ISIS and Religious Nationalism: Religious Nationalist Identity among Non-State Actors

Nathan C. Mikami[1]

Abstract

This paper explores the concept of religious nationalism. More specifically, it develops a theoretical framework for understanding how, and why, non-state actors develop a religious nationalist identity within their respective group in order to provide its members, and potential recruits, with a strong social identity built around a religious ideology. The theory developed here argues that ISIS markets itself as a religious nationalist movement and specifically targets those individuals who feel alienated and marginalized from the societies in which they reside. By examining ISIS recruitment through the lens of social identity theory we can understand why individuals, especially from the West, would feel compelled to leave their homes in the West and join the ranks of ISIS. I further explore how providing recruits and members with a religious nationalist identity is especially meaningful, and why a nationalist identity built on the foundation of Islam would be so appealing to disenfranchised Muslims in the West. This study serves to integrate the underdeveloped concept of religious nationalism into our discussion of ISIS, while also informing policies toward non-state actors that may hold a religious nationalist identity.

[1] Ph.D. Candidate, Washington State University, School of Politics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs, Pullman, WA. Email: nathan.mikami@wsu.edu

Introduction

As of September 2015, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) had recruited nearly 30,000 people from outside of Iraq and Syria, and an estimated 5,000 of that total came from Western countries (Schmitt & Sengupta, 2015). These data should cause us to ask why ISIS' recruiting of non-Syrians and non-Iraqis has been so successful, especially among citizens of Western states. This paper will serve as the theoretical foundation for a larger project examining the rise of ISIS, the role of identity in its recruiting, and how ISIS uses its propaganda and published works for perpetuating a religious nationalist message targeting specific audiences who hold particularly weak social and national identities. I argue that social identity provides a lens through which we can build a theoretical framework for understanding why an individual, especially a Westerner, would feel compelled to join the ranks of ISIS. An induvial who feels alienated and marginalized from the Western society in which he resides will fail to acquire a strong national identity; consequently, he will seek out a national identity with which he can find a sense of meaning, belonging, and purpose. I further argue that ISIS has, as an organizational strategy, marketed itself as a religious nationalist movement built around the goal of establishing an Islamic Caliphate. I argue that the weak national identities in the Middle East have resulted from the region's colonial history, and that the alienation felt by many in the West can largely be attributed to policies and social norms that result in the marginalization of minority populations.

I will begin with a brief history of ISIS and its rise to power in Iraq and Syria. This will be followed by a three-fold analysis of the Islamic State in regards to the research question. First, the concept and attributes of a "nation" will be explored and tested against the attributes of ISIS to see if there are any similarities or connections between them. Second, a possible explanation for the rise of a pseudo-religious nationalist group, such as ISIS, will be explored by examining

the colonial history of the Middle East and the relatively weak national identities that formed as a result. And finally, the paper will conclude with an analysis aimed at determining if ISIS and its members exhibit the same patterns of behaviors and attitudes that one can expect to find in a nationalistic nation-state.

The Rise of ISIS: A Brief History

The story behind the rise of ISIS arguably begins on March 20, 2003, when President George W. Bush announced the United States' invasion of Iraq. The initial campaign was over relatively quickly, as expected, when Saddam Hussein's government collapsed in early April of 2003. What would prove to be a pivotal moment in the rise of the Islamic State came in May 2003 when Paul Bremer, the Bush-appointed head of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, disbanded the Iraqi military and fired all members of the ruling Ba'ath Party from all governmental positions (Stern & Berger, 2016). This decision left more than 100,000 Sunni Ba'athists unemployed, angry, and armed (Otterman, 2005)—a combination that would prove to be instrumental in the rise, and subsequent staying power, of ISIS.

The group that served as the pre-cursor to ISIS was al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). AQI held ties to the Bin Laden led al-Qaeda, but the founding father and key figure for AQI was not Bin Laden, but a man named Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (Weiss & Hassan, 2015). Al-Zarqawi was a Jordanian who hailed from the Bani Hassan tribe that resided on the East Bank of the Jordan River. Early on, al-Zarqawi proved to be an unpromising student and only ever became semiliterate. He became radicalized through the mentorship of several influential religious leaders, including a man named Abdullah Azzam. Through the influence of Azzam and other extremist Islamic thinkers, al-Zarqawi eventually became convinced of the doctrine found in contemporary *Salafism* which advocates for a return to the theological purity of the teachings and

traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. Beyond advocating for a return to theological purity, al-Zarqawi fiercely believed that "Muslims had both an individual and a communal obligation to expel conquering or occupying armies from their sacred lands" (Weiss & Hassan, 2015).

