spatial segregation from other viewpoints pushes people's views to extremes (Wilkinson, 2018).

Those living in larger urban areas tend to be more educated and often more liberal in their views. The reasons why larger urban areas have become more liberal compared to more conservative rural areas are complex, but one explanation is economic growth. Economic growth reliably generates liberalising cultural change, shifting people toward more progressive, "self-expression" social values, whatever their original ideological temperaments might have been. Conversely, stagnant or declining prospects often associated with rural areas due to increasing urbanisation tend to generate a rising sense of anxiety and threat, leading people to adopt a zero-sum, "Us or Them" frame of mind. The concentration of economic growth in relatively big cities similarly focuses the liberalising "treatment effect" of rising living standards on the already relatively liberal urban population. This focusing leads to rural stagnation which widens the gap in cultural and moral values produced by the increasing spatial separation of urbanisers and rooted, rural holdouts. (Wilkinson, 2018, pp. 5-6).

Urban areas have also become centres for grass-roots social and political movements aiming to improve lives under often authoritarian regimes. At the same time with the increasing global popularity and demand for basic human rights and political participation, governments in the Middle East have moved from populist crowd-pleasing subsidies to pseudo-liberalism, which has increased income inequalities and expanded the groups of marginalised people (Bayat, 2002, p. 2). The social responsibilities forced upon even more authoritarian governments to keep the larger crowds happy could be shrugged off after the fall of Communism: in Egypt, Iran, and Jordan, certain social indicators such as the child mortality rate have decreased while poverty and income gaps have become more prominent (Bayat, 2002, p. 2). When these regimes reduce their social responsibilities, they

open the door to the growth of civil society institutions, which bring with them demands for more openness and accountability. Due to rapid urbanisation across the globe, thus also in the Middle East, larger urban centres have increasingly become forerunners in conflicts and struggles associated with human rights, democracy, women, and other areas of social development (Bayat, 2002, p. 3).

Where you live, that's how you radicalise

After Latin America, which is about 75% urbanised, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has the highest level of urbanization in the developing world, with the majority of the region's inhabitants now residing in urban areas. The exponential and fast growth of cities has led to social problems when expectations and demands of the increasing population have not been met with adequate public services. Some of these megacities, especially Cairo, have extremely high population densities, severe shortages of housing and services, and a lack of regulation of construction and urban development. The economies of many such cities cannot absorb their large populations, leading to un(der)employment and poverty among urban populations. Other problems include a shortage of clean drinking water, the growth of slums or shantytowns, polluted air, inadequate waste disposal systems, power shortages, and noise pollution (Moghadam, 2010, pp. 18-20).

In Asia, the complex reasons for radicalisation especially among the more vulnerable young people are deeply connected to psychosocial and economic grievances such as poverty and unemployment, marginalization through illiteracy and lack of education, as well as admiration for charismatic leaders, pursuit of social acceptability and psychological trauma (Alava et al, 2017, p. 33). In South Asia, the increase of religious extremism and intolerance has been linked to the growth of the madrassa education system in elementary and secondary levels. In Bangladesh, unregulated private madrassas rise in poor areas, causing great concern because several Islamist extremists engaging in terrorist activities are affiliated with these institutions. In Pakistan, especially during President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's regime in 1977–1988, his Islamisation programme made education highly Islamic in nature. Since then, the Pakistani state has systematically introduced an exclusivist ideology that proliferates jihad as part of its security policy in a strategic manner. This highly intolerant and exclusivist way of religious teaching has proven to be very problematic in the expansion of the global Jihadi scene. (Ghosh et al., 2016, p. 19).

In Europe, in countries where background differences are forcefully homogenised in places like the public-school system, this equalisation process has led to the alienation of many minority students. One of these countries is France, which has utilised a comprehensive assimilation policy on all migrants arriving in France. The assimilation, in short, aims to make everyone French, and in turn, the original identity of the person is lessened or at least pushed back. France had desperately needed

and sought for migrants to fuel its economy until the recession of the mid-1970s: then France put a stop on legal migration flows and for the first time, immigration triggered strong political reactions that tended to overshadow complex phenomena of mutual repulsion. The Algerian war, its terrorism and torture, became a black mark in French history. After the war, mental links between Muslims and long-lasting moral scars, vexation, and colonial guilt were repressed in the national French psyche for a long time. (Maillard, 2005, pp. 67-68). Seeing inequality and discrimination at work in the same country that demanded assimilation from migrants led to disappointment and disillusionment among the Muslims of France. Eventually, the dismay and confusion of the disaffected elderly Muslims turned out to be the perfect opportunity for the radical Islamists to expand their popularity. Also for Salafi organisations in places such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, this need for funds enabled them to influence French Muslim communities and expand their ideological reach (Maillard, 2005, p. 74).

3.4. Employment status

The intuitive expectation is for violent extremist or terrorist organisations to be populated by individuals who have the lowest market opportunities. The idea that people with fewer opportunities are more likely to commit crimes, take their own lives, or join religious groups, has been the traditional rationale, which has since been transferred to include terrorist organisations as well. Political figures such as former US President George W. Bush and his then-Secretary of State Colin Powell have used the narrative of "with hope against terrorism" in 2001–2002[14]. (Berrebi, 2007). However, many scientists and scholars believe that blaming the poor and the ignorant of joining violent extremist organisations belittles and excessively narrows the issue at hand.

In the MENA area, unemployment of the highly educated is a growing problem. At the same time with ever-increasing youth population, governments are trying to educate more and more people in higher education facilities. However, while lower-cost degrees[15] in the humanities and social sciences become more popular, governments have begun decreasing the number of civil service jobs that have been the main employment option for humanities and social science graduates for decades. Percentage-wise, 20% of Egyptian men, and 50% of Egyptian women, born in 1978 found their first job in the public service; by 2009 those figures were 5% and 25%, respectively (Rose, 2017). Now that most MENA states have moved to free-market economies, their vast public sectors have had to

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[14] In 2002, Powell discussed the motivations of terrorists: *"I fully believe that the root cause of terrorism does come from situations where there is poverty, where there is ignorance, where people see no hope in their lives"*. President G.W. Bush declared also in 2002 in a conference on poverty: *"We fight against poverty because hope is an answer to terror… We will challenge the poverty and hopelessness and lack of education and failed governments that too often allow conditions that terrorists can seize and try to turn to their advantage."* (Berrebi, 2007, pp. 2–3).
[15] lower cost degrees when compared to science, technology, medicine, engineering etc.

be cut to offset the costs of a more efficient economy. This has left scores of once well-to-do public servants unemployed and without the comforts they previously enjoyed. The unemployment rate in these graduates is high in many European and North American countries as well, but most of them still offer some social security and services, unlike in MENA countries.

The large number of young people in Middle Eastern countries has been offered as one of the reasons for the birth of the Arab Spring. At the beginning of the Arab Spring, the youth unemployment figures in the Middle East were at their highest in Tunisia (42.3%), Palestine (35.7%), and Egypt (29.7%) (Stoenescu, 2014). However, these figures were similar to those in many other southern European countries at the same time: youth unemployment in Spain was 46.4% and 44.4% in Greece with the EU28 average being 15.8%. In Tunisia and Palestine, youth unemployment remained at a high level in 2001–2011, and in both places, high youth unemployment was combined with social and political imbalances (Stoenescu, 2014). In 2018, at least one in five people in the MENA area were considering emigrating (Dale et al., 2019). In Sudan, this accounted for half the population. In Jordan, the change from 2007 through 2013 to 2018 went from 24% to 27.2% to a staggering 44.7%. Economic reasons were overwhelmingly cited as the push factor. (Arab Barometer, 2020).

Un(der)employment and rationalising radicalisation

Violent extremist groups have been known to use the poor employment situation and complicated political issues in the Middle East and Africa as one way to convince people of their own charitable merits. Rational propaganda used by extremist groups focuses all the attention on numbers and facts on paper, which allows the ideology of the group to fade into the background; the same technique was used in the 1930s and 40s in Germany.

One reason for the popularity of violent extremist groups such as ISIL may have been that it (supposedly) was paying wages to its members. A demographic trap has developed in many MENA countries because mortality rates have been significantly reduced but the birth rate has remained at the same level as in the times of high child mortality. This is the so-called stage two of demographic transformation, where many developing countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia are at present: more than 20% of their populations consist of 15–24-year-olds who are largely unemployed and without a vision for the future (Stoenescu, 2014). This combination of high unemployment and high birth rate has made rational propaganda of violent extremist groups such as ISIL appeal to many young men in the Middle East. Claims of high salaries, company cars, and social welfare made by supporters of ISIL were verified by multiple media sources; more importantly, it was also confirmed, inter alia, by the King of Jordan, Abdullah II. He

told NBC news (22.9.2014) that ISIL fighters receive up to USD1000 per month [EUR960], which in Jordan is equivalent to the monthly middle-class or upper-middle-class salary level.

Engaging in domestic terrorism can be a part-time occupation and does not require the recruit to travel long distances. By contrast, joining an international terror group involves migration costs in addition to forgoing earning opportunities at home, a combination of mechanisms that has received little attention in the literature on terrorism. The high level of foreign fighters arriving to ISIL territories in Syria and Iraq was heavily influenced by the proximity: from, for example, Turkey and Jordan the travel costs were minimal. In addition to this, their higher unemployment rates pushed more recruits to join ISIL (Brockmeyer et al, 2018, p. 3). In Turkey, the high levels of foreign fighters from Turkey can be attributed to ISIL recruitment centres along the country's southeast provinces and the proximity to Iraq and Syria. For male affiliates specifically, reports indicate that ISIL offered monetary incentives for Turkish foreign fighters to cross the border and fight in Syria. Whilst there is limited data on female affiliates, there are indications that many Turkish women joined ISIL alongside their husbands (University of Maryland, 2019, p. 68).

3.5. Religiosity and radicalisation

There appear to be two basic modes of religiosity, and both can be differently utilised in the radicalisation process. They rarely exist in their extreme forms; rather, individual believers are a mix of these two modes. The first one is the spiritual and emotional pilgrim, focusing on explorations, feelings, reflections, self-knowledge, and the relationship between the interior and the exterior. It emphasizes the body as a place for experience and personal space, for example in the prayer (salah) and its influence on personal states of mind, which tend toward the personal relationship with God. The other mode of religiosity is characterised by a preoccupation with following rules, with what is haram and halal, and is oriented toward truth and proof in fixed and unquestionable forms. This submissive tenet focuses on rationality in contrast to emotions and with putting Islam on the same footing as science. Here, correct observance emphasises, for example in Islam, correct Islamic dress as well as correct ways of submitting to God. This expression of religiosity puts worldly things such as modernity, individuality, and democracy in contrast with divine rule represented by sharia and the caliphate. (Jensen, 2006, p. 654). This other extreme could be described as radical neo-fundamentalism because it denounces things such as human rights and democracy and is therefore against the current principles of most constitutions.

Both sides of religiosity are useful for radical and extremist actors. Authoritative scholars, preachers, or mentors selected to guide individuals because of their presumed knowledge of "the Truth" can

abuse their power by re-educating people through sociological propaganda such as selective readings and interpretations of holy texts. Key events can be interpreted anew as emotional agitational propaganda showing “the Truth” of how the in-group of true believers has suffered injustices. Ever-increasing focus on denouncing worldly things and emphasis on eschatology, and their own special role in it, redirects minds effectively and allows them to concentrate on things like Paradise or Jannah. For adolescents, peer pressure is effective invisible horizontal propaganda because of their innate need to conform to group expectations while trying on identity options.

Religiosity in the MENA region

Arabs are increasingly saying they are no longer religious: since 2013, the number of people across the Middle East and North Africa region identifying as "not religious" has risen from 8% to 13%.[16] The rise is greatest in the under 30s cohorts, within whom 18% identify as not religious (Dale et al., 2019). An increasing number of Arab youths think that religion has too big a role in the Middle East: the number of youth thinking this way has increased from 50% in 2015 to 66% in 2019 in a very short amount of time (PBS Research, 2019)[17]. The continuing strong influence of former colonial powers such as France, Italy, and the UK has also affected especially the youth in North African countries, who are self-reporting to be less religious: in Tunisia today, youth (47%) are as likely to say they are not religious as in the United States (46%) (Habtom, 2020). However, both regions remain staunchly religious and will remain so despite current trends. The more religious Middle East is more divided across sectarian lines and has less influence from anti-Islamist charismatic leaders such as Libya’s Khalifa Haftar.[18] In the Middle East, religion remains a key aspect of personal identities, and the current political systems both enforce and reproduce religious and sectarian identities (Habtom, 2020).

One additional dimension of religiosity is that if current trends continue, countries with high levels of religious affiliation will grow fastest. The same is true for levels of religious commitment: the fastest population growth appears to be occurring in countries where many people say religion is very important in their lives. (Pew Research Center, 2018)

Rulers and religion

From 2007 to 2018, trust in religious leaders has declined in MENA countries, and most perceptibly with Islamic parties. The loss of trust is possibly linked with decisions some Islamist parties made

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[16] See religiosity numbers in the appendix: chart 1.
[17] The Arab Youth Survey is a poll where 3 300 young adults under the age of 24 from 15 Arab countries were interviewed.
[18] Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar is a Libyan warlord and the Commander of the Libyan National Army (LNA). His fight for power in Libya is supported by countries such as Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

when they came to power in Egypt and Tunisia after 2011. These Islamist parties did not have comprehensive support of the populations, and Islamist governments passed legislation based narrowly and heavily on Islamic law without considering secular powers. In Egypt, the public eventually rejected the Muslim Brotherhood due to its narrow focus on the interests of the party's religious base. Also, the rise of the ISIL had a dramatic effect on support for Islamist parties; a decline in popularity happened even though ISIL represents a violent extremist interpretation of Islam with little in common with Islamist political parties across MENA (Habtom, 2020).

Many Islamist parties have announced that democracy is a Western form of governance fundamentally incompatible with Islam and Islamic law. This claim has been supported by some early Western researchers such as Samuel P. Huntington (in 1993) who claimed that the scarcity of democracies in the MENA region was best explained by cultural incompatibility (Ciftci et al, 2018, p. 2). For example, ISIL utilised this rhetoric in an attempt to build a religious Caliphate which would have religious authority over all Muslims. For many Salafis, this message was a welcome one since they are concerned with living according to Prophet Muhammad's sunna and felt that this cannot be acceptably done in their own countries. Since political activism of individuals is not particularly encouraged in Salafism, and most observers are strictly obedient of Muslim rulers (Hamid & Dar, 2016), the promise of a Caliphate where Muslims would be ruled with strict accordance to sunna was enticing. Many Muslims living in the West have also experienced racism and discrimination in liberal democratic countries such as France (Maillard, 2005), so a suitable reminder to them was to make *hijrah* to a land governed by Muslims and sharia law. In modern Salafi terminology, hijrah refers to an individual's effort to abandon a lifestyle perceived as non-Islamic and move towards hisba. Religious scholars and ideologues, both Sunni and Shi'a, agree that hijrah is compulsory if their stay in a non-Muslim country leads to loss of faith or neglection of religious duties (Sistani, 27.5.2017). Violent extremist Salafi groups such as ISIL have changed the original narrative and instead insist on hijrah as a religious duty of all Muslims.

The idea of Islamic law being incompatible with democracy or that national governments should rule only according to sharia has lost support across the MENA area since 2007 but a few exceptions to the rule exist (Arab Barometer, 2020). Still, in the aftermath of the vast changes in the MENA area in 2011, groups like ISIL were able to take advantage of the call for religious authorities to rule

instead of uncaring authoritarian leaders who had ignored the people. These extremist, often Salafi-Jihadist groups moved the disillusioned masses by stating that “the solution is only Islam” [19].

In the future, current religious leaders may be replaced by religious leaders and ideologues who are adept at social media. Considering the diversity of new media, particularly social media, and the ease of contacting religious leaders across vast distances, believers now have greater options when choosing to whom they look for religious guidance. This means that the monopoly of state institutions or long-standing Islamist parties is weakening (Habtom, 2020). Still, many popular Islamic scholars such as Ayatollah Sistani (27.5.2017) in Iran, Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani in Pakistan, as well as Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi in Egypt have made the effort to appear multilingually online in an effort to hold on to their relevance and authority.

Age, identity, and levels of religiosity

There are a few possible and overlapping explanations to why younger generations are often less religious than older ones, no matter their religion. One theory relates advancing religiosity with ageing and approaching one’s own mortality. Another stresses the correlation of decreasing religiosity of societies with improved economic conditions and fewer anxiety-inducing or life-threatening problems. Since young people in steadily developing societies generally have easier lives than their elders, they become less religious (Kramer & Fahmy, 2018). Meanwhile, in countries with advanced economies, people are more likely to feel safe in part because technology and infrastructure investments in these societies have helped people overcome many common health problems, cope with severe weather, and deal with other types of emergencies that can cause existential anxiety. People in these countries rely less on religion for emotional support or explanations of the unknown. When measured between adults aged 18–39 and adults over age 40, the age gaps in importance of religion are smallest in sub-Saharan Africa (1% difference), Asia Pacific (4% difference), and in the Middle East and North Africa region (7% difference). (Pew Research Center, 2018).

Age and developmental stages also influence spirituality and the search for one’s own religious identity. “Faith development” examines conversion processes in individuals and identifies how movements from one developmental stage to another can foster spiritual conversion and vice versa (Rambo, 1993, p. 157). Religious conversion does not always require growth to a new stage, but it can set parameters for what an individual wants from their personal spiritual renewal or rediscovery. Many of those born-Muslims who rediscover their faith do so in their late teens or early adulthood

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[19] For year and country-specific statistics for the popularity of the idea that democracy is a Western form of government and not compatible with Islam; see appendix, chart 2.

(Inge, 2016, p. 66), and the spiritual awakening usually occurs in the identity formation and identity crisis stages, when the authority of parents diminishes and outside influences (university, friendship networks) increase. In the crisis stage individuals examine their life and question their values independently and reach their own conclusions through intensive search (Marcia, 1966).

Islam is more often than other religions thought to be as a hot, strong, and uncompromising religion which helps believers form an equally strong and solid identity. Whether this view is true or not, the authoritative tradition of Islam is seen as attractive because it provides clear guidelines for individuals, but also because it invokes a sense of continuity and feeling of belonging. This view of Islam as more fundamentalist is a construct that those who convert, revert, or rediscover Islam. Salafi Islam draws in people searching for their identity because they rely heavily on the authority of tradition, permanence, the juxtaposition of holy over disorder, and a return to ancient, and therefore real, guidelines and values. (Jensen, 2006, pp. 647-648). Populist, radical, or even extremist actors can take advantage of this identity vulnerability and search for guidance by presenting a worldview that offers stability and unambiguous life choices in a moment of crisis.

Religiosity in converts to Islam

Another aspect of the level of religiosity are converts. Conversion is a term that is not limited to only those who move from one religion to another but also those born-Muslims who come to a new understanding of their faith (Inge, 2016, p. 7). Their transformation encompasses both cognitive and behavioural changes, meaning that a conversion incorporates a range of identity transformations, including the change from the absence of faith to a faith commitment, switching religious communities within the same faith tradition, and 'born-again' experiences – that is, spiritual awakening without changing religion at all (Rambo, 1993, p. 2). However, in my thesis, for the sake of clarity, I will only refer to converts who are not born Muslim as converts.

Converts who were not born Muslim are brought into a religious tradition in which they have not been socialised. As a result, converts appear to be negatively positioned with respect to authority and authenticity concerning the question of being "a proper Muslim". While some argue that converts themselves cannot be qualified as "authentically Muslim," and are attracted to Islam as an authoritative tradition, the beliefs of converts are informed by individuality and autonomy, features that characterise general forms of modern religiosity in Western Europe. (Jensen, 2006, p. 643). If assessed on a spectrum of different modes of religiosity among converts, there are converts who do not show any outward signs of their conversion and emphasise the continuity of their former identities, whereas other converts very intentionally show off their new identities as Muslims. Additionally, Muslim converts in the West may feel they also have to prove their Muslim identities

to Muslim communities; this is a point where some converts choose overt expressions of "Muslimness" to show the depth of their true dedication to Islam in the eyes of born-Muslims. Converts may choose to exhibit and stage their Muslim identities in a very ritualistic posture, which is expressed by inventing a symbolic ethnicity, for example, a preoccupation with taking on the entire Islamic dress code. With women, this may mean wearing the hijab, the jilbab, and the niqab, whereas in men, this is expressed by growing a beard, wearing different headwear and sunna-clothes. The recently converted are thus often known for becoming more Muslim than born-Muslims and therefore "becoming more royal than the king." (Jensen, 2006, pp. 645-646).

During the progressive conversion process, a convert looks for assistance and religious guidance within their sphere of influence. Religions often aim to encapsulate their followers into worlds of their own, where older members and new converts learn more about pertinent teachings, lifestyle, and expectations. This ideological encapsulation involves cultivation of a worldview and belief system that "inoculates" the adherent against alternative or competitive systems of belief. Members and potential converts both are reminded of the purity and sacredness of their beliefs, the destructiveness of beliefs of the outside world, and often, the special responsibility that adherents bear for preserving the Truth. (Rambo, 1993, pp. 102-104). In essence, ideological encapsulation and integration utilise sociological propaganda provided horizontally and vertically to members.

Group indoctrination includes relationships that consolidate emotional bonds and perspectives to the group, rituals that provide integrative modes of identifying with a new way of life, rhetoric offering guidance, interpretations, and meaning, and also clear-cut roles or special missions which must be performed according to new creeds (Rambo, 1993, pp. 107-122). During a later conversionary stage, a committed follower conforms to the wishes and goals of the group (religion) because they fulfil or express a fundamental part of the individual's identity. This can lead to the willing adoption of new practices and prohibitions, withdrawal from competing social attachments, and conformity of new ones social networks (Inge, 2016, p. 8). According to observations made among converts in North-Western Europe (Jensen, 2006, p. 652), it became apparent that many people went in and out and between classes offered by opposed Muslim institutions, for example, between those considered to represent Salafi and the Hizb-ut-Tahrir[20] and those considered to represent ethical Islam and Sufism.

[20] Hizb-ut-Tahrir meaning "Party of Liberation" is an international Islamist movement seeking to unite Muslims under one Islamic caliphate. It considers itself a non-violent political party wishing to peacefully convert Muslim nations to Islamist political systems. However, Hizb-ut-Tahrir praises the concept of jihad but insists that it does not use "material power to defend itself or as a weapon….". (Counter-Extremism Project, 2020).

Most concerning in relation to possible radicalisation, the participant was often not aware of what kind of Islam was being represented to them.

The newly converted may often exhibit a so-called fanaticism with their new religion. This can lead to situations in which converts renounce born-Muslims for not doing things "the right way" or for not living up to the "definition of being a Muslim." (Jensen, 2006, p. 646). Acting ritually according to all the rules represents the new religious and psychological identity of the convert and their religious identity. When attempting to find “the Truth”, many new converts face a crisis during which they experiment with competing interpretations of the faith. In Islam, Salafism appeals to many because it presents itself as pure and unadulterated Islam, which leads converts to experience an ‘intellectual’ – more than affective – conversion. Converts may conclude that Salafism alone represents untainted Islam free from opinion, emotion, and culture because it is clear-cut, textually anchored, and has a comprehensive ‘manual’ for proper Muslims (Inge, 2016). However, in some unsupervised Salafi study circles, even extremist views can surface and affect converts (Inge, 2016, p. 3)[21].

4. Creating a Salafi-Jihadist mindset

It is clear there are common ideological features that bind Salafi-Jihadist movements: some have started as insurgencies against local governments and fought for national or separatist goals, but many of these have eventually converged to support the broader, global Islamist cause. This merge was activated by groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIL, to which groups have respectively pledged their allegiance according to their shared visions. However, there are still groups that remain independent.

In a study conducted in 2017, 25 different violent Islamist groups and their adherence to the Salafi-Jihadi ideology were analysed. The six themes focused on were the restoration of Islamic governance as a religious obligation, violent opposition to perceived enemies of Islam, violent jihad as every Muslim's duty, identification with a global struggle, a narrow interpretation of who is a 'Muslim', and support for expansion of Muslim lands. The study found that the most divergence was over whether a group identified with a global struggle, whether it supported an expansion of Muslim lands, and whether it practised a narrow interpretation of who is a ‘good Muslim’. Despite these few deviations, 72% of the groups subscribed to all six ideological themes, and all were committed to restoring Islamic governance and to waging war against perceived enemies of Islam. (Munasinghe et al., 2018).

[21] In the UK, an exposé documentary[21] filmed among a women’s Salafi study group showed teachers preaching highly conservative teachings, including brutal sharia punishments, hatred of non-Muslims, and strict gender segregation.

Other central themes that all Jihadi terrorist groups have in common are their views on rejecting the Western society and its rules and norms, which leads to Islamic supremacism combined with an exclusionary, discriminatory, and occasionally violent approach to non-Muslims (*kuffar*[22]) (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010b, p. 82). Inspiration for the timing of attacks against perceived enemies comes from theorist Qutb, who pointed to the tactical difference between the "phase of weakness" (*istid'af*) and the "phase of strength" (*tamkîn*) in the fight to create the Islamic state: as long as the Muslim community too weak, it must not resort to armed conflict for fear of annihilation; but if the balance of power shifts, it is right to switch approach and destroy the infidels, establishing the Islamic state on the rubble of the battlefield (Kepel, 2019).

Even though Salafi-Jihadist terror groups may seem ideologically similar, in the beginning of 2013, it became increasingly clear that Al Qaeda and ISIL had deep divisions over central tenets of their shared ideology. At the same time as the Islamic State of Iraq rebranded itself the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and eventually as the so-called caliphate of the Islamic State, its connection to Al Qaeda unravelled. With this unravelling, the ideological gaps in Salafi-Jihadism became more pronounced: ISIL represented a more hard-line view of the movement and fully embraced the doctrine of takfir of those it deemed as apostates and insufficiently pure believers in tawhid (the oneness of God). For ISIL, the Afghani Taleban, for example, was too nationalistic and too tolerant of “deviant and heretical” Shias. There were groups within Al Qaeda which ISIL saw as takfiri: in 2015, ISIL declared the terrorist organisation Jabhat al-Nusra as an apostate group. Soon after, the surviving Al Qaeda leader Zawahiri declared war on ISIL by accusing Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of sedition and misleading Muslims into thinking he was their caliph. (Bunzel, 2019, p. 13).

4.1. Profile of a Salafi-Jihadist

Some of the ingredients in making a terrorist include a violent extremist group such as ISIL that offers terrorism as an answer to everything. The second ingredient is the ideology offered by the group such as Salafi-Jihadism which justifies terrorism as a legitimate means for extreme violence. (Speckhard, 2016). When assessing how damaging this justification can be in recruitment of foreign fighters, one only has to look at the results of a poll surveying opinions on the use of violence among Muslims: in Britain, France, and Germany in 2007, 5–10% of Muslims surveyed was the use of violence as justified if the cause is noble. (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010b, p. 53). Third, there is often an element of social support or interaction from like-minded, in-group individuals performed through, for example, ISIL propaganda. The last ingredient consists of several personal vulnerabilities and factors such as

[22] The word *kuffar* is also translated as ‘infidel’.

age, gender, identity formation stage, religiosity, and employment which make an individual susceptible to violent extremist groups and their ideologies. (Speckhard, 2016).

In the case of ISIL, a unique data set on its acolytes was obtained when personal records of ISIL members were provided by an ISIL defector (Brockmeyer et al, 2018, p. 2). The data set contains information on approximately 4,000 male foreign fighters from 59 countries who entered Syria in 2013–2014. The data only consists of the records of men even though women were recruited as well. When followers of ISIL wanted to join their ranks in Syria, upon arrival they were asked to fill in a form containing 23 questions: name, nom de guerre and kunya, name of mother, blood type, date of birth, nationality, marital status, last address, education, sharia knowledge (a. weak or b. medium or c. student/scholar level), profession, countries visited, border crossing, guarantor, and possible jihad experience. (Musharbash, 2016). After individual information was recorded on the form, male followers were asked to indicate if they wanted to be suicide bombers, fighters, or inghimasi fighters.[23] Afterwards, information on areas of special knowledge and where they are currently being used, security guarantees, "obedience", telephone numbers, circumstances of death, and notes were added by ISIL administrators. Almost one in ten was ready to die as a suicide bomber, offering huge potential for ISIL both in the arena in the Middle East but also in the West. The overwhelming majority, however, indicated that they wished to be regular fighters (Musharbash, 2016). It must be noted that the records account for only approximately 30% of the total number of foreign recruits of that time, and only 13% of the total foreign recruits in Syria and Iraq since 2013.

A similar dataset was attained from the predecessor of ISIL in 2007, from the Al Qaeda-associate called the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)[24]. The dataset consists of 606 records which were drawn from the personnel records of ISI: the records were collected by Al Qaeda's Iraqi affiliates, the Mujahidin Shura Council (MSC), which later became the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). The development of ISI began with the Jordanian Salafi-Jihadist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of the group Tawhid wa'l Jihad (Monotheism and Jihad), who fled Afghanistan and slipped into Northern Iraq in 2002. Zarqawi did not swear allegiance to Al Qaeda until two years later due to ideological disagreements such as on cooperation with takfiris: Zarqawi saw that "near enemies" such as takfiris and Shias were more dangerous than "far enemies" such as the United States and the West. Zarqawi did not change his opinion even after joining Al Qaeda and heading Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)[25]. AQI and Zarqawi at its lead alienated many insurgency groups in Iraq with their brutal tactics and ultra-conservative religious

[23] An inghimasi is a warrior who throws himself into battle knowing that he will not survive; a martyrdom seeker.
[24] A comparison of fighter data can be found in the appendix, chart 3.
[25] The official name of AQI was Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn. (Felter & Fishman, 2007, p. 4).

views. Their situation only worsened after a less than successful suicide bombing of three hotels in Amman, Jordan, by AQI fighters. It led to AQI being subsumed under an umbrella group called the Majlis Shura al-Mujahidin (Mujahidin Shura Council, MSC), where Zarqawi, a tremendously successful propagandist, led from the shadows until his death in June 2006. The so-called Sinjar records began to be collated shortly after Zarqawi's death, and they contain varying levels of information on each fighter, but often include the fighter's country of origin, hometown, age, occupation, the name of the fighter's recruiter, and even the route the fighter took to Iraq. (Felter & Fishman, 2007, pp. 3-5).

Incubation locales for Salafi-Jihadist fighters

The fighters who arrived in Syria in 2013–2014 originated from over 70 countries[26]. In the early stage of 2013–2014, the highest number of fighters were, in order, from Saudi Arabia (14.4%), Tunisia (13.9%), Morocco (5.9%), Turkey (5.2%), Egypt (3.8%), Russia (3.5%), China (3.4%), and Syria (3%)[27]. However, when comparing the number of fighters to the total population of departure countries, the highest percentage of early arrivals came from Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Kosovo, Bahrain, Albania, Libya, Kyrgyzstan, and Jordan. (Dodwell et al, 2016, pp. 6-10). Due to the larger number of records and the more successful global call for fighters, the percentages in the ISIL files are lower.

When searching for similarities and trends among foreign recruits of Salafi-Jihadist groups in Iraq and Syria, the statistics, incomplete as they are, are nonetheless indicative of the truth. Compared with the Sinjar records, in 2006–2007, the highest number of fighters in ISI were, in order, from Saudi Arabia (41%), Libya (18.8%), Syria (8.2%), Yemen (8.1%), Algeria (7.2%), Morocco (6.1%), and Jordan (1.9%). Similar countries have remained as the top departure countries for foreign recruits. Similarly, the age structure of foreign recruits has remained analogous: the relatively high number of teenagers and young adults under the age of 30 (81.4% for ISIL, 89.6% for ISI) shows that most volunteers were first timers rather than veterans of previous Jihadi struggles. The age structure also shows that Jihad continues to attract new generations of young fighters into Iraq. However, it also confirms that in the case of ISIL, veterans with previous experience of jihad can still effectively be drawn to violent combat despite their knowledge of the realities of life on the battlefield.

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[26] The problem with citizenship is that it focuses on citizenship instead of the place of departure meaning that a Tunisian living and departing from France to Syria is marked as a Tunisian. Putting emphasis on the country of departure as opposed to what citizenships they maintain, is more applicable and useful in understanding where they may have radicalised or mobilised, as well as where they may eventually return.
[27]Percentages calculated with the number of identified fighter nationalities divided by 4,018 fighter records identified at Dodwell et al (2016, pp. 6-9).

