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Understanding the Appeal of ISIS

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The Islamic State, or ISIS, has proven to be persistently successful in attracting people from all over the globe to join in its state-building and state-defending enterprise. This article explores the messages it has crafted, from the utopian to the militarily defensive, and the techniques it uses to propagate these messages (including on social media), which includes some historical comparisons to communism and Nazism. It goes on to provide initial research findings from the field to show how their message is working among (a small percentage of) the target audience, sketching the theory of identity fusion to argue that it is a sense of belonging to one group above all others that persuades people to travel to another country to kill and die for a cause.

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There is no single path to ISIS, just as there is no single path to any form of extremism.[1] But there are similarities among cases of people joining ISIS across the world, in almost a hundred countries from Australia to the United States. This article presents an overview of overarching themes from the Islamic State propaganda and from the broad similarities before dissecting how common they are. It goes on to look at local factors that contribute to the flow of fighters to the Islamic State, a movement that is seemingly unprecedented in the stretch and reach of its appeal.

A note on the name: before the declaration of the caliphate in June 2014, the group called itself ad-Dawlat al-Islamiyya fi-l ʿIraq wa ash-Sham, literally the Islamic State in Iraq and ash-Sham. *Ash-Sham* is an inexact word in English. It can be used for Damascus alone, but in this instance it refers to Belad ash-Sham, "the country of Ash-Sham," the so-called Greater Syria, a historic area taking in modern-day Syria, Lebanon, and parts of south Turkey, Jordan, and Israel–Palestine—which could be translated as the Levant. Some commentators quickly named the group ISIS by translating *ash-Sham* as Syria, partly because that is where the group was established—modern-day Syria as well as Iraq—exploiting the chaos of the Syrian conflict. Others, including al-Jazeera and President Barack Obama, chose ISIL, translating *ash-Sham* as the Levant, a more accurate translation. With the declaration of the caliphate, the group changed its name to simply Dawlat al-Islamiyya, the Islamic State, disdaining the "colonialist" borders, and released a video showing a symbolic bulldozing of the so-called Sykes-Picot borders, which refers to the agreement between France and Britain that defined the countries a hundred years before.[2] They announced they were henceforth to be *the* Islamic State, not confined to any particular "colonialist" country, thus signaling their global ambitions. Their Arab enemies use the acronym of their first name: Da'ish, the exact equivalent of ISIS or ISIL, depending on how you translate *ash-Sham*. This label infuriates ISIS not just because it removes their legitimacy as the sole Islamic state in the world but because the acronym sounds like *da'es* (just one letter different, with an Arabic *s* rather than the single Arabic letter *sh*), which means to stamp or trample. It makes them so angry that they punish people they hear using it; reports have suggested that the punishments include cutting out tongues and flogging.[3]

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The name used here is ISIS for no better reason than it is the name used by the majority of commentators and experts.

ISIS Propaganda: The Techniques

Messages from ISIS come in many forms, cleverly targeted to many audiences, including their enemies. These include video games that mimic already popular products, such as Call of Duty, which, reinterpreted as Call of Jihad, copies much of the style and design of the original (see Figure 1). Grand Theft Auto retains the name but with the added subtitle Saleel as-Sawarim, or Clash of Swords (see Figure 2). (This name is used for many other products, from historical television series to the *nasheed*s, or chants, of the Islamic State.) The backdrops were changed to reflect the scenery of the battles in Northern Syria and Iraq; the enemies wear US military uniforms. The target audience is clear: young men, the overwhelming demographic who play Grand Theft Auto, as illustrated by a British jihadi interviewed by the BBC after he traveled to Syria to fight who said that life with ISIS is "better than that game Call of Duty."[4] An Islamic State official was quoted as saying that the game's goal is to "raise the morale of the mujahedin and to train children and youth how to battle the West and to strike terror into the hearts of those who oppose the Islamic State."[5]