These rigid beliefs were reflected in the brutal tactics of AQI from 2004 until the death of al-Zarqawi in 2006. Terror attacks within Iraq rose exponentially during this time consisting of car bombings, mass shootings, and a highly disturbing string of public beheadings, all committed by AQI. Al-Zarqawi was eventually killed by a U.S. air strike in the summer of 2006, but his legacy and his influence would persist. Only months after his death, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) was formed, though it experienced relatively limited success and influence, largely due to the Sunni Awakening in Iraq's al-Anbar province (Cottam, Huseby, & Baltodano, 2016).

Just seven years after the death of al-Zarqawi and the creation of ISI, a civil war was raging in Syria between the Assad regime and Syrian rebels seeking to overthrow it. In the spring of 2013, ISI, now under the leadership of a man named Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi—recognized by his followers as the caliph Ibrahim—announced that ISI would henceforth be known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Later that same year, ISIS announced their campaign to establish control over actual territory in both Iraq and Syria; and in 2014, ISIS announced the official establishment of a caliphate. Since that announcement, ISIS has taken a large amount of territory, including some key cities, such as Raqqa in Syria, and Mosul, Iraq's second largest city (McCants, 2015).

A more robust examination of ISIS will come to bear throughout the remainder of the paper, but this brief historical overview highlights why the Islamic State continues to dominate international discussions and remains one of the primary security concerns of the international community. We will begin the rest of the study with an examination of the attributes and

characteristics of a "nation," and decipher which, if any, of these attributes or characteristics the Islamic State possesses.

Nation and Nationalism: Attributes and Characteristics

Much debate has centered around how best to categorize the Islamic State. Is it a social group that simply uses brutal terror tactics, or is it a legitimate army of terror? Is it a state, or is it nothing more than a well-funded and well-equipped gang? In September 2014, President Barack Obama made a statement on the expanded role that the United States would play in the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In that speech, President Obama stated that he wanted to make two things clear to the American public; first, that ISIS is not Islamic, and second, that ISIS is certainly not a state (Obama, 2016). Ample attention has been given to the first point in the President's statement, as it has been a contentious topic of debate between those who concur with his assertion—that ISIS is not Islamic—and others who argue that ISIS is "very Islamic" (Wood, 2015). I argue that the religious variables cannot be ignored, and that our understanding of ISIS is contingent upon understanding how it uses (and abuses) Islam to justify its actions. It should go without saying, but I absolutely condemn the assertion that Islam is the cause of ISIS' rise, or that ISIS somehow represents the values of all Muslims world-wide; but given that, I do argue that it is erroneous, and detrimental to our studies, to assume that ISIS draws nothing from certain doctrines and beliefs within Islam.

President Obama's second point, in regards to ISIS' claim to statehood, has been given significantly less attention, likely because it is generally accepted that ISIS is not a legitimate state. If ISIS cannot legitimately be considered a state, can it be considered a nation? Or, at least, is it possible that it behaves like a nation? In this paper I explore the possibility of

conceptualizing ISIS as a nation or nationalist movement, and how ISIS builds a nationalist identity built around a religious ideology.

Territory

A "nation," as a social concept, lacks a clear and conclusive definition. The nation has been variously described as an "imagined" (Anderson, 1983) and an "abstract" community (James, 1996). In other words, the nation is considered by many to be a purely subjective concept rather than an objectively observable entity. The term "nation" is often used synonymously with the terms "state" or "country," but the existence of a nation is not necessarily contingent upon holding sovereignty over a geographic territory, nor is an official governing body necessary for a nation's existence. What *is* necessary to be considered a nation, however, is a collective desire for these things: sovereignty and territory (White, 2007). Indeed, once a nation obtains actual territory, it is one large step closer to being considered a nation-state. A nation is an entity that can exist without borders, but a nation-state is delineated by territorial boundaries.