One other interesting statistical information is the size of the place where most of the foreign fighters came from. In 2006–2007 with ISI, the largest number of fighters came from Dernah, Libya[28]: a total of 11.8% of fighters came from a town of 80 000 inhabitants[29]. After Dernah, the next most common hometowns of foreign fighters were large metropolises such as Riyadh (11.5%) and Mecca (9.7%) in Saudi Arabia: a total of 56.6% of Saudis came from large metropolises, 12.4% from large cities, and 31% from various sized smaller towns and cities across the country. A total of 65.4% of the Moroccan fighters hailed from the metropolis of Casablanca while 19.2% were from the town of Tetouan[30][31].

Religiosity within ISIL

The difference between radicals and violent extremists or terrorists is not the level of knowledge but their willingness to explore religion in depth, to recognise its complexity, and admit one's own ignorance. As a group, radicals[32] such as radical Islamists have delved deeper into Islamic history and jurisprudence, considering its depth, logic, capacity and rigour as great virtues. In comparison, violent extremists express with unquestioned certainty that their views and interpretation are correct, that the Qur'an is the only source of religious guidance needed, and that other sects of Islam are un-Islamic. For the majority of radical, non-violent Muslim groups, Islam is far too complex to be summarised as "Us against Them". For violent extremist Islamists, this monochromatic dichotomy is at the heart of their ideological world structure, and their unwavering willingness to uphold this simplified creed.

Salafi-Jihadists have also appropriated core Salafi theological concepts to advance their violent interpretations of the creed. For example, these Jihadis took the concept of al-wala' wa-l-bara' (loyalty and disavowal) and turned it more accepting of direct violence by interpreting it as a requirement for Salafis to show hatred in words and actions against non-Muslims but also non-Salafi Muslims. During the time of the so-called Caliphate, ISIL also enforced its distorted interpretation of the Salafi concept of hisba (the commanding of right and forbidding of wrong) by emulating controversial Islamic religious moral police practises used in Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Iran. ISIL formed its own ruthless Hisbah police where both male and female followers

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[28] Dernah has a long history of guerrilla resistance movements dating back to the Ottoman empire times, and since the 1970s, the small town has provided several violent extremist Jihadi movements such as Afghanistan before and after the Taleban rule as well as Al Qaeda, with fighters (Kirkpatrick, 23.6.2012). With a large number of ultraconservative Salafi-Jihadist veterans and preachers, Dernah has remained a seedbed of Jihadists.

[29] The population of Libya in 2007 was approximately 6 million inhabitants.

[30] The population of Tetouan in 2007 was approximately 337 000 inhabitants. The population of Morocco was 35 million.

[31] Tetouan has been considered as a hotbed for Salafi-Jihadist recruitment partially due to its proximity to the autonomous Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Although under Spanish authority, the fact that Ceuta and Melilla are situated in Morocco means that they are often used in jihadist propaganda. The poor living conditions of the cities' Muslim quarters make it a fertile ground for extremists (Botha, 2008).

[32] The difference between radicalism is that radicals are only opposed to the principles of the constitution, whereas extremism is unconstitutional since it aims to eliminate free democratic order (Mudde, 1996, ss. 230-231).

of ISIL worked, enacting brutal punishment on anyone not seen to abide by their extreme moral codes. According to their extremely violent attitude on every aspect of Islam, ISIL and its Hisbah police were responsible for using floggings, forced labour, imprisonment and torture, mutilations, and executions as forms of punishment (Speckhard, 2018).[33]

Almost 75% of ISIL members assessed their own knowledge of sharia as "weak" (Musharbash, 2016) but this does not necessarily mean they were not observant Muslims. Many scholars argue that ignorance of sharia means ignorance of Islam, leading to a conclusion that a large majority of ISIL recruits are too ignorant of Islam to be accurately described as religious fundamentalists and that their religious terrorism is more driven by kinship and networks than purist zeal (Brockmeyer et al, 2018, p. 7). Others, such as Lebovich (2016), argue that in some cases ignorance of sharia also means genuine ignorance of even basic religious tenets, but this correlation is not omnipresent. People join militant movements for a variety of intersecting reasons, including belief, politics, economics, and more. Limited knowledge of an area of Islam traditionally left to dedicated experts in the ‘ulama says little about the contours of individual religious belief: someone can be an ardent and even informed believer in the cause and justness of ISIL without having much knowledge of the sharia. Equating an individual’s insufficient knowledge of sharia or fiqh[34] or any other theological aspects of Islam as proof that the underlying problem behind the emergence of extremist Salafi-Jihadist movements is poor Islamic education ignores several key issues. Recruits to Salafi-Jihadist groups may have followed, but then rejected, moderate principles and systems of belief before joining violent extremist groups; simply not being aware of competing interpretation is not always the reason. Another issue is governmental regulation of Islamic education which leads to effective results in removing radical preachers from public arenas but also gives often-authoritative states more tools for oppression and acceptance from liberal democracies in the West. (Lebovich, 2016).

When looking at self-assessed religiosity levels of ISIL fighters (Brockmeyer et al, 2018, pp. 25-26), only 5.1% of foreign recruits agreed that religion is an important part of their daily life. Religion was the driving force behind ISIL, and the organisation skilfully mixed agitational and integrational propaganda to create cohesion but more importantly, to motivate and direct fighters. Studies based on the ISIL records show that those with the most knowledge about sharia were the least likely to volunteer as inghimasi or suicide fighters. If martyrdom was seen as the highest religious calling, the

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[33] Infractions of the moral code seemingly based on sharia and hisba could be smoking, unacceptable clothing (e.g. women not covered as per ISIL regulations), not paying zakat taxes, whereas more serious violations could range from escape attempts, sedition and speaking against ISIL, to violations of the sharia.
[34] Fiqh is Islamic jurisprudence and interpretation of the sharia law.

religious justification for it should have been most visible among those with the most education in Islam and sharia. Instead, it was those with only a basic knowledge of sharia who volunteered themselves as suicide fighters (Dodwell et al, 2016, pp. 32-33).

Conventional belief is that those who become foreign fighters have nothing to lose and are looking for money as mercenaries or excitement as adrenaline junkies. They are often also depicted as loners who have nothing to go back to. Instead, 61% of the foreign fighters who joined ISIL in 2013–2014 were indeed single, but 30% were married; in addition, approximately 20% of all the foreign recruits said they had at least one child. Clearly, some fighters were ready to leave behind their spouses and children but with ISIL, there were also other alternatives: some foreign fighters brought their families with them to Syria and Iraq because they found the narrative of the caliphate so compelling that it overcame even significant and important social commitments (Dodwell et al, 2016, p. 15). Others put their faith in finding a suitable spouse and creating a family inside the caliphate, which was also a high priority for ISIL to ensure their fighting forces remained faithful.

Radicalised converts as Salafi-Jihadis

Foreign fighters who have joined Salafi-Jihadist groups around the world come from many countries, where, for them, there may be conflict between local political ties and global religious ties. In Europe, reasons for joining range from social conflicts, social exclusion, and higher unemployment rates to multicultural and integration policies that have failed to address for over 30 years and may have led to extremist tendencies among European Muslims. Foreign fighters include both committed believers and new converts who have taken up jihadi ideology. (Ghosh et al., 2016, p. 9). Converts to Islam represent a small percentage of the Muslim community in Western countries but when it comes to Islamist extremism and terrorism, research suggests that converts are considerably overrepresented.

Converts to Islam are overrepresented both as home-grown jihadists and as foreign fighters. For example, in Britain converts make up less than 4% of the country's Muslim population but they constitute not only about 12% of the radical Salafi-Jihadist population in the country but also about 16% of those Muslims who carried out terrorist attacks Britain in 1998–2015. (Azani & Koblentz-Stenzler, 2019, p. 4). When looking at European foreign fighters, there is no clear-cut profile. However, when looking at data collected, it is obvious that there is a sizeable number of converts among foreign fighters from Europe: depending on the country, 6–23% of foreign fighters are converts. The highest number of converts came from France; in a survey done in 2016, out of approximately 900 French foreign fighters, a total of 23% were converts. (Boutin et al, 2016, p. 31).

In Portugal, most foreign fighters who left to join ISIL had converted to Islam within a few years to months before traveling to the conflict zone. (Boutin et al, 2016, p. 47).

Education and employment within extremist groups

No clear parallels can be drawn between the employment levels in ISI and ISIL due to the limited amount of data available from 2006–2007. Nevertheless, what can be said is that violent Salafi-Jihadist groups are very adept at utilising feelings of personal and familial humiliation in the Muslim world as part of their propaganda of recruitment and integration. These types of feelings of humiliation spring from a person's inability of match their real income to their perceived status. Due to a widely accepted narratives of contempt toward (perceived and real) oppressors, the feeling of humiliation feeds naturally into feelings that the Muslim world and Islam as a religion are being humiliated by the United States and its non-Muslims allies such as the Western countries. In addition to this convenient narrative, when it comes to recruitment for Islamist insurgency, the ability of groups to pay fighters, and compensate the families of the dead, is obviously of great importance. Many fighters, though no doubt perfectly sincere in their desire to fight the enemy, are fighting in return for far better pay than they could ever receive as impoverished farmers (Lieven, 2008, p. 20).

The desire to elevate one's social status links with education levels as well. Since education is often seen as perfect way to inoculate large masses of people against radicalism through knowledge, Western countries such as former colonial powers (the United Kingdom with Pakistan, for example) pump large sums of money into the education sector of radical or possibly-radicalising countries. However, without similar stimulus to rouse economic growth and generate jobs, the un(der)employed graduates will be easy recruits for Islamist extremists. (Lieven, 2008, p. 22). A total of 51.7% of the foreign fighters in Syria reported having a secondary education and 30.6% as having a tertiary education. The high level of education in the dataset highlights that ISIL recruits came from a wide range of educational backgrounds, and that as a whole, the group appeared to be relatively well educated when compared to educational levels in their departure countries. Similarly, there were a number of students in the foreign recruits of ISI as well as those who had worked in professions requiring university graduate degrees such as doctors, teachers, and engineers (Felter & Fishman, 2007, p. 15). With similar evidence gathered from such relatively comparable groups, it can be stated that terrorist recruits are not uneducated, and often come from middle-class backgrounds or have some college education (Brockmeyer et al, 2018, p. 7). The high level of education combined with more unemployment and lower skilled positions within these Salafi-Jihadist groups may indicate that some fighters may have been motivated by frustration over failure to achieve expected success in the job market following their education (Dodwell et al, 2016).

However, not all ISIL foreign fighters came from the MENA area, so un(der)employment and education are less effective as markers of the average Salafi-Jihadist fighter. With countries such as the OECD countries[35], greater geographic distance from the ISIL-held areas in Syria and Iraq and stronger social welfare systems do not create similar conditions which would be fertile recruitment ground for Salafi-Jihadist recruiters. In addition, more distant countries are less likely to be Muslim-majority countries and are thus also more culturally distant to disadvantage recruitment. Lastly, the OECD countries, on average, have very few individuals with only primary education. (Brockmeyer et al, 2018, p. 20).

4.2. Creating an ISIL mindset through sociological propaganda

The main objective of sociological propaganda is to get individuals to participate in and actively maintain a certain social state of affairs. In the case of ISIL, this social premise is linked directly to the Salafi-Jihadist ideological themes of restauration of Islamic governance, violent opposition to perceived enemies of Islam, violent jihad as every Muslim's duty, identification with a global struggle, narrow and exclusivist interpretation of who is a Muslim, and support for expansion of Muslim lands (Munasinghe et al., 2018). ISIL also subscribes to other central themes such as the rejection of Western society and its rules and norms, and violently expressed Islamic supremacism. Even before its meteoric rise into public consciousness in 2014, ISIL had begun to embrace what Ellul (1973, pp. 9-10) calls “total propaganda” where a propagandist must use all technical means within their disposal to draw individuals into a web of propaganda perfectly designed to target and penetrate a person’s intellectual and emotional life.

Useful guiding myths for Muslims are based the Qur'an and hadiths as well as on the traditions and history of the Middle East region. These could be explained and interpreted in new ways to suit Salafi-Jihadi goals. From the start, Salafi-Jihadist integrational propaganda has attempted to create unity among the multitudes of Muslims around the world. They have had to position themselves through similar propaganda that nationalism uses to distinguish Us from Them. The goal has been to reach a stage where, for example, an ISIL follower can automatically upon asking know how to define what is considered non-ISIL, similarly to, for example, a French person whose nationality is such an integral part of their personality that they can immediately define what is non-French.

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[35] Most of the 37 OECD members are from Europe. They are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. There are four countries from the Americas: Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and the United States. The four Pacific members are Australia, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand. the two countries from the Middle East are Israel and Turkey. (Balance, 19.5.2020).

However, with groups such as Al Qaeda, ISI, and ISIL, other requirements must be fulfilled for their propaganda to be effective. The effectiveness of social media in the promotion of the Jihadi message was understood a decade before it truly became a skilfully used scalpel: the Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri commented already in 2005 that the use of media is vital for Al Qaeda (Fernandez, 2015, p. 2). In particular, the Somali Jihadi group Al-Shabaab took al-Zawahiri's advice to heart and published material on social media in multiple languages at an early stage. Until the birth of ISIL, the Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was the most effective propaganda machine: it published posts in English in a magazine called *Inspire,* but its effectiveness was reduced after AQAP were driven out from its base in Yemen in 2011 (Fernandez, 2015, p. 2).

Slowly, learning from its predecessors, the ISIL brand of Salafi-Jihadist propaganda started forming around a focus on Syria in 2013. ISIL concentrated on high quality material production and social media networks in its attempts to influence the broader, pan-Islamic and non-native Arabic-speaking audience (Fernandez, 2015, p. 6). ISIL also wanted to increase the permeability of its message by using its own supporters, the so-called fanboys, alongside its knowledgeable media propagandists to ensure both the horizontal and vertical propagation of its themes. For ISIL to be perceived as the solution to all the problems of the Syria region, and eventually the whole Muslim world, its media material had to be, in the beginning, more encompassing and benign through a link to the main themes of peaceful Islam through duty and compassion toward other Muslims. ISIL utilised media material of those suffering because of the Syrian civil war (women, children, elderly, good Muslims) (Fernandez, 2015, p. 19) because this way ISIL knew it would be able to gather support. The restauration of Islamic governance was presented as just and incorrupt, and violent opposition to enemies was presented as necessary. Only slowly ISIL revealed its true intentions as not just a rebel force against President Assad's regime but as a violent, ultra-conservative extremist group taking up the mantle of ISI in its quest for global jihad and the expansion of Muslim lands.

Indoctrination of the masses

ISIL ideology was expertly weaved in with Muslim past and present, where political leadership, often autocratic, has usually tempered its authoritarian potential by leaving the ruled free to live their lives as long as they avoid fitna (dissension) and pay their taxes. The ruled, in turn, were satisfied with their quietist stance, avoided politics and accepted a distinct separation between rulers and the ruled (Brown, 2000, p. 80) in order to live in the promised land of Muslims. Once finally truthful about its intentions in Syria and Iraq, ISIL publicly announced its goal of establishing an Islamic state on areas it conquered. In order to create a specific ISIL identity for its citizens, it had to encourage the formation of common myths, customs, and psychologies which both relied on common Salafi themes

while still making important divisions between Salafis and ISIL followers. ISIL also established a supreme media headquarters known as the Central Media Office[36] to lead its integrational objectives.

ISIL had to work hard because it was aiming to create a unified caliphate which would have to provide for its citizens in order to thrive. In its propaganda, ISIL used a tried-and-tested method used also by the Soviet Union of combining guiding myths, education, and propaganda (Brown, J.A.C., 1963, p. 21). ISIL created a complex bureaucratic structure, which included media points (in essence, re-education centres) for people under its rule to constantly receive immersive indoctrination on the ISIL ideology and its goals (Stalinsky & Sosnow, 2015). In 2014, competition amongst Syrian Salafi-Jihadist groups was so fierce that it forced ISIL to invest more aggressively in its ideological program, which included establishing a Ministry of Religious Endowments (Diwan al-Awqaf), a Ministry of Muslim Services (Diwan Khidamat al-Muslimin), and sharia institutes for both men and women, serving as the seed for its education program. (Olidort, 2016, p. 4).

ISIL learned its lessons from groups such as the Taleban who had understood that in order to bring about their version of the perfect Islamic society, they had to be legitimate rulers and use the ministry of education (or similar) as their tool. The Taleban seek to take advantage of existing religious schools, madrassas, to indoctrinate and inculcate very narrow and extreme values that align with their interpretation of Islam (Ghosh et al., 2016, p. 17). A useful strategy of Jihadi groups is to capture or create elements of civil society – mosques, primary schools, networks of social services – to advance their cause within a weakening state. However, extreme violent Islamism or Salafi-Jihadism is a far more dynamic political movement, which, like other extremist groups, entails killing large numbers of people as part of its need for sustained or even accelerated political momentum (Midlarsky, 2011, p. 145); thus, groups such as ISIL needed a firm justification to base their terrorist acts in order to preserve their guise of godliness and reasoning for the need for mass murder.

ISIL took to indoctrinating their current and future generations by creating handbooks for new recruits with helpful tips on what to pack as well as textbooks and educational material to Jihadi fighters and their families when they arrived on its territory. In order to be sustainable, sociological propaganda must, however, also focus on other than young men in prime fighting age. Among the ranks of ISIL and other Jihadi groups, women have been given an important task of raising and educating the new generation of believers: women were instructed in orthodoxy, motherhood and raising ‘jihadi babies’, while children were taught to accept the Jihadi ideology as a natural and desirable (Weimann, 2016, p. 84). In 2014, ISIL published a guidebook named *Sister's Role in Jihad*, in which mothers are

[36] Diwan al-I’lam al-Markazi, ديوان الإعلام المركزي.

encouraged to raise their children as jihadis from an early age. With such long-lasting sociological yet agitational propaganda ISIL reinforced its vision of the role of women within ISIL, re-created its ideological base, and prepared a new generation of jihadis in its children.

ISIL propaganda leaned heavily on common narratives known to all Muslims. The Qur'an, hadiths, and tafsir (exegesis) create a cultural basis, but their in-depth reflection and interpretation are often left in the hands of imams and scholars, meaning that only very few recruits or foreign fighters would be able to question their warped interpretations. Even intermittent exposure to sociological propaganda combined with well-known guiding myths creates an integrated ISIL-personality (Ellul, 1973, pp. 40-41). ISIL shaped these basic tenets of Islam into something benefiting their own goals, where generally accepted truths and ethical considerations reflect their ideology.

Especially in the beginning of the creation of the caliphate and the time of attracting followers, ISIL paid attention to fiqh[37] in justifying several criminal or generally abhorrent practises. In its magazine Dabiq in 2014, ISIL for example claimed that slavery is acceptable precisely because it is based on sharia:

> *"...enslaving the families of the kuffar and taking their women as concubines is a firmly established aspect of the Shariah . . ." or Islamic law and that any Muslim "who were to deny or mock . . . [this assertion] would be denying or mocking the verses of the Qur'an and the narrations of the Prophet." (Freamon, 2015, p. 257).*

For segregation and abuse to be justifiable, ISIL had to convince its followers that their actions follow sunna. Concepts such as kuffar[38], takfiri[39], and al-wala' wa-l-bara'[40] served to dehumanise non-Muslims and Muslims who disagree with their views. The use of pejorative names to reduce the humanness and worth of individuals is an important psychological stage that makes acts of violence more palatable to those who carry them out: dehumanisation turns a person into a 'non-person', unworthy of moral treatment. (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010b, p. 84). Even more disturbing is the fact that Muslim jurists have nonetheless agreed that ISIL's way of enslaving non-Sunni prisoners of war is admittedly based on Islamic jurisprudence (Freamon, 2015, p. 250). In its propaganda, ISIL concentrated a lot of effort into depicting the equality it claimed existed between its members; they also focused on how all people under its patronage were treated equally well. As ISIL preferred to use horizontal propaganda, it encouraged followers of all sorts to share their message. One person participating in proliferating Jihadi propaganda on social media was username *BirdOfJannah,* a

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[37] Islamic jurisprudence
[38] infidel
[39] apostate
[40] loyalty and disavowal

woman who originally went to ISIL-controlled areas to work as a doctor and later became a propagandist for them (Hall, 12.9.2014). *BirdOfJannah* published information on how well ISIL took care of its citizens and how all people were equal on ISIL-administered territories, slaves excepted. In her messages, *BirdOfJannah* stressed free housing, health care, lack of bills, as well as the absence of racism in the region.

4.3. Value judgements within Jihadi movements

As a tradition, violent combat against foes in Salafi-Jihadism has commonalities with romantic militarism: war is a positive and life-affirming force promoting the values and virtues of vigour, action, contention, courage, strength, striving and risk-taking. Peace, by contrast, is condemned as the negation of all the fundamental virtues of man. (Cottee & Hayward , 2011, p. 979). As an ideology, Salafi-Jihadism has much in common with the radical and extreme leftist ideology: like the radical left, the Salafi-Jihadism attests its actions as a global revolt against injustice and rejects bourgeois values, imperialism and materialism. Both ideologies see violence as justified because it will help bring about a more just society. (Moghadam, A., 2008). Such values and principles shape specific ideologies and form the moral basis of groups, but they also justify actions and dictate conduct and objectives, which provide the basis a group's identity can be formed upon. These core values are so foundational in nature that when they interact amongst themselves, they reveal the nature of the ideology itself, allowing for further examination. With a religious ideology such as Salafi-Jihadism, the values can be sub-grouped into creedal values, honour and solidarity, and the end times. (El-Badawy et al, 2015, p. 23).

One of the more influential ideologues creating and upholding Salafi-Jihadist values of groups such as ISI and ISIL was Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir who wrote two of the most read guidebooks of ISIL: one was called “Issues in the Jurisprudence of Jihad” (Mas’ail Fi Fiqh al-Jihad), also known as Fiqh al-Dima (the Jurisprudence of Blood) but also in its new, ISIL-related title “These Are Our Creeds and Ways” (Landau-Tasseron, 2016, p. 1). The other common guide within ISIL was an earlier work of his called “Pioneers of Spreading the Sunnah and the Landmarks of the Victorious Sect”. Muhajir's aim was to provide a theological and legal framework for acts of terror committed by ISIL. The re-purposed handbook was edited and published by ISIL in 2015, and it is suspected to have been the instructions manual for approximately 6000 ISIL foreign fighters. (Townsend, 2018).

The ISIL guidebook on their values starts by delineating the boundaries of the community of believers into Us and Them: members are those who believe in absolute tawhid and the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, the divine message, and eschatology, and meet all the requirements that ensue from this

belief. Secondly, the book looks at the "politics", which is sourced directly from Islam: it gives principles for sources of authority, leadership, jihad, internal cohesion, the nature of faith, and conditions for the accusation of takfir. Since politics and religion are so intertwined and interdependent, they often create implications within each other: for example, within the category of eschatology, the document mentions belief in the return of the caliphate. This tenet implies that believers owe allegiance to the Islamic State. All who fail to meet these strict requirements are takfiris even if they proclaimed to be Muslims. (Landau-Tasseron, 2016, p. 2).

Creedal values of groups like ISIL

The central beliefs of Sunni Islam are tawhid (Oneness of God), kutub (belief in holy books), malaikah (belief in angels), nubuwwah (belief in the prophets), Akhirah (belief in the End of Days), and al-qadr (belief in predestination). Where Salafi-Jihadi groups such as ISIL differ from most Muslims, is in their narrow definition they give to the six central Islamic tenets, and their rejection of those who disagree with them. (El-Badawy et al, 2015, p. 24). These differences in interpretation are partially based on varying views of Sunni schools of legal reasoning, exemplified by different interpretations given by Hanafi and Hanbali/Wahhabi schools[41].

The Salafi-Jihadi ideologue Muhajir has offered violent extremist groups theological workarounds that avoid any Quranic bans against the use of violence, suicide, or other morally questionable behaviour. Many traditionally abhorrent and forbidden acts were declared commendable by Muhajir, who asserted that such extreme violence to enemies (and Jihadis themselves) had to be celebrated openly; this ruling was adopted and realised to a disturbing degree within ISIL. The merits of beheading, torturing, or burning prisoners as well as discussions on assassination, siege warfare, and the use of biological weapons all became a part of Muhajir's intellectual legacy in the literary corpus of ISIL. (Winter & Al-Saud, 2016).

4.4. Salafi-Jihadist communication strategies

The official ISIL brand has been entirely unspontaneous, and any changes in its strategies are orchestrated by their central media diwan. Even in its diminished form after the fall of its so-called

[41] The Hanafi tradition is based on a very deep understanding of the Sharia which can lead to interpretations according to the situation by the jurist, called istihsan (juristic preference). Istihsan can rely on the jurist's personal opinion or al-'urf (the consensus of Muslims), and it can soften harsh consequences that might otherwise flow from strict legal reasoning (Warren, 28.5.2013). The Hanbali tradition, a school of jurisprudence linked to Wahhabism and Salafism, is a mixture of strict scriptural adherence the sources of Sharia, the Qur'an and the Sunna, and inflexibility in applying independent ijtihad (juristic reasoning) in areas that the scriptures did not cover (Holtzman, 2015). In cases where no clear answer can be found in the sacred texts of Islam, the Hanbali school does not accept istihsan or al-'urf as a sound basis to derive Islamic law.

caliphate, the ISIL communication strategy revolves around three axes constructed of an internal narrative, counter-speech, and calculated media attacks. (Winter, 2017a, p. 2). More specifically, the cohesive self-narrative of ISIL consists of integrational propaganda with alternative explanations and positive emotions toward ISIL and its so-called caliphate. ISIL counter-speech is based on comprehensive operations with specific value- and ideology-targeting, and their media diwan has constructed a carefully structured timetable of jabs directed at their opponents. Propaganda is essential to the survival of ISIL, both as a group and as an idea: it has been an invaluable mechanism with which to enforce compliance of its active supporters but also in innocent bystanders in its pseudo-state, and as a penetrating weapon with which to assert its agenda and install fear abroad.

The strategy behind ISIL propaganda was not to limit their propaganda to those abroad but also make sure to include followers and acolytes, but also those forced to live under its rule. All this propaganda had to be part of a larger approach of compelling narratives and strategic targeting. The main way for a totalitarian regime to rule is to convince the small elite to follow an elaborate ideology such as Salafi-Jihadism which covers all aspects of a person's existence. This elite becomes hardcore followers who unquestioningly follow the edicts of the dictator such as the so-called caliph Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. Together they force the rest of the population to fall in line with the help of systematic terror and ruthlessness, as well as strictly controlled media, violence, and economy. (Friedrich & Brzezinski, 1965, p. 22).

When communicating propaganda to (potential) followers, ISIL focused on positive narratives showing how blissful life was in its so-called Caliphate. Audio-visual media allows for a more personal connection with its consumer, and it also permits ISIL to show the multinationalism and equality of its caliphate. Areas under ISIL rule had dedicated media kiosks where civilians in the caliphate were force-fed imagery ranging from theology competitions, industrial pipe factories, and sheep markets to military operations and bomb sites (Winter, 2017b, p. 38). While continuing with strategic integrational propaganda within its areas, at the same time ISIL limited access of people living under its rule to other forms of information. At the same time, the unstoppable and brutal imagery of ISIL executing non-believers or traitors to its cause was a powerful deterrent to anyone opposing ISIL. As with other totalitarian regimes, at its heyday ISIL was also pursuing a strategy where, by strictly controlling information, it prevented any rebellions of non-followers and effective countermeasures by scared Iraqi or coalition forces.

"You are a Mujahid, too"

The ideological framework and strategic designs were almost entirely kept hidden until April 2016 when ISIL circulated a document on its Telegram channel for media operatives, called "You are a

Mujahid, Too." Previously, sparse background to media operations as well as ideological standpoints could be found in the al-Himma Library[42] booklet produced by ISIL in 2015. (Winter, 2017a, p. 7). The context given to "Media jihad" is legitimate information warfare, which responds to and fights against "Crusader campaigns". The ISIL central media diwan followed by its fanboys cultivated a large body of propaganda for Muslims which exploits disturbing images of children injured or killed in violent conflict, creating strong emotionally charged narratives of the enemies of Islam. This narrative was especially influential and useful in the early stages of the Syrian civil war when many Western citizens migrated in the name of humanitarianism. Extremist groups such as ISIL were able to highlight the courage of their troops in the war against Assad due to the lack of international intervention against the Assad regime. (Saltman & Smith, 2015, pp. 11-13).

The importance of media jihad is glorified by ISIL more than by any other Salafi-Jihadist group. ISIL adamantly defended its media mujahideen and directly compared cameras to guns, most probably attempting to shame or cajole non-attendees into participating in "Jihad lite" in the name of ISIL:

> *Have you not seen the photographer, how he carries a camera instead of a Kalashnikov and races before the soldiers in raids, welcoming bullets in his chest with open arms?! Have you not seen the brigades that disseminate videos and pamphlets? How they enter into the most dangerous and fortified areas to circulate the mujahidin's productions in the heart of the hypocrites' den?! Have you not seen how dedicated the media operative is in gathering intelligence on the enemy's movements and following the work of the brothers as they monitor the news of the enemy?! (Salahuddin Province Media Office, 2015, as cited in Winter, 2017, s. 13)*

Visual culture and strategies

ISIS relies heavily on visual framing in its media campaign, and they are very strategic in their use of such visual cues to attract and sustain the attention of its audiences, amplify their emotional responses, interact with them, and reinforce the ISIL narrative. At the same time, ISIL wants to increase the involvement of its audience in its propaganda campaign, and appeal to various target audiences through narrowcasting and specifically selected material underlining different grievances. (Winkler et al, 4.12.2019, pp. 3-4). The themes of Salafi-Jihadism are replicated in their visual imagery because they resonate faster due to their familiarity: the more familiar a symbol regardless of ethno-linguistic backgrounds, the more effective it is and thus, the more favoured it is among Jihadi propaganda imagery. As mentioned earlier, ISIL and Al Qaeda have been the most successful users of the "Jihadist lens" and employed images depicting austere religiosity, war, antagonism toward enemies, as well as honour, fraternity, chivalry, and justice (Ostovar, 2017, p. 83).

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[42] The media institution called "The Al-Himma Library" or "Maktabat al-Himma" published pamphlets and manifestos for ISIL. Its ideologues are mainly Saudi, and the ideological support does not come from more central figures in Salafism.

Jihadist groups (whether Salafi or other) often rely on basic tenets such as Arabic names and script as symbolic of their dedication to Islamism. Militant Islamist groups also use a rifle as a symbol for armed resistance. (Ostovar, 2017, p. 84). The mujahid are key components of Jihadi imagery, and they are often depicted mid-battle either with ancient or modern weaponry in hand. These masked, black-clad mujahideen are a common archetype favoured by Jihadi propagandists because they conjure up desirable attributes such as anonymity, violence, strength, intimidation, power, and mystery. In propaganda materials, these mujahideen are portrayed in similar poses (often directly copied) as action heroes in comic books, movie posters, or popular first-person -shooter video games. (Ostovar, 2017, pp. 96-97). In addition to mujahideen, the black flags of Al Qaeda and ISIL are both emblems of the organisations but also declarations of their control in the area where the flag is flown. These black flags are meant to evoke associations to the battles fought by Islam's most powerful early generations, which symbolise Islam in its purest. Flying the Islamic standard adorned with the shahada allows Jihadist groups to connect with these revered first generations, commonly known history of Islam, and present themselves as fighters of righteous and legitimate Jihad. ISIL made sure people understood its statement by explaining the meaning of its flag on Jihadi forums: it claimed that the flag was an accurate recreation of the Islamic standard from the Prophet Muhammad's era and that the white circle and its text were the official seal of the Prophet. (Ostovar, 2017, pp. 88-90).