Figure 1. Call of Jihad co-opted the Call of Duty branding entirely

Figure 2. Grand Theft Auto, with the ISIS flag and "Saleel as-Sawarim" in Arabic

The three main production companies in the Islamic State (and the twenty-six others in regions outside their current borders in Syria and Iraq) are staffed by experienced filmmakers and technicians who are given further, intensive training before starting work.[6] Using advanced computer-design techniques, they have produced a continual stream of videos throughout the period of ISIS statehood that includes brutal videos of executions made to inspire terror in their enemies.[7] They have also produced rougher products along the lines of home videos, or citizen journalism, to appeal to different audiences. In addition to the video games, other ISIS products mimic Western imagery: Javier Lesaca has analyzed 845 videos and identified images and scenes from *Saw*, *The Matrix*, *American Sniper*, and *V for Vendetta*, among others.[8]

Online magazines in many languages (for example, *Dabiq* is in English, *Dar al-Islam* in French) regularly transmit military news and reports of terrorist attacks around the world. Their issues also include essays on ideology, descriptions of normal life, and even advertisements for jobs in the Islamic State. The essays are long and intricate and very repetitive from issue to issue. They are designed as positioning statements rather than propaganda, material to study and refer to if you are interested in the ideological framework of ISIS. Far more effective for recruitment, however, are the personal videos and photos from the frontline or from daily life that ISIS's extensive network of supporters post on social media.

Twitter has been a useful medium for spreading the ISIS message, especially during the crucial early days of the Islamic State's declaration of a caliphate, in June 2014.[9] ISIS successfully seized on the methodology of "hashtag hijacking," adding to their tweets the hashtag of whatever was trending at that moment. Figure 3 shows a tweet from an ISIS account that includes #JustinBieber. Though very few of those who click further will be sympathetic to the movement, to ISIS, with formidable manpower at their disposal, the ability to draw in the tiny fraction of 1 percent who are already susceptible is worth the effort. Twitter's recent shutting down of these accounts has been remarkably successful in limiting the reach of ISIS on their platform, though this action could not completely silence extremist voices.[10]

Figure 3. Hashtag hijacking: this tweet from ISIS randomly includes #JustinBieber to capture Justin Bieber fans

ISIS used Twitter in combination with other platforms. For example, the website Justpaste.it allowed ISIS to enter any material—text, photos, video—and then generated a small URL that did not reflect the content. (See Figure 4 for an example from the ISIS media production company Al-Furqan.) Thus, ISIS was able to bypass problems with bots that automatically spot extremist content; in order for Twitter to remove it, other users had to report the content. The site is minimal, meaning minimal bandwidth is needed to load content, an important consideration in a war zone or where services are intermittent.
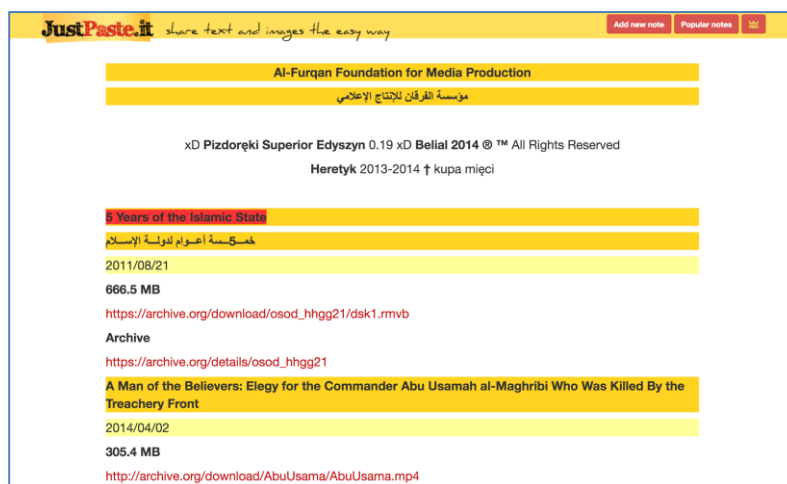
Figure 4. Example of a Justpaste.it page from Al-Furqan, a production
company in the Islamic State