There is no question that one of the primary objectives of the Islamic State is to obtain and control territory. As stated above, in the summer of 2013, ISIS declared its intention to establish control and assert its authority over territory (Stern & Berger, 2016), and in June of 2014, ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani announced that ISIS was reestablishing the caliphate (Stern & Berger, 2016). In simple terms, a caliphate is an Islamic empire that consists of a geographic area that is ruled by a caliph, an individual believed to be a "successor to the Messenger of God" (Aslan, 2011). ISIS considers the land it has captured in Iraq and Syria to be a modern caliphate, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to be the caliph, or rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad. At the end of 2014, the violent and brutal efforts of ISIS had given them control over nearly one-third of Iraqi territory and one-third of Syrian territory—where they

ruled over an estimated 9 million people (Johnson, 2016). In this regard, there is no question that the Islamic State shares a conviction to gain and control territory as one would expect a striving and emerging "nation" to do. While working to obtain territory is a necessary attribute of a nation, it is not, in and of itself, sufficient to be considered one. Thus, there are several other variables that must also be considered before ISIS can legitimately be considered a nation or a nationalist movement.

Religious National Identity

In addition to holding or seeking territory, Rupert Emerson defines a nation as "a community of people who feel they belong together in the double sense that they share deeply significant elements of a common heritage and that they have a common destiny for the future" (Emerson, 1960). Cottam and Cottam further clarify Emerson's definition of nationalism by describing it as "a modern-day behavioral manifestation of identity community attachments" (2000). In other words, nationalism is an intense attachment to a community of people who collectively feel a strong shared past and an equally strong sense of a collective future. Individuals that make up a nation have an intense attachment—not necessarily to one another, but to the community; This shared social identity, built around the national community itself, is what binds these individuals together as a group. A shared collective identity serves as the life-blood of a nation, for without it, a nation cannot sustain itself much less come into existence in the first place.

Religious nationalism comes about when "religious and political ideologies are intertwined" (Juergensmeyer, 2001). The driving ideology behind ISIS seems to match Juergensmeyer's description of religious nationalism as religion serves as the fundamental motivator and unifier for the Islamic State's nationalist identity. Religion is often an element

within many ethnic or cultural nationalist movements, but in the case of ISIS, religion is the transcendent and intrinsic ingredient for the social identity that is shared among its members. Juegensmeyer explains that a shared religion can form a bond among a community much like ethnicity, culture, or language can, but the differentiating nature of religion from these other variables is the ideological element that can serve as a primary motivator of political action and activism. Where nationalism provides the communal attachment, religion provides an ideology around which the community can rally and unify on an even deeper level (Juergensmeyer, 1996). Religious nationalism stands as an alternative to, or even direct refutation of, secular nationalism. One of ISIS's primary goals is to purge Muslim lands of the influence of Western modernity, and secular nationalism has come to be a major symbol of the values of the modern West. As such, a non-secular, or religious nationalist movement, would appear to be appropriate for a nation that wishes to stand as an opposing symbol of the Western world.

The Islamic State provides its members with a strong religious identity that is tied directly to its proclaimed nationalist goals of establishing a caliphate. Included in this religious national identity is a clear role in the world, and more importantly, a role in the defense of Islam and the destruction of its enemies. What strengthens the convictions of ISIS's followers, and ultimately their shared identity, is a belief that they are in fact part of a movement that will be responsible for bringing about the end of days. Indeed, the religious national identities held by members of the Islamic State are couched in their belief that they were foreordained to usher in the apocalypse and the end of days as the servants and warriors of *Allah* and defenders of Islam (Wood, 2015). Whether ISIS can truly be considered a religious nationalist movement is a debatable point, but it is clear that the Islamic State's leadership wants their followers to believe that it is, and one of their primary goals is to inculcate within its members, and potential recruits,

a strong religious national identity that is based in, and strengthened by, 1,400-year-old Quranic prophecies. We now turn to the question of the possible causes for ISIS's rise, and how these causes relate to the concept of nationalism and national identity.

Colonial History & Contemporary Causes of the National Identity Void

The proposed explanations for the rise of ISIS are as numerous and varied as the number of individuals studying this international phenomenon. Stern and Berger point out that any explanation for the rise of ISIS must necessarily be multidimensional, as there is no complete single explanation (2016). Some will inevitably attribute its rise to competition for access to oil and natural gas pipelines, while others could blame the United States government for evangelizing democracy while ignoring basic civil and political rights (e.g. Carothers, 2002; Zakaria, 1997). Stern and Berger further explain that the rise of ISIS has also been viewed by some as nothing more than "untamed Wahabism" (2016; e.g. Kirkpatrick, 2014). Again, while there might be some validity to each of these points, none can be considered to be the only explanation for the rise of the Islamic State.