Social movement framing and subcultural provocation

The religious narrative of ISIL within its propaganda imagery is not only upheld by its tenuous connection to the Golden Age of Islam. Their principal narrative of the "demon West" and "traitorous non-Muslims" leans against four recognisable themes: The Crusades, the city of Dabiq, Jews and Christians, and the Law of Retaliation. These topics are referred to especially in the execution videos of ISIL, where ISIL both legitimises its actions (good against evil) and frames its fight as a religious, divinely sanctioned struggle. Westerners are paraded as Crusaders, but those who are seen to assist Crusaders against righteous Muslims, such as immolated Jordanian pilot Muath Al-Kasasbeh, are also traitors. (Herfroy-Mischler & Barr, 2018, p. 12). Other popular topics include calls for Muslims to help build and maintain the Caliphate, the mistreatment of Muslims in majority non-Muslim countries, as well as other audience-specific topics. The Law of Retaliation (lex talionis) is also used to frame executions as divine justice against both Muslims and Western foreign policy in the Middle East. Forcing soon-to-be executed Westerners to give justifications for their deaths allows ISIL to set themselves up as meek servants of Allah trying to oppose an oppressive, ungodly enemies. (Herfroy-Mischler & Barr, 2018, pp. 13-15).

Gendering ISIL propaganda

A traditional, binary understanding of participants in terrorism comes down to how levels of participance are understood: men's terrorism is significantly more likely to be seen and presented as active and rational participation whereas women are portrayed and understood as emotionally-driven terrorists (Gentry & Sjöberg, Female terrorism and militancy, 2016, pp. 146-147). Even ISIL as a representative of a Salafi group bent on traditional gender roles participated in gendered propaganda, which was "traditionally feminine" with purple and pink backgrounds, pictures of sunsets specially designed to attract women (Pearson, 2015, pp. 18-19). Such framing and incremental radicalisation could almost be called grooming.

Since ISIL is a descendant of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which utilised women as suicide bombers already in the early 2000s, it should not be surprising that ISIL evolved into using women in combat (Margolin, 2019, p. 44). Women can be very influential propaganda assets, particularly Western women: their willingness to join ISIL and even their willingness to use violence can be used to shame men into participating in jihad (de Leede et al, 2017, p. 7). Female propagandists of ISIL have shown to have a higher sympathy for political violence than men, and these expressions of joy upon beheadings of Westerners was common in their material (Pearson, 2015, pp. 18-19). When the participation of women (and their roles) in ISIL before and after 2014 was traced, it was noted that ISIL had moved away from strict cultural and gender-specific whereby women upheld their family and its honour as a bride and mother; the new norm was for women to be more active and have wide-ranging roles all the way to those of suicide bombers (Banks, Introduction: Women, Gender, and Terrorism: Gendering, 2019, pp. 4-5). The ISIL propaganda magazine Dabiq had even a dedicated section in one of its issues titled "to our sisters," which encouraged women to "[b]e a base of support and safety for your husbands, brothers, fathers, and sons" (al-Hayat Media Center, 2015, pp. 50-51). Only a year or so later, the official propaganda of ISIL had switched its views on women in combat only in exceptional circumstances to praising women participating in combat as mujahidat:

> *"Jihad is not, as a rule, an obligation for women, but let the female Muslim know as well that if the enemy enters her abode, jihad is just as necessary for her as it is for the man, and she should repel him by whatever means possible" (Margolin, 2019, p. 45)*[43].

While all women who supported ISIL (not ones simply residing in their territory, though) do receive a basic training in firearms, this is only for emergencies and self-defence as instructed in Al-Naba. Officially, the closest women in the caliphate could come to a militant role was as members of the

[43] Original Al-Naba magazine: "I Will Die While Islam Is Glorious." 2016. Al-Naba' Issue LIX, Central Media Diwan, Translated from Arabic to English by C. Winter.

brutal all-female Al Khansaa Brigade formed in early 2014. The women of the Al Khansaa brigade patrolled the streets, armed with AK-47's, were known to carry out harsh physical sentences against women who did not abide by the rules imposed by ISIL. (de Leede et al, 2017, p. 28).

5. Jordan, Jihad, and Foreign Terrorist Fighters

The Kingdom of Jordan has been a target for Salafi-Jihadist terrorism since the early 2000s partly due to its unashamed pro-Western and pro-peace views exemplified by the peace deal with Israel in 1994 (Schenker, 2016). The proximity of Jordan to sectarian and Salafi-Jihadist hotspots in Iraq and Syria means that radical ideologies, preachers, and fighters can pass through Jordan's long desert borders. Jordan has the third highest number of persons who travelled to join ISIL in Iraq and Syria: the highest is Turkey (7 000 travellers), Tunisia second (5 800 travellers), and Jordan third (4 000 travellers). (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2019, p. 68). Concurrently with this, the Kingdom has nonetheless been very active in Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), a coalition fighting ISIL.

Most Salafis in Jordan support a quietist model of disseminating ideas through education and preaching. However, according to the Jordanian moderate Islamist columnist, Hussein Al-Rawashdeh[44], the Salafi-Jihadi variant adopted by ISIL has found its focus group in approximately 7 000 hard-line Jordanian Salafists, of which around 2 000 are known Islamic State sympathisers. In 2016, Al-Rawashdeh estimated that there were also approximately 1 300 Jabhat al-Nusra supporters in Jordan, which could sway either in the direction of Al Qaeda or ISIL. (Al-Monitor, 3.9.2016).

5.1. Vulnerabilities to radicalisation within the Jordanian population

Universities in Jordan are easy targets for extremist recruitment due to the long-lasting and deteriorating unemployment situation of university graduates; being unable to get a job means less independence, less opportunities, problems with identity-formation, and complex frustration, both mental and physical. The findings of the 2019 Arab Barometer suggest that currently nearly half of Jordanians, irrespective of their backgrounds, are thinking about emigrating from the country. The change has been rapid: from 24% in 2007 through to 27.2% in 2013 and all the way to a staggering 44.7% in 2018. (Dale et al., 2019).

Another fundamental concern for Jordan is that its booming youth population has no emotive attachment to Jordanian national identity and thus even less stake in the political order (Yom & Sammour, 2017, p. 25). Even though Jordan does not have a problem with sectarian violence, it has

[44] Al-Rawashdeh (also known as Rrawashdeh), is the editor of the Islamic page in the Jordanian Addustour Newspaper and is an Islamic writer and journalist. (Al Shalabi & Alrajehi, 2011, p. 1391).

still struggled with its identity, meaning that Jordanians have had difficulties situating themselves in the world (Wagemakers, 2012, s. 41). Jordan was created with the help of the British as the Emirate of Transjordan, hundreds of thousands fled there to escape the Arab-Israeli war, and it still has official custodianship of the West Bank while it is at peace with Israel; none of these help Jordanians discover who they are as a nation because there are so many opposing views. Demands for dignity and participation of the youth has been one of the ways extremist groups has lured people to join them.

In 2007, before the Arab Spring and in between the fall of ISI and the rise of ISIL, Jordanians were asked about their identity and whether they identified above all as Jordanians, Arabs, or as Muslims: 24% identified themselves first as Jordanians, 9.2% as Arabs, and a staggering 64.5% as Muslims first. Interestingly, 18–24 -year-olds but also 65–74 -year-olds identified themselves most as Jordanians first when compared to all other age cohorts (30.3% and 34.0%, respectively). The 18–24 -year-olds were also less likely to identify as Muslims first compared to all other age cohorts with 58.2%. (Arab Barometer, 2020). These results would suggest that a common Jordanian national identity has been more successfully built in people born between 1983 and 1989. Unfortunately, this question was not repeated in subsequent surveys so further analysis cannot be made.

In a state with limited freedom of speech and opinion like Jordan, and with a stratified society structure, trusted information sources are another aspect feeding radicalisation. While there is a wide spectrum of media channels and campaigns countering radicalisation, there are many messages, shows, and presenters that encourage it. When asked, 31% of Jordanians state they believe social media and the Internet can be used to validify controversial religious ideas, 26% would put their faith in religious talk shows, and 15% would utilise religious books. Even though, at a grassroots level, 46% of Jordanians would first refer questions about radical ideas to their local religious leaders, especially young persons acknowledged that they would most likely search the question online first. (UN Women Jordan, 2016, pp. 21-22). This importance of different media channels, as well as an individual's trust especially in the accuracy of the religion-related information of these channels, was yet another reason why questions about their media channel consumption were so vital in my survey.

Not one profile for terrorists in Jordan

The attraction of Salafi-Jihadist groups extends beyond poor and disaffected people. Post–2011, the vast influx of displaced Syrians did not destabilise Jordan as feared, neither did the refugee camps become hotbeds for radicalisation. Instead, most terrorists in Jordan come from ordinary Jordanian homes. (Yom & Sammour, 2017, p. 26). Even the children and relatives of the privileged Jordanian financial and political elite have committed acts of violence: some left for Syria and Iraq to become

foreign fighters for ISIL or Al Qaeda-related groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra, some perpetrated terror attacks in Jordan in the name of the same Salafi-Jihadist groups.

Analysis of perpetrator profiles in Jordan shows that Salafi-Jihadist sympathisers, supporters, and activists can be found in all social strata in Jordan. For example, Mohammed Dalaeen (Noskov, 12.10.2015) was a 23-year-old medical student from Al-Karak who came from a wealthy and respected Jordanian family. His father is a parliament member who had protested against ISIL with Mohammed when a member of their tribe, fighter pilot Kasasbeh, was burned to death by ISIL (Ma'ayeh & El-Ghobashy, 1.12.2015). Dalaeen was studying abroad in the Ukraine, where met and married a Ukrainian woman, a recent convert to Islam. Soon, Mohammed became more devout[45], and then travelled together with his wife to Iraq to become a part of ISIL (Noskov, 12.10.2015). Six months after he had protested the death of Kassasbeh in the hands of ISIL, on the orders of the same group, Mohammed Dalaeen detonated a suicide bomb, killing himself and 30 others in Iraq.

In an attempt to gauge the thoughts of Jordanian youth and soon after the propaganda images of immolated Jordanian pilot Kasasbeh were released in 2015, religious and non-religious university students in Jordan were asked if they supported Jordan and the coalition against ISIL. Non-religious students generally supported their country's fight against ISIL, but religious students were ambiguous about the burning of the pilot, attributing the brutality to foreign agents who want to harm Islam's image. Religious men and women alike tended to support the ISIL version of sharia as righteous:

> *"Daesh [ISIL] is applying Sharia. The whole world was in uproar (about the burning of the pilot) but this is the punishment; it exists in our religion. They applied the punishment on him for bombing people by burning him."*[46]
>
> *"All that is being portrayed about Daesh is wrong and aims at disfiguring the image of Islam. There could be an Israeli-American organization behind the bad propaganda against Islamic State to hurt the image of Islam. I wish and long to live in an Islamic State that applies Sharia. Borders don't count; the Islamic State seeks to provide the needs of the people"*[47]*. (Nakhoul & Al-Khalidi, 26.2.2015).*

Local reactions to radical ideas

The Jordanian areas of Zarqa, Ma'an, Salt, Irbid, and Rusaifa have been identified by both locals and scholars as areas prone to increased radicalisation, partially due to religiosity in general, partially due to radicalisation linked to ISIL or other terrorist groups. (UN Women Jordan, 2016, p. 7; Wagemakers, 2018, p. 195). Jordanian scholars of Jihadism such as Mohammed Abu Rumman claim that the real danger of ISIL is not external, but internal, and it is reaching Jordan's middle class,

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[45] Many close to the family said his wife had been radicalised first but there is no clear evidence of this.
[46] Words of an unnamed female sharia student at the University of Jordan.
[47] Words of an unnamed sharia student at the University of Jordan.

students, and educated – the so-called privileged – in an unprecedented way. In addition to areas such as Irbid and East Amman, Palestinian refugee camps housing tens of thousands are also prime targets for radicalising propaganda and hate-speech.

Same areas of Zarqa, Ma'an, and Irbid, which were identified by ordinary Jordanians as areas with increased radicalisation, also have prevalent pro-Salafi-Jihadi spokespersons present. Jordan has several local Salafi-Jihadist shaykhs who serve as spokesmen, local leaders for mostly younger knowledge-seekers or lower rank scholars. One of the best known shaykhs is Muhammad al-Shalabi[48] from Ma'an, who condemned Muslim regimes (and the nationalism and regionalism they represent) as takfiri because they want to separate Islam from life. Another local shaykh is ʻAbd al-Fattah Shahada Hamid[49] from Irbid, who acted as one of the main spokesmen for Salafi-Jihadis in Jordan, especially near the border with Syria. All these prominent local shaykhs have been imprisoned by the Jordanian regime at some stage on terrorism-related charges. More interestingly, these Salafi-Jihadi clerics have also spoken out against ISIL.

Unsuccessful government policies, rampant youth unemployment of around 30%, and proximity to Syria add to the effectiveness of Salafi-Jihadist propaganda penetration in these high-risk areas. Still, not only these specific areas harbour pro-ISIL thoughts: before the immolation of Kasasbeh in 2015, a poll taken only a year before suggested that only 62% of Jordanians saw ISIL as a terrorist organisation. A more recent polling suggests that nearly 90% of Jordanians now consider ISIL a terrorist organisation; the concern are the opinions of the remaining 10% who do not see ISIL as a terrorist organisation. (Schenker, 23.6.2016). These numbers are the reason why I chose to conduct my research in areas identified as ambivalent in their reactions towards Salafi-Jihadism and ISIL. In areas known for radical Salafi-Jihadist sympathies, it could be possible to glean accurate results reflecting the actual state of effectiveness of Salafi-Jihadist propaganda in Jordan.

5.2. Development of Salafi-Jihadism in Jordan

Jordan has had Salafi influences from various angles: from the quietist and ideological side, the more radical and even extremist side, as well as from the combative side. Jordan has been a refuge to many Muslim scholars and Salafi theologians since the 1980s, but its complicated history with Israel, its large Palestinian refugee population, and suitable political, economic, and social circumstances also helped in the formation of more militant versions of Salafism. Once established, Salafism in Jordan has both grown but also divided itself among three different views on Salafism in the modern world.

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[48] Al-Shalabi is better known as Abu Sayyaf. (Wagemakers, 2018, p. 194).
[49] Hamid is better known as Abu Muhammad al-Tahawi. (Wagemakers, 2018, p. 194).

In addition, its proximity to the sectarian conflict in Iraq in 2006–2008, the rise of Al Qaeda in Iraq, and continued upheaval in neighbouring countries Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon have also given Jordan a front-row seat to witness the slow transformation of Al Qaeda in Iraq into ISIL.

Jordan has become the nerve centre for maintaining the legacy of a prominent quietist Salafist, Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (d. 1999). Albani moved from Saudi Arabia to Jordan in 1981 and settled near the city of Zarqa. In the 1990s, Jordan, and particularly the northern city of Zarqa where Albani lived, had become a hub for Salafi-Jihadists, the most famous of whom was AQI's leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Albani became a persona non grata among such Salafi-Jihadists for his negative views on takfir and groups misappropriating Salafism. (Olidort, 2015).

Albani was, however, not the only Salafist scholar to have influence in Jordan. In 1992, a Palestinian-Jordanian known by his kunya, Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi[50], returned after years in Afghanistan and Pakistan to Jordan. Influenced by Wahhabism and radical actions when growing up in Saudi Arabia, the returning Al-Maqdisi had become a known author on takfir, al-wala' wa-l-bara', and his strict interpretation of tawhid and God as the only source of authority; he also had experience of global Salafi-Jihadist circles and networks with the likes of Zarqawi. The radical Islamist ideologue has been called the spiritual father of Al Qaeda and the Jihadi intellectual universe partially due to the accessibility of his writings online (Wagemakers, 2008)[51]. Maqdisi called the Jordanian government apostates soon after his arrival. (Wagemakers, 2012, p. 42).

Salafi-Jihadist terrorism in Jordan

The Jordanian Zarqawi was integral in the development of ISIL because, in 1999, he founded a group called the Organisation of Monotheism and Jihad (JTJ). He had just been released from prison and moved to Afghanistan, but he followed events in Jordan and Iraq closely. In Jordan, as early as in late 1999, several hotels and popular Christian tourist areas were being targeted by Al Qaeda. Attacks were meant to be realised on New Year's Eve in 2000 but authorities managed to prevent them. This threat of terrorism led the Jordanian government to tighten their terrorism legislation with wide-spread popular support. Only five years into his reign, King Abdullah II called for tolerance and peace within the Islamic community and rejection of terrorism in his so-called "Amman Message" of 2004. Still, between 2002 and 2005, Al Qaeda perpetrated several attacks in Jordan such as assassinating an American diplomat in 2002 in Amman, attacking hotels in Amman in 2005, and firing missiles at

[50] If one were to include all the parts of al-Maqdisi's name and his tribal affiliations, it would be Abu Muhammad Isam/Asim b.Tahir b. Muhammad al-Barqawi al-Maqdisi al-Hafi al-Ruqi al-Utaybi. (Wagemakers, 2012, pp. 30-31).
[51] Al-Maqdisi's website is currently not in use but it has housed a significant collection of Salafi-Jihadist writings.

U.S. warships docked in the port of Aqaba in 2005. Zarqawi and the Salafi-Jihadist AQI-group he headed claimed responsibility for the hotel bombings in Amman. Since 2005, the efficient security apparatus of Jordan and a popular backlash against Al Qaeda contributed to a decrease in local terrorist acts (Schenker, 2016).

In the 2010s, Jordan had several terror incidents perpetrated by Salafi-Jihadist groups or actors but, in comparison to states surrounding it, the number of incidents in Jordan is negligible. According to the Global Terrorism Database, in 2014, there were 3925 terrorist incidents in Iraq, 328 in Syria, and three (3) in Jordan. In 2015, Iraq had 2743 incidents, Syria 485, and Jordan only four (4). (University of Maryland, 2019). Most of the terrorist incidents between 2013 and 2020 in Jordan have been linked with ISIL, and the attacks were targeted at security forces and government officials near Amman. There were several partially successful deadly attempts by ISIL terrorists to attack the Jordanian border police from Syria near Ruqban, the tri-border area of Iraq, Jordan, and Syria (Haaretz, 22.10.2012; Jordan Times, 19.8.2014; Jordan Times, 22.1.2017). Terrorist cells directly linked to ISIL as well as individuals inspired by ISIL have also targeted tourists and foreigners in Jordan. A shooting attack took place in the city of Al-Karak in 2016, and a stabbing incident in the town of Jerash at the end of 2019; in both attacks, several tourists and locals died. Especially in the 2019 case, the 22-year-old Jordanian man responsible for the stabbings in Jerash told the officials that he had been unable to join ISIL, so the group had then told him to commit attacks against foreigners in Jordan (Arabian Business, 26.1.2020).

Arab Spring and the rising appeal of Salafi-Jihadism in Jordan

Since the end of the cold war, Jordan has been a semi-authoritarian political environment, a state with restricted democracy, licenced political parties, and measured election processes, none of which have led to radical changes in political decision-making. It did force religious revivalist movements like the Muslim Brotherhood to change into semi-political movements, which in turn caused fragmentation within the group due to opposing views for and against more radical action. (Abu Haniyeh, 17.4.2016). The Muslim Brotherhood led mass protests in Jordan in 2011–2012 during the so-called Arab Spring: they called for full revolution of the political system and criticised king Abdullah II heavily (Bondokji, 2015, p. 1). The violence was heaviest in the northern city of Irbid, where hundreds of armed protestors stormed a police station (Al-Khalidi, 16.11.2012). Many prominent Salafi and Salafi-Jihadist leaders were arrested in these protests, which aimed to force the king to abdicate. This call for a revolution coincided with a proliferation of Salafism especially among traditional tribal-origin Jordanian Islamists in Zarqa, Salt, and Ma’an who found the Brotherhood to be too foreign and too Palestine-oriented (Schenker, 2014). The lure of more radical movements

convinced many that any extensive weakening of the Muslim Brotherhood could destabilise Jordan by encouraging their supporters and sympathisers to back alternative movements such as Salafis and Salafi-Jihadists like ISIL (Bondokji, 2015, p. 2).

5.3. Guises of Salafi-Jihadism in Jordan

Despite this wealth of research-based insight into the reasons behind radicalisation, the counter-terrorism policies of Jordan still rely on traditional means of ever-stricter homeland security through greater monitoring and intelligence-gathering. Experts argue that countering and preventing radicalisation must also include actions to resolve the underlying social and political pressures pushing individuals toward an idea of the worthiness of dying while carrying out extremist violence (Yom & Sammour, Counterterrorism and Youth Radicalization in Jordan: Social and Political Dimensions, 2017, pp. 26-27). Other experts such as Mohammed Abu Rumman go as far as to say that the government's strategy to counter violent extremism has been neither serious nor convincing but rather, a spectacular failure (Schenker, 2016). Thus, it should be essential for the Jordanian government and its counter-terrorism policies to understand why the country's youth feels alienated from their political system and disenchanted by their social and economic prospects that embracing the extremist violence of ISIL seems worthwhile. (Yom & Sammour, Counterterrorism and Youth Radicalization in Jordan: Social and Political Dimensions, 2017, pp. 26-27).

Mixed approaches to the rise of Salafi-Jihadism in Jordan

During the initial stages of the Syrian conflict, it seemed to many that the Jordanian regime was either surprised by it and, some say, even consciously turning a blind eye to local Salafi-Jihadis leaving the country for Syria because it meant less trouble for them. (Reuters, 21.4.2014). Jordan was even rumoured to have provided basic military training to non-jihadi foreign fighters fighting the Assad regime in Syria (al-Najjar, 19.2.2014). Jordanian officials quickly realised how dangerous the effects armed Salafi-Jihadists in the neighbouring country could be, even before ISIL showed its true colours. After a series of incidents along the Jordan-Syria border, Jordanian officials began to restrict access from Syria in 2014 (Human Rights Watch, 3.6.2015). Eventually, after an attack in 2016 at the border in Ruqban, Jordan declared all border areas closed military zones (BBC, 22.6.2016).

Another part of Jordan's approach to Salafi-Jihadis returning from Syria was to introduce new anti-terrorism legislation in April 2014. It criminalises "the intent or act of joining, recruiting, funding or arming" organisations such as the Salafi-Jihadi groups operating either in Syria or in Jordan. Now even "intent" became a criminal offence, which led parliamentarians to wonder if simply liking the Facebook page of a radical organisation was considered as "intent". In actuality, the law provided the

regime with sweeping powers to crack down on terrorist activities in the name of security, no matter how insignificant they were. The application of this law led to widespread arrests in Jordan, some of which proved the point of wondering parliamentarians; one of those arrested was referred to as the "WhatsApp Jihadist" for allegedly spreading pro-ISIL propaganda on the popular WhatsApp-application while one journalist claimed that some Jordanians who had "liked" ISIL on Facebook had actually been arrested for doing so. (Wagemakers, 2018, pp. 196-197).

Even though the anti-terrorism legislation already included acts that "disturb the public order" and could be thus used to restrict freedom of speech, in order to restrict the possibility for sectarian violence and further support for Salafi-Jihadism, Jordan also amended its hate-speech laws in 2015. In a country with limited freedom of speech and expression, any speech seen to be critical of the king, foreign countries, government officials and institutions, and Islam, as well as any speech considered to defame others is against the law. (Human Rights Watch, 2019). In an effort to reduce online hate speech, amendments were proposed to the Cybercrime Law No.27 to the Jordanian parliament in June 2018. They included increased penalties for a broadened definition of online hate speech, defined as "any statement or act that would provoke religious, sectarian, ethnic, or regional sedition; calling for violence and justifying it; or spreading rumours against people with the aim of causing them, as a result, physical harm or damage to their assets or reputation." The wording of the proposed amendment, especially the reference to religion, caused wide-spread protests that led to the specific reference to religion being deleted. (MENA Rights Group, 2019).

Despite all its tough actions against Salafi-Jihadism, Jordan also continued on a more inclusive and positive note in the spirit of the king's Amman Message of 2004. Jordan established a government council "for the preparation of a specific strategy to combat extremism, terrorism, extremism, and takfiri thought" (Wagemakers, 2018, p. 197). Since 2017, the Jordanian government has required imams to adhere to officially prescribed themes and texts in their Friday sermons. Muslim clergy who do not follow government policy may be suspended, issued a written warning, banned from delivering Friday sermons for a certain period, or dismissed from their positions. A preacher violating the law may also be imprisoned for a period of one week to one month or be given a fine not to exceed 20 dinars (US$28)[52]. The law also prohibits the publication of media items that slander or insult "founders of religion or prophets" or are deemed contemptuous of "any of the religions whose freedom is protected by the constitution," and imposes a fine on violators of up to 20 000 dinars (US$28 200). (United States Department of State, 2018, p. 5). Jordanian e-Muftis are using Twitter,

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[52] The average income in Jordan is approximately 450JOD (US$637) per month. (Azzeh, 7.4.2017).

Facebook, and websites to counter radical interpretations of Islam (Ghosh et al., 2016, p. 57)[53]. All these efforts fit in with the broader Jordanian policy of portraying itself, and true Islam, as moderate, peaceful, inclusive, and tolerant.

ISIL propaganda in Jordan

ISIL and its atrocities are good for selling newspapers, and not all beneficial propaganda and exposure was created by ISIL media diwan. People all over the world, also in Jordan, have been exposed to ISIL propaganda and gore imagery for years without explicitly looking to consume such material. Especially wide-spread was the news of the immolation of the Jordanian pilot Kasasbeh in 2015 which reached wide swaths of people in Jordan; people may not have seen all of the footage, but they were aware of it and made automatic mental associations with other ISIL imagery.

In addition to the news, the ISIL media diwan with the help of local acolytes and fanboys manage to circulate vast amounts of propaganda especially at its heyday. In Jordan, at the height of anti-terrorism actions in 2015, approximately 66 individuals were tried under charges of "promoting the ideas of a terrorist group" either for circulating material published by ISIL or for expressing their support to the organisation. Some of those tried had tried to join the group in Syria or Iraq. At the time, evidence of support to ISIL or promotion of the organisation was deemed sufficient even when, for example, one of the accused had social media and WhatsApp groups titled "The Caliphate State Exists[54]" and "Our State is Victorious[55]". Publishing pictures of operations or propaganda materials created by ISIL was also deemed sufficient evidence of support for ISIL. (Al-Masry, 27.7.2015).

In 2017, based on the amended anti-terrorism legislation, the Jordanian State Security Court SSC arrested and later sentenced people for sympathising with ISIL. One group of six had created Facebook pages to find Jordanian supporters for ISIL and thus promote terrorist activity. Others were charged with propagating terrorist ideology by posting pro-ISIL videos and statements on social media. (US State Department, 3.4.2019). Just a year earlier, the government had been criticised for not paying enough attention on time to online radicalisation, which indoctrinated young Jordanian men and converted them into Salafi-Jihadists (Keilani, 5.3.2016). In addition to other criticism, there are claims that the law on hate-speech has been misused and misinterpreted because it further restricts freedom of speech and does not actually protect Jordanians. A Jordanian Christian Nahed Hattar drew a caricature of the deceased ISIL foreign fighter Abu Saleh in heaven, sitting next to two women and

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[53] The e-Muftis state-appointed Islamic scholars who interpret Islamic teachings for daily life and respond to inquiries from other Muslims online.
[54] Arabic: دولة الخلافة قائمة
[55] Arabic دولتنا منصورة

asking God to bring him a drink. Hattar attached the words “Lord of ISIS” to the drawing. In August 2016, he was charged with inciting sectarian strife and insulting Islam (Beaumont, 25.9.2016). Hattar received several death threats, and when he was released on bail, he was assassinated in front of the Amman courthouse. His assassin was later arrested but the social media pages calling for his assassination have not been punished.

Despite all these countermeasures, social cohesion, and condemnation of ISIL, Jordan hasn’t gotten rid of the underlying causes for the attractiveness of violent extremism and Salafi-Jihadism. This is why I chose to study how attractive ISIL propaganda still is to Jordanians even after finding out the true intentions of ISIL, years of strict anti-terrorism legislation and laws against hate speech.

6. Thesis survey, methodology, and ethical discussion

In this section, I will present the methodologies I have used in conducting this survey. I will also present the specifics of data collection as well as the results gathered. Since this study concentrated in acquiring primary data in a way which hadn’t been done before, I had to make sure my survey form as well as the materials presented to participants could provide all the information I needed it to. This meant that I had to first settle on a preliminary cache of propaganda images suitable for my study, which could then be filtered. Finally, the only pictures remaining would cover all set parameters and be as clear and unambiguous as possible without being excessively graphic and thus, illegal as well as off-putting.

I was unable to find any studies that would have conducted similar surveys or experiments, so I began my thesis by focusing on image interpretation analysis as my base methodology. Since I was hoping to work with large, complex, multi-dimensional, and multi-variable data, I had to ensure I would be able to extract meaningful information for further analysis. The data I would collect had to be both quantifiably and qualitatively analysable. Early on, I had decided not to direct attention to Salafi-Jihadi imagery alone, but that I would rather place them in a larger survey context. To create this extensive image context, I decided to choose pictures which fit into four simple divisions: religious imagery, socio-political imagery, sports imagery, and entertainment imagery. Next, in order to have clear distinctions within the chosen images, I decided the images should fit into four opposing sub-divisions I had come up with: violent/non-violent and religious/non-religious.[56] These four divisions

[56] The images had to have clearly violent or clearly non-violent undertones and they had to either include or not include any religious symbolism.

and sub-divisions would create a two types of fourfold tables: one with a focus on the theme divisions, one with a focus on the image characteristic divisions.

Image theme divisions[57]		
	violent	non-violent
sports	**none**	**3 images:** Thesis image 1, Thesis image 8, and Thesis imageThesis image 17.
entertainment	**none**	**5 images:** Thesis image 3, Thesis image 4, Thesis image 6, Thesis image 11, Thesis image 22
religion	**4 images:** Thesis image 5, Thesis image 10, Thesis image 19, Thesis image 23	**4 images:** Thesis image 7, Thesis image 13, Thesis image 18, Thesis image 25
socio-political issues	**3 images:** Thesis image 12, Thesis image 16, Thesis image 20	**6 images:** Thesis image 2, Thesis image 9, Thesis image 14, Thesis image 15, Thesis image 21, Thesis image 24

I had discussed my study with a practising psychologist who has experience in treating people who have experienced trauma and/or lived in an environment where expressing one's emotions and opinions freely is not possible. I was advised to consciously tone down the amount of violent imagery in the survey, so that the images wouldn't cause a block in the respondents or harm them mentally in any way. Thus, the unequal amount between the violent and non-violent images within the survey was a conscious choice from me since it was both ethical but also non-detrimental to my study. As long as there were enough images in all categories which could be divided by characteristics (violent/non-violent, religious/non-religious), I could cross-tabulate any correlations.

Image characteristics divisions		
	violent	non-violent
religious	**4 images:** Thesis image 5, Thesis image 10, Thesis image 19, Thesis image 23	**7 images:** Thesis image 2, Thesis image 7, Thesis image 8, Thesis image 13, Thesis image 15, Thesis image 18, Thesis image 25
non-religious	**3 images:** Thesis image 12, Thesis image 16, Thesis image 20	**11 images:** Thesis image 1, Thesis image 3, Thesis image 4, Thesis image 6, Thesis image 9, Thesis image 11, Thesis image 14, Thesis image 17, Thesis image 21, Thesis image 22, Thesis image 24

Since my object was to study the unguarded responses and values of respondents, I had to safeguard the respondents' replies from the effects of any unseen bias and make sure they could mark down the reasoning and value judgements of their image responses with as little outside influence as possible. This was only one of the many psycho-social challenges of constructing the survey and its collection methodology: in a collective society where freedom of speech and opinion are limited, and where any

[57] Some pictures may have two themes: in these cases, the picture has been categorised according to its broader depicted theme.

overt support of ISIL or other Salafi-Jihadist groups can lead to lengthy prison sentences, it was important to make sure that respondents felt safe and not pressured while giving their answers.

Once I had already settled on my preferred methodology of using images to uncover social realities in Jordan, I discovered that work done by William J.T. Mitchell (1994) closely resembled what I was trying to achieve. To him, pictures and images not only constitute and reproduce the social reality but also represent it. Images are iconic mediums for interpreting and explaining the world, and as such, they provide orientation for actions and values of individuals (Mitchell, 1994). Encouraged by Mitchell's theory, I thought it had been feasible to choose various icons (hijabs, flags), gestures (tawhid, V-victory sign, hug), and other well-known symbols (The Dome of the Rock, White Helmet workers in Syria) in the survey imagery. I estimated I would be able to cross-tabulate whether it was a specific symbol or the larger aspect (violence/non-violence or the religion/non-religion) of the image, which led to a specific response. In addition to Mitchell, Karl Mannheim theorised that implicit or tacit knowledge of everyday practises, cultural traits, and shared biographies can expose how experiences (and thus also values) are constructed (1982, pp. 59, 65, 67). Since image- or icon-based knowledge, and our value-based responses to them, are instinctive and conceptual, images of social settings with specific icons should reveal underlying values. I had originally thought to allow all respondents to describe why they either liked or disliked the photo, but it soon became apparent quantifying open responses would be almost impossible. Instead, I pre-prepared ten opposing options for respondents to use.