ISIS even created their own app for android phones, the Dawn of Glad Tidings (see Figure 5). When downloading the app, users sign away their privacy rights, giving ISIS access to their contacts and, crucially, their twitter account. J. M. Berger describes what happens next:

> Once you sign up, the app will post tweets to your account—the content of which is decided by someone in ISIS's social-media operation. The tweets include links, hashtags, and images, and the same content is also tweeted by the accounts of everyone else who has signed up for the app, spaced out to avoid triggering Twitter's spam-detection algorithms. Your Twitter account functions normally the rest of the time, allowing you to go about your business.[11]

Figure 5. The ISIS app Dawn of Good Tidings, as it appeared on the
app store

The fraction of people who respond to these overt forms of propaganda are contacted, and the conversation, for a fraction of that fraction, is quickly shifted to private messaging platforms, such as the ubiquitous Skype and WhatsApp or the more encrypted Telegram, Kik, Wickr, Threema, and others. ISIS also hires recruiters who respond to people's expressions of anger at their government, alienation from their society, longing for purer Islamic governance, and so on, both on and offline, and reach out one-to-one. In these more private conversations the messages are driven home, but what is more important is that these private conversations

engage the individuals as individuals, because their interlocutors listen and respond to their personal concerns and the details of their lives, making them feel valued and cared for and creating a sense of warmth, inclusion, and belonging. First, however, the actual message, rather than the media, must be explored to understand the context of this pull of belonging.

The Perfect State of ISIS and Others

Western media have done a good job of publicizing the brutal side of ISIS: the videos, photos, and statements that ISIS has issued showing beheadings of westerners, the mass executions of Shia soldiers, and the statements of threats to any kuffars, or unbelievers, in any country can be found on media websites the world over. This dissemination has spread fear of the group in the West, one of ISIS's aims,[12] but it has also obscured to a Western audience the revolutionary message of idealism and joy that attracts many young people to the cause, which in turn blocks our understanding of and our ability to combat the appeal.

It all adds up, however, to a rather simple message: for the first time in a hundred years there is a caliphate, an Islamic state; but unlike that of the Ottomans, it is truly following God's law, strictly, with no corruption. This difference makes the caliphate a utopia on earth, and for some people, this utopia will usher in the apocalypse following the defeat of the kuffar armies inevitably ranged against it,[13] and it is every Muslim's duty to travel there (in jihadi terms: make hejira, echoing the hejira of the Prophet Mohammed from Mecca to Medina that marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar) and help build this fledgling state.[14]

Al-Hayat, a well-branded production company in the Islamic State, has, so far, produced eight short films called mujatweets, a play on *mujahidin* (people who perform jihad) and "tweet" to show they are short.[15] They are designed to show the utopia the Islamic State offers and are available in many languages. They include all generations (boys and girls and men of all ages but no women) and a range of races (one mujatweet features only happy blond Bosnian children), they stress the camaraderie and joy of living in a utopia, and they show a land of plenty, where the markets are full of fresh produce and the meals are generous, and where children in the park are handed candy floss and chocolate by smiling fighters. There is even a mujatweet profiling a shawarma seller. The fight, however, is never sidelined: guns are omnipresent, with most featured men clearly fighters, even when children are profiled. (See Figure 6 for a still from mujatweet 8.) There is no mistaking the message that the next generation of the Islamic State is made up of diverse, happy, committed, and militant citizens.

Figure 6. A still from mujatweet 8.

This narrative not only attracts idealistic young Muslims but it helps encourage people already in the Islamic State who are discouraged by the hardships they encounter: the lack of electricity, Western luxuries, and sometimes food and basic medical supplies and, in some areas, the constant bombardment. Of course it is hard, the narrative tells them, because this is the beginning; everything new must be built with sacrifice and effort. The brutality of the ISIS interpretation of sharia, when witnessed in person, can be a shock, but this too can be overcome, ISIS argues, using the narrative of a new state: once people are used to the law, there will be less crime and thus, inevitably, less need to punish people. In other words, these are just birthing pains.