This paper puts forward and explores another possible dimension for explaining the rise of ISIS that has been, to the best of the author's knowledge, largely unaddressed. Given the colonial history of the Middle East, and the arbitrarily drawn state borders that resulted from that period, we can assume that individuals have been less-likely to hold strong national identities and connections; thus, there is a dearth or a void of strong national identities within the region. It may be that the Islamic State provides an alternative religious nationalist identity that fills the void left by colonialism; it's an identity that transcends arbitrarily drawn state borders and that resonates with disenfranchised Muslims all over the world.

For purposes of this paper, the colonial era of most interest here is the division of Arab territories after the fall of the Ottoman Empire following World War I through the end of Middle East colonialism after World War II. According to Nasr, the colonial era ended in the late 1940's, following World War II, when Britain and France began to withdraw from their colonial territories (Nasr, 1999). Nasr states that "the emergence of Muslim states involved negotiated withdrawals of colonial powers" (1999). One example of these negotiations is the creation of Afghanistan (not technically part of the Middle East, but a Muslim state that resulted from this process), which was formed purely as a buffer state between British India and Czarist Russia. By the 1970s, most Muslim territories had gained independence from their respective colonial powers and were either functioning as independent states or as a part of an independent non-Muslim state. Though technically free from colonial rule, colonialism's influence persisted as it greatly influenced the shaping of the political systems, economies, ideologies, and societies of these newly emerging Muslim states. There were some within these societies who welcomed colonial influences as they had become enamored with the West and Western institutions. However, these individuals largely consisted of the wealthy kings and aristocrats that would also become the enemies of Islamic extremists, as they represent the evils and corrupt nature of modernity (Zakaria, 2001).

This post-colonial period presented the Muslim world with this new conception of territorial states, a concept wholly foreign to them in the premodern era. In fact, while "Muslims were conscious of ethnic, linguistic, and regional differences among them," up to that point, they had been politically unified under the caliphate, which was ruled in the name of Islam and included no conception of political territories or borders (Nasr, 1999). In many ways, these newly created territorial states undermined the Islamic principle of *ummah* (holy community), a

concept that "calls Muslims not only to unite across national boundaries but to place Islam above all other political allegiances in their everyday lives" (Nasr, 1999). One could argue that by striving to establish a caliphate, the Islamic State is living the principle of the *ummah,* though in a very sadistic and violent way. The evidence shows that the concept of territorial states was a Western import—precisely what ISIS is determined to eradicate and purge from the Muslim world.

The result of all this was a Middle East unable to move beyond its colonial past. Because of this colonial influence, we see a Middle East being torn apart by newly created territorial states grappling with the ethnic and sectarian realities of the region. Additionally, we see the emergence of new, but weak, national identities clashing with the predominant Islamic identity and the principle of *ummah*. Kumaraswamy contends that the overarching consequence of the Middle East's colonial past and the introduction of new and arbitrarily formed territorial states is a widespread "identity crisis in the Middle East" (Kumaraswamy, 2006).

Kumaraswamy states:

More than democratic deficit, most countries of the Middle East suffer from the fundamental problem over their national identity. More than three-quarters of a century after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire from which most of them emerged, these states have been unable to define, project, and maintain a national identity that is both inclusive and representative. None of the countries of the Middle East is homogeneous; they consist of numerous ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic minorities. Yet they have not succeeded in evolving a national identity that reflects their heterogeneity. Countries of the Middle East are internally diverse and, hence, a narrow exclusive national identity could not be imposed from above (2006)

The identity crisis that persists in the Middle East leaves individuals with a psychological void that will perpetually remain until it is filled. Tajfel's social identity theory suggests that we all, as social animals, have a psychological need for a positive self-image, sense of belonging,

11

and meaning. (1978). One of the necessary variables in a positive self-image is membership in a group and subsequent positive comparisons between one's in-group and a relevant out-group.

When times are difficult, individuals are most attracted to groups that provide a clear ideological blueprint and plan of action, along with a clearly defined enemy who must be destroyed in order to fulfill the ultimate goals of the ideology (Staub, 1989). Given this absence of strong national identities to which Middle East Muslims could cleave, it seems that opportunity would be ripe for a group with a strong, compelling ideology to enter the scene and fill that void with an identity that these individuals could adopt. ISIS seems to have seized such an opportunity as we see its very real ability to recruit and maintain support from individuals from all around the world. Again, the rise of the Islamic State is a complex and multifaceted affair, but perhaps one facet of ISIS's rise is its ability to fill the social and national identity voids left by the Middle East's colonial history.