In order to more fully analyse implicit knowledge, values, and attitudes of people living in Jordan, I had to have a comprehensive awareness of all the socio-cultural and psychological factors that affect value judgements. In addition, for further analysis, I had to be knowledgeable of the framework of radicalism and extremism both generically and in the context of Jordan. Without a deeper understanding of how my results fit onto a baseline, it would be difficult to analyse possible deviations from it. I have written out an extensive baseline in previous chapters of this thesis.

6.1. Visual materials for data collection

The initial phase of creating the data collection survey was to find appropriate photographic material which would act as the dependent variables of this research. There are four images in the survey that are the actual target of this research; the rest of the pictures act as a control. These images of Salafi-Jihadists were collected from various media sources available at the end of year 2018. A lot of online Salafi-Jihadist propaganda had already then been taken down due to the changing social media guidelines.

As further requirements for the Salafi-Jihadi propaganda pictures suitable for my research, they had to conform to some of Ellul's five propaganda categories (1973) in order to be suitable in the first place. Upon further examination of the propaganda categories, it became clear that rational and sociological propaganda were the most difficult to pinpoint into visual propaganda because they rely on different psychological and non-visual cues than the other categories. Initially, I had compiled a picture bank of approximately 35 pictures portraying violent Salafi-Jihadist propaganda. I conducted preliminary tests on the viability of the pictures by asking a total of five persons (consisting of students, researchers, and professors working on the Middle East) to assess the images. I asked each person to evaluate the pictures according to the clarity of the propagandist message and identify any possible ambiguities within the picture. Pictures deemed too confusing, too obscure, or too ambiguous were then eliminated from the chosen images. I also decided that no clear text should be visible on the images and that any textual references should only appear as part of iconography such as flags and banners. At the end, I ended up with a total of fifteen (15) Salafi-Jihadist propaganda pictures suitable for this research.

After I selected these fifteen violent Salafi-Jihadi propaganda pictures as my dependent research variables, I had to choose other images to act as both a control and as a distraction from the foci imagery being studied. As I suspected the Jihadi imagery would most likely create passionate responses, the other images used as the control had to be such that would create emotional responses as well; in short, all images had to be able to create strong emotions in different groups of people depending on their worldviews. I selected pictures that varied between different ideological extremes, and, if possible, which had already received substantial amounts of fame or notoriety within Jordan or the wider Middle East region. Wide-spread popular knowledge of the images being used as control was important because the notoriety of Jihadi propaganda imagery had to be balanced by the other images; if not, the propaganda pictures would be instantly recognisable as different from the rest of the imagery in the survey and the viability of the survey would be in jeopardy.

Upon my arrival in Jordan, I conducted another control assessment of the images: I asked two university-educated locals to act as a control group and go through all the chosen images as well as the preliminary survey form. They were given the same instructions as the previous group but in addition, I asked them to inform me if all the images could be recognised by the general public. During this check-up process, one picture in particular, chosen to represent the non-violent socio-political imagery aspect in the survey, was of the King of Jordan, Abdullah II. This was the only picture that my Jordanian control group advised to remove because criticism of the King or the Jordanian royal family was forbidden by law; thus, if people were asked to rate the positivity or

negativity of a picture with the King in it, it would be most likely that respondents would stop answering the survey completely.

Other suggestions from the control group had to do with the length of the survey: the preliminary survey form had a total of 31 images (of which five dealt with violent Jihadi imagery) in addition to eight (8) sections of background questions and preferences. The responses of the control group concentrated mainly on reducing the length of the survey, and comments ranged from apprehensive (*"It takes too long to look at 35 pictures."*) to suspicion *("Why are you asking me to rate so many pictures? It makes me suspicious. Tell me, why are you doing this again?")*. I chose to decrease the number of images to 25, of which only four (4) dealt with violent Jihadi propaganda, because I wanted to make sure as few as possible would choose to stop answering the questionnaire before it finished.

6.2. Research variables and measurements

The independent variables or the assumed causes for differences in results in this research are the statistical personal and demographic variables, the political and socio-cultural backgrounds, as well as the individual preferences of the respondents. Qualitative variables such as individual preferences were transformed into quantifiable and measurable variables by scaling them on the Likert scale from 1 through to 5. I decided to allow the respondents a possibility to choose option 3 as a non-committal option because forcing people to choose from two opposing choices sometimes leads to a refusal to respond at all. I also gave numerical equivalents to the image questions so that they could be analysed and evaluated. Next, I will specify each independent variable and possible considerations made during the planning or execution of the survey.

Age

I decided to divide the age categories into three-year intervals; for example, 15–18-years-old. There were two considerations for this: one was the ease of results analysis afterwards, the second consideration had to do with the anticipated reluctance of respondents to answer questions that could possibly be used to identify their replies afterwards. I expected some of the images to create stronger emotional responses, so in light of this and the strict anti-terrorism and hate speech legislations, I wanted to be able to explain it was impossible to identify specific responses from the survey answers.

I chose to limit my age intervals between 15 and 35 years. I selected the lower range as 15 years because that is the age when almost 25% of both males and females are still searching for their final identities and are thus more vulnerable to propaganda and outside influences (Meeus et al, 2012). Similarly, the decision-making capabilities of 15-year-olds are still less developed than those aged

16–19-years. As noted before, the ability to fully comprehend the consequences of one's actions matures by the 30s. (Schiebener et al, 2015, pp. 762-771).

In addition to physiological reasons affecting brain maturity, sociological and psychological factors were also important in deciding age ranges for my survey. The life stages of individuals is in flux until at least their mid-20s, and it is often only in early adulthood when an individual's identity conflict is resolved (Marcia, 1966). Age and developmental stages also influence spirituality and the search for one's own religious identity (Rambo, 1993, p. 157). Many born-Muslims rediscover their faith in their late teens or early adulthood (Inge, 2016, p. 66), and this spiritual awakening usually occurs in the identity formation and identity crisis stages, when the authority of parents diminishes and outside influences increase. This may lead to the adoption of more conservative values.

Personality characteristics and emotions also develop until mid-teens. Especially in males aged 13–16, emotional turmoil due to hormonal activity combined with low empathy, aggressiveness, and sensation-seeking lead to enjoyment of violent media content. Gore watching, which is more common in males, significantly contributes to a preference for graphic violence. In relation to real-life violence and radicalisation, preferential and exclusive gore-watching may reflect a curiosity or a future inclination towards actual physical violence. (Johnston, 1995, pp. 540–541).

Finally, when analysing the ages of Salafi-Jihadist fighters who have joined either ISI or ISIL, there is a high number of teenagers and young adults under the age of 30 (total of 81.4% for ISIL, 89.6% for ISI[58]). The youngest foreign fighter in ISI had barely turned 15 years old; the oldest fighter in ISI was 54 when he crossed into Iraq. Teenagers under the age of 20 comprised of 11–13% of foreign recruits, and conversely those over 31 years comprised a total of 9% (ISI) to a significant 24% (ISIL) of foreign recruits. (Brockmeyer et al, 2018; Felter & Fishman, 2007). The age range of foreign fighters joining Salafi-Jihadist groups is yet another motive for my chosen age range.

Gender

When I began to plan my study, my original goal was to only survey men because statistically and historically evaluated, men have been more likely to be the perpetrators of violent terrorist acts. However, ISIL had quickly evolved from using women in propaganda to utilising them in combat (de Leede et al, 2017, p. 7) and the roles of women changed from conservative roles (daughters, wives, and mothers) to hisbah officers and even fighters (Banks, Introduction: Women, Gender, and Terrorism: Gendering, 2019, pp. 4-5). The importance of women in ISIL propaganda as producers

[58] For more information, see Appendix.

and consumers as well as their changing roles within the Salafi-Jihadist ideology made me change my mind and include women as well. Simply focusing on the male perspective and male narratives would have denied valuable primary data from further research into women in Salafi-Jihadist organisations.

I chose not to provide the respondents an option to choose a third option of 'prefer not to say' or 'neither' because it could have challenged binary gender beliefs, which wouldn't have been conducive for this study. Thus, only the options 'male' and 'female' were provided.

Habitation and place of residence

As the intent was to gather information as widely as possible from different areas of Jordan, I chose to make more specific residential distinctions available. Simply selecting between 'urban' and 'rural' would have provided much too narrow a view into possible liberal vs. conservative -dichotomies, so instead I chose to ask respondents to estimate the size of the area where they had spent the majority of their life, then select the most fitting option. I also decided my research assistants would be able to assist respondents in estimating the number of inhabitants, if necessary.

The Jordanian Department of Statistics does not provide exact measurements for the sizes of habitation in Jordan. I chose six distinctive categories for my thesis survey after having analysed information on the general population sizes of the few metropolises in Jordan (namely the Greater Amman area, Irbid, and Zarqa) as well as towns and villages in the surrounding areas. The categories I chose were: small village (less than 1000 inhabitants), small town (1000–10 000 inhabitants), large town (10 000–100 000 inhabitants), city (100 000–300 000 inhabitants), large city (300 000– one million inhabitants), and metropolis (more than one million inhabitants). My research assistants also confirmed the viability of these categories before we began the survey.

Marital and employment status

Marital status was an important yet simple section in this study. Once again, I chose not to give respondents an option to avoid answering these questions because becoming a part of the larger Salafi-Jihadi family and ummah has been such a key component in their propaganda. The respondents were asked whether they are married or not. I separated the question of employment and set the category in a way that it provided options for different respondents: a simple yes/no dichotomy wouldn't have been so informative as adding an option for full-time students who may work part-time. However, I intentionally chose not to include more categories into this such as 'stay-at-home mother' or 'part-time employment' because the focus of the study is to see if there is a difference

between employed and unemployed respondents in the way they perceive violent Salafi-Jihadist propaganda.

Another reason why marital status and employment are important variable is that one of the biggest obstacles to marriage and sexual intercourse in majority-Muslim countries is the tradition of *mahr* (dower). Mahr is the payment a prospective husband offers to both a woman and her parents in exchange for her hand in marriage, and it is a requirement in all Islamic marriages. A common complaint is that it is very difficult to get married in the Middle East because the groom needs money for a flat, the mahr payment, and the wedding. Being unable to collect money towards marriage because of un(der)employment or being rejected by the bride's parents due to less advantageous social circumstances challenges the hegemonic masculinity of many men (McDowell, 2000, p. 207).

One part of ISIL propaganda was to tell foreign recruits (both men and women) that they would find spouses and a family and live happily with them in the Caliphate. In Jordan, 34.9% of women and 44.9% of men are unmarried, while 55.8% of women and 53% of men are married (Roya News, 23.9.2019). The EU-28 average shows that both genders combined, a total of 28.1% of EU-citizens are unmarried and 55.3% married (Corselli-Nordblad & Gereoffy, 2015). The Jordanian average of single persons (39.9%) is considerably higher than in any EU country. In general, the majority of those joining ISIL were single and did not have children; according to ISIL personal records only 33.7% were married and 22.1% of the recruits had children. Lack of hope, crisis of identity, and anxiety leaves many men vulnerable to external influences, which is why ISIL so expertly used salary payments and the offer of marriage to lure foreign recruits.

Finished education level

Education levels of respondents were interesting variables because of its links to radicalisation and Islamism especially in Jordan. In Jordan, 81.5% of children attended primary school, 63.1% moved on to secondary school in 2018. A total of 34.4% of Jordanians went on to enrol in tertiary education in 2018. (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2020). After 1957, the theocratic legitimacy of the Jordanian monarchy was stressed, and the Jordanian regime began to work with the Muslim Brotherhood. People closely associated with the Brotherhood were given run of the Education Ministry at this time, and their position in Jordan remains important. The Brotherhood completely changed school curriculums, and as a result, the society started to change. Radicalising elements were introduced into the school systems over many decades, and a study carried out in Jordan in 2013 during the first stages of ISIL revealed conservatism at school had made attitudes harsher and more patriarchal especially in traditional families with low education. The Jordanian Muslim identity was becoming ever more fundamentalist, and schools were quietly indoctrinating generations of students

to embrace violent extremist solutions to political issues, namely Palestine. Teachers would encourage students to take part in the Palestinian Jihad and shame those who did not want to participate. (Speckhard, 2017, pp. 38, 55-56). The Jordanian government has taken some steps to rectify the situation in Jordanian schools but there is much resistance and all attempts are easily seen as blasphemous and anti-Islamic.

Among the foreign fighters of ISIL, 17.7% had only completed primary education, whereas 51.7% were secondary school graduates. A relatively high number of 30.6% had higher education diplomas. (Brockmeyer et al, 2018, p. 7) With many push factors in Jordan facing secondary and tertiary education graduates, the attractiveness of violent Salafi-Jihadi propaganda may be visible in education levels as well.

Religion

Jordan is a Muslim-majority country where majority of Muslims are Sunnis. However, there is a small but significant Christian minority in Jordan, mainly situated in the areas surrounding the city of Madaba. It was important not to exclude respondents who were other than Muslim because a preference for violent or gruesome imagery, Salafi-Jihadi or otherwise, does not have anything to do with a specific religion.

The Jordan Department of Statistics does not release statistical information related to religious affiliation. The most recent estimate is from 2010 in which 97.2% of Jordanians are Muslims (mainly Sunni), and 2.2% are Christians (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). Since the introduction of new identification card and passport regimes in 2016, these two official Jordanian documents no longer openly specify the card holder's religious affiliation. However, this information is embedded in the card's electronic chip and on file in government records.

Individual media preferences and social factor descriptors

Personal media preferences were included to help identify what kind of media each individual consumes the most. The world can be understood as constructed through images, which fill and mould our everyday lives in a very elementary way (Mitchell, 1994, s. 41). The secret algorithms of Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube are designed to maximise the engagement of users by analysing the content of what has been originally sought and then automatically promoting similar content. Thus, media potentially has incredible impact on personal values, but at the same time, these personal values also dictate what kind of media an individual chooses to consume.

To gauge their media consumption preferences and see if there was any correlation to their responses, I divided the questions into media platforms: radio, TV, books, newspapers, and social media. With

each platform, the question dealt with what kind of content did the respondent consume and prefer on that media platform. The reply options followed my original four theme divisions: mainly entertainment, mainly politics and society, mainly religion, mainly sports. Even though it added to the number of variables, I decided it was necessary to provide to opposite non-committal options where the respondent could claim to consume all themes equally or none of the themes at all.

In addition to media consumption, I also asked respondents to self-assess the importance of the same themes of entertainment, politics, religion, and sports in their life. Here, I used the Likert scale from 1 through to 5 again (1 representing no importance at all, 5 representing extreme importance). I decided against inserting pre-determined measurements here because it could have inhibited the genuine responses of respondents by forcing them to evaluate their preferences against pre-ordained ones, thus creating biases.

6.3. Construction of the survey

I decided to use an online service called E-lomake (“E-form”) provided by the University of Helsinki to construct the survey questionnaire as well as serve as a depository of the responses until analysis. Reasons were two-fold: the form would show the identifiable markings of Helsinki University for respondents and possibly lessen any fears of respondents. This turned out to be the right choice since many respondents were worried about their responses and asked many questions about Helsinki University before taking part. Surprisingly, Finland and its high level of education was well known in Jordan due to a documentary about the Finnish education miracle, so eventually even those most reticent to participate agreed to it when they learned Finland was involved in the survey.

After talking to my research assistants in Jordan, I decided to add an explanation of the goal of the survey at the beginning of the questionnaire where the survey was identified as a media material survey. The information on the form was in Arabic[59], here translated in English:

> *We request that you answer the survey so that you only think of your own personal preferences when answering. The images have been published in and gathered from newspapers, television, movies, and social media between 2014–2018. This survey looks at how the background and personal preferences of a person affect the way they view images on media. All replies to this survey are entirely anonymous and cannot be traced or pinpointed back to any particular person.*

[59] للمشاكة في هذا الاستبيان, نود منك أن تجيب استنادا لآراك الشخصية فقط. الصور التي سوف تشاهدها تم نشرها وجمعها من وسائل الاعلام المختلفة . بين عام2014 الى 2018. هذا الاستبيان هدفه دراسة كيف أن التفضيلات الشخصيةو الخلفيات المختلفة تأثر على الطريقة التي نحلل بها الصور في وسائل الاعلام. جميع الاحصائات التي سوف يتم جمعها لن تجمع أي بيانات شخصية عنك, ولن تقوم بتتبعك بأي طريقة, لذلك أشعر بالحرية التامة أثناء اجابتك

My research assistants would give this same information verbally to the respondents after the initial introduction to the topic of the survey. I also decided I needed to emphasise the need to answer according to their individual opinions since many respondents were being observed by others.

Collection of demographic information

After the initial introduction to the survey would be made by my research assistants, respondents would fill in the first stage of required demographical identifiers, which act as the independent variables of the study. First was age, then gender, and third, their religion in separate sections.

Age in numerical value العمر
15-18
19-22
23-26
27-30
31-35
35+

Gender الجنس
(male) ذكر
(female) أنثى

Religion الدين
(Muslim) مسلم
(Christian) مسيحي
(other)آخر

After the initial demographics had been selected, the survey focused on habitation. Here, the research assistants would first explain that this selection should be chosen to represent the type of area where the respondent has spent most of their lives in. Each respondent then makes the estimation themselves.

Question: Where have you spent most of your life?	أين أمضيت معظم حياتك؟ ?
Habitation	مكان الإقامة
In a small village (less than 1000 inhabitants)	في قرية صغيرة (أقل من 1000 نسمة)
In a small town (1000-10 000 inhabitants)	في محافظة صغيرة (1000 الى 10000 نسمة)
In a large town (10 000-100 000 inhabitants)	في محافظة كبيرة (10000 الى 100000 نسمة)
In a city (100 000-300 000 inhabitants)	في مدينة كبيرة (100000 الى 300000 نسمة)
In a large city (300 000- one million inhabitants)	في مدينة كبيرة (300000 نسمة الى مليون)
In a metropolis (more than one million inhabitants)	في العاصمة (مليون فما أكثر)

Next, the respondents would be asked to state whether they are married or unmarried, and their level of finished education at the time. The question regarding education levels could be outlined by the research assistants even though the options themselves are self-explanatory. More specifically, the respondents should select the level they had successfully completed and had a diploma on.

Marital status	الحالة الاجتماعية
Single	أعزب\اء
Married	متزوج\ة

Education level finished	المستوى التعليمي
No education or little	بلا أي مستوى
Elementary level	تعليم اعدادي
Secondary level	تعليم ثانوي
University or college	جامعة أو كلية

The employment status was requested in the same section as the educational level. Respondents would be told that if they were only partially employed, part-time or on a short-term contract, they could nonetheless choose whichever option they personally thought best suited their situation. Those who are students could also choose, which employment status suited them best.

Employment status	الحالة الوظيفية
Employed	أعمل
Unemployed	لا أعمل
Student	طالب\ة

Personal preferences in media

Respondents would be told that in this section, all the answer options for each type of media were the same, so all they were required to do was choose which type of media content they consume the most in each media channel. Both sections utilised radio buttons, and only one option per question could be selected.

Personal preferences in media	خاصة الترفيه Mainly entertainment	خاصة السياسة والمجتمع Mainly politics & society	خاصة الدين Mainly religion	خاصة الرياضة Mainly sports	كل شيء بالتساوي All equally	غير ذلك None of these
الي ماذا تستمع على الراديو What do you listen to on the radio?						
ما هو نوع البرامج التلفزيون التي تفضل What kind of TV-programs do you watch?						
ما هو نوع الكتب التي تقرأ What kind of books do you read?						
ماهي طبيعة الجرائد التي تتابع What kind of news do you read in newspapers?						
ماهي طبيعة المحتوى الذي تفضل على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي What kind of content do you prefer on social media?						

The second preference section dealt with the self-reported importance of the same topic fields in the lives of individuals. These two sections are as close to the respondent's self-assessment of their religiosity without forcing them to assess their preferences publicly or against ready-made, and thus prejudiced from the outset, evaluation metrics.

Self-reported importance of topic fields	غير مهم على الاطلاق Not at all important	مهم بعض الشيء Slightly important	مهم باعتدال Moderately important	مهم جدا Very important	ضروي جدا Extremely important
كم هي أهمية وسائل الترفيه في حياتك How important is entertainment to you in your life?					
كم السياسة مهمة في حياتك How important is politics to you in your life?					
كم الدين مهم في حياتك How important is religion to you in your life?					
كم الرياضة مهمة في حياتك How important is sports to you in your life?					

6.4. Surveying image reactions and values

After the initial background data was collected, the respondents would be told they could now complete the survey, if they so wished, without any assistance and in privacy. The first image of the survey would be used to give instructions. There were also written instructions on the survey.

Respondents would be told that the text would be identical with all pictures and all they needed to do was to choose the option that felt best to them. None of the images have a heading or any text to indicate what topic it dealt with. There are no pre-made categorisations, depictions, or definitions to prepare the ground for the respondent, and the research assistants would be instructed to encourage self-assessment of the respondents. If the respondents have any questions on the self-assessment of pictures and their content, they would be reminded that when consuming any image material, every viewer always makes their own judgements on the context and connotations of the image, sometimes without any outside influence at all.

It was a very conscious choice on my part to begin the survey with a picture of the celebrated Jordanian taekwondo world champion Ahmad Abughaush (Sburat, 8.6.2017). My research assistants used his picture as an example of how to answer the survey. The non-confrontational picture was also well suited to calm down some nervous respondents while it also showed them that the survey responses could not be traced back to any specific respondent in any way.

"Look at the picture. Then answer the questions below."

"أنظر الى هذه الصور وأجب على الأسئلة التي تحت كل صورة ."

Respondents were instructed to indicate their impression of the image on the Likert scale:

"Please select the option that best expresses your view on the picture above. In my opinion this picture is:" *في رأيي هذه الصورة الرجاء اختيار أي من التالي يعبر عن شعورك اتجاه هذه الصورة*

The research assistants would explain the Likert scale to all respondents so that we could be sure they understood how it works. The visible Likert selection values are in written form for the convenience of the respondents, but the actual numeric Likert values were not visible to them.

Written Likert response	Written Likert response in Arabic	Likert value (not visible)
Very negative	سلبي جدا	1
Somewhat negative	سلبي قليلا	2
Don't know / prefer not to say	لا أدري أو أفضل عدم الإجابة	3
Somewhat positive	ايجابي نوع ما	4
Very positive	ايجابي جدا	5

After the respondents assign the image with the value they see as most appropriate, they are advised to choose the reason why they evaluated the image in such a way. If the respondent feels strongly that they cannot pinpoint a background value judgement to their selection or they are afraid to do so for any reason, they could leave it empty. Respondents are also told that if none of the pre-set 10 responses feels applicable in their case, they can choose to write their answer to an open-ended text box. These qualitative value judgements and concepts were not to be analysed numerically on a Likert scale but rather qualitatively as the exact values they represented.

"Please give more details. Did you select this choice because of..."

" الرجاء فسر اجابتك. هل كان خيارك السابق هكذا لأنه..."

The pre-set value options available as radio buttons were:

Visible value (English)	Visible value (Arabic)
Heroism	بطولي
Honour and solidarity	مشرف
Freedom	حرية
Pleasure	متعة
Aesthetic	جمالي
Islamic values	قيم إسلامي
Western values	قيم غربية
Oppression	اضطهاد
Intolerance	تعصب
Dishonour	عار
Other, what?	سبب آخر (ماذا)

6.5. Data collection

I conducted the survey in Jordan because it has the third highest amount of foreign fighters in the world (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2019, p. 69; Speckhard, 2017, p. 9). Approximately 4 000 foreign fighters left Jordan to fight in the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts, and it is one of the primary sources for fighters. The objective of the thesis was to gather information equally from both genders even though the majority of people engaged in terrorist activities fighters are male. Another key component of including both men and women in the study was to see what kind of differences in responses there are, if any, between genders. A major factor in collecting data from both genders was also that women are important influencers and promoters in indoctrinating radical Islamist or Salafi-Jihadi ideologies to the next generations (Weimann, 2016, p. 84); still, even in Jordan, there have been female terrorists.

In this thesis survey, a representative national sample of Jordanian residents (n = 194) were surveyed anonymously: the survey data was collected 12.–19.1.2019 using an online questionnaire which was

introduced a potential respondent by a research assistant via a face-to-face interaction. A respondent used one of the three tablet computers provided by the research assistants to answer the survey.

Procedure of data collection

All respondents were randomly approached in cities and areas I thought best represented the multitudes of different peoples and backgrounds in Jordan. Ensuring that the sample size not only corresponds with the size of the population in Jordan but also represents a large enough number of various subgroups present in the country, I chose the main areas for conducting research in advance based on feedback from my local research assistants. In addition to pre-chosen cities, villages, and other locales, I also decided to make unarranged stops at random areas to make sure our own biases of the best areas of research would not create an avoidable sampling error. The areas were also chosen in such a way that the amount of people residing in each governorate would represent a higher concentration of possible respondents within Jordan. This did not, however, mean that all areas where the survey were conducted were high population density or urban centres as described by The Jordan Department of Statistics (2018).

The research team and I pre-chose areas which would have the highest variability of respondents. In addition, we also considered it important to collect responses from areas where terrorist incidents had taken place in the past 20 years such as Amman and Al-Karak. In the north of Jordan, closest to the challenging Jordan-Syria border area, we pre-chose Irbid, Ajloun, and Jerash as well as the city of Zarqa. In the larger capital area, different locations within the greater Amman municipality were chosen. In central and southern Jordan, the areas within and around the cities of Madaba, Al-Karak and Aqaba were used as bases for the survey. The population within these governorates represents approximately 91.5% of the population of Jordan (Jordan Department of Statistics, 2018). The surveying was timed to both weekdays and weekends, and it was conducted at varying times of day to reach as many different subgroups of respondents as possible.

All the respondents to this survey were volunteers who were offered nothing in return for their participation. No willing respondents were excluded from answering the survey and no replies of participants were rejected in this research. It was important to make sure that even though ethnic or subgroup origin was not specified on the survey questionnaire, a possibility to participate was given to individuals belonging to these subgroups. To maintain a respondent group that was accurately nationally representative of Jordan, the amounts of respondents from each demographic were checked at the midpoint of results-collection to be aware of the numbers; however, this did not affect the data collection procedures in any way. In order to make sure people from all education levels could participate, the questionnaire was translated to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in Jordan. Still, in

order to avoid presumptions about literacy and reading comprehension as well as to avoid possible misunderstandings, all the research assistants were instructed to guide the respondent through the preliminary data collection verbally.

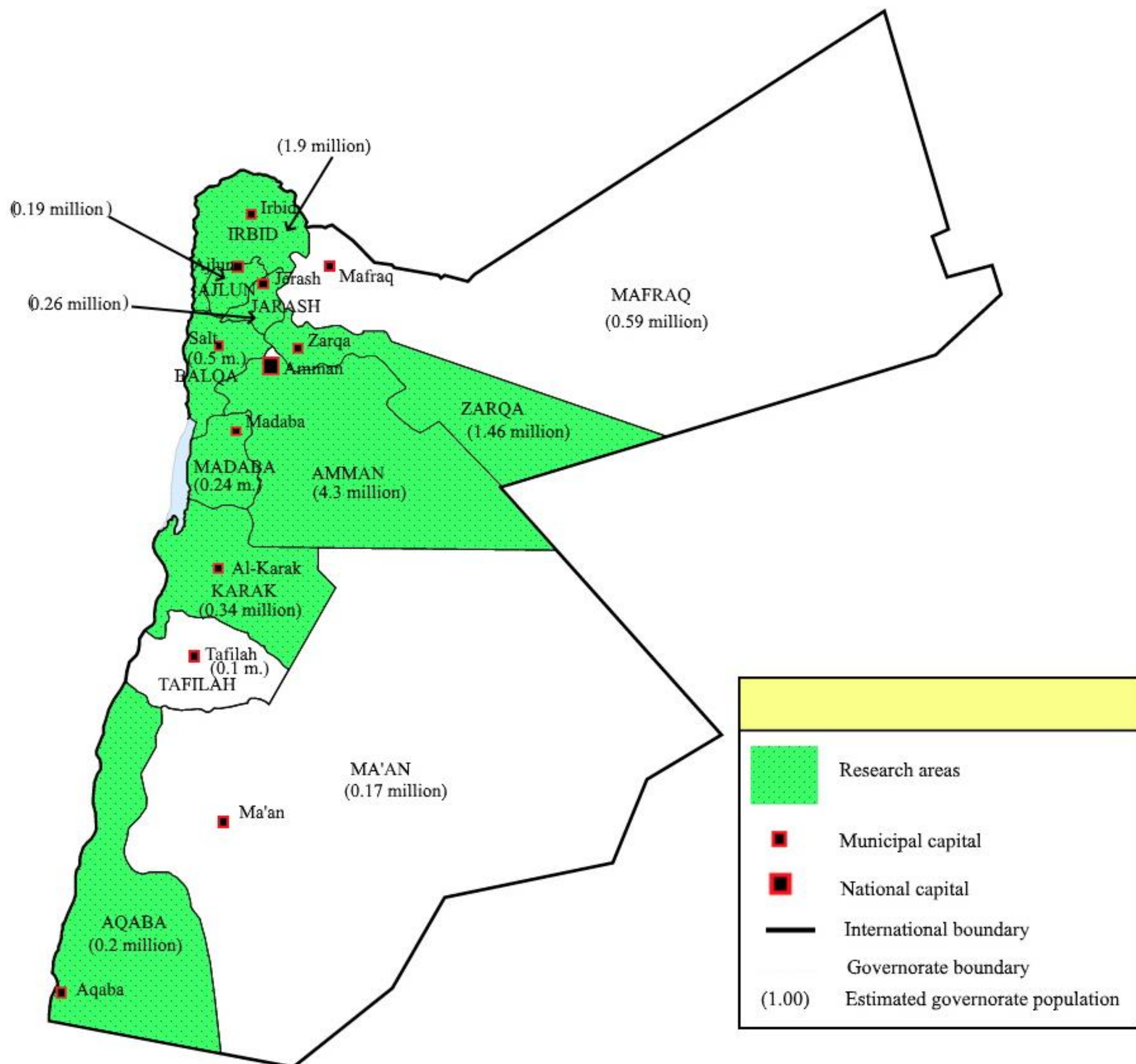

Figure 1 Map of Jordan municipalities, populations, and research areas (Golbez, 2007)

Complications during the survey

In an attempt to avoid acquiescence bias[60] in the respondents, the research assistants had been instructed to avoid priming responses in any way. After background questions and preferences had been answered but before the actual pictorial survey began, all respondents were informed that they

[60] Acquiescence bias is the tendency for people to agree rather than disagree. This happens when a question is posed with unbalanced answers like agree/disagree or yes/no. This type of bias may be due to politeness because people tend to agree (to be polite) unless they have very strong negative feelings about a topic. It also happens when a person defers to a higher authority — like an interviewer, who the interviewee thinks is more knowledgeable or intelligent, or is of a higher social class. Finally, respondents may just want to "get it over with" and "agree" to speed up the process. Faced with a lengthy quiz they do not want to take, people will check "agree" down the block without reading the questions. (Glen, 2016).

should simply try to react to whatever they felt or thought the picture represented. Whenever the respondents inquired what a specific picture dealt with, the assistants informed them that the more they informed the respondent about the specifics of the picture, the more they influenced the response. Despite this, there were a few instances where either the research assistant was compelled to assist some respondents by giving them a general overview of the picture before they felt able to answer.