Use of the utopian ideal as a motivator to fight and struggle has many precedents. The most obvious parallel in the twentieth century is communism, which called on people to make huge sacrifices to support what they believed was a socially just system on earth, as represented in George Orwell's *1984* by the character Boxer, a strong but easily persuaded workhorse who regularly tells himself, "I will work harder" to overcome any problems that the new system produces. Also, the global reach of the Islamic State is reflected in the numbers of people who went to Spain from the United States and other parts of Europe to fight for communism during the Spanish Civil War and in the numbers who, like double agent Kim Philby, spied on their countries for the Soviet Union. And there are more recent examples: the last time I visited the Marxist-Leninist–based Kurdish separatist organization the PKK (the Kurdish Workers' Party), I interviewed a young German who had left his hometown at age twenty to fight with them. Because the majority of the PKK fighters I have interviewed over the past five years have been fearsome Kurdish Nationalists, I asked about his motivations as a white German. His answer, in response to various probes, had to do with socialism: the PKK, he said, is the purest form of the ideology in the world today, and with a victory in Kurdistan, the world could, and probably would, follow their example. Thus, he believes that he has committed to a new embodiment of the socialist revolution still in its embryonic form, as many of those traveling to Syria in the past two years also believe. This belief requires and enables huge sacrifices; the movement's embryonic state can excuse certain mistakes by the leadership, and it gives one a sense of adventure, glory, and duty—a heady blend, especially for a young person who wishes to change the world.

A comparison can also be made with the Hitler Youth movement, which captured large numbers of German youth in pursuit of a better world. It was based on an ideology of racial purity that invoked nostalgic images of the German Volk to build an idealized version of what the German race was when it was strong, and what therefore should be recreated. This method of reading history to build a vision for the future strong enough to motivate people to fight and die is seen in the propaganda of ISIS, which uses the Qur'an and the hadith, the sayings and doings of the Prophet, to define and illustrate the ideology. In the Prophet's time, when Islam was pure, the religion spread easily, and Islamic rule covered much of the world. But, the argument goes, to explain the state of the Middle East today, when impurities were brought in from non-Muslim sources, such as Europe and later the United States, and weak leaders adopted political systems, such as democracy or socialism, Islam was weakened and the Islamic world made vulnerable. If the Islamic society and rule of the Prophet's teachings could be brought back, Islam, the Islamic community or Ummah, and the Islamic world will once again flourish.[16]

These comparisons illuminate a basic point: this is not all about the ideology of Islam, because vastly different ideological frameworks (socio-economic-political, racial, religious represented by communism, national socialism, and Islamism, respectively) can inspire identical actions for identical end goals. What is more important is that these ideological frameworks structure a group, and interviews with many fighters from different extremist

groups have pointed to a far stronger factor in the pull to join such groups and make the most extreme sacrifices on their behalf: the human desire to belong.

Pull and Push Factors: Identity and Belonging

One of the striking aspects of much of the Islamic State's utopian propaganda, including the mujatweets and the more effective material shot by fighters while at the front or in their time off, is the camaraderie among soldiers and civilians alike. This age-old reported feature of fighters, of being bonded by the constant threat of death, has been quantified and tested in terms of identity, and it is currently being tested with ISIS fighters all over the world.[17]

In 2012, William B. Swann and colleagues published a landmark paper in which, drawing on previous work in psychology and sociology to do with community and social identification, they identify a mechanism they call "identity fusion." They define it as a "form of alignment with groups that entails a visceral feeling of oneness with the group," adding, "this feeling is associated with unusually porous, highly permeable borders between the personal and social self."[18]

At the point of "visceral oneness with the group," an insult, a compliment, or an injury to the group or to another member of the group is perceived as an insult, a compliment, or an injury to the self, prompting all the same responses up to and including fighting and dying. When one identity clearly dominates another, for example, when someone feels a visceral oneness with the entire Islamic community, over and above his or her own biological family, that person can sacrifice all—including the family—for that one element of identity.