But what of those who have joined ISIS who are not from the Middle East or do not have a sense of its colonial history? With so many individuals from outside the Middle East joining ISIS, it would appear that the appeal of the Islamic State's identity goes beyond a history of colonialism. There is reason to believe that the religious national identity created by ISIS can appeal to the disenfranchised and identity-less regardless of their regional origin. As outlined above, the Islamic State provides its members with a strong identity that brings with it a perceived purpose and high level of importance. This identity can be especially impactful and resonant for an individual who comes from a colonially created Middle East and, consequently, does not have a strong national or social identity. Evidence of the strength of this identity can be found in the Islamic State's recruitment numbers. When al-Baghdadi announced the end of ISIS and the birth of the Islamic State and the caliphate in June of 2014, he stated: "Rush O Muslims

to your state. Yes, it is your state. Rush, because Syria is not for the Syrians, and Iraq is not for the Iraqis" (BBC, 2014). Al-Baghdadi at once denounces the secular nationalist identities of Iraq and Syria and calls all Muslims to join ISIS in the cause of establishing a caliphate and an Islamic State.

Several Western states have become hotbeds for producing disenfranchised Muslims who have weak national and social identities and little hope for a future; a seemingly perfect target for ISIS's recruiting efforts. To highlight this, we need only look at very recent terror attacks for which ISIS has claimed responsibility. Two of the most recent terror attacks to occur in the West, in Paris and Brussels, were claimed by ISIS but were planned and executed by Belgians who claim allegiance to the Islamic State. The Paris attacks were masterminded by a Belgian man named Abdelhamid Abaaoud who was born into a mildly observant Muslim family but eventually became radicalized (Graham, 2015). Abaaoud and the vast majority of radicalized Belgian Muslims come from Molenbeek, a neighborhood of approximately 100,000 residents in northwestern Brussels. Molenbeek is described as being "densely populated, [with] large immigrant populations, [a] very high unemployment [rate], complaints of inadequate government services, [and] isolation from the central city and corridors of power" (Graham, 2015).

NPR conducted several interviews with residents of Molenbeek in order to determine how a particular neighborhood could be uniquely susceptible to the allure of ISIS and Islamic radicalism. One individual they spoke to was Ibrahim Ouassari, a second generation Belgian whose parents came to Europe from Morocco. In the interview, Ibrahim describes his experience of crossing "the canal" for the first time to go to the Brussels City Center when he was sixteen years old. The canal, Ibrahim explains, is a symbolic and psychological border that separates the largely Muslim Molenbeek from the rest of the city. It was on that trip to the City Center that

Ibrahim felt discriminated against for the first time when someone refused to serve him in coffee shop and told him "you're not Belgian" (Block, 2016). Ibrahim says "It is like you're not really a Belgian guy…It's a little bit like schizophrenia because in my mind I feel like [a] Belgian guy. The other guy, he tell[s] me, no, you are not. So what am I?" (Block, 2016).

Ibrahim represents a class of individuals who are confused, disenfranchised, and hopeless in terms of future prospects for a quality life. Ibrahim's question "what am I?" illustrates the confusion that can come from a weak or even non-existent social or national identity. Ibrahim thought he was Belgian, but because of prejudice and marginalization he now seems unsure of his national identity. Many Muslims around the world, in the Middle East and beyond, feel a weak national identity or connection to the state in which they reside, largely due to the fact that these states tend to isolate and marginalize Muslim communities, just like Belgians have done in Molenbeek. The plight of these disenfranchised and marginalized Muslims living is Western countries is similar to those living in the Middle East, both feel a weak connection to their respective state either because of the abusive colonial history attached to it, or because of current abuses perpetrated against their Muslim communities.

One can easily see how ISIS' message, and the religious-nationalist identity it provides, would be appealing to an individual living in Molenbeek, where opportunities are scarce, and feelings of alienation and marginalization abound. One can also see how living in a state that was created by an external power, rather than one's own Muslim community, could also create an impetus to join the Islamic State. What this section has illustrated is the real possibility that ISIS is filling a national identity void left by the Middle East's colonial history, and/or a weak national and social identity that results from the marginalization of Muslim communities in non-Muslim states.