Another expected issue was the inherent communality of respondents. Many respondents who agreed to participate were a part of a group of 2–11 people, meaning that the confidentiality of individual responses was at least partially jeopardised. In a few instances, the surrounding group members also interfered by making interjections and suggestions to the respondent; it is possible this may have affected some results. I had instructed the research assistants to gently tell the rest of these groups that they should avoid influencing the answers of the respondent. Same guidance was given if the respondent asked their group for clarification on what a specific picture portrayed. However, in order to ensure that the respondents continued with the survey, it was sometimes necessary to accept that total confidentiality of replies was forfeited by the respondents themselves if they allowed other people to view their responses to the survey questions. Fortunately, in some cases, this communal curiosity into other people's responses created a ripple effect, after which several other members of the same group indicated their willingness to reply to the questionnaire. As my assistants had three tablet computers in their disposal, it was possible for several people to answer the survey simultaneously, which in of itself also decreased the likelihood of influencing the replies of the other. Also, none of the respondents claimed to have been coerced to reply in a specific way so all viable responses were taken into consideration.

I had identified safety issues of both respondents and my research group as something that had to be addressed beforehand. Since I knew the strict anti-terrorism legislation in Jordan, it was important that in all sections of the survey, respondents knew they had an option of refraining from answering any part of the questionnaire, including background information such as age and gender. Many respondents remarked that they were concerned for their safety and well-being after answering the survey even though they were assured that their answers could not be traced back to them. If any respondents expressed these concerns before filling in the survey, my research assistants informed them that they could leave any section empty should they so choose.

6.6. Ethical discussion

All survey participants gave their oral consent to the survey and were voluntary participants in the survey. They were informed in advance that their replies are completely anonymous and cannot be

traced back to them in any way or at any time. Participants were told that they should attempt to answer every question but that they always had the option of moving to the next section without answering.

Due to the sensitivity of the actual research topic and wide varieties of upset it would undoubtedly cause, both the hired assistants and the respondents were informed that the survey studies the effects of personal backgrounds and preferences on media consumption and value-based judgements of visual data. This, in essence, is the actual research question but described with a wider perspective.

Before I departed for Jordan, I discussed the ethical issue of obscuring the actual focus of my research from the participants and my assistants with several professors. It was agreed that due to the sensitivity of the topic and safety concerns if we happened to arouse suspicion in the wrong people made it acceptable to obscure the specific focus of my current thesis. After all, the survey was done openly all around Jordan, also in places where there are known Salafi-Jihadist hotspots; I had to be very sure no one's safety was in jeopardy because we attracted the attention of local fighters who wanted to make an example of us. In addition, in order to get actual, correct data with as little bias as possible, it was deemed acceptable to give the wider description of the objectives of the survey to the participants.

7. Analysis of survey data

The data gathered was deposited on the E-lomake -system provided by Helsinki University. Data analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software. In order to examine the possible predictors for viewing agitational Salafi-Jihadi images favourably, all the collected individual-level predictors (age, gender, religion, habitation, marital status, education and employment status) were cross-referenced with each other to find notable similarities or differences.

7.1. Demographic result analysis

The results gathered produced both qualitative and quantitative data. In total, there were 194 replies to the survey. At the time of conducting the survey, the population size of the Kingdom of Jordan was 9.5 million (United Nations Jordan, 2019). The response sample is representative of the whole population of Jordan. Based on the size of the total population of 9.5 million Jordanians, the responses of 194 individuals equals a margin of error of 5.9%, and a confidence level of 90%.

Respondents by gender and age

According to the United Nations (2019), the population of Jordan is very young; more than 70% of Jordanians are under the age of 30. The median age in Jordan in 2015 was 22.1 years and is estimated

to be 23.2 in 2020 (Statista.org, 2019). The ages surveyed in specific age groups do not precisely represent their exact age cohort volumes in Jordan; however, the total percentage of survey respondents under the age of 30 was 66.5%, which coincides with the Jordanian age demographics of under 30-year-olds. According to the Jordanian Department of Statistics (2018), the gender ratio is 52.9% males, 48.1% females. Compared to this, the gender distribution in the survey results shows a fair representation of the Jordanian population; 56.5% of respondents were male, 43.5% female.

Age & Gender of respondents				
	males in population in Jordan	**females in population in Jordan**	**Survey respondents male (of total *n= 191*)**	**Survey respondents female (of total *n= 191*)**
total population in 2018	**5 458 000** (52.9%)	**4 851 000** (48.1%)	**108** (56.5%)	**83** (43.5%)
15–24 years	**1 114 783** (16.2% of total)	**975 086** (14.2% of total)	**49** (45.4% of males) [61]	**32** (38.6% of females)
25 years and over CIA (**2015**)	**2 571 105** (37.3% of total)	**2 226 572** (32.3% of total)	**59** (54.6% of males)	**51** (61.4% of females)
younger than 30 years	**≥70%**		**75** (69.4% of males)	**52** (62.7% of females)
30 years and over	**≤30%**		**33** (30.6% of males)	**31** (37.3% of total)

As the younger age cohorts (15–24 years) were expected to exhibit more variability in their behaviour and their value expressions, and they have a more pronounced susceptibility to propaganda, the age distribution in the survey responses is not problematic. Rather, the larger number of responses from the ‘at risk’ age cohorts accentuates the results and gives credence to them. When compared to the percentages of over 30-year-olds in Jordan, the survey total fairly represents the official statistics.

Respondents by religion

In 2010, the CIA (2015) estimated that 97.2% of Jordanians are Muslims (mainly Sunni) whereas Christians in Jordan comprise 2.2% of the population. The respondents of the survey informed us that 81.7% identified themselves as Muslims, 6.8% as Christians, and 11.5% identified their religious status as “Other”. The large amount of people identifying themselves as “Other” is partly explained through some of the comments made during the survey: some respondents did not want to be identified as representatives of a specific religion, some chose “Other” because they felt they did not have a religion, or that they did not identify as either of the two major religions provided.

When studying those 6.8% who identified their religious status as “Other”, 95.5% were 23–35 years of age and the majority (77.2%) were men. A total of 88.2% of these respondents had lived most of their lives in a metropolis with over one million inhabitants. Of the 11.5% who identified themselves as Christians, a total of 84.6% were male, and 15.4% were female. The majority of Christian men

[61] Since the age cohorts I had designated were grouped differently, here, half of male age group 23–26yrs were calculated into this (half of the total of 24). Similarly with the female group, where half of 23–26yrs were calculated into this (half of the total of 16).

were 15–18-year-olds (45.5%) and over 30-year-olds (45.5%). With Christian women, a majority were 27–35-year-olds. Most Christian respondents had lived a significant part of their lives in large towns, cities, or metropolises with 10,000– ≥1,000,000 inhabitants.[62]

Habitation of respondents

Most respondent men and women had lived a significant part of their lives in the metropolis of Amman where there are 2 148 000 inhabitants.

			Habitation - Where have you lived most of your life?						
			city	large city	large town	metropolis	small town	village	Total
Female	Age	15-18	1,2%	1,2%	1,2%	3,6%	2,4%		9,6%
		19-22		1,2%	6,0%	6,0%	1,2%	4,8%	19,3%
		23-26	1,2%		6,0%	7,2%	3,6%	1,2%	19,3%
		27-30	1,2%		2,4%	10,8%			14,5%
		31-35			4,8%	9,6%	1,2%	1,2%	16,9%
		35+	2,4%	1,2%	3,6%	8,4%	2,4%	2,4%	20,5%
	Total		**6,0%**	**3,6%**	**24,1%**	**45,8%**	**10,8%**	**9,6%**	**100,0%**
Male	Age	15-18	3,7%	3,7%	5,6%	3,7%	1,9%		18,5%
		19-22	2,8%	2,8%	3,7%	1,9%	1,9%	2,8%	15,7%
		23-26	3,7%	0,9%	3,7%	9,3%	4,6%		22,2%
		27-30	0,9%	1,9%	2,8%	6,5%	0,9%		13,0%
		31-35	4,6%		1,9%	11,1%	3,7%		21,3%
		35+		1,9%	2,8%	1,9%		2,8%	9,3%
	Total		**15,7%**	**11,1%**	**20,4%**	**34,3%**	**13,0%**	**5,6%**	**100,0%**
Total	Age	15-18	2,6%	2,6%	3,7%	3,7%	2,1%		14,7%
		19-22	1,6%	2,1%	4,7%	3,7%	1,6%	3,7%	17,3%
		23-26	2,6%	0,5%	4,7%	8,4%	4,2%	0,5%	20,9%
		27-30	1,0%	1,0%	2,6%	8,4%	0,5%		13,6%
		31-35	2,6%		3,1%	10,5%	2,6%	0,5%	19,4%
		35+	1,0%	1,6%	3,1%	4,7%	1,0%	2,6%	14,1%
	Total		**11,5%**	**7,9%**	**22,0%**	**39,3%**	**12,0%**	**7,3%**	**100,0%**

Only 3.6% of women and 11.1% of men said they live in a large city such as Irbid (557 000 inhabitants) or Zarqa (729 000 inhabitants). (Macrotrends, 2020). This means that beyond those living in the metropolis of Amman, the rest of the respondents lived in smaller urban or rural areas around these large centres.

Education level and employment of respondents

Only 4.1% of respondents said they had only graduated from elementary school, whereas 27.8% had a secondary school diploma, and 67% of the respondents told us they have a university education. Those with only an elementary school diploma were all 15–22 years old, meaning that some of them most likely hadn't yet finished their secondary school studies. Most university educated respondents had lived most of their lives in a metropolis (58%) or in a large town (21.9%) whereas most respondents with a secondary school diploma had lived most of their lives in smaller and more rural areas: village (16.3%), small town (16.3%), large town (23.6%), and city (18.1%).

[62] Exact statistics of Muslim respondents is not detailed here because they present the majority of the respondents.

Both Christians and Muslims respondents had an equal amount of university diplomas (61.5% and 63.4%, respectively). Those who identified their religion as 'Other' had almost exclusively a university diploma (95.5%). The rising number of women in higher education can be seen in the survey results: 19.2% of women and 36.1% had a secondary school diploma, whereas 78.3% of women and 58.3% of men had a university diploma.

Out of all respondents (n=191), 19.9% identified themselves as students, 61.3% as employed, and 18.8% as unemployed. Women, rather than men, were more often unemployed (80.6% and 19.4%, respectively). There was no clear correlation between a specific age cohort and greater unemployment in either gender.

7.2. Demographics and media usage analysis

When respondents were asked about which media they used and for which type of content, the most commonly consumed media platform was, as expect, social media. People who had lived most of their lives in large towns (10 000–100 000 inhabitants) or in a metropolis like Amman used the more unpopular media sources like the radio and books more often than others.

Radio

Most commonly, respondents said they use the radio for entertainment-related content: across all ages, 42.4% of respondents (45% women, 39% men) listen to the radio for entertainment purposes. Men aged 15–18 and 19–22 with 5.5% of all respondents were the only ones to use the radio to listen to sports-related content. Politics and society-related content on the radio appeals to only 13% of the respondents equally across both genders and all age cohorts. Only very few, 4.2%, listen to religion-related content on the radio; however, almost all of these listeners were men of all ages. A total of 23.6% of all respondents did not listen to the radio at all. When compared to the use of people from other habitation backgrounds, respondents of large towns and metropolises used the radio most, especially when listening to religious programmes (7.1% and 4%, respectively) and entertainment (38% and 53%, respectively). Even then, the use of the radio was low compared to other medias.

Television programmes

Similarly to radio users, most respondents replied that they use television mainly for entertainment-related content. Across all age cohorts and both genders, 40.3% watch television almost exclusively because of entertainment. Out of the 9.4% watching television for sports-related content, men make up 89% of these viewers across all age cohorts. Politics and society-related content has a slightly wider audience on television, even though only 10.5% watch such programmes. Here, men are more likely to watch politics and society-related content than women with 65% and 35% shares,

respectively. Religious content on television is clearly set apart from others: only 2.6% of the respondents said they mainly watch religion-related content on television. Of those few who mainly watch religious programmes on television, none of the respondents from the age cohorts of 23–26 and 27–30 watch religious programmes. A total of 16.8% do not watch television for any reasons.

Books

A significant 47.6% of the respondents claim they do not read books for any given reason. Those who read books do it mainly for entertainment (16.2%) or for various kinds of reasons (14.6%). Despite the low numbers of interest in books, both genders and all age cohorts consumed near equal amounts of all literature apart from politics and society-related as well as religion-related books. Of men aged 23–34, a total of 77.8% said they mainly read politics and society-related literature. With religion-related books, 68.4% of men in all age cohorts reported reading mainly religion-related literature, whereas the few instances reported by women coincided in age cohorts 19–22 years (15.7%) and 35+ years (15.7%). When compared according to habitation backgrounds, respondents from large towns and metropolises read the most books, especially those concentrating on politics and society (7.1% and 14.6%, respectively). The interest in religion-related books above other themes was relatively high in all habitation backgrounds: it was highest in villages with less than 1000 inhabitants (21.4% of all topics), lowest in metropolises (2.6%), and otherwise equal (~13.5%) in all other locations.

Newspapers

As with books, the majority of respondents, 57%, did not read newspapers for any reason at all. Those who reported reading newspapers used them mainly for politics and society-related content (20.9%). All age cohorts except those over 35 years read the newspapers mainly for entertainment (women 81.8%, men 18.2%) and for sports (women 36.3%, men 63.6%). No respondent said they read the newspapers for religion-related material. Of all topics, politics and society had most readers in metropolises (29.3% of all topics), small villages (21.4%), and cities (18.1%).

Social media

Almost all respondents identified social media as the main source of media use in their lives; only 11% (of whom 33.3% were women, 66.6% men) across all age cohorts claimed they do not use social media at all. This emphasises the importance of the UN Women survey in Jordan (2016, pp. 21-22), in which 31% of Jordanians, the highest percentage in the study, said they would trust social media to validify controversial religious ideas. In my survey, most often social media was used for all types of media content (35%) especially between ages 19–34 across both genders. Second most common use of social media was with entertainment-related content: 31.9% of men and women of all age cohorts use social media for entertainment purposes. Politics and society -related content interested

only 14.1% of all respondents but once again, men of all ages (66.7%) consumed more politics and society -related content when compared with women. Religion-related material on social media appealed only to 2.1% of the respondents, mainly to men (75% of responses). Of all topics, politics and society had most followers on social media in cities (27.2% of all topics), large towns (21.4%), and villages (14.2%). Very few admitted to following social media to watch mainly religion-related content: the highest percentage 13.3% was in large cities but these were mainly women over 35 years of age. More interestingly, 4.3% of 15–18-year-old males living in small towns admitted to using social media mainly for religion-related content.

7.3. Analysis on the importance of societal themes in personal lives

The personal values and interests of Jordanians come through in the analysis of the same themes that were a part of the media usage questions. Those with habitation history especially in a metropolis such as Amman were more likely to be disinterested in religion, whereas those living in large cities such as Irbid and Zarqa were most interested in both politics and societal issues as well as religion.

Entertainment and sports

Entertainment and sports as over-all themes were most important to 19–26-year-old men. Of these 19–26-year-old men, 26% found entertainment extremely important, whereas only 12% of women found it extremely important. Entertainment was especially important to men living in metropolitan areas: 30.7% of men living in metropolis areas saw entertainment as very or extremely important in their lives. The most avid sports fans were men, of which 68.3% saw sports as either very or extremely important in their lives. The 15–26-year-olds were most keen on sports regardless of where they lived.

Politics and society

Politics and society issues were mostly rated as unimportant and only 18.2% of all respondents saw it as either very or extremely important to them; 27.1% rated it not important at all. Most interested in politics and societal topics were men living in large cities as 25% of them thought the topic is either very or extremely important to them. In women, most interested in politics were the 19–22-year-olds living in villages as 66.7% of them saw politics and society issues as extremely important to them. Most disinterested in politics were 19–26-year-old men and women from all habitation backgrounds.

Religion

Religion as a theme was most very or extremely important to 61.1% of men (n=108) and 57.8% of women (n=83). In total, 57.1% of all women saw religion as very or extremely important to them. Personal importance was very high or extremely high to men in large cities and villages (both 83.3%) and large towns (77.2%). With women, religion was very or extremely important in villages, small

towns, and large cities (100%) and clearly lower elsewhere, for example, in metropolises (36.8%). The age cohorts to whom religion is most important were clearly the younger generations such as the 15–18-year-olds (92.9%) and the 19–22-year-olds (84.8%). With 23–26-year-olds, religion was most unimportant to 42.5% of the entire age cohort, when out of the entire respondent sample (n=191) across all ages and genders, 19.4% said religion was not important to them at all. Most disinterest was reported in metropolis areas where 45.3% of respondents (n=75) who had lived long in metropolises reported they are not interested in religion at all.

7.4. Analysis of Salafi-Jihadist propaganda imagery

I will use analyse any visible frequencies of demographic details, media usage information, and the relative importance of societal themes in the appraisal of Salafi-Jihadist propaganda images. I will compare the frequencies seen in image responses to those collected from the entire survey population (n=194). I will then determine if there are any indications of correlation or even causation in how the images are appraised and evaluated to the demographical background details.

7.4.1. Salafi-Jihadist rebel militant soldiers on the frontline

The image of three masked Salafi-Jihadist men with guns and ammunition showing tawhid[63] (Arnett, 18.11.2014) was the fifth picture in the survey. It followed four pictures with both religious and non-religious imagery: first, the picture of the Jordanian taekwondo world champion Ahmad Abughaush after his victory, then a picture of two older women in niqabs voting in the Jordanian parliamentary elections 2016. The third image depicted the Egyptian actress Rania Youssef in her controversial dress at the Cairo Film Festival in 2018 which caused an uproar in traditionalist Muslim circles. The picture preceding the Salafi-Jihadist militia was of a crowd of men standing in front of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem peacefully demonstrating the loss of their loved ones.

General image appreciation results

In total, 87.6% of respondents viewed the image as somewhat or very negative (83.3% of women and 90.5% of men, respectively). Those who viewed the image as somewhat or very positive (n=8) totalled 4.3% of all respondents (of all women, 5.0% somewhat positively, none very positively; of all men, 0.9% somewhat positively, 2.8% very positively). In men, only those aged 19–22 and 23–26 years saw the image as very positive: 5.9% of the men aged 19–22 and 8.3% of men aged 23–26 years. Also, men aged 23–26 were divided at opposite ends of the spectrum and rated the image as either very negative or very positive.

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[63] sign of tawhid = index finger raised toward the sky

Thesis image 5: Isis rebel militant soldiers on the frontline (Arnett, 18.11.2014).

None of the female respondents rated the image as very positive but compared to men, more women of different age cohorts viewed it as somewhat positive. The percentages were clearly highest, almost triple those of men, at ages 15–18 and 19–22 years (16.7%, and 12.5% of age cohorts, respectively). Differently to men, also women aged 31–34 rated the image as somewhat positive (7.1% of the age cohort) whereas none of the men over the age of 26 rated the image as anyway positive.

Positive image appreciation: results and demographics

Out of all those who rated the image as positive, 87.5% were between the ages of 15 and 26. Those who rated the image positively (n=8) were 87.5% Muslim, the rest did not want to state their religious affiliation. Habitation-wise, 25% had spent most of their lives in a metropolis, but the rest had lived in smaller communities such as villages, small or large towns (25%, 37.5%, and 12.5%, respectively). Almost all were single, and nearly two thirds were employed (62.5%).

Those who rated the image as somewhat or very positive associated said it represented freedom (both men and women 25% each), heroism (12.5% of women, none of men), and Western values (both men and women 12.5% each). The rest of the men saw the image as representing an aesthetic value to them. None of those who rated the image in positive terms associated any negative value judgements or themes to the picture.

N=186			Salafi-Jihadist rebel militant soldiers on the frontline (image 5)					
			Very negative	Some-what negative	Don't know / prefer not to say	Some-what positive	Very positive	Total
Female	15-18	% within Age	66,7%	16,7%		16,7%		100,0%
		% of Total	5,0%	1,3%		1,3%		7,5%
	19-22	% within Age	81,3%		6,3%	12,5%		100,0%
		% of Total	16,3%		1,3%	2,5%		20,0%
	23-26	% within Age	50,0%	12,5%	37,5%			100,0%
		% of Total	10,0%	2,5%	7,5%			20,0%
	27-30	% within Age	75,0%	8,3%	16,7%			100,0%
		% of Total	11,3%	1,3%	2,5%			15,0%
	31-34	% within Age	69,2%	23,1%		7,7%		100,0%
		% of Total	11,3%	3,8%		1,3%		16,3%
	35+	% within Age	94,1%	5,9%				100,0%
		% of Total	20,0%	1,3%				21,3%
	Total	**% within gender**	**73,8%**	**10,0%**	**11,3%**	**5,0%**		**100,0%**
		% of Total	**73,8%**	**10,0%**	**11,3%**	**5,0%**		**100,0%**
Male	15-18	% within Age	89,5%		10,5%			100,0%
		% of Total	16,0%		1,9%			17,9%
	19-22	% within Age	70,6%	11,8%	5,9%	5,9%	5,9%	100,0%
		% of Total	11,3%	1,9%	0,9%	0,9%	0,9%	16,0%
	23-26	% within Age	91,7%				8,3%	100,0%
		% of Total	20,8%				1,9%	22,6%
	27-30	% within Age	92,9%		7,1%			100,0%
		% of Total	12,3%		0,9%			13,2%
	31-34	% within Age	91,3%	4,3%	4,3%			100,0%
		% of Total	19,8%	0,9%	0,9%			21,7%
	35+	% within Age	66,7%	22,2%	11,1%			100,0%
		% of Total	5,7%	1,9%	0,9%			8,5%
	Total	**% within gender**	**85,8%**	**4,7%**	**5,7%**	**0,9%**	**2,8%**	**100,0%**
		% of Total	**85,8%**	**4,7%**	**5,7%**	**0,9%**	**2,8%**	**100,0%**
Total	15-18	% within Age	84,0%	4,0%	8,0%	4,0%		100,0%
		% of Total	11,3%	0,5%	1,1%	0,5%		13,4%
	19-22	% within Age	75,8%	6,1%	6,1%	9,1%	3,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	13,4%	1,1%	1,1%	1,6%	0,5%	17,7%
	23-26	% within Age	75,0%	5,0%	15,0%		5,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	16,1%	1,1%	3,2%		1,1%	21,5%
	27-30	% within Age	84,6%	3,8%	11,5%			100,0%
		% of Total	11,8%	0,5%	1,6%			14,0%
	31-34	% within Age	83,3%	11,1%	2,8%	2,8%		100,0%
		% of Total	16,1%	2,2%	0,5%	0,5%		19,4%
	35+	% within Age	84,6%	11,5%	3,8%			100,0%
		% of Total	11,8%	1,6%	0,5%			14,0%
	Total	**% within gender**	**80,6%**	**7,0%**	**8,1%**	**2,7%**	**1,6%**	**100,0%**
		% of Total	**80,6%**	**7,0%**	**8,1%**	**2,7%**	**1,6%**	**100,0%**

With media use, out of all respondents with positive views of the image, half reported they do not listen to the radio or watch television at all. Among these respondents, books were mostly used for politics and societal issues or equally for all purposes (12.5% and 25%, respectively) whereas 62.5% do not read newspapers at all. Only 12.5% said they do not use any social media at all. Mostly (37.5%) respondents said they use social media mainly to follow politics and societal issues, and 25% claimed to use social media for all topics (entertainment, politics and social issues, religion, sports) equally.

When asked about the importance of certain themes in their lives, only 12.5% of men were interested in politics and social issues in any way whereas 25% of women (all aged 19–22) claimed they were somewhat or very interested in these themes. Religion was very or extremely important to 62.5% of the respondents but not important at all to 25% (all of whom were men).

Demographics of negative value judgements or themes associated with image

When respondents were asked to identify their view on the image, out of all respondents(n=186), 45.9% of men and women together said the image represented intolerance, 18.6% said it represented dishonour, and 8.8% said it represents oppression. None of the respondents said they associate the image with honour and solidarity or pleasure. More women viewed the image as representing intolerance than men (53% and 41.7%, respectively). Age differences in opinions varied most among 15–18-year-olds and those over 35 years: whereas 62.5% of 15–18-year-old women and 64.7% of women over 35 years chose intolerance as their assessment, only 35% of 15–18-year-old men and 20% of men over 35 years chose this option.

Demographics of positive value associations such as freedom or heroism

There were those who associated more positive values or themes[64] to the image (n=16): in total, 6.7% (6.5% men, 7.2% women) said the image represents freedom and a total of 1.0% said it represents heroism to them. Despite linking a positive value or word association to the image, 46.6% of this specific group still rated the image as very or somewhat negative on the Likert scale. Over a third (33.4%) rated the image as somewhat or very positive; women were twice more likely to say they found the image somewhat positive compared to men whose responses were the same in both categories (6.7% respectively). A few men aged 23–26 years thought the image appealed to them aesthetically: these respondents had lived most of their lives in small towns, they were single, university educated and employed, and used media only for entertainment purposes. A total of 7.2% of the respondents chose not to identify their views at all.

In all age cohorts, men and women also associated freedom with the image: the numbers were highest with 19–22 and 23–26-year-olds where approximately 12% of the age cohorts assigned this positive value to the image. Almost half (46.2%) of these respondents had lived most of their lives in a large town, but 15.4% had spent their lives in villages and similarly, in a metropolis. Approximately a fifth were married (23.1%) and most of them were women. Only 7.7% had only an elementary education, whereas the rest of the respondents had either a secondary or a university degree (46.2%, respectively). Those who were either students or unemployed represented of the respondents totalled a third of this group (15.4% respectively).

[64] I categorise heroism, honour and solidarity, freedom, pleasure, and aesthetics as universally positive values.

Salafi-Jihadist rebel militant soldiers on the frontline (image 5) (n=191)											
Age	Values & concepts	Heroism		Honour and solidarity		Freedom		Pleasure		Aesthetic	
		males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females
15–18	% within age % of total image					5.0% 0.9%					
19–22	% within age % of total image	5.9% 0.9%	6.3% 1.2%			11.8% 1.9%	12.5% 2.4%				
23–26	% within age % of total image					12.5% 2.8%	12.5% 2.4%			4.2% 0.5%	
27–30	% within age % of total image					7.1% 0.9%	8.3% 1.2%				
31–34	% within age % of total image						7.1% 1.2%				
35+	% within age % of total image										
Total	% of total image	0.9%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	7.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%

Media use and personal preferences among those with positive associations to the image

Those who linked any positive themes or values to this image (n=16) preferred social media the most: only 12.5% said they do not use any social media at all. Over a third (37.5%) said they use social media mainly for entertainment purposes but the same number (37.5%) follows all topics (entertainment, politics and social issues, religion, sports) equally. Politics and society issues interested 12.5% of the respondents (all women). With other media sources, 62.5% reported they do not listen to the radio at all, 43.8% do not watch television at all, 62.5% do not read books, and 81.3% do not read newspapers at all. Consumption of religious content on the radio was limited to only to men aged 23–26 years (12.5% of their entire age cohort); similarly, reading of mainly religious books was confined to men aged 15–18 years (25% of their age cohort). With books, those reading mainly religious content were all 27–30-year-old men. No one reported using social media to consume mainly religion-themed content.

Politics and social issues were not important at all in the lives of 53.8% of these respondents, more so with men (38.5%) than women (15.4%). Women who associated freedom with the image claimed politics and social issues are moderately important or very important to 30.8% of them (23.1% and 7.7%, respectively). Only 7.7% of all men claimed the topic moderately important to them, and only in age cohorts 23–30 years of age. In women, the most importance to politics and social issues was with 19–30-year-old women. Religion was very or extremely important to 69.3% of respondents, all of whom were Muslims, claiming the image represents freedom to them, whereas only 7.7% claimed religion is not important to them at all.

The only ones to associate the value or judgement behind their evaluation as heroism were men and women aged 19–22 years: 6.3% of women and 5.9% of men in their age cohort associated the image with a very positive connotation. Religion was extremely important to all these respondents, but

politics and social issues were exactly the opposite to them. They all also claimed that they follow all themes on social media equally.

Salafi-Jihadist rebel militant soldiers on the frontline (image 5) (n=187)											
	Values & concepts	Islamic values		Western values		Oppression		Intolerance		Dishonour	
Age		males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females
15–18	% within age	10.0%		10.0%	12.5%	20.0%		35.0%	62.5%	15.0%	
	% of total image	1.9%		1.9%	1.2%	3.7%		6.5%	6.0%	2.8%	
19–22	% within age	5.9%		11.8%	6.3%		12.5%	35.3%	43.8%	23.5%	19.2%
	% of total image	0.9%		1.9%	1.2%		2.4%	5.6%	8.4%	3.7%	2.4%
23–26	% within age	8.3%		8.3%		8.3%		54.2%	50.0%	4.2%	6.3%
	% of total image	1.9%		1.9%		1.9%		12.0%	9.6%	0.9%	1.2%
27–30	% within age			7.1%		14.3%	16.7%	35.7%	41.7%	35.7%	33.3%
	% of total image			0.9%		1.9%	2.4%	4.6%	6.0%	4.6%	4.8%
31–34	% within age	13.0%		4.3%	7.1%	4.3%	7.1%	52.2%	57.1%	26.1%	21.4%
	% of total image	2.8%		0.9%	1.2%	0.9%	1.2%	11.1%	9.6%	5.6%	3.6%
35+	% within age	10.0%		10.0%		10.0%	11.8%	20.0%	64.7%	30.0%	23.5%
	% of total image	0.9%		0.9%		0.9%	2.4%	1.9%	13.3%	2.8%	4.8%
Total	% of total image	8.3%	0.0%	8.3%	3.6%	9.3%	8.4%	41.7%	53.0%	20.4%	16.9%

Demographics of cultural associations such as Western or Islamic values

Interestingly, 6.7% of all respondents said the image represents Western values whereas an almost similar number, 4.6% respectively, said it represents Islamic values to them. Those who saw the image representing Western values (n=12) were all Muslims (with 75% men and 25% women) and came, in similar percentages, from all types of habitation backgrounds. Only men with 8.3% of all respondents who associated Western values to the image rated the image as very positive; these men were aged 19–22 years. All women who associated Western values to the image rated it as very negative; also, none of the women claimed any interest in politics and social issues whereas 25% of the men said these themes are very or extremely important to them. Religion, though, was very or extremely important to 83.3% of these respondents. Reversely, all those who saw the image representing Islamic values rated the image as very negative; 77.8% of these respondents were Muslims, 11.1% Christians.

7.4.2. Kalashnikov and the Qur'an

The image of a Kalashnikov rifle lying on a sofa next to the Qur'an was the tenth picture in the survey (Dreuz.info, 13.1.2018). It followed four pictures, the first one of which was a picture of a the television show "Project Runway Middle East (Fathy, 7.11.2017) with a male designer and two women in non-Islamic dresses standing behind him. The image following was a picture of two Palestinian girls reading the Qur'an in hijabs (Welt, 6.8.2018), and afterwards, an image of the famous footballer Mohamed Salah kneeling after a goal with his index fingers and face raised to the sky (Ramdani, 25.2.2018). The image just preceding the Kalashnikov and the Qur'an picture was a popular image circulating widely on social media a year before: it showed a young woman sitting on

another person’s shoulders, a keffiyeh scarf around her, fist raised and addressing a large crowd around her through a megaphone during the protests in Jordan in summer 2018 (Darwish, 3.6.2018).

Thesis image 10: Quran and a Kalashnikov (Dreuz.info, 13.1.2018).

Image appreciation results

In total, 65.3% of all respondents (n=187) viewed the image as somewhat or very negative (76.5% of women and 56.6% of men, respectively). Those who viewed the image as somewhat or very positive (n=33) totalled at 17.7% of all respondents (of all women, 2.5% somewhat positively, 6.2% very positively; of all men, 10.4% somewhat positively, 14.2% very positively). In men, especially those aged 15–26 years saw the image as very positive (25% of the 15–18-years male cohort, 18.8% of the 19–22-years male cohort, and 16.7% in the 23–26-years male cohort). With women, only those aged 15–22 years and those over 35 years attached positive views to this image: 14.3% of those women aged 15–18 years, 6.3% of women aged 19–22, and 17.6% of women aged over 35 rated the image as very positive. Still, whereas women aged 23–34 rated it exclusively as negative, men in all age cohorts rated the image as very positive with varying percentages. Women aged 15–18 exclusively chose only opposite ends of the spectrum: either very negative or very positive ratings were given. There were also many more of those among both genders who rated the image as somewhat positive: 6.3% of women aged 19–22 said the image was somewhat positive, but the amount with men of similar age (25% of the age cohort) was nearly four times larger. Similar quadrupled results can be

seen with age cohort of those over 35 years: 5.9% of the women of that age cohort but 20% of men of that age cohort saw the image as somewhat positive.