The Islamic State knows this effect all too well and exploits the extremist position of "them and us," of "You're with us or you're against us." President George W. Bush's statement of this position after 9/11 (to which he added, "There is no in between")[19] was gleefully seized on by Osama bin Laden and has been used by various factions, in Islamist and Western circles, ever since.[20] ISIS states their position very clearly in their English-language online magazine, *Dabiq*, in an essay titled "The Extinction of the Grayzone."[21] They argue that if you have any true Islamic faith, it is hypocrisy to remain in a non-Islamic country (that is, all the countries currently seen as part of the Islamic world, such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Morocco, whose leaders are labeled as non-Islamic rulers by virtue of their failure to apply the Prophet's law) when there is an alternative—the Islamic State run on the Islamic law of the Prophet's time. This argument runs the risk of alienating some but has the advantage of propelling others into a single identity and away from their national, tribal, ethnic, and other identities.

Much of the public propaganda and the private messaging is tailored to local contexts. Most obvious is the use of a huge number of languages from Chinese to Russian to Indonesian to English, and, crucially for this process of creating a strong group identity, the use of local grievances to fuel alienation from competing identities, such as nationalism. Detailed criticisms of the failures of liberal democracies and free-market capitalism often zone in on national examples, such as budgets that promote inequality. Members of the Saudi royal family are cited for their hypocrisy in preaching piety while practicing hedonism, and the leaders of Morocco and Jordan are criticized for attempting the impossible, combining democratic ideals with Islam. On a more personal level, efforts to alienate Muslims from their French, American, and British identities draw on the Islamophobia of the West, as revealed in the pronouncements of politicians (Donald Trump on the campaign trail was a gift to their message) and in such social realities as the casual racism seen in hate speech and hate crimes, which have become a constant source of messages from ISIS. Banning the burkini is an example of the political and the social: the ruling and the popular response could both be cast as a rejection of Muslims in France (and the photo of armed police ordering a burkini-clad woman to strip that went viral was another gift). In other, less obviously ideologically structured appeals to these alienated people,

frustrated ambitions in education, economic situation, and social situation are cast as the effects of governments not caring. Individuals at a crossroads, whether personal, such as after a death or the break-up of a relationship, or professional, such as after the loss of a job, are reached out to if they express bitterness toward their wider society, for example, on Facebook.

To a large extent the Islamic State's propaganda and techniques exploit the all-consuming need to belong and to feel welcome. The other side of the coin is the contextual push factor: we welcome you in a world that continually rejects your identity as Muslim.

Belonging vs. Ideology

Obama's statement in 2014 that the Islamic State is "not Islamic" provoked a huge backlash with the perception that he was protecting Islam when they themselves were claiming that their brutality was within the holy texts of Islam.[22] The question is, Who gets to speak for Islam, or even more, to define Islam? Is it Obama, a non-Muslim, or the caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who claims descent from the Prophet's own tribe? Is it an imam in New York or an imam in Iraq? As with any global religion, the interpretations are too numerous to count, and there can be no one authority on the issue, no matter how famous he is or what title he holds. To claim that ISIS is not Islamic in the light of all their pronouncements to the contrary is to obscure the public debate and generate conspiracy theories that Obama is in fact protecting Muslims.

The group duality that ISIS promotes (us vs. them, with a definition of Islam so extreme that "them" includes the majority of Muslims in the world as well as all the non-Muslims) is common to many extremist groups, such as cults and far-right nationalist groups, and is often accompanied by a similar binary attitude in the personal worldviews of extremist individuals, a long-studied feature in the psychology of fundamentalism.[23] In these binary worldviews there is always one correct thing to do in any situation, a rule for every occasion. (This attitude is also expressed in ISIS's essay "The Extinction of the Grayzone," which states that "the Qur'ān, the divider between truth and falsehood" is the arbiter of all behavior.)[24] It might seem that binary attitudes toward the personal and the group go together but they do not: an individual can be committed to an exclusionist identity yet see gray areas in personal areas of life—though this generosity is more often extended to the ingroup than the outgroup.