Nationalism and Nationalists: Patterns of Behavior and Attitudes

A nationalist is an individual who holds his or her national identity above all other identities (i.e. religious, ethnic, racial, etc.). A nationalist not only holds their national identity above all others, but this identity leads to an intense loyalty that can predispose "nations" to engage in conflict, stereotyping, in-group bias, and other predictably divisive patterns of behavior (Searle-White, 2001).

From a psychological perspective, nationalism is necessarily tied to the concept of categorization. Nationalism, or national identity, is contingent upon how we perceive, or categorize ourselves, and how we perceive and categorize others (Searle-White, 2001). Categories serve as a type of cognitive short-cut for processing the large amount of information we encounter on a daily basis. In terms of nationalism, one way in which we simplify the world is by categorizing ourselves and others into a particular national group. There exist several variables that contribute to how these groups or national identities can be delineated; including ethnicity, religion, location, race, language, culture and common history—all are characteristics that can be used to categorize oneself and others into certain national categories (Searle-White, 2001). Once an individual categorizes him or herself into a particular group, or nation in this case, that group becomes the "in-group," while all other groups become the "outgroup." This in-group versus out-group dynamic ultimately creates an "us" versus "them" mentality, where an individual views their own in-group favorably and the out-group in an overly simplistic and potentially discriminatory way (e.g. Tajfel, 1970; Brown, 2000).

As stated, once the national group categorization occurs, there are several predictable patterns of behavior and attitudes that will reliably follow. These expected behaviors are neatly outlined in *Introduction to Political Psychology* by Cottam et al. (2016), and by Cottam and

Cottam (2000) in *Nationalism and Politics.* Each of these patterns of behavior will be examined

and compared to the patterns of behavior we observe in the Islamic State. Of course, even if ISIS

exhibits some of the same patterns of behaviors that we would expect to find in a nation-state,

this does not necessarily mean that the Islamic State can be considered a nation. An examination

of this nature does, however, allow us to see how ISIS's leadership has used a religious

nationalist identity to unify their group, and how this strategy has resulted in patterns of behavior

that in many ways mirror those of a nation.

Patterns of Behavior and Attitudes:

- *Nationalists tend to be more sensitive than non-nationalists to threats to the nation-state, and the image through which they view the threatener is extreme.*

The above is an expected behavior, especially given our understanding of categorization

and the in-group versus out-group dynamic. Members of the in-group will hold overly simplistic

images or stereotypes of the out-group, and this can often result in a heightened, almost paranoid,

sense that the out-group's intentions are sinister, threatening, and destructive (Gurin, Peng,

Lopez, & Nagda, 1999). The use of Image Theory allows us to see exactly how the image that a

nationalist nation-state holds of another state could cause an irrationally heightened threat

perception.

The declared enemies of ISIS are almost innumerable, as they perceive anyone who does

not subscribe to their particular interpretation of Islam as an enemy that must necessarily be

destroyed, or at least be purged from Muslim lands. This list of enemies includes, but is not

limited to, the United States, the West and Western influence, Shia Muslims, moderate Sunni

Muslims, and the governments of Iraq and Syria (McCants, 2015). Based on the statements and

rhetoric coming from the Islamic State's leadership, as well as published works produced by the

group, we can see that ISIS holds a particular "image" of each of their respective enemies. For

example, ISIS appears to hold a "barbarian" image of the U.S. as this image is applied when a country is perceived to have superior capabilities in economic and military terms, but is inferior culturally (Cottam M. , 1994). The Islamic State views the United States, and anyone else who does not accept their caliphate as the only legitimate society, to be culturally inferior; however, ISIS's rhetoric also indicates that they recognize the military superiority of the U.S. and other perceived enemies. Given this information, the barbarian image is appropriate. The perceiving state, or organization in this case, views the decisions of the barbarian state to be made by a small group of elites, and perceives their intentions to be aggressive and threatening (Cottam M. , 2006).

The patterns of behavior that one would expect from a nationalist nation-state indicate a proclivity toward attaching images to other states that would cause the perceiving group to feel highly threatened and to view the threatener as extreme. The images that ISIS has attached to its enemies coincides with the behavior one would expect from a nationalist movement or nation-state. As with any of the other observations made thus far, this alone does not allow us to distinguish ISIS as a nation or a nationalist movement. This behavior does, however, indicate the Islamic State's perceived status as a nation, and it's a reflection of the nationalist tactics used by leadership in order to create cohesion and devotion among ISIS's followers.