The Qur'an and a Kalashnikov (image 10)								
N=187			Very negative	Some-what negative	Don't know / prefer not to say	Some-what positive	Very positive	Total
Female	15-18	% within Age	85,7%				14,3%	100,0%
		% of Total	7,4%				1,2%	8,6%
	19-22	% within Age	62,5%	6,3%	18,8%	6,3%	6,3%	100,0%
		% of Total	12,3%	1,2%	3,7%	1,2%	1,2%	19,8%
	23-26	% within Age	53,3%	13,3%	33,3%			100,0%
		% of Total	9,9%	2,5%	6,2%			18,5%
	27-30	% within Age	58,3%	16,7%	25,0%			100,0%
		% of Total	8,6%	2,5%	3,7%			14,8%
	31-34	% within Age	64,3%	35,7%				100,0%
		% of Total	11,1%	6,2%				17,3%
	35+	% within Age	58,8%	11,8%	5,9%	5,9%	17,6%	100,0%
		% of Total	12,3%	2,5%	1,2%	1,2%	3,7%	21,0%
	Total	**% within Age**	**61,7%**	**14,8%**	**14,8%**	**2,5%**	**6,2%**	**100,0%**
		% of Total	**61,7%**	**14,8%**	**14,8%**	**2,5%**	**6,2%**	**100,0%**
Male	15-18	% within Age	40,0%	10,0%	15,0%	10,0%	25,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	7,5%	1,9%	2,8%	1,9%	4,7%	18,9%
	19-22	% within Age	31,3%	6,3%	18,8%	25,0%	18,8%	100,0%
		% of Total	4,7%	0,9%	2,8%	3,8%	2,8%	15,1%
	23-26	% within Age	50,0%	8,3%	16,7%	8,3%	16,7%	100,0%
		% of Total	11,3%	1,9%	3,8%	1,9%	3,8%	22,6%
	27-30	% within Age	50,0%	21,4%	14,3%	7,1%	7,1%	100,0%
		% of Total	6,6%	2,8%	1,9%	0,9%	0,9%	13,2%
	31-34	% within Age	63,6%	4,5%	27,3%		4,5%	100,0%
		% of Total	13,2%	0,9%	5,7%		0,9%	20,8%
	35+	% within Age	40,0%	10,0%	20,0%	20,0%	10,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	3,8%	0,9%	1,9%	1,9%	0,9%	9,4%
	Total	**% within Age**	**47,2%**	**9,4%**	**18,9%**	**10,4%**	**14,2%**	**100,0%**
		% of Total	**47,2%**	**9,4%**	**18,9%**	**10,4%**	**14,2%**	**100,0%**
Total	15-18	% within Age	51,9%	7,4%	11,1%	7,4%	22,2%	100,0%
		% of Total	7,5%	1,1%	1,6%	1,1%	3,2%	14,4%
	19-22	% within Age	46,9%	6,3%	18,8%	15,6%	12,5%	100,0%
		% of Total	8,0%	1,1%	3,2%	2,7%	2,1%	17,1%
	23-26	% within Age	51,3%	10,3%	23,1%	5,1%	10,3%	100,0%
		% of Total	10,7%	2,1%	4,8%	1,1%	2,1%	20,9%
	27-30	% within Age	53,8%	19,2%	19,2%	3,8%	3,8%	100,0%
		% of Total	7,5%	2,7%	2,7%	0,5%	0,5%	13,9%
	31-34	% within Age	63,9%	16,7%	16,7%		2,8%	100,0%
		% of Total	12,3%	3,2%	3,2%		0,5%	19,3%
	35+	% within Age	51,9%	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%	14,8%	100,0%
		% of Total	7,5%	1,6%	1,6%	1,6%	2,1%	14,4%
	Total	**% within Age**	**53,5%**	**11,8%**	**17,1%**	**7,0%**	**10,7%**	**100,0%**
		% of Total	**53,5%**	**11,8%**	**17,1%**	**7,0%**	**10,7%**	**100,0%**

Positive image appreciation: results and demographics

Out of those who rated the image as positive (n=33), 69.7% were between the ages of 15 and 26. Those who viewed the image in any way positively were 93.3% Muslims, the rest did not want to state their religious affiliation. Habitation-wise, 36.4% had spent most of their lives in a large town, but the rest had mainly lived in smaller communities such as villages, small towns or cities (18.2%, 18.2% and 15.2%, respectively). Only 3% stated they had lived most of their lives in a metropolis. Singles constituted a 63.6% of these respondents, and only 21.2% were unemployed, 15.2% students. Almost all had some higher education: 60.6% had a secondary degree, 36.4% a university degree.

In total, 33% of those who rated the image as somewhat or very positive said it represented Islamic values (42.9% women, 26.9% men). To 15.2%, the image represented freedom (28.6% women, 11.5% men). Only men saw that the image represented aesthetics but still, the percentage was high at 15.2% of all responses. Honour and solidarity as well as pleasure both suited the views of 9.1% of respondents, respectively. Still, among these respondents who rated the image in positive terms, there were those who associated more negative values and assessments to the image: 6.1% of all of them said the image represents dishonour, 3% said it represents intolerance.

With regards to media use, out of all respondents with positive views of the image, most listened or watched entertainment content on radio (24.2%) and the television (33.3%) or alternatively did not consume these medias at all (36.4% of radio, 33.3% television). However, 18.2% listened to politics and social issue broadcasts on the radio, majority of whom (40.3%) were 18–26-year-olds. In addition, 6.1%, of which all were men aged 23–26, listened to mainly religious content on the radio. Television attracted similar demographics, but no one reported watching mainly religious programmes. Books were mostly used for entertainment or religious literature (15.2% and 12.1%, respectively) whereas 54.5% do not read books at all; those aged 27–34 were the only ones who said they do not read at all. Newspapers interested mainly those who read politics and society content (21.2%, men and women aged 19–30 only), since 57.6% claimed not to read newspapers at all.

Only 12.1% of those with positive ratings said they do not use any social media at all. Mostly (27.3%) respondents said they use social media mainly to follow entertainment, and 24.2% claimed to use social media mainly to follow politics and social issue themes. Concentration on only religion-related topics on social media was accurate only to 6.1% of respondents, all male aged 15–18 and 23–26-years-old. All topics (entertainment, politics and social issues, religion, sports) equally was the choice for 21.2% of respondents.

When asked about the importance of these themes in the lives of those who rated the image positively, 48.5% were not interested in politics and social issues at all. With women, only those aged 15–18 and 19–22 years and those over 35 years of age claimed they were moderately or somewhat interested in these themes (12.5%, 11.1%, and 28.6%, respectively). With men, interest in politics and social issues was more consistent in all age cohorts except those aged 23–26 where they claimed no interest at all. Religion was very or extremely important to 78.8% of the respondents but not important at all to 15.2% of whom 12.1% were men.

Demographics of negative value judgements or themes associated with image

When all respondents were asked to identify their view on the image (n=187), 35.6% of men and women together said the image represented intolerance, 9.4% said it represented dishonour, and 4.7% said it represents oppression. Men and women judged the image to represent intolerance quite similarly (38.6% and 33.3%, respectively), and the results were comparable with the theme of dishonour (10.8% women, 8.3% men). The most visible difference was with the value of oppression: 8.4% of women but only 1.9% of men judged the image to represent oppression. Even though it seems that the clearest age difference is seen with the value judgement of 15–18-year-olds (only 12.5% of 15–18-year-old women but 45.0% of men chose intolerance as their assessment), this is explained by the fact that only women aged 15–18 chose other negative values to the picture: 12.5% for dishonour and 12.5% oppression.

Demographics of positive associations such as freedom or heroism

Out of all respondents, the highest rated positive theme or value was freedom with 10.5% of all replies. The second highest positive association was with honour and solidarity with 2.1% of all replies even though this option was selected by only men. Heroism was the chosen value or theme only to women aged 15–18 (12.5% of all responses of their age cohort; n=191) and to men aged 19–22 (5.9% of all the responses of their age cohort). Men were again the only ones to state that the image appealed to them aesthetically. A total of 13.1% of all respondents chose not to identify their views.

With the image of a Kalashnikov and the Qur'an, there were once again those who had linked a positive value or theme association to the image but still rated it as somewhat or very negative on the Likert scale. Out of those respondents who selected positive values or themes, 21.3% nonetheless rated the image as negative: 15.2% of men, 0% of women as very negative; 0% of men, 6.1% of women as somewhat negative. Clearly over a half (54.6%) of those who had chosen a positive value judgement for the image also viewed it as somewhat or very positive; men were twice more likely to say they found the image somewhat positive compared to women who had most often preferred not to rate the image at all (44.4% of women with positive value judgements).

Over half (52.9%) of those who associated any positive values or themes to the image (n=34) were aged 15–18 and 19–22 years. Habitation-wise, 38.2% of these respondents had lived most of their lives in large towns, 17.6% in small towns, and 14.7% in villages and similarly, in cities. Approximately a third were married (29.4%), most of them women. Only 2.9% had only an elementary education, whereas most had a secondary degree (58.8%). Employment rate was high:

70.6% were employed, 17.6% students; a third of all women were unemployed whereas only 4.0% of men had no job.

The Quran and a Kalashnikov (image 10) (n=191)											
Age	Values & concepts	Heroism		Honour and solidarity		Freedom		Pleasure		Aesthetic	
		males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females
15–18	% within age		12.5%	5.0%		15.0%				10.0%	
	% of total image		1.2%	0.9%		2.8%				1.9%	
19–22	% within age	5.9%		5.9%		17.6%	18.8%	11.8%		5.9%	
	% of total image	0.9%		0.9%		2.8%	3.6%	1.9%		0.9%	
23–26	% within age						12.5%			4.2%	
	% of total image						2.4%			0.9%	
27–30	% within age			7.1%		14.3%	8.3%				
	% of total image			0.9%		1.9%	1.2%				
31–34	% within age					17.4%	7.1%	4.3%			
	% of total image					3.7%	1.2%	0.9%			
35+	% within age			10.0%			5.9%			10.0%	
	% of total image			0.9%			1.2%			0.9%	
Total	% of total image	0.9%	1.2%	3.7%		11.1%	9.6%	2.8%		4.6%	

Media use and personal preferences among those with positive associations to the image

Almost all respondents who associated this image with positive values or themes (n=34) use social media to gain information: only 11.8% replied that they do not use social media at all. With other media, 35.3% reported they do not listen to the radio at all, 26.5% do not watch television at all, 58.8% do not read books, and 67.6% do not read newspapers at all. A third (29.4%) said they use social media mainly to follow all topics (entertainment, politics and social issues, religion, sports) equally. Politics and social as well as entertainment available on social media were important to 23.5%, respectively more so with women (33.3%) than women (14.7%) in both themes. Religion-themed content was the main draw on television only to men aged 19–22 years (12.5% of their entire age cohort); similarly, reading of mainly religious books was confined to men aged 15–18 years (16.7% of their age cohort), 27–30 years (33.3% of the age cohort), and men over 35 years of age (50% of their age cohort). The consumption of only religion-themed social media was also restricted only to men aged 15–18 years (16.7% of their age cohort).

Women who associated positive values or themes with the image claimed politics and social issues are moderately important to 11.1% of female respondents. In comparison, 22.0% of men claimed the topic moderately or very important to them (16.0% and 8.0%, respectively) apart from two: those aged 23–26 and 31–34 years of age where most men said they had no interest in politics at all. In women, the most importance to politics and social issues was with 19–22-year-olds and those over 35 years. Religion was very or extremely important to 85.3% of respondents who associated a positive value to the image, whereas only 5.9%, all of them over 35 years old, claimed religion is not important to them at all.

The Quran and a Kalashnikov (image 10) (n=191)											
Age	Values & concepts	Islamic values		Western values		Oppression		Intolerance		Dishonour	
		males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females
15–18	% within age % of total image	20.0% 3.7%			37.5% 3.6%		12.5% 1.2%	45.0% 8.3%	12.5% 1.2%		12.5% 1.2%
19–22	% within age % of total image	17.6% 2.8%	6.3% 1.2%	5.9% 0.9%	18.8% 3.6%			11.8% 1.9%	31.3% 6.0%	5.9% 0.9%	12.5% 2.4%
23–26	% within age % of total image	25.0% 5.6%		4.2% 0.9%	12.5% 2.4%		18.8% 3.6%	37.5% 8.3%	18.8% 3.6%	16.7% 3.7%	6.3% 1.2%
27–30	% within age % of total image	7.1% 0.9%	8.3% 1.2%	7.1% 0.9%		14.3% 1.9%		21.4% 2.8%	58.3% 8.4%	14.3% 1.9%	8.3% 1.2%
31–34	% within age % of total image	8.7% 1.9%	7.1% 1.2%	4.3% 0.9%			14.3% 2.4%	43.5% 9.3%	57.1% 9.6%	4.3% 0.9%	14.3% 2.4%
35+	% within age % of total image	10.0% 0.9%	17.6% 3.6%	10.0% 0.9%	5.9% 1.2%		5.9% 1.2%	30.0% 2.8%	47.1% 9.6%	10.0% 0.9%	11.8% 2.4%
Total	% of total image	15.7%	7.2%	4.6%	10.8%	1.9%	8.4%	33.3%	38.6%	8.3%	10.8%

Demographics of cultural associations such as Western or Islamic values

When analysing the results of cultural values and themes, 12.0% of all respondents (n=187) said the image represents Islamic values whereas 7.3% said it represents Western values to them. Those who saw the image representing Western values (n=15) were 86.7% Muslims, 13.3% ‘Other’. They had lived most of their lives in large cities or a metropolis (26.7% each), or in small or large towns (13.3% each). Only men with 7.7% of all respondents who associated Western values to the image rated the image as very positive; all these men were aged 19–22 years. All women and all other age cohorts of men who associated Western values to the image rated it as very negative; in total, 84.6% saw the image as very negative as well as associating it with Western values. In women, 11.1% claimed that politics and social issues were very important to them, but this interest was limited to women aged 15–18 years. In men, 20.0% said politics and social issues are very important and 40.0% extremely important to them; with men, most interest in these topics was limited to ages 15–18, 19–22 years, and some interest in men aged over 35 years. Religion, though, was very or extremely important to 71.4% to these respondents.

Reversely, all those who claimed the image represents Islamic views (n=23) were 87.0% Muslims, 8.7% ‘Other’, and 4.3% Christians. These respondents had lived most of their lives in a metropolis (26.1) or in a small town (21.7%). Of all these respondents (n=23), 26.1% saw the image as very positive (33.3% of women and 23.5% of men), and 17.4% as somewhat positive (16.7% of women and 17.6% of men). Most positive ratings were given by men and women aged 15–26 years. In women, 66.7% claimed that politics and social issues were not important to them at all. In men, 5.9% said politics and social issues are very important and with 11.8% it was extremely important to them; with men, most interest in these topics was limited to ages 15–18 and 23–26 years. Religion, though, was very or extremely important to 65.2% to these respondents.

7.4.3. ISIL fighters

The image portrays two male ISIL fighters smiling while operating a heavy machine gun in the back of a pickup truck: one man is standing and facing away from the camera, one is looking past the camera, showing the tawhid. The men are dressed in Salafi style with billowy clothes, trousers that end at the ankle, and with facial hair following the sunna of the Prophet.[65] Behind the men, attached to a house, is the flag of ISIL. This image was the 19th picture shown to respondents in the survey.

This image followed eight pictures with varying kinds of themes. Image 11 was a movie poster of a popular American car chase movie "The Fate of the Furious" (Simpson, 13.4.2017), a movie franchise which has been popular especially among young men seeking excitement and adrenaline. Image 12 portrayed male Kurdish peshmerga fighters in Syria (who have been fighting against ISIL), operating a machine gun mounted on top of a tank in front of the Kurdish flag (Times of Israel, 30.10.2014). Image 13 had three women in front of a simple house: two elderly women stand at the side of the picture in wine-coloured dresses while a third, younger woman stands at the centre of the picture covered in black and is in the process of whipping her hijab around her head and smiling (Cockburn, 12.6.2016). Originally this image portrayed the liberation of the women of Manbij after the rule of ISIL and the happiness when they take off their hijabs; however, many respondents wondered out loud if this was women dancing, which made many, especially younger women, shake their heads in dismay. Image 14 was from a Lebanese campaign poster against child marriage, showing a young girl dressed in a white wedding gown and a significantly older man holding her hands (The National, 18.2.2016). Image 15 depicts men on a protest march of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan with green Muslim Brotherhood flags flying (Hearst, 20.4.2016). Image 16 is of the Syrian "White Helmets" saving people from the rubble of collapsed buildings in Idlib (Alaawar, 26.8.2018). In image 17, the victorious Jordanian national women's football team runs after they have scored a winning goal: two women, one in long sports gear and a hijab, the other in a short-sleeved shirt and shorts run smiling on the pitch (Schneider, 3.5.2018). The last picture, image 18, depicted the inside of a mosque at Eid when two elderly men are hugging each other and smiling (Dirnhuber, 21.8.2018).

Even though there were several images with varying themes preceding this one, many respondents stopped when they reached the ISIL picture: some started laughing awkwardly, some showed clear signs of nervousness, some questioned why we were asking them to rate these pictures in the first

[65] Especially in Salafi-Islam, the growing of a beard is seen as innate nature to a man and if not followed, sinful against the commandments of God. Rules guiding how a beard should be worn follow the Prophet's sunna, which forbids a moustache or a neckbeard. The length of the beard can be determined (according to some scholars) by grabbing it in a fist and cutting off anything that remained beyond the fistful. (Abu Khadeejah, 2018).

place. My research assistants explained to anyone who stopped at any picture that they had surely all seen pictures like this before in different media channels, and that if these types of pictures were excluded, it wouldn't give a good view of the media use and preferences of Jordanian people. One young man aged 23–26 in Al-Karak summarised the views of him and his friends: *"Why do you ask us this? Here, we live in peace with these people."* He, like all other doubtfuls, still continued to fill in the survey after the research assistants asked him if he wanted to stop or continue.

Thesis image 19: ISIL soldiers (Al-Rai, 2014).

Image appreciation results

With the image of ISIL fighters, 83.9% of respondents (n=177) rated the image as somewhat or very negative (82.9% of women and 84.2% of men, respectively). Those who rated the image as somewhat or very positive (n=9) totalled 5.1% of all respondents (5.3% of women and 5.0% of all men). In men, only those aged 19–26 years rated the image as very positive: 6.3% of all men in the 19–22 age cohort and 8.7% in the 23–26 age cohort. In contrast, there were clearly more positive ratings attached to this image among women: women were more cautious and only rated the image somewhat positive, but their positive ratings occurred in almost all age cohorts except those aged 27–34 years. Of women aged 15–18 years, 16.7% said the image was somewhat positive, three times higher than in men of the same age cohort (5.3%).

ISIL fighters (image 19)								
N=177			Very negative	Some-what negative	Don't know / prefer not to say	Some-what positive	Very positive	Total
Female	15-18	% within Age	66,7%	16,7%		16,7%		100,0%
		% of Total	5,3%	1,3%		1,3%		7,9%
	19-22	% within Age	53,3%	20,0%	20,0%	6,7%		100,0%
		% of Total	10,5%	3,9%	3,9%	1,3%		19,7%
	23-26	% within Age	58,3%	16,7%	25,0%			100,0%
		% of Total	9,2%	2,6%	3,9%			15,8%
	27-30	% within Age	83,3%		16,7%			100,0%
		% of Total	13,2%		2,6%			15,8%
	31-34	% within Age	78,6%	14,3%	7,1%			100,0%
		% of Total	14,5%	2,6%	1,3%			18,4%
	35+	% within Age	82,4%	5,9%		11,8%		100,0%
		% of Total	18,4%	1,3%		2,6%		22,4%
	Total	**% within Age**	**71,1%**	**11,8%**	**11,8%**	**5,3%**		**100,0%**
		% of Total	**71,1%**	**11,8%**	**11,8%**	**5,3%**		**100,0%**
Male	15-18	% within Age	73,7%		21,1%	5,3%		100,0%
		% of Total	13,9%		4,0%	1,0%		18,8%
	19-22	% within Age	81,3%	6,3%	6,3%		6,3%	100,0%
		% of Total	12,9%	1,0%	1,0%		1,0%	15,8%
	23-26	% within Age	78,3%	4,3%	4,3%	4,3%	8,7%	100,0%
		% of Total	17,8%	1,0%	1,0%	1,0%	2,0%	22,8%
	27-30	% within Age	91,7%		8,3%			100,0%
		% of Total	10,9%		1,0%			11,9%
	31-34	% within Age	81,0%	4,8%	14,3%			100,0%
		% of Total	16,8%	1,0%	3,0%			20,8%
	35+	% within Age	80,0%	10,0%	10,0%			100,0%
		% of Total	7,9%	1,0%	1,0%			9,9%
	Total	**% within Age**	**80,2%**	**4,0%**	**10,9%**	**2,0%**	**3,0%**	**100,0%**
		% of Total	**80,2%**	**4,0%**	**10,9%**	**2,0%**	**3,0%**	**100,0%**
Total	15-18	% within Age	72,0%	4,0%	16,0%	8,0%		100,0%
		% of Total	10,2%	0,6%	2,3%	1,1%		14,1%
	19-22	% within Age	67,7%	12,9%	12,9%	3,2%	3,2%	100,0%
		% of Total	11,9%	2,3%	2,3%	0,6%	0,6%	17,5%
	23-26	% within Age	71,4%	8,6%	11,4%	2,9%	5,7%	100,0%
		% of Total	14,1%	1,7%	2,3%	0,6%	1,1%	19,8%
	27-30	% within Age	87,5%		12,5%			100,0%
		% of Total	11,9%		1,7%			13,6%
	31-34	% within Age	80,0%	8,6%	11,4%			100,0%
		% of Total	15,8%	1,7%	2,3%			19,8%
	35+	% within Age	81,5%	7,4%	3,7%	7,4%		100,0%
		% of Total	12,4%	1,1%	0,6%	1,1%		15,3%
	Total	**% within Age**	**76,3%**	**7,3%**	**11,3%**	**3,4%**	**1,7%**	**100,0%**
		% of Total	**76,3%**	**7,3%**	**11,3%**	**3,4%**	**1,7%**	**100,0%**

Positive image appreciation: results and demographics

With this picture of ISIL fighters, the respondents who rated the image as any way positive (n=9) was similar to that of the Salafi-Jihadist fighters of image 5. Out of those who rated the image as positive, 77.8% were between the ages of 15 and 26. Almost half had lived most of their lives in a small town (44.4%) or a metropolis (22.2%), and the rest were equally divided between villages and cities of all sizes. Singles constituted a 55.5% of these respondents, and 22.2% were unemployed, 22.2% students. Many had some higher education: 44.4% had a secondary degree, 33.3% a university degree.

In total, 44.4% of those who rated the image as somewhat or very positive said it represented freedom (25.0% women of all ages, 60.0% men of all ages). To 11.1%, all women, the image represented heroism. As with other similar images, there were once again those who associated more negative

values and assessments to the image even though their overall rating had been positive: 11.1% of all of these respondents said the image represents dishonour, 11.1% said it represents oppression.

When looking at media use preferences, out of all respondents with any positive ratings of the image (n=9), most listened to politics and social issues content or everything equally on the radio (22.2%, respectively), leaving entertainment last at 11.1%; politics and social issues had most interest among men aged 15–18 years (50% of the age cohort) and both genders over 35 years. On television, entertainment was most popular (33.3%) except to women aged over 35 years who preferred politics and social issues on the television (50% of the age cohort). However, most did not consume these medias at all (44.4% of radio, 55.6% television). Books were mostly used for entertainment or equally across themes (22.2% each) whereas 44.4% across all age cohorts except with 19–22-year-olds who do not read books at all. Newspapers did not interest 55.6% of these respondents, but those who did read newspapers claimed to read entertainment, politics, sports, or everything equally (11.1% each). Social media was the most used media source with only 11.1% claiming not to use it at all. On social media, 55.6% said they use it for entertainment, politics, or equally across themes (11.1% each). Interestingly, only on social media did these respondents claim to also view mainly religious content: 11.1%, all men aged 15–18 years said they use social media mainly for its religious content.

When these respondents were asked their opinions on different themes in their lives, 55.6% were not interested in politics and social issues at all. Oppositely, only men aged 15–18 and women 19–22 years were extremely interested in politics and social issues (22.2% of the total); also, women over 35 years of age claimed they were moderately interested in these themes (11.1% of the total). Religion was extremely important to 66.7% of the respondents but not important at all to 22.2%, all of whom were men.

Demographics of negative value judgements or themes associated with image

When all respondents (n=177) were asked to identify a theme or tell their judgement of the image, 46.6% of men and women in total indicated that the image represents intolerance, 18.8% dishonour, and 8.9% oppression. Women were more likely to claim that the image represents intolerance (53%) than men (41.7%), and the opposite distribution was visible with dishonour: men were more likely to assess the image as representing dishonour (20.4%) than women (16.4%) since no women aged 15–18 chose this value. Men aged 15–18 chosen oppression or dishonour as the value whereas women chose only intolerance; this explains most of the percentage difference in men and women.

Demographics of positive associations such as freedom or heroism

Out of all respondents (n=177), freedom was rated highest of all the positive values with 6.8% of all replies. Freedom was supported most in age cohorts 19–22 and 23–26 by both men and women, but support for this evaluation was visible in every age cohort except those over 35 years of age. Heroism was rated second highest with only 1.0% total, and finally aesthetic with 0.9%, which was only chosen by men. A total of 6.3% of all respondents chose not to identify their views.

As with other similar images containing Salafi-Jihadist imagery, there were once again those who had associated a positive value or theme to the image but still rated it as somewhat or very negative on the Likert scale. Out of those who had associated positive value judgements to the image (n=9), 35.3% still rated the image as negative: 30% of men, 14.3% of women as very negative, 10% of men, 14.3% of women as somewhat negative. The largest amount of people with positive value judgements had chosen not to rate the image as either positive or negative (42.9% women, 30% men). Somewhat positive or very positive ratings totalled 29.4%, and once again women were more cautious in their evaluations, choosing somewhat positive rather than very positive ratings for the image.

ISIL fighters (image 19) (n=177)											
Age	**Values & concepts**	**Heroism**		**Honour and solidarity**		**Freedom**		**Pleasure**		**Aesthetic**	
		males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females
15–18	% within age % of total image					5.0% 0.9%					
19–22	% within age % of total image	5.9% 0.9%	6.3% 1.2%			11.8% 1.9%	12.5% 2.4%				
23–26	% within age % of total image					12.5% 2.8%	12.5% 2.4%			4.2% 0.9%	
27–30	% within age % of total image					7.1% 0.9%	8.3% 1.2%				
31–34	% within age % of total image						7.1% 1.2%				
35+	% within age % of total image										
Total	% of total image	0.9%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	7.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%

Only women aged 15–18 and 19–22-years-old (100% and 50% of their age cohorts, respectively) claimed the image as somewhat positive with 28.6% of all women (n=17 for all positive value evaluations). Men aged 23–26 were the only ones to rate the image as very positive (50% of the age cohort), whereas those who saw it as somewhat positive belonged to age cohorts 15–18 years (25% of the cohort) and 23–26 years (50% of the cohort). All respondents with positive values were Muslim. With respect to their longest place of habitation, 29.4% had lived most of their lives in a large town, 23.5% in a metropolis, 17.6% in a city, and 11.8% in either a village or a small town. Most of the women were married (42.9%) whereas only 10% of men were married. Over half (52.9%)

had a secondary school degree, over a third (35.3%) a university diploma. Most were employed (64.7%) or students (23.5%); unemployment was almost equal in both genders.

Media use and personal preferences among those with positive associations to the image

As with other similar images, almost all respondents who associated this image with a positive value or theme (n=17) used social media: only 11.8% said they do not use social media. Other medias were less used: 52.9% did not listen to the radio, 35.3% did not watch television, 52.9% did not read books, and 70.6% did not read newspapers. Over a third (35.4%) follow mainly entertainment on social media, and almost a similar number (29.4%) follow all topics (entertainment, politics and social issues, religion, sports) equally. Politics and social issues were the main themes to track on social media for 17.6% of all respondents: men aged 15–18 were the only ones in their gender interested in this topic (50% of the age cohort), whereas women over 35 years were the only ones in their gender to follow the topic. Religious-themed social media was used only by men aged 15–18 years (25% of the age cohort), and religious books were read only by men aged 27–30.

Women who associated positive values or themes with the image claimed politics and social issues are moderately important to 42.9% of female respondents. In comparison, 30% of men claimed the topic moderately or very important to them (20% and 10%, respectively) but only in age cohorts aged 15–18 years (25% moderately important, 25% very important) and 19–22 years (33.3% moderately important). In women, the most importance placed on politics and social issues was with 19–22-year-olds (50% of the age cohort), and all women in cohorts 23–26 years and over 35 years. Religion was very or extremely important to 76.4% of respondents who associated a positive value to the image, whereas 11.8%, all of them aged 23–30 years old of both genders, claimed religion is not important to them at all.

ISIL fighters (image 19) (n=177)

Age	Values & concepts	Islamic values		Western values		Oppression		Intolerance		Dishonour	
		males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females
15–18	% within age	10.0%		10.0%	12.5%	20.0%		35.0%	62.5%	15.0%	
	% of total image	1.9%		1.9%	1.2%	3.7%		6.5%	6.0%	2.8%	
19–22	% within age	5.9%		11.8%	6.3%		12.5%	35.3%	43.8%	23.5%	12.5%
	% of total image	0.9%		1.9%	1.2%		2.4%	5.6%	8.4%	3.7%	2.4%
23–26	% within age	8.3%		8.3%		8.3%		54.2%	50.0%	4.2%	6.3%
	% of total image	1.9%		1.9%		1.9%		12.0%	9.6%	0.9%	1.2%
27–30	% within age			7.1%		14.3%	16.7%	35.7%	41.7%	35.7%	33.3%
	% of total image			0.9%		1.9%	2.4%	4.6%	6.0%	4.6%	4.8%
31–34	% within age	13.0%		4.3%	7.1%	4.3%	7.1%	52.2%	57.1%	26.1%	21.4%
	% of total image	2.8%		0.9%	1.2%	0.9%	1.2%	11.1%	9.6%	5.6%	3.6%
35+	% within age	10.0%		10.0%		10.0%	11.8%	20.0%	64.7%	30.0%	23.5%
	% of total image	0.9%		0.9%		0.9%	2.4%	1.9%	13.3%	2.8%	4.8%
Total	% of total image	8.3%	0.0%	8.3%	3.6%	9.3%	8.4%	41.7%	53.0%	20.4%	16.9%

Demographics of cultural associations such as Western or Islamic values

Looking at judgements based on cultural values and themes chosen for the image, 4.7% of all respondents (n=177) said the image represents Islamic values whereas 6.3% said it represents Western values to them. Those who saw the image as representing Western values (n=8) were all Muslims, and 62.5% were men, 37.5% women of all age cohorts except those aged 27–30 years. Habitation-wise, most had lived their lives either in villages or large towns (25%, respectively); the rest equally in other areas. When asked to rate the image on the Likert scale, half (50%) had chosen not to rate the image, but 37.5% rated it as very negative, 12.5% as very positive. Only men aged 19–22 years who saw it representing Western values had rated the image as very positive.

In women, 66.7% claimed that politics and social issues were only slightly important to them, and this interest was limited to women aged 19–22 years and those over 35 years. In men, 20% said politics and social issues are very important and 20% extremely important to them; as with women, most interest in these topics was limited to men 19–22 years and those over 35 years. Religion, though, was very or extremely important to 62.5% to these respondents.

Those who saw the image representing Islamic values (n=7) were all university educated men over the age of 23 years, and they identified their religion as 57.1% 'Other', 28.6% Muslim, and 14.3% Christian. A significant majority had lived most of their lives in a metropolis (85.7%), the rest in a large town. They had all rated the image as very negative. Politics and social issues were moderately important to 42.9% and extremely important to 28.6% similarly across all age cohorts; none said they are not interested in politics and social issues at all. Religion was not important at all to 71.4%, but very or extremely important to 14.3%, respectively.