Binary ideology, however, can and does structure individual behavior, and the instructions from ISIS, backed up by (carefully curated) scripture from the Qur'an and the hadith, gives a comforting certainty to life under the strict and detailed sharia law ISIS has developed—if certainty is what one is after. What comes first and which plays a greater role, the sense of belonging or the framing ideology, is a thorny question in scholarship, but by using fusion theory in interviews with fighters all over the world, researchers are finding that the fusion to the group motivates extreme action, framed by the ideology that defines the group.

Let us then conclude that ideology does play a part in attracting someone to fight in a foreign country, or to commit other extreme actions, and that the repetition of certain Qur'anic verses and other quotations from the traditions of the Prophet, or hadith, reveals a strongly articulated and strongly supported Islamic framework for the arguments of the Islamic State. But it cannot be as simple as creating a coherent and extreme ideology and waiting for people to flock to you. People are not so easily persuaded, and there are too many groups and causes competing for their attention and commitment. Our initial research into the motivations of those who have traveled to and fought for the Islamic State show they are not so interested in the ideology—for a start, many expressed confusion over the concepts of caliphate, jihad, and sharia—but were attracted to the sense of brotherhood. One major reason defectors give for leaving the Islamic State is disillusionment over finding the same racism, inequality, and

corruption that exists in their own countries, and perhaps even worse. Rather than ideology per se, what may pull someone back from traveling to join ISIS is the group that the ideology defines and, more important, how that group defines the outgroups, some of which are the competing identities, such as nationality, family, and ethnicity.

Notes

[1] Research by the United Kingdom's Security Service, Military Intelligence, Section 5 (MI5) supports this statement in a classified report from 2008. Alan Travis, "MI5 Report Challenges Views on Terrorism in Britain," *Guardian*, August 20, 2008, https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/aug/20/uksecurity.terrorism.

[2] The video, made by ISIS's production company Al-Hayat, can be seen here: http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=d43_1404046312, accessed October 20, 2016.

[3] William Watkinson, "5 ISIS Fighters Have 'Tongues Cut Out' by Commanders after Attempting to Flee Besieged Fallujah," *International Business Times*, May 25, 2016, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/5-isis-fighters-have-tongues-cut-out-by-commanders-after-attempting-flee-besieged-fallujah-1562027; Justin Koski, "Watch What ISIS Hates More than Anything," *Western Journalism*, February 13, 2015, http://www.westernjournalism.com/isis-punishes-young-boy-calling-daesh/.

[4] "British Jihadi Compares Syria War to Call of Duty," *BBC Newsbeat*, June 13, 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/27838978/british-jihadi-compares-syria-war-to-call-of-duty. The ease with which ISIS coopted the basic structure of the games should lead to uncomfortable questions about the celebration of violence in our societies.

[5] Michelle Malka Grossman, "WATCH: Islamic State's Terror Video Game," *Jerusalem Post*, September 21, 2014, http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/IS-claims-it-created-a-terror-video-game-375935.

[6] The *Washington Post* interviewed seven such men in Morocco who had defected and either were in prison or had recently been released, and they described their part of the propaganda machine. Greg Miller and Souad Mekhennet, "Inside the Surreal World of the Islamic State's Propaganda Machine," *Washington Post*, November 20, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/inside-the-islamic-states-propaganda-machine/2015/11/20/051e997a-8ce6-11e5-acff-673ae92ddd2b_story.html.

[7] For the Islamic State's strategy for creating fear in their enemies, see the Al-Qaeda manual they adopted, written by Abu Bakr Naji and published in 2004. An English version, translated by William McCants under the title *The Management of Savagery* and funded by John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, is available at https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/abu-bakr-naji-the-management-of-savagery-the-most-critical-stage-through-which-the-umma-will-pass.pdf.

[8] Javier Lesaca, "On Social Media, ISIS Uses Modern Cultural Images to Spread Anti-Modern Values," Brookings Institution, September 24, 2015, http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/techtank/posts/2015/09/24-isis-social-media-engagement.