- *Nationalists, particularly nationalistic leaders, are very sensitive to opportunities to advance their country's influence and are more likely than non-nationalists to seriously consider the option to expand state influence at the expense of others.*

The Islamic State has become notorious for its use of incredibly brutal and violent tactics. To say that ISIS's leaders have taken every opportunity to expand their influence at the expense of others is a gross understatement, as they are apparently willing to do anything, no matter how heinous, in order to further the goals of the group. One tactic of the Islamic State's leadership has

been high-profile kidnappings and public beheadings. These beheadings are believed to be a tactic used in hopes of unnerving enemy combatants and civilians, and deterring foreign powers from committing forces (Porter, 2014). This practice began with the founding father of ISIS, al-Zarqawi, when he beheaded American businessman Nicholas Berg in 2004. More recently, in 2014, photojournalist James Foley was beheaded on camera after reading a statement demanding that President Obama halt air strikes against the Islamic State. In the video, Foley's "tormentor speaks…warning President Barack Obama that attacks on ISIS would result in the spilling of American Blood" (Stern & Berger, 2016). The beheading of Foley, along with many other ISIS hostages, is a clear example of the Islamic State's leadership doing what they feel will advance their power and influence at the expense of innocent lives (Callimachi, 2014).

Beyond the high-profile abductions and beheadings, just in the last few years many thousands of Iraqis and Syrians have lost their lives at the hands of ISIS militants. A report produced by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights found that, as of October 2015, in less than two years, nearly 19,000 civilians had been killed in Iraq in ISIS-related violence, with more than 36,000 wounded. In addition to the casualties, more than 3.2 million people have been internally displaced while an estimated 3,500 women and children are being held as sex and labor slaves (Hussein & Kubis, 2015).

The accounts of these horrific acts, coupled with the sheer number of lives lost, wounded, or displaced at the hands of ISIS, are clear indications that the leadership of the Islamic State is in fact all too willing to consider the option to expand the group's influence at the expense of others.

- *There will be a greater tendency among nationalists to be deeply concerned with the objective of gathering together communities existing outside the borders of the state whom they regard as a part of their national community.*

Much of the evidence that could be presented here was already covered above in the discussion on the colonial history of the Middle East and the marginalized Muslims living in the West. ISIS's leadership has made numerous appeals to the broader Muslim communities that exists outside of the caliphate's borders. In May of 2015 an audio recording of al-Baghdadi was released, wherein he states:

> There is no might nor honor nor safety nor rights for you except in the shade of the caliphate…Islam was never a religion of peace. Islam is the religion of fighting. No one should believe that the war that we are waging is the war of the Islamic State…It is the war of Muslims against infidels (Bajekal, 2015)

Al-Baghdadi and the Islamic State appear to be very intent upon gathering together the world-wide Muslim community that exists outside of the declared caliphate. He calls on all Muslims to come join the caliphate, or to fight where they are against the "infidels".

The Islamic State's desire to gather together those regarded as part of their national community is further highlighted by the group's use of propaganda. Searle-White describes the use of propaganda in nationalist movements as "explicit attempts to shape one group's image of the other" (Searle-White, 2001). The purpose of ISIS's propaganda is multifaceted, but one of its primary purposes is to convey to the broader Muslim community, both inside and outside of the caliphate, that the Islamic State is religiously and politically legitimate, and that all who oppose it are enemies to *Allah* and Islam (Gambhir, 2014).

ISIS is producing a wide-range of propaganda through the use of social media, online magazines, well-produced videos, and even music. Unlike the ultraviolent tactics used by ISIS on a daily basis, the group's propaganda is surprisingly varied. Coupled with the messages of hate and violence, are messages with positive themes intended to appeal to the wide spectrum of political and ideological supporters (Winter & Bach-Lombardo, 2016). Winter and Bach-Lombardo point out that "on a daily basis, the group parades images of civilian life, ruminates

19

upon the concept of mercy, and highlights visceral camaraderie allegedly felt among its

members" (2016). They further note that ISIS expends huge amounts of resources to build this

"composite narrative" for a wide range of audiences. As stated, their propaganda is aimed at the

broader Muslim community, but the message is intended to reach an even broader audience than

that. The Islamic State's propagandists have deliberately lumped their entire audience "together

by communicating the same core narrative to each—that its caliphate is a triumphant, model

society that offers community to all who desire it, and destruction to those who don't" (Winter &

Bach-Lombardo, 2016).