7.4.4. Jabhat al-Nusra or Hayat Tahrir al-Sham

An image of the Al Qaeda -affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra group, which merged to become a part of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group in Idlib (Rosenberg, 28.5.2016) was the 23rd and also the last Salafi-Jihadist image in the survey. The image of Jabhat al-Nusra depicts nine masked male Salafi-Jihadist fighters brandishing their Kalashnikovs in the air: one croutches on top of a pickup truck that has been covered with an Al Qaeda flag.

The main research image of Jabhat al-Nusra was preceded by three images of different themes. First, image 20 portrayed Kurdish female fighters in Syria with Kalashnikov rifles in their hands (McKernan, 4.1.2017). Next, image 21 portrayed the taxi protests of Jordan from 2017 (Ghazal, 26.9.2017), where hundreds of yellow taxi cars are parked in the centre of Amman, their drivers protesting against the Jordanian government and its proposed tax increases. Finally, image 22 showed

Egyptian-Algerian rapper and actor Ahmad Mekky (Al Ain News, 27.2.2018), who is popular especially among young Arabs because he has been vocal about the social inequalities they suffer and the realities of being a young Arab in today's world.

Thesis image 23: Jabhat al-Nusra group in Syria (Rosenberg, 28.5.2016).

Image appreciation results

With the image of Jabhat al-Nusra fighters, 79.6% of respondents (n=182) rated the image as somewhat or very negative (75.3% of women and 82.9% of men, respectively). Those who rated the image as somewhat or very positive (n=14) totalled at 7.7% of all respondents (7.8% of women and 7.7% of all men). In men, only those aged 19–26 years rated the image as very positive: 15.8% of all men, and 6.3% in the 19–22 cohort and 8.3% in the 23–26-years age cohort. Nonetheless, there were clearly more, and with higher percentages, positive ratings attached to this image among women, especially those over 30 years old: 7.1% of the age cohort 31–34, and 11.8% of women over 35 years. There were many more of those among both genders who rated the image as somewhat positive: 28.6% of women aged 15–18 said the image was somewhat positive, which was nearly double the highest percentage seen with men of similar age (15.8% of the male age cohort).

Positive image appreciation: results and demographics

N=182		Jabhat al-Nusra (image 23)						
			Very negative	Somewhat negative	Don't know / prefer not to say	Some-what positive	Very positive	Total
Female	15-18	% within Age	71,4%			28,6%		100,0%
		% of Total	6,5%			2,6%		9,1%
	19-22	% within Age	50,0%	14,3%	28,6%	7,1%		100,0%
		% of Total	9,1%	2,6%	5,2%	1,3%		18,2%
	23-26	% within Age	69,2%		30,8%			100,0%
		% of Total	11,7%		5,2%			16,9%
	27-30	% within Age	75,0%	8,3%	16,7%			100,0%
		% of Total	11,7%	1,3%	2,6%			15,6%
	31-34	% within Age	78,6%		14,3%		7,1%	100,0%
		% of Total	14,3%		2,6%		1,3%	18,2%
	35+	% within Age	76,5%	5,9%	5,9%		11,8%	100,0%
		% of Total	16,9%	1,3%	1,3%		2,6%	22,1%
	Total	**% within gender**	**70,1%**	**5,2%**	**16,9%**	**3,9%**	**3,9%**	**100,0%**
		% of Total	**70,1%**	**5,2%**	**16,9%**	**3,9%**	**3,9%**	**100,0%**
Male	15-18	% within Age	78,9%		5,3%	15,8%		100,0%
		% of Total	14,3%		1,0%	2,9%		18,1%
	19-22	% within Age	56,3%	18,8%	12,5%	6,3%	6,3%	100,0%
		% of Total	8,6%	2,9%	1,9%	1,0%	1,0%	15,2%
	23-26	% within Age	75,0%		12,5%	4,2%	8,3%	100,0%
		% of Total	17,1%		2,9%	1,0%	1,9%	22,9%
	27-30	% within Age	100,0%					100,0%
		% of Total	12,4%					12,4%
	31-34	% within Age	82,6%	4,3%	13,0%			100,0%
		% of Total	18,1%	1,0%	2,9%			21,9%
	35+	% within Age	80,0%	10,0%	10,0%			100,0%
		% of Total	7,6%	1,0%	1,0%			9,5%
	Total	**% within gender**	**78,1%**	**4,8%**	**9,5%**	**4,8%**	**2,9%**	**100,0%**
		% of Total	**78,1%**	**4,8%**	**9,5%**	**4,8%**	**2,9%**	**100,0%**
Total	15-18	% within Age	76,9%		3,8%	19,2%		100,0%
		% of Total	11,0%		0,5%	2,7%		14,3%
	19-22	% within Age	53,3%	16,7%	20,0%	6,7%	3,3%	100,0%
		% of Total	8,8%	2,7%	3,3%	1,1%	0,5%	16,5%
	23-26	% within Age	73,0%		18,9%	2,7%	5,4%	100,0%
		% of Total	14,8%		3,8%	0,5%	1,1%	20,3%
	27-30	% within Age	88,0%	4,0%	8,0%			100,0%
		% of Total	12,1%	0,5%	1,1%			13,7%
	31-34	% within Age	81,1%	2,7%	13,5%		2,7%	100,0%
		% of Total	16,5%	0,5%	2,7%		0,5%	20,3%
	35+	% within Age	77,8%	7,4%	7,4%		7,4%	100,0%
		% of Total	11,5%	1,1%	1,1%		1,1%	14,8%
	Total	**% within gender**	**74,7%**	**4,9%**	**12,6%**	**4,4%**	**3,3%**	**100,0%**
		% of Total	**74,7%**	**4,9%**	**12,6%**	**4,4%**	**3,3%**	**100,0%**

With this picture of the Al Qaeda-affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra fighters, the number of respondents who rated the image as any way positive was 1.5 times higher than in other pictures representing Salafi-Jihadist fighters (n=14). Similarly with other similar images studied, a large majority, 78.6% of those who rated the image as positive were between the ages of 15 and 26. A third had lived most of their lives in a small town (28.6%), a small village or a metropolis (21.4% each), and the rest were equally divided between towns and cities of all sizes. Singles constituted a majority (71.4%) of these respondents, and 14.3% were unemployed, 21.4% students. Most of them had a secondary degree (64.3%), and only 21.4% a university degree.

In total, 28.6% of those who rated the image as somewhat or very positive (n=14) said it represented freedom (16.7% women of all ages, 37.5% men of all ages). To 16.7%, all women, the image represented heroism, and pleasure also to 16.7% of women. None of these men said the image represents any other clearly positive value. As with other similar images, there were many who associated more negative values and assessments to the image even though their overall rating had been positive: dishonour and intolerance each had 7.1% of all value judgements among this group. Most value judgements, 28.6% of this group of positive ratings, said it represents Islamic values.

When looking at media use preferences, out of all respondents with any positive views of the image (n=14), most listened to everything equally on the radio (22.2%), next came politics and social issues and sports (14.5% each) leaving entertainment last at 7.1%. On the radio, politics and social issues had most focus among men aged 15–18 years (33.3% of the age cohort), with women, those aged over 35 years were most interested in politics and social issues (50% of the age cohort). On the television, entertainment was most popular (28.6%), except in women aged 31–34 years who preferred politics and social issues on the television (50% of the age cohort); the rest did not watch television at all. Religious-themed television was watched only by women aged 15–18 years. Most of this group did not consume these medias at all (35.7% of radio, 42.9% television). Books were mostly used for entertainment (21.4%), for sports, or equally across themes (14.3% each). In total, 50% of this group across all age cohorts do not read books at all. Newspapers also did not interest 50% of these respondents, but those who did read newspapers claimed to read entertainment, politics, sports, or everything equally (11.1% each). Social media was the most used media source with only 11.1% claiming not to use it at all. On social media, 55.6% said they use it for entertainment, politics, or sports (14.3% each). Once again, social media was the main media used by this group with only 7.1% claiming not to use social media at all. Out of both genders, 50% said they use social media mainly for entertainment. With men, 33.3%, all men aged 15–18 years said they use social media mainly for its religious content, or an equal number mainly for politics and social issues. Women across all age cohorts were more likely to use social media to watch all content equally.

When these respondents were inquired to rate the importance of different themes in their lives, 64.3% were not interested in politics and social issues at all. Women said they are only moderately interested in politics and social issues with highest interest centred at those over 31 years (33.3% of all women). Oppositely, only men aged 15–18 and 19–22 years were extremely interested in politics and social issues (25% of all men); the rest of the men were very interested in politics (12.5% of all men). Religion was extremely important to 78.6% of the respondents but not important at all to 14.3%, all of whom were men.

Negative value judgements or themes associated with image

Intolerance was the most prevalent theme of value judgement with 44.5% of all respondents (n=191): women with 43.4%, men with 45.4%. Other popular values attached to the image were oppression (12.6% of total) and dishonour (8.9% of total). Men and women had almost equal total percentages with the value of intolerance, but opinions varied greatly within different age cohorts: with women in age cohorts 19–22 and 23–26years, nearly half (43.8% in each) refused to assign any value to the image: this explains some of the larger differences in percentages in these age cohorts. None of the men over 35 years assigned a positive value to the image, but in women of the similar age cohort, 5.9% thought it represents freedom.

Demographics of positive associations such as freedom or heroism

Out of all respondents (n=182), freedom was rated highest of all the positive values with 5.2% of all replies. Freedom as a value had most support from both genders in age cohorts 19–22 and 23–26 years (9.5% and 7.5% in total, respectively), but support for this evaluation was visible in nearly every age cohort except those aged 31–34 years. Only men aged 15–18 years said the image represents freedom (with 10% of the age cohort), but none of the women of similar age supported this value. Aesthetics, heroism, and pleasure all had 0.5% of all responses supporting them; however, these evaluations were very age- and gender-specific. Only women aged 19–22 associated heroism with the image (6.3% of the age cohort), and only women aged 31–34 years related the theme of pleasure to the image (7.1% of the age cohort). Men aged 31–34 years associated aesthetics with the image. A total of 15.7% of all respondents chose not to identify their views at all.

As with other similar images containing Salafi-Jihadist imagery, there were again those who associated a positive value or theme to the image but still rated it as somewhat or very negative on the Likert scale. Out of those who had associated positive value judgements to the image (n=13), 23.1% still rated the image as negative, all of them men: 28.6% of men saw it as very negative, 14.3% as somewhat negative. None of the women of this group had evaluated the image as negative on the Likert scale; instead, 50% of 19–22-year-olds and all 27–30-year-old women had chosen not to rate the image at all. None of the men opted out from rating the image.

Somewhat positive or very positive ratings totalled 53.9% of this specific group (n=13), and unlike with other similar Salafi-Jihadist fighter images, this time women chose very positive ratings (33.3%) more often than the option of somewhat positive (16.7%). Men were equally divided among these ratings with 28.6% each. Only women aged 19–22-years-old (50% of their age cohort) claimed the image as somewhat positive, and only women in cohorts 31–34 and those over 35 years rated the

image as very positive (100% each of their age cohorts). Men aged 23–26 were the only ones to rate the image as very positive (66.7% of the age cohort), whereas those who saw it as somewhat positive belonged to age cohorts 15–18 years (50% of the cohort) and 23–26 years (33.3% of the cohort).

Jabhat al-Nusra (image 23) (n=182)											
Age	Values & concepts	Heroism		Honour and solidarity		Freedom		Pleasure		Aesthetic	
		males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females
15–18	% within age % of total image					10.0% 1.9%					
19–22	% within age % of total image		6.3% 1.2%			11.8% 1.9%	6.3% 1.2%				
23–26	% within age % of total image					8.3% 1.9%	6.3% 1.2%				
27–30	% within age % of total image						8.3% 1.2%				
31–34	% within age % of total image								7.1% 1.2%	4.3% 0.9%	
35+	% within age % of total image						5.9% 1.2%				
Total	% of total image	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	4.8%	0.0%	1.2%	0.9%	0.0%

Out of the respondents with positive value judgements, 92.3% were Muslim, the rest identified themselves as 'Other'. Equal number of respondents had lived most of their lives either in a small village, small town, or a metropolis (23.1% each), and 15.4% in a city; the rest were divided equally between other habitations. Most of the women were married (66.7%) whereas only 14.3% of men were married. None of the respondents had only a primary school degree: a third (30.8%) had a university degree, the rest a secondary degree. Most were employed (61.5%) or students (23.1%); unemployment was almost equal in both genders.

Media use and personal preferences among those with positive associations to the image

As with other similar images, almost all respondents who associated this image with a positive value or theme (n=13) used social media: only 15.4% said they do not use social media. Other medias were less consumed: 46.2% did not listen to the radio, 38.5% did not watch television, 61.5% did not read books, and 76.9% did not read newspapers. A third (30.8%) follows mainly entertainment on social media. Respondents said they follow politics and social issues as well as equally all topics (entertainment, politics and social issues, religion, sports) in similar amounts (23.1% each). Politics and social issues on social media interested mainly men aged 15–18 years (50% of their age cohort) as well as all respondents from both genders aged 31–34 years. Religious-themed media content was consumed only on social media, where it was limited to men aged 15–18 years (50% of the cohort).

Women who associated positive values or themes with the image claimed politics and social issues are moderately important to 66.7% of female respondents. Women of all age cohorts except those

aged 15–18 and 27–30 were all moderately interested in politics and social issues with lowest numbers among 19–22-year-olds (only 50% of the cohort). In comparison, 28.6% of men claimed the topic moderately or very important to them (14.3% each) but only in age cohorts aged 15–18 years. Religion was very or extremely important to 76.9% of respondents who associated a positive value to the image, whereas 15.4%, all of them men aged 23–26 years claimed religion is not important to them at all.

Jabhat al-Nusra (image 23) (n=182)											
Age	Values & concepts	Islamic values		Western values		Oppression		Intolerance		Dishonour	
		males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females
15–18	% within age	5.0%	25.0%	5.0%		15.0%	25.0%	40.0%	37.5%	15.0%	
	% of total image	0.9%	2.4%	0.9%		2.8%	2.4%	7.4%	3.6%	2.8%	
19–22	% within age	11.8%		5.9%	12.5%	5.9%	12.5%	35.3%	18.8%	11.8%	
	% of total image	1.9%		0.9%	2.4%	0.9%	2.4%	5.6%	3.6%	1.9%	
23–26	% within age	4.2%		8.3%		8.3%	18.8%	62.5%	25.0%	8.3%	6.3%
	% of total image	0.9%		1.9%		1.9%	3.6%	13.9%	4.8%	1.9%	1.2%
27–30	% within age	14.3%				21.4%	8.3%	42.9%	58.3%	7.1%	8.3%
	% of total image	1.9%				2.8%	1.2%	5.6%	8.4%	0.9%	1.2%
31–34	% within age	17.4%		4.3%		8.7%	21.4%	43.5%	50.0%	4.3%	14.3%
	% of total image	3.7%		0.9%		1.9%	3.6%	9.3%	8.4%	0.9%	2.4%
35+	% within age	10.0%	5.9%	10.0%			11.8%	40.0%	70.6%	30.0%	5.9%
	% of total image	0.9%	1.2%	0.9%			2.4%	3.7%	14.5%	2.8%	1.2%
Total	% of total image	10.2%	3.6%	5.6%	2.4%	10.2%	15.7%	45.4%	43.4%	11.1%	6.0%

Demographics of cultural associations such as Western or Islamic values

Looking at judgements based on cultural values and themes chosen for the image, 7.3% of all respondents (n=182) said the image represents Islamic values whereas 4.2% said it represents Western values to them. Those who saw the image as representing Western values (n=8) were all Muslims, and 65% were men, 35% women of all age cohorts. Habitation-wise, most had lived their lives in large towns (37.5%) or villages (25%); the rest equally in other areas. When asked to rate the image on the Likert scale, half (50%) had chosen not to rate the image. Still, 37.5% had rated it as very negative, 12.5% as very positive. Only men aged 19–22 years who saw that the image represents Western values had rated the image as very positive. In women, 50% claimed politics and social issues were only slightly important to them, and this interest was limited to women aged 19–22 years; the rest had no interest in the theme at all. In men, 33.3% said politics and social issues are not important to them at all; the rest of the interest was equally distributed across all options. As with women, most interest in these topics was limited to men 19–22 years and those over 35 years. Religion, though, was very or extremely important to 75% to these respondents; none claimed that religion is not important to them at all.

Reversely, all those who claimed the image represents Islamic views (n=23) were 87% Muslims, 8.7% ‘Other’, and 4.3% Christians. These respondents had lived most of their lives in a metropolis

(26.1%) or in a small town (21.7%). Of all these respondents, 26.1% saw the image as very positive (33.3% of women and 23.5% of men), and 17.4% as somewhat positive (16.7% of women and 17.6% of men). Most positive ratings were given by men and women aged 15–26 years. In women, 66.7% claimed that politics and social issues were not important to them at all. In men, 5.9% said politics and social issues are very important and with 11.8% it was extremely important to them; with men, most interest in these topics was limited to ages 15–18 and 23–26 years. Religion, though, was very or extremely important to 65.2% to these respondents.

Of those who saw the image representing Islamic values (n=14), 78.6% were men, 21.4% women. A majority (64.3%) identified themselves as Muslims, 28.6% as 'Other', and 7.1% as Christian. A clear majority had lived most of their lives in a metropolis (57.1%), then in large towns (21.4%), the rest in cities and small towns. Of all the respondents who associated the image with Islamic values (n=14), 7.1% rated the image as very positive (33.3% of women but none of the men), and 21.4% as somewhat positive (66.7% of women and only 9.1% of men) on the Likert scale. None of these women rated the image negatively at all, whereas all male age cohorts except those aged 15–18 years rated the image as very negative. None of the women were at all interested in politics and social issues. With men, politics and social issues were moderately important to 27.3% (only those over 35 years) and extremely important to 9.1% (only ages 23–26). Religion was very or extremely important at all to 64.3%, and not important at all to 35.7%.

7.5. Cross-examination of all positive evaluations and their demographics

Next, I will analyse the similarities and differences of the demographic details of respondents among those who rated and/or evaluated the Salafi-Jihadi imagery positively. This more in-depth analysis will show what, if any, characteristics rise up as significant markers. I look at commonalities between those who rated all four or minimum, three images, positively.

Positive ratings across all four images: demographics and evaluations

In the survey, there were several respondents who consistently responded positively to images depicting different Salafi-Jihadist themes. However, only very few (n=3) rated all four Salafi-Jihadi -themed images as somewhat or very positive: they were all male, aged 19–22 (33.3%) and 23–26 years (66.7%). They identified themselves as 66.7% Muslim, 33.3% 'Other', and they had all lived most of their lives in a small town. They were all single and employed, and 66.7% had a university education, and 33.3% an elementary school education.

These respondents (n=3) all rated image 5 (Salafi-Jihadist rebel militant soldiers on the frontline) as very positive, and the result was the same (100%) with the image 10 (Kalashnikov and the Qur'an).

Opinions varied slightly with images 19 (ISIL fighters) and 23 (Jabhat al-Nusra fighters), where the results were the same: 66.7% of the respondents maintained that the images were very positive whereas 33.3% (aged 23–26 years) said it was somewhat positive.

The value judgements they associated with these images did vary significantly. Image 5 of the three Salafi-Jihadist soldiers evoked the themes of freedom, aesthetics, and Western values equally divided in this group. With image 10 of the Kalashnikov and the Qur'an, the themes associated with the image were dishonour, Islamic values, and Western values equally divided. With image 19 of the ISIL fighters as well as image 23 of the Jabhat al-Nusra fighters, the themes they had given the picture were dishonour, freedom, and Western values all equally.

Positive ratings across three images: demographics and evaluations

There were more of those who had rated three out of the four Salafi-Jihadi -themed images as somewhat or very positive (n=6). This group excludes those who had rated all four images positively. A majority of these respondents were between ages 15–26 years (66.7%), and only a third of them were men (33.3.%). They were all Muslims, and most of them had lived a large portion of their lives in a metropolis (33.3%); the rest were equally divided between other habitation types. Half of the men were single whereas only 25% of the women were unmarried. The amount of employed, students, and unemployed was the same in all categories (33.3% each), but only women were unemployed (50% of all women). Most of this group had a secondary degree (66.7%) but only 16.7% had a university degree.

Out of these respondents, they all rated images 19 (ISIL fighters) and 23 (Jabhat al-Nusra fighters) as somewhat or very positive. Women all rated the image of ISIL fighters as somewhat positive, but with the image of Jabhat al-Nusra fighters, there were also women (all aged over 35 years) who rated it as very positive (50% of all women). Men were equally divided between somewhat and very positive with both of these images. Image 5 (Salafi-Jihadi fighters) created more division in ratings: here all women over 35 years rated the image as very or somewhat negative, whereas half of the men rated it as very negative (50%), and the rest opted out from rating it. With image 10 (Kalashnikov and the Qur'an), assessments were at either extreme: in total, 16.7% rated the image very negative, 66.7% as very positive (16.7%, all women, refused to answer). All men rated the image as very positive; they were all aged 15–26-years-old. Only women aged 15–18 rated this image as very negative, the rest as very positive.

The value judgements these respondents associated with these images varied significantly. Image 5 of the three Salafi-Jihadist soldiers were associated mostly with oppression (33.3.%), but also with

freedom, heroism, intolerance, and Western values, which divided respondents equally among them. With image 5, men aged 15–18 years chose freedom (50% of all men) and men aged 23–26 years chose oppression (50% of all men). Women were equally divided between the values except that none of them chose freedom as the value or theme: women over 35 years of age chose negative values (oppression and intolerance) whereas women aged 15–18 chose Western values, women aged 19–22 associated heroism with the image.

With image 10 of the Kalashnikov and the Qur'an, the themes chosen by respondents were aesthetics, freedom, intolerance, and Islamic values. Most of the respondents (33.3% each) associated Islamic values or freedom to this image, aesthetics and dishonour were also equally divided (16.7% each). Only women aged 15–18 years claimed the image had to do with intolerance, whereas 50% of all women (aged 19–22 and over 35 years) associated it with freedom, then with Islamic values (25% of all women, all aged over 35 years). Men only saw aesthetics or Islamic values in the image: those aged 15–18 years linked the image only to aesthetics (50% of all men) whereas men aged 23–26 linked it to Islamic values (50% of all men).

With image 19 of the ISIL fighters, themes associated by respondents were freedom (50% all respondents), heroism (16.7%) and oppression (16.7%); some of those who had rated it as positive chose not to attach a value judgement to it. All men saw the image as representing freedom. Women were equally divided between all values or themes: those aged 15–26 years only chose positive values.

The values attached to image 23 with Jabhat al-Nusra fighters were all positive or cultural values: freedom, heroism, and Islamic values. All men associated the image with freedom. Half of the women linked Islamic values to the image, 25.0% (women aged 19–22) with heroism, 25% (women over 35 years) with freedom.

7.6. Analysis of qualitative data

Many respondents wanted to express their opinions and feelings relating to the survey questions, the images, and the purpose of the survey in general. In value judgements, the most popular value or theme attached to these four Salafi-Jihadi images was freedom. Out of all respondents (n=191), the mean average of freedom as the value was 7.4% in men, 7.2% in women of all ages. Among those who rated even one image as positive (n=36), 15.4% of men and 20% of women of all ages attached freedom as the central theme or value of these Salafi-Jihadist images.

Some respondents also chose to write down their comments and opinions on the survey itself, and these comments were as follows.

In image 5 (Salafi-Jihadist fighters), there were the following comments on the image:

- *"Bad people killing innocent." (Male, 35+, Muslim, secondary school, married, employed, large town; rated very negative.)*
- *"Default."* تخلف *(Female, 35+, Muslim, university educated, married, employed, large town; rated very negative.)*
- *"Represents Islam."* يمثل الاسلام *(Male, 27–30, 'Other', university educated, single, unemployed, metropolis; rated very negative.)*
- *"I felt the misrepresentation of Islam and its portrayal of a bloody religion."* شعرت بتشويه صورة الاسلام و تصويره ب الدين الدموي *(Female, 19–22, Muslim, university educated, single, student, metropolis; rated very negative.)*
- *"Ignorance."* جهل *(Male, 15–18, Muslim, university educated, student, single, metropolis; rated very negative.)*

In image 10 (Kalashnikov and the Qur'an), the following comments were made:

- *"Freedom, intolerance." (Male, 31–34, Muslim, university educated, single, employed, city; rated "don't want to answer").*
- *"Islamic values. If it is for God's sake."* إن كان في سبيل الله. *(Female, 35+, Muslim, university educated, married, unemployed, city; rated very positive.)*
- *"Misleading."* مضلل. *(Male, 35+, Muslim, university educated, single, employed, metropolis; rated "don't want to answer").*
- *"Linking religion to weapons has false connotations on the reality of religion…".* ربط الدين بالسلاح أصبح له مؤشرات مغالطة لحقيقة الدين ... *(Male, 27–30, Muslim, university educated, single, employed, metropolis; rated somewhat negative.)*
- *"Religion should not be linked to arms."* لا يجب ان يرتبط الدين بالسلاح. *(Female, 35+, Muslim, university educated, married, employed, large town; rated very negative.)*
- *"Bad representation of religion."* تمثيل سيء للدين. *(Female, 27–30, Muslim, university educated, single, employed, metropolis; rated somewhat negative.)*
- *"Stereotyping." (Female, 23–26, Muslim, university educated, single, unemployed, metropolis; rated very negative.)*
- *"Misconceptions."* مفاهيم مغلوطة. *(Female, 27–30, Muslim, university educated, single, employed, metropolis rated very negative.)*
- *"I don't know the significance of the picture."* لا ادري المغزى من الصورة. *(Male, 23–26, Muslim, university educated, single, student, metropolis; rated "don't want to answer".)*
- *"Is there a link between the presence of the gun and the Qur'an?"* هل هناك رابط بين وجود السلاح والقرآن؟ *(Male, 23–26, 'Other', university educated, single, employed, metropolis; rated "don't want to answer".)*
- *"Islam is not a bloody religion and this image tries to reverse it."* الاسلام ليس دين دموي و هذه الصورة تحاول عكس ذلك. *(Female, 19–22, Muslim, university educated, single, student, metropolis; rated very negative.)*

- *“Offensive.” هجومي. (Male, 15–18, Christian, secondary school educated, student, single, large city; rated somewhat negative.)*
- *“Negative stereotype about specific religion.” (Male, 23–26, ‘Other’, university educated, single, employed, metropolis; rated somewhat negative.)*

In image 19 (ISIL fighters), the following comments were made:

- *“They use religion in wars with shame.” بيستخدموا الدين بالحروب بصورة بتخزي (Female, 19–22, Muslim, university educated, single, student, large town; rated somewhat negative.)*
- *“Depicting religion [Islam] as a bloody religion.” تصوير الدين على انه دين دموي (Female, 19–22, Muslim, university educated, single, unemployed, metropolis; rated very negative.)*

The following comments were made in image 23 (Jabhat al-Nusra fighters):

- *“If it is really in defence of the religion, mixed.” إن كان حقا دفاعا عن الدين مخالطة. (Woman, 35+, Muslim, university educated, married, employed, city; rated very positive).*
- *“Portraying Islam as terrorism and bloody.” (Female, 19–22, Muslim, university educated, single, student, metropolis; rated very negative.)*

In addition to comments made on the survey itself, some respondents commented on the survey as well as some of its images, and their feelings during or after answering.

- *I think the ISIS pictures are funny. I chose 5 because I think they are good with weapons. I don’t think their ideology is necessarily all evil, but I don’t like the sharia bit or their ideology. (Man, 23–26 years, unemployed)*
- *I had no problems or issues filling in the survey. I think the images were positive and this survey represented our Jordanian society and our culture very well.* (Woman, 19–22 years, employed)
- *I don’t like these pictures; they are propaganda and they give the wrong picture of our culture and religion. (Woman, 15–18, student)*
- *I am scared to answer this survey because there are ISIS-pictures in it. (Man, 15–18, student)*
- *The image of Mosul [image from the liberation of Manbij] is propaganda. Is the woman giving up Islam? (Woman, 15–18, student)*
- *I am afraid these results and my answers will be used for some other purpose. (Man, 15–18, student)*
- *Why do you ask us these things? We live in peace with these people [Salafi-Jihadists] in this area. We don’t want to disrupt that peace. (Man, 23–26)*
- *When I saw the picture of ISIS, I had to ask [the research assistants] if this information is being gathered for private use or for something else. (Man, 35+, employed)*
- *The picture of Jihadi propaganda was not nice, not good at all. I really don’t like it. (Woman, 15–18)*

- *I think there is something fishy going on here. (Man, 23–26)*
- *This survey is prejudiced. (Woman, 19–22)*
- *Why are there so many pictures of ISIS in this survey? (Woman, 23–26)*
- *Was the [Muslim Brotherhood] image of Shias or Sunnis? That makes a difference. I also gave ISIS a 5 [very positive] because I like their guns. (Man, 15–18)*
- *Is the Jordanian army now going to arrest me? (Man, 19–22)*
- *My friend [older man standing beside him] told me I shouldn't answer this survey because he suspects you are from the Jordanian security police. (Man, 15–18)*
- *These images are all very political in their way. I suspect you will get many different types of answers for your study. (Man and woman, 35+).*

Especially university educated respondents were more eager to offer additional information on the value they chose or choose to write out their opinions on the images. Most thought that the Salafi-Jihadist images were propaganda meant to either defame Islam and Muslims and portray the religion itself and the believers as accepting of terrorism. Many commented that Islam or any religion should not be connected to weapons or violence, but at the same time many said that the Salafi-Jihadist fighter images represent the false image many have of Islam even among Muslims. Comments such as these were made by persons living in all types of habitation areas, and there was no clear indication that people felt forced to comment or justify their answers even though most were surrounded by a group of people, usually friends, family, or even co-workers. There was lively conversation among many respondents and my research assistants afterwards, and many said they look forward to learning the results eventually to see how their views differ from the rest of the country.

Despite the great deal of negativity towards Salafi-Jihadist imagery, there were also positive comments. Some men aged 15–18 and 23–26 years said that they liked the Salafi-Jihadist fighter images because they like their weapons. Some even chose to justify the use of violence by saying that it was acceptable if it was connected to the protection of Islam; this trend was mostly visible with women over 35 years. To some, sectarianism played a part in how positively they viewed the images: it was important for some to know whether the image portrayed Sunnis or Shias.

8. Discussion

All in all, there were 36 respondents or 18.6% of all respondents (n=194) who indicated that they viewed even one of the four images studied in any positive way. I will attempt to analyse their results and demographics, and put them into perspective in the larger Jordanian, and global, outlooks.

8.1. Gender and age differences in positive appreciation of Salafi-Jihadist imagery

As Marcia (1966) and Meeus et al (2012) noted, 23% of 16–20-year-olds are still searching for their identities, which makes them more susceptible than other age cohorts to outside influences and propaganda. In some cases, this search for an identity can, however, extend beyond late adolescence to early adulthood, especially in males, who are more indecisive in their personality and preference development, which can then manifest as depressive symptoms and delinquency. Young brains also need instant gratification more often because their cognitive and emotional processes as well as an understanding of consequences are less developed. In addition, Salafis have had significant influence in Jordan for several decades, which has given Salafi interpretations time to affect the perceptions of Islam, popular folk tales, and even historical facts such as the creation of Israel, which is one of the most important historical facts which has affected the Muslim world, Jordan included. Political and religious propaganda has permeated the Jordanian scene, especially since there are indications that the Muslim Brotherhood has had a significant influence in the Jordanian education system. As Ellul (1973, pp. 62-88) and Brown (1963) put it: education can be categorised as sociological propaganda since school books and curricula can be used to drive ideological agendas. Jordan has also been a sanctuary to many Salafi theologians since the 1980s, which, together with its large Palestinian refugee population, a suitable semi-authoritarian political environment, and decreasing economic and social circumstances have led to the rise of more militant versions of Salafism in the country.

Image-specific appreciations and their demographics

The first image of the survey with unidentified Salafi-Jihadist fighters (image 5) received least positive ratings out of all four images (4.3% total). These positive ratings were given especially by 15–18-year-olds, 19–22-year-olds, and 23–26 years: in total, 16.7% of 15–18-year-old women, 12.5% of 19–22-year-old women, and 5.9% of 19–22-year-old men rated the image as somewhat positive. Very positive ratings were restricted to men but they, too, were aged 19–22 years (5.9% very positive) and 23–26 years (8.3% very positive).