[9] For details about Twitter's policy on combatting extremism on their platform, see Twitter, "Combatting Violent Extremism," February 5, 2016, 20:13 UTC, https://blog.twitter.com/2016/combating-violent-extremism.

[10] J. M. Berger and Heather Perez, *The Islamic State's Diminishing Returns on Twitter: How Suspensions Are Limiting the Social Networks of English-Speaking ISIS Supporters* (Washington, DC: George Washington University, 2016), https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Berger_Occasional%20Paper.pdf.

[11] J. M. Berger, "How ISIS Games Twitter," *Atlantic*, June 15, 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/06/isis-iraq-twitter-social-media-strategy/372856/.

[12] As outlined in Naji, *Management of Savagery*.

[13] For a thoroughly researched book, including translation of all the key hadith, or sayings of the Prophet, on predictions of the end times, see William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015).

[14] The mission of building an Islamic utopia on earth has been developed in the ideology of many contemporary Islamist groups, for example, Hizb at-Tahrir. An examination of this recent history of the idea, however, is outside the scope of this article. See the Hizb ut-Tahrir website at http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/, for their methodology, the constitution of an Islamic State, and broad ideas on political system and history. For a 2013 translation of Hizb ut-Tahrir, *A Draft Constitution of the Khilafah State* (2010), see http://www.khilafah.com/a-draft-constitution-of-the-khilafah-state/; for their own explanations of this ideology, see Taqiuddin an-Nabhani and Hizb ut-Tahrir, *The Islamic State* (London: Al-Khilafah Publications, 1998), http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/PDF/EN/en_books_pdf/IslamicState.pdf. See also Suha Taji Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb Al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate* (London: Grey Seal, 1996).

[15] The films are all archived at Jihadology, a website created by Aaron Y. Zelin, http://jihadology.net/; accessed October 20, 2016.

[16] Various far-right movements, such as the white supremacist ideology of Trump supporters and the white supremacism of the British National Party, apparently responsible for the motivation behind the murder of British MP Jo Cox during the run-up to the referendum on British membership in the European Union, also echo ISIS propaganda, but this analysis is for another article.

[17] For initial findings from Iraq, see Lydia Wilson, "What I Discovered from Interviewing ISIS Prisoners," *The Nation*, October 21, 2015, http://www.thenation.com/article/what-i-discovered-from-interviewing-isis-prisoners/. For initial findings from Kosovo, see Wilson, "Is Kosovo the New European Hotbed of Jihadi Extremism?" *The Nation*, July 14, 2016, https://www.thenation.com/article/is-kosovo-the-new-european-hotbed-of-jihadi-extremism/.

[18] William B. Swann Jr., Jolanda Jetten, Ángel Gómez, Harvey Whitehouse, and Brock Bastian, "When Group Membership Gets Personal: A Theory of Identity Fusion," *Psychological Review* 119 (May 28, 2012): 441–56, http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22642548.

[19] For two examples, see "With Us or Against Us," YouTube video, 0:20, posted by LeadingToWar.com, March 7, 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-23kmhc3P8U.

[20] See J. Peter Scoblic, *U.S. vs. Them: How a Half Century of Conservatism Has Undermined America's Security* (New York: Viking, 2008).

[21] "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone," *Dabiq*, no. 7 (January–February 2015): 54–66, http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-dabiq-magazine-issue-7-from-hypocrisy-to-apostasy.pdf.

[22] For one overview, including the video of Obama's speech, see Aaron Blake, "Obama Says the Islamic State 'Is Not Islamic': Americans Disagree," *Washington Post*, September 11, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/09/11/obama-says-the-islamic-state-is-not-islamic-americans-are-inclined-to-disagree/.

[23] See Charles B. Strozier, David M. Terman, and James W. Jones, with Katherine A. Boyd, eds., *The Fundamentalist Mindset: Psychological Perspectives on Religion, Violence, and History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[24] "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy," 61.