The Kalashnikov and the Qur'an image (image 10) was rated most positively (17.7% total) in all age cohorts but especially those in cohorts 15–18 and 23–26-year-olds where the percentage of respondents was highest. Out of all 15–18-year-olds, 7.4% rated the image as somewhat positive, 22.2% rated the image as very positive. All in all, the percentage was this high mainly because over a third of all men aged 15–18 had rated the image as positive. With age cohort 19–22, over a third had once again rated the image as positive (25% somewhat positive, 18.8% very positive), whereas there was more variation in similarly aged women whose positive ratings were evenly distributed (6.3% each). A quarter of all men aged 23–26 also rated the image positively (8.3% of the cohort

somewhat positively, 16.7% of the cohort very positively). Despite the amount of positive ratings, the largest number of respondents, a total of 17.1%, opted not to rate the image by choosing the “don’t know / don’t want to answer” -option, but only 3.6% refused to answer it at all.

Positive image ratings only: demographics of four pictures										
Negative ratings removed from table for clarity. % of all ratings (1-5) shows the percentage of responses in relation to all ratings.			Image 5 (Salafi-Jihadi fighters) n=186		Image 10 (Kalashnikov and Qur’an) n=187		Image 19 (ISIL fighters) n=177		Image 23 (Jabhat al-Nusra) n=182	
			positive		**positive**		**positive**		**positive**	
			somewhat	**very**	**somewhat**	**very**	**somewhat**	**very**	**somewhat**	**very**
Female	15-18	% within Age	16,7%			14,3%	16,7%		28,6%	
		% of all ratings (1-5)	1,3%			1,2%	1,3%		2,6%	
	19-22	% within Age	12,5%		6,3%	6,3%	6,7%		7,1%	
		% of all ratings (1-5)	2,5%		1,2%	1,2%	1,3%		1,3%	
	23-26	% within Age								
		% of all ratings (1-5)								
	27-30	% within Age								
		% of all ratings (1-5)								
	31-34	% within Age	7,7%							7,1%
		% of Total	1,3%							1,3%
	35+	% of all ratings (1-5)			5,9%	17,6%	11,8%			11,8%
		% of Total			1,2%	3,7%	2,6%			2,6%
	Total	**% within gender**	**5,0%**		**2,5%**	**6,2%**	**5,3%**		**3,9%**	**3,9%**
Male	15-18	% within Age			10,0%	25,0%	5,3%		15,8%	
		% of all ratings (1-5)			1,9%	4,7%	1,0%		2,9%	
	19-22	% within Age	5,9%	5,9%	25,0%	18,8%		6,3%	6,3%	6,3%
		% of all ratings (1-5)	0,9%	0,9%	3,8%	2,8%		1,0%	1,0%	1,0%
	23-26	% within Age		8,3%	8,3%	16,7%	4,3%	8,7%	4,2%	8,3%
		% of all ratings (1-5)		1,9%	1,9%	3,8%	1,0%	2,0%	1,0%	1,9%
	27-30	% within Age			7,1%	7,1%				
		% of all ratings (1-5)			0,9%	0,9%				
	31-34	% within Age				4,5%				
		% of all ratings (1-5)				0,9%				
	35+	% within Age			20,0%	10,0%				
		% of all ratings (1-5)			1,9%	0,9%				
	Total	**% within gender**	**0,9%**	**2,8%**	**10,4%**	**14,2%**	**2,0%**	**3,0%**	**4,8%**	**2,9%**
Total	15-18	% within Age	4,0%		7,4%	22,2%	8,0%		19,2%	
		% of all ratings (1-5)	0,5%		1,1%	3,2%	1,1%		2,7%	
	19-22	% within Age	9,1%	3,0%	15,6%	12,5%	3,2%	3,2%	6,7%	3,3%
		% of all ratings (1-5)	1,6%	0,5%	2,7%	2,1%	0,6%	0,6%	1,1%	0,5%
	23-26	% within Age		5,0%	5,1%	10,3%	2,9%	5,7%	2,7%	5,4%
		% of all ratings (1-5)		1,1%	1,1%	2,1%	0,6%	1,1%	0,5%	1,1%
	27-30	% within Age			3,8%	3,8%				
		% of all ratings (1-5)			0,5%	0,5%				
	31-34	% within Age	2,8%			2,8%				2,7%
		% of all ratings (1-5)	0,5%			0,5%				0,5%
	35+	% within Age			11,1%	14,8%	7,4%			7,4%
		% of all ratings (1-5)			1,6%	2,1%	1,1%			1,1%
	Total	**% of Total**	**2,7%**	**1,6%**	**7,0%**	**10,7%**	**3,4%**	**1,7%**	**4,4%**	**3,3%**

Image 19 of the ISIL fighters had most people refusing to answer (8.7% of all respondents) whereas 11.3% chose the option of “don’t know / don’t want to answer”. Despite these opt outs, percentage-wise the positive ratings were similar with image 5 since positive ratings totalled at 5.1%. Highest positive ratings within an age cohort, even only as somewhat positive, were with 15–18-year-old women (16.7% of the age cohort), then with women over 35 years old (11.8% of the cohort). Out of women in cohort 19–22 years, 6.7% rated the image as somewhat positive. Once again, none of the women rated the image as very positive. In men, highest rating was among 23–26-year-olds, where a total of 13.0% of the age cohort claimed that the image was in any way positive (4.3% somewhat,

8.7% very positive). Men aged 15–18 years rated the image as somewhat positive three times less than women of similar age, at 5.3% of the cohort.

The image of Jabhat al-Nusra fighters (image 23) was the highest positively rated image which depicted human beings. This time, significantly higher than with other images, 19.2% in total, those aged 15–18 rated it as somewhat positive, women (28.6%) more than men (15.8%). Second highest positives were in age cohort 19–22 years, where 11% in total rated it as somewhat or very positive. Once again, none of the women rated the image as very positive, but men aged 19–22 and 23–26 did (6.3% and 8.3%, respectively). Interestingly, with all images depicting Salafi-Jihadist fighters (images 5, 19, and 23) none of the men over the age of 27 years rated it in any way positively. Also, none of the women aged 27–30 rated the images in any way positively. Women over 35 years were outliers since in every image other than the first image of the Salafi-Jihadist fighters, approximately 11.8% of their age cohort rated the images as positive. With women over 35 years, this percentage was double in the image of the Kalashnikov and the Qur'an.

Similarities and their causes

All in all, men in age cohorts 19–26 years and women in age cohorts 15–22 years rated violent Salafi-Jihadist propaganda images most positively. These age cohorts coincide with the previously examined ages where identity formation, personal crises, and high interest in outside opinions matter most. Since 23% of 12–20-year-olds are still searching for their identities and thus more susceptible to outside influences, 7% of them intensely susceptible (Meeus et al, 2012), then the average results of this survey support this. The average positivity (either somewhat or very positive) to the four research images among 15–18-year-old women was 19%, among similarly aged men 14%. In the following age cohort, in average 9.7% of 19–22-year-old women rated all the images as positive, but the average positiveness of 19–22-year-old men was significantly higher at 18.6%. Women in the same age cohorts very rarely chose to rate images as very positive, so definitive data on whether they could be categorised as intensely susceptible to influencing cannot be confirmed in this research. It is possible young women were more careful in voicing their opinions, but it may also be that these traditional images of male fighters appealed to them differently than in men. Since women over 35 years displayed more positive appreciation towards imagery of Salafi-Jihadist fighters, it may indicate that they have adopted a Salafi, even a Salafi-Jihadi ideology, and are more accepting towards the use of violence to protect their beliefs.

Men aged 15–18 were also more hesitant of expressing strong positivity towards controversial images. However, 9.3% of men aged 19–22 rated the images as very positive, in average, thus making the connection to intense susceptibility plausible. Since most people aged 19–22 have reached identity

commitment, it could be said that these 9.3% of men in this age cohort have been or are still being significantly influenced by Salafi-Jihadist materials in their identity searching moratorium stages.

When these numbers of positive ratings are translated from percentages to actual population sizes, there is a possibility that 6.7% of women may be more tolerant or perhaps supportive of Salafi-Jihadist propaganda. In men, 10.2% of survey respondents said they rate even one of these images as positive. Counted together, 8.5% of the respondents, male and female, can be assessed to have a higher preference for Salafi-Jihadist imagery and thus, a lower threshold for possible radicalisation. Put on to a larger scale within the 9.5 million population of Jordan (United Nations Jordan, 2019), this would mean that there is a possibility that 807 500 persons in Jordan may conceivably be inclined to see Salafi-Jihadism or its highly effective propaganda as a positive thing.

8.2. Other factors explaining positive appreciation differences of Salafi-Jihadist imagery

Research shows that a person's environment and life experiences mould their identity and values. Violent Salafi-Jihadist propaganda and gruesome sectarian violence has been circulating in world medias and especially on social media almost continuously since the early 2000s, which means that people in their late adolescence and early adulthood have been exposed to this imagery almost their entire lives. This passive and occasionally active contact to gory Salafi-Jihadist propaganda affects especially male viewers with low capabilities for empathy, and high sensation-seeking and aggressive personality traits (Hoffner & Levine, 2005).

Eventually, personal traits combined with structural grievances can cause an individual to become increasingly narrow-minded, and this is when some people can turn to violence as a legitimate tool to force the surrounding world to follow their homogenous worldview. Social relationships and networks are also important in the facilitation process toward radicalisation especially in cases where the true goals of the network and the ideology it supports is unclear and possible consequence difficult to comprehend. In these cases, especially those young people who rely on the inputs of their friends and family to form their identities and value judgements are in danger of being exposed to radical views. Still, men are not the only ones at risk; women are important for extremist ideologies such as Salafi-Jihadism because they maintain and propagate the ideology and raise their children according to their ideology.

Employment, education, and marital status as a risk factor in Jordan

In country like Jordan where unemployment rates in young people are high (around 30%), a lack of prospects can leave especially young men pliable to radical influences. Traditional worldviews especially in smaller communities and their outlook on the traditional hegemonic masculinity traits

such as high earnings, and heterosexuality and its expressions peers may lead to some believing that liberal notions are to blame for their lack of success. Unlike in Europe where many ISIL recruits have been mainly young men with limited education, employment, or social status (Abbas, 2017, p. 56), the profiles of Salafi-Jihadist terrorists and foreign fighters in Jordan has been more complex, and sympathisers, supporters, and activists can be found in all social strata in Jordan. Recent research also suggests that higher levels of education correlate with a greater likelihood of joining a violent group (Gambetta & Hertog, 2016) because university education in places like Jordan no longer equals a well-paying job for the rest of your life. Thus, joining an extremist group can start to seem like a justifiable way to earn a living.

Out of all respondents, those with a secondary or tertiary education diploma appraised Salafi-Jihadist images more positively than those with only a primary school education. Only 4.1% of all survey respondents (=191) had graduated elementary school, 27.8% had a secondary school diploma, and 67% of the respondents a university education. Among the positive rating respondents (n=36), most had a secondary degree (63.9%) or a university degree (33.3%); only 2.8% had only finished elementary school. Among the respondents who rated any of the images as positive, the number of elementary school diplomas closely matches the number among all respondents. However, the clearest difference is among higher education levels, where it seems that having a university degree decreases the chance of rating a Salafi-Jihadist image as positive. Some of this decrease may be attributed to a higher level of media literacy and critical analyses of what they consume on medias. Still, self-censorship in this survey among university graduates is possible because university graduates may be more aware of Jordan's strict anti-terrorism legislation and its consequences. An interest in politics and social issues cannot directly be considered an explanation of higher awareness in university students since in this survey, the majority of self-reported interest in these topics was with those with only an elementary school diploma (62.5% of elementary educated were very or extremely interested in these themes; only 16.5% in other education levels).

Employment situation did not significantly affect how violent Salafi-Jihadist images were assessed by either gender. Out of all survey respondents (n=191), 18.8% identified themselves as unemployed, 61.3% as employed, and 19.9% as students. Men were less likely to be unemployed than women (19.4% and 80.6%, respectively). With the group who rated any of the Salafi-Jihadi images as positive, unemployment was at 19.4%, 63.9% employed, 16.7% were students. These numbers show no clear difference between respondents who rated the images as positive or negative. As such, it would seem employment status alone does not distinctively correlate with positive or negative evaluations of Salafi-Jihadist propaganda imagery.

Marital status of respondents with positive views on Salafi-Jihadist imagery did not seem to be a significant factor on its own either. Out of all survey respondents (n=191), 71.7% were single, 28.3% married, whereas out of the positive respondents (n=36), only 63.9% were single. More significant a factor may be cultural or religious spheres which are against pre-marital sexual relationships and often even dating. My survey responses showed that most men get married around the age of 27–30 years (35.1% in that age) whereas marriage ages for women settle more equally along all age cohorts. Sexual frustration linked to possible un(der)employment and lack of funds combined to the inability to express other traditional hegemonic masculinity traits may lead to men younger than this to search for answers in radical thoughts and groups, or even make drastic decisions of joining a Salafi-Jihadist group in order to earn money. Since younger men and women under the general age of marriage showed heightened positive preferences to Salafi-Jihadi imagery, it is also possible that the hope of getting a family makes Salafi-Jihadi promises more enticing.

Effects of habitation on positive appreciation in Jordan

Exposure and higher likelihoods of becoming radicalised happen everywhere, not just in marginalised neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, larger urban population centres discourage extremism more effectively because of their heterogeneity and diversity. More homogenous non-urban populations can move to extremes faster because of their lack of exposure to intellectual and ideological. Urban areas also create more economic growth, which generate more progressive values in its populace. (Wilkinson, 2018). The prevalence of pro-Salafi-Jihadi spokespersons in certain areas such as Zarqa, Ma'an, and Irbid in Jordan also adds the risk of acclimatisation to the ideology and violent expressions against those who believe differently.

Respondents who had spent most of their lives in small villages or towns evaluated Salafi-Jihadist images more positively than those who had lived in larger settlements. In the survey, 39.3% of respondent men and women (n=191) had lived a significant part of their lives in the metropolis of Amman with over 2.1 million other residents. Only 3.6% of women and 11.1% of men said they live in a large city such as Irbid (557 000 inhabitants) or Zarqa (729 000 inhabitants). Beyond those living in the metropolis of Amman, the rest of the respondents lived in smaller urban or rural areas around these large centres. When comparing the results of the entire respondent population to those who saw even one of the images as positive (n=36), the highest number of respondents (69.5%) had spent most of their lives in smaller settlements such as villages or towns (village 19.4%, small town 16.7%, large town 33.3%), the rest in larger settlements (cities 13.9%, large cities 8.3%, metropolis 8.3%). The results of this survey confirm that respondents who come from smaller habitation settlements in Jordan were more likely to rate any of the Salafi-Jihadi images as positive. Thus, habitation,

especially in the forms of homogeneous worldviews and unacceptance of diversity, can be seen as a contributing factor in possible radicalisation.

Religiosity as an explaining factor in positive ratings in Jordan

Some individuals may see jihad or religiously-sanctioned warfare as an individual obligation incumbent upon all Muslims, not just as a collective obligation carried out by legitimate representatives of the Muslim community (Hamid & Dar, 2016). According to the Arab Barometer (2020), the levels of religiosity in Jordan have risen from 73.4% in 2007 to 92.7% in 2018. In addition to generally rising levels of religiosity, many born-Muslims rediscover their faith in their late teens or early adulthood (Inge, 2016, p. 66). At ages 12–20 and up to 26 years, this spiritual awakening may occur simultaneously with vulnerable identity formation and identity crisis stages. Rediscovering one's religion may lead to a preoccupation of following rules, finding answers, and denouncing differences of opinion and religion. Still, in most cases where a person has a deeper understanding of their religion and its tenets through education, recruitment into Salafi-Jihadist groups is more unlikely (Brockmeyer et al, 2018, p. 7). In fact, only 5.1% of foreign recruits in ISIL said religion is an important part of their daily life.

Very high levels of self-assessed religiosity potentially contributed to the positive appreciation of violent Salafi-Jihadist images, especially among women. From a media consumption perspective, women of all ages who said they consume principally religious content mostly rated the four Salafi-Jihadist propaganda images negatively. However, corresponding men, especially those aged 15–22 and 27–30, were more likely to assess these images positively. In this study, 94.4% of the respondents with positive views (n=36) were Muslims, 5.6% identified their religion as 'Other'. Among all survey respondents (n=191), Muslims comprised 80.4%, Christians 6.7%, and 'Other' 11.3% of respondents. Religion was very or extremely important to 80.6% of these respondents but almost exclusively among women; men comprised only 7.6% of this total percentage. When compared to all survey respondents (n=191), 59.8% of them claimed that religion is very or extremely important to them (very or extremely important in 55.9% of women, 61.1% in men).

It would be incorrect to say that simply being a Muslim makes a person more vulnerable to Salafi-Jihadist propaganda based on these survey results. In a Muslim-majority country like Jordan, this result would be the most likely outcome no matter what. More interestingly, it can be said that it is unlikely to view agitational Salafi-Jihadist images in any way positively when you are of a minority faith like Christianity in Jordan. However, appreciating this kind of imagery does not necessarily have anything to do with your faith since also those who self-reported their religion as 'Other' saw some of these images as positive. The level of religiosity in men seems to follow a similar pattern in these

survey results as with information gathered from ISIL recruits: only a very small percentage of men, 70% of which were aged 15–18 and 19–22 years, said religion is very or extremely important to them.

It is inconclusive how religiosity affects radicalisation if only the results of this survey are used as a reference point. It would seem that more religious young men and women 15–26 years are most vulnerable to radicalisation since all of them (n=36) reported that religion is very or extremely important to them. High self-reported religiosity levels in women over 31 also seems to be a possible contributing factor to more positive assessments of agitational Salafi-Jihadi propaganda, but with these age cohorts, these women less at risk of being recruited but rather, they can be used to propagate a violent extremist ideology to their families.

Media use and positive ratings of Salafi-Jihadi imagery in Jordan

Social media has been a highly successful channel for sharing and consuming violent extremist ideologies such as Salafi-Jihadism. Thus, the more social media is consumed, the more likely it is that inspirational propaganda of terrorist groups such as ISIL proliferates into the masses. Stirring and emotionally attractive agitational propaganda distributed by violent extremist groups may push young, rebellious and excitable, yet psychologically immature people to see they can be special and change the world by joining a group like ISIL. In addition, those with less education and information have been proven to be easier to agitate (Ellul, 1973, p. 74). It also has to be considered that young people aged 12–20 years are most at risk of adopting borrowed identities and views (Meeus et al, 2012). Older generations use social media to report on their lives, but the young live their lives on social media. This distinction is another reason for why Salafi-Jihadi propaganda on social media has so strongly affected younger generations.

Out of all survey respondents (n=191) only 11% said they do not use social media at all (33.3% women, 66.6% men). Among those who viewed any Salafi-Jihadi images as positive (n=36), this number was exactly the same. Out of all survey respondents, politics and society content on social media interested only 14.1% of all respondents especially men of all ages (66.7%). In the positive group, a quarter (25%) were interested in these themes, mostly among women (40%) instead of men. Religion-related material on social media appealed only to 2.1% of all respondents (75% men) whereas this number had only increased among the positive responses group: none of the women claimed to follow only religion-related content on social media at all. Highest percentages of religion-related social media use were with men aged 15–18 years (28.6% of the cohort) and 19–22 (14.3% of the cohort) but also with men aged 27–30 years (50% of the cohort).

Because social media use or consumption of religion or politics-related content alone does not point to radicalisation, the use of social media must be examined together with other vulnerabilities. Since social media consumption in Jordan is so high and predicted numbers have been confirmed in this survey study, social media is a very effective way of disseminating Salafi-Jihadist propaganda. Clear correlations or causations cannot be drawn between specific content use on social media and, for example, age cohorts or genders. However, the survey results show that men at vulnerable ages at 15–22 years were more likely to follow mainly religion-related content on social media. In susceptible ages such as these, it is easier for them to come in contact with radical or extremist propaganda especially if they are not exposed to many other types of opinions or views in their daily lives.

8.3. Further discussion on the results

Radical thoughts and extremist deeds do not unambiguously correlate with each other. Acceptance or positive associations to agitational propaganda do not automatically predict a person's current or future involvement with extremism. Positive value judgements of Salafi-Jihadi imagery also do not directly point to acceptance of real-life violence. Even the strongest correlations between two variables does not confirm a causation between them. Sympathy for an ideology differs from supporting it, and active work in advancing an extremist ideology differs greatly from both of these.

My survey results show that there are many individual and societal pressure points in Jordan which can exacerbate discontent in individuals. In moments of crises in an individual's life they are most vulnerable to outside pressure from ideas and ideologies offering easy or black and white solutions to all life's problems. In individuals, psychological and cognitive maturity is one important exposure point: the brains of young people are not mature enough to know better and they are dependent on social acceptance and dopamine flows. When put into the perspective of this survey, the ones to rate the Salafi-Jihadi images most positively (as very positive) were men and women aged 15–18 years, 19–22 years and 23–26 years. These age cohorts all coincide with the same psychological and cognitive maturity vulnerabilities, so it can be said that these age cohorts in Jordan are more at risk of either developing sympathies or becoming even more accepting of Salafi-Jihadist propaganda and the ideology it promotes. In older age cohorts, positive associations in women aged over 31 may suggest that they have been sympathetic to a more radical, even extremist outlook on Islam for a longer time. This possible sympathy can possibly mean that they are also more likely to raise their children to follow this way of thinking.

Positive ratings were lower with image 5 (Salafi-Jihadist rebels), possibly due to the fact that it was the first image of its kind and people were surprised by it and therefore anxious to answer it truthfully. Since numbers of people opting out from rating the image were highest with the image of the

Kalashnikov and the Qur'an (image 10) and the lowest with the image of the Salafi-Jihadist fighters (image 5), it does not seem respondents chose not to answer the image but rather, were more used to the imagery and perhaps more assured that their positive ratings could not be connected to them.

Mostly university educated respondents were keen to comment on the clear signs of religiously motivated propaganda in the four main survey images. However, some of the positive comments did reveal ideas and value judgements of individuals when it comes to sympathising with violent religious extremism: some justified the use of violence by saying that it was acceptable if it was connected to the protection of Islam; some contemplated on sectarianism as a possible reason for conflict. When looking at the value judgements or themes respondents attached these four images, freedom was the most associated positive value. People with positive ratings were twice as likely to attach freedom as a value to these images, which gives credence to the possibility that one main reason for acceptance or sympathy for these images and groups is that they are seen as freedom fighters for either Arabs, Jordanians, or Muslims. However, then there are also those young men who simply appreciated the fighters because of their prowess with weapons, which links their reasoning to the pitfalls of dopamine-seeking, adventure, and the need to make a difference in the world.

9. Final thoughts

There is no typical terrorist profile nor a typical pathway into radicalisation. Previous conclusions and models on radicalisation, violent extremism, and terrorism were made with relatively small representative samples. Now, with tens of thousands of foreign fighters and radicalised persons returning from various arenas, these models must be challenged and redone with larger samples. Extensive fieldwork is necessary in formulating more accurate representations of extremist pull-factors. In 2010, only 20% of terrorism and radicalisation-related research articles were based on new research; future will tell how much this has increased in a decade.

One of the challenges of my thesis was the gathering and analysis of valuable primary data. Inventing a survey in its entirety as well as a suitable methodology for conducting it in a foreign country with strict anti-terrorism laws and low levels of freedom of speech made the entire process a very arduous one. In addition, security concerns and ethical questions had to be satisfactorily answered and maintained at all times, which also required a lot of coordination and pre-planning. When the survey went live for testing, several potential respondents told us that they were afraid to answer the survey because they did not feel secure in answering the survey for fear that they or their choices could be later identified and used against them. This meant that early on, I also had to lower my expectations of getting a data sample size that would also fulfil the requirement of 95% confidence level as well

as a maximum 5% margin of error. In order to fulfil those requirements, possibly in future repeat surveys, the data sample size should be at least 385, which, under the existing current societal and political circumstances, is nearly impossible to achieve without far larger time, fiscal, and personnel resources.

In order to verify results and further examine correlations and possible causalities, the data I acquired in 2019 should be studied statistically in more detail. In this thesis, I was unable to produce complex statistics such as linear regression models to see how all the different independent and depend variables correlate with each other. This type of statistical analysis requires more in-depth knowledge of the SPSS programme I used to code and analyse the survey results. Identifying the most significant demographic variables via these more advanced statistical means would be beneficial and make them more accessible to other studies and analyses as well.

It would also be important to be able to repeat this survey with the same images a few years from now to see how the opinions and values of people living in Jordan have changed. It might predict how anti-terrorism legislation in Jordan is working and assess, how well counter-radicalism programmes are targeted in Jordan. Possible government approval in Jordan would be necessary since more extensive studies might be considered, under the anti-terrorism legislation of 2014, as intent of distributing terrorism-related material.

It would also be beneficial, for clarity's sake, to slightly change the image of the Kalashnikov and the Qur'an so that the weapon would be less modern, such as some type of a blade. This, depending on the responses, might either be linked directly to the battles of the Prophet and the ensuing Muslim conquests, or there might be a more immediate association of a blade and the Qur'an to Salafi-Jihadist terrorist groups like ISIL. Comparing these two types of weapons and their associations in the general public to specific themes or values would give valuable insight into how violent struggle portrayed both in the Islamic holy texts as well as in history books should be framed so that they do not encourage or radicalise people into extremism and violent action as a means to resolve political or religious disputes. Re-framing these narratives where violence and Islam are linked could, after a long period of time, help to increase the amount of non-violent dissension through grass-roots democratic movements.

In the future, it would also be interesting to continue with the data I already collected to see how the opinions of respondents correlate with other controversial images I had in my survey as the control images. This would give researchers a more insight into how persons with several different push

factors towards radicalisation or simply the enjoyment of violent Salafi-Jihadist imagery view different aspects of the society and its values.

There is also a lot of information that could be gleaned from the results pertaining to the other images used as controls in this survey. It would be interesting to delve deeper into topics such as traditional and non-traditional views of women, which have been one of the foci in the other image materials. Another view into women and their roles in Salafi-Jihadist ideology would be to cross-examine if there is any correlation between the positive views of Salafi-Jihadi fighters and views on women in the survey. Looking for significant variation between negative and positive views on liberal and more traditional examples of women might reveal patterns of deeper indoctrination which are not visible otherwise. Since my survey showed that women aged 31 years and over were very positive towards imagery of Salafi-Jihadist fighters, it could be that surveys such as this could indicate how many female supporters are raising their children according to this kind of ideology.

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Appendix 1: Images used in the survey

Thesis image 1: Jordanian taekwondo world champion Ahmad Abughaush. (Sburat, 8.6.2017)

Thesis image 2: Jordanian parliamentary elections 2016. (Williams, 20.9.2016)

Thesis image 3: Egyptian actress Rania Youssef and controversy about the indecency of the dress she wore at a Cairo Film Festival in 2018. (Times of India, 4.12.2018)

Thesis image 4: Protests by Palestinians at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. (Walsh, 13.10.2016)

Thesis image 5: Isis rebel militant soldiers on the frontline. (Arnett, 18.11.2014)

Thesis image 6: Project Runway Middle East (Fathy, 7.11.2017)

Thesis image 7: Palestinian girl reads the Quran. (Welt, 6.8.2018)

Thesis image 8: Footballer Mohamed Salah after a goal. (Ramdani, 25.2.2018)

Thesis image 9: Protests in Jordan in May-June 2018. (Darwish, 3.6.2018)

Thesis image 10: Quran and a Kalashnikov. (Dreuz.info, 13.1.2018)

Thesis image 11: A popular movie poster called The Fate of the Furious. (Simpson, 13.4.2017)

Thesis image 12: Kurdish peshmerga fighters in Syria. (Times of Israel, 30.10.2014)

Thesis image 13: Liberated women from Manbij take off their hijabs. (Cockburn, 12.6.2016)

Thesis image 14: Campaign against child marriage. (The National, 18.2.2016)

Thesis image 15: Protest march of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. (Hearst, 20.4.2016)

Thesis image 16: Syrian "White Helmets" saving people from the rubble of collapsed buildings in Idlib. (Alaawar, 26.8.2018)

Thesis image 17: Victorious Jordanian national women's football team. (Schneider, 3.5.2018)

Thesis image 18: Eid Blessing. (Dirnhuber, 21.8.2018)

Thesis image 19: ISIL soldiers (Al-Rai, 2014)

Thesis image 20: Kurdish female fighters in Syria. (McKernan, 4.1.2017)

Thesis image 21: Taxi protests in Jordan in 2017. (Ghazal, 26.9.2017)

Thesis image 22: Egyptian rapper Ahmad Makki (Al Ain News, 27.2.2018)

Thesis image 23: Jabhat al-Nusra group in Syria. (Rosenberg, 28.5.2016)

Thesis image 24: Traditional Palestinian wedding. (Daghlas, 28.7.2017)

Thesis image 25: Danish police officer investigated for hugging a niqabi during protest. (5Pillars, 27.9.2018)

Appendix 2: Charts and figures

Chart 1: Level of religiosity in MENA countries (Arab Barometer, 2020).

Q: Level of religiosity	2007	2011	2012-2014	2018
Algeria	54.9% religious 0.1% somewhat 12.7% not religious	21.5% religious 63.3% somewhat 15.2% not religious	24.2% religious 59.1% somewhat 8.2% not religious	27.5% religious 55.9% somewhat 15.4% not religious
Egypt	N/A	36.9% religious 60.1% somewhat 1.9% not religious	46.4% religious 47.3% somewhat 2.8% not religious	47.3% religious 39.9% somewhat 10.5% not religious
Iraq	N/A	36.3% religious 61.5% somewhat 2.2% not religious	38.9% religious 51.1% somewhat 5.3% not religious	49.6% religious 44.5% somewhat 5.5% not religious
Jordan	73.4% religious 0% somewhat 20% not religious	34.4% religious 59% somewhat 6.6% not religious	37.2% religious 57.9% somewhat 4.5% not religious	29.7% religious 63% somewhat 7% not religious
Morocco	72.6% religious 0% somewhat 9.9% not religious	N/A	36.1% religious 57.4% somewhat 2.9% not religious	39.7% religious 44.6% somewhat 12.7% not religious

Chart 2: Democracy is a Western form of government that is not compatible with Islam. (Arab Barometer, 2020)

Q: Democracy is a Western form of government that is not compatible with Islam.	2006-2009	2012-2014	2016-2017
Algeria **(agree + strongly agree)**	24.3%	23.6%	29.4%
Egypt **(agree + strongly agree)**	15.4%[66]	5.4%	11.8%
Iraq **(agree + strongly agree)**	24%	22.7%	N/A
Jordan **(agree + strongly agree)**	25.8%	36.7%	19.2%
Morocco **(agree + strongly agree)**	16.4%	22%	9.5%

[66] Neither Egypt nor Iraq participated in the Wave I in 2006-2009. These numbers are from Wave II conducted in 2010-2011.

Chart 3: Male fighter characteristics with ISI and ISIL.

Male fighter characteristics		ISIL mean% 2013–2014 **(Brockmeyer et al, 2018, p. 25)**	ISI mean% 2006–2007 **(Felter & Fishman, 2007)**
Age [at time of arrival]	< or = 20 years 21–30 years 31+ years	13.8% 67.6% 23.8%	11.4% 78.2% 9.4%[67]
Education	primary secondary tertiary	17.7% 51.7% 30.6%	not available
Self-proclaimed religiosity level	low medium high	68.7% 26.2% 5.1%	not available
Previous occupation	no job, student, retired, illegal craftsperson, manual or agriculture shop owner, employee manager, professional worker	27.2% 11.9% 31.1% 20.6%	42.6%[68] 19.2% 25% 12.1%
Previous Jihad experience		11%	not available
Desired role in ISIL	Administrator Fighter Suicide fighter	6.8% 54.2% 39%	1.8% 49.1% 56.3%

[67] Calculated from numbers given in Felter & Fishman (2007, p. 16) divided by the number of age records (413 records).
[68] Calculated from numbers given in Felter & Fishman (2007, p. 17): administrative 5, business 6, labourer 5, medical 3, military 7, police 3, professional 6, self-employed 14, skilled worker (electrician etc.) 13, teacher 7, other (mainly manual labour and crafts) 19, student 67 (n=156).