It is evident that ISIS's leadership and followers are intent on reaching out to those whom

they consider to be part of the community. Their message is clear: join us, or suffer the

consequences. Their audience includes a broad spectrum of states, groups, and individuals, and

in order to accomplish their goal of bringing together a more robust community of believers,

ISIS has produced an impressive array of propaganda that has proven to be very effective.

- *Nationalists are more concerned with their country's prestige and dignity than are non-nationalists, and nationalists are willing to take action to rectify perceived affronts. Additionally, there is more likelihood that the public of a nation-state will be susceptible to grandeur interests, and will therefore want to see national prestige and status enhanced and recognized globally.*

The declared goals of ISIS are clearly ambitious, and the fact that they have established a

society that they view to be the pinnacle of civilization speaks volumes about the group's desires

for prestige and status in the world. Some have argued that one key motivator for ISIS is a desire

to recapture the glory of the last caliphate—the Ottoman Empire (Haltiwanger, 2014). The

Ottoman caliphate stood for more than 400 years until its demise following the end of World

War I (Quataert, 2005), but for centuries it had been the pride of the Muslim world. The Islamic

State has sought to reestablish the prestige and power of the caliphate through at least two avenues: the accumulation of wealth and a display of military might.

In its quest to establish its status as a legitimate and important global entity, the Islamic State has become a highly-funded and relatively sophisticated military power. Estimates of the size of ISIS's army have varied between 20,000 and 200,000, but the most recent estimates from the U.S. intelligence community estimate that the Islamic State's fighting force is somewhere between 20,000-25,000 fighters (Michaels, 2016). To give some perspective, there are several small countries around the world, Hungary and Uruguay for example, that have approximately the same number of troops in their respective militaries (Haltiwanger, 2014). ISIS also boasts an impressive stash of conventional weapons, ranging from large artillery such as the M198 howitzer and the M1 Abrams tanks (Gibbons-Neff, 2014) to advanced surface-to-air missile systems (Semple & Schmitt, 2014).

From an economic perspective, ISIS's finances appear to be strong, but they have been stronger. The Islamic State at one point was taking in an estimated $2 million per day just from extortion and taxation (Almukhtar, 2015). In addition to taxation and extortion—ISIS's largest source of income—the group also receives income from crime, dealing drugs, oil sales (Leigh, 2014), kidnapping ransoms, the sale of antiquities and artifacts (Giovanni, Goodman, & Sharkov, 2014), and personal donations (Rogin, 2014). Total assets of the group are estimated to be between $2 and $3 billion, making it the world's most well-funded terror organization (Johnston, Bahney, & Shatz, 2014).

When we think of the most "prestigious" or powerful states in the world, we would most likely think of states that are economically and militarily powerful. ISIS has clearly taken actions in an attempt to emulate the most prestigious states around the world, by bolstering their military

strength and increasing and diversifying their wealth. Again, we see ISIS displaying patterns of behavior that one would expect from a nationalist state, as the group strives to enhance their national status and prestige in the eyes of the global community.

- *Leaders of nationalists are better able to make effective appeals to the citizens to make great sacrifices to enhance the power of the state, and the public is more willing to serve in the military, and have a more intense commitment to the defense of that state.*

As discussed above, tens of thousands of individuals from around the world have joined ISIS over the past few years. While we are aware that thousands have joined ISIS, what has been unclear is their level of commitment to the cause and what exactly these recruits are willing to do. The Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point recently produced a report based on a trove of recently obtained ISIS documents that contain personal and demographic information for thousands of ISIS recruits during 2013 and 2014 (Dodwell, Milton, & Rassler, 2016). NBC News covered the release of the report and summarized many of the highlights. For example, the report found that most of the recruits don't want to be martyrs or suicide bombers, as only 12 percent of recruits "ticked the box for martyrdom" (Engel, Smith, & Connor, 2016). Several experts explain that this seemingly low number of volunteers for martyrdom isn't necessarily a reflection of devotion, but rather, it reflects "how ISIS marketed itself to the world and the kind of future it envisioned" (2016). As has been shown throughout this paper, ISIS, unlike other terror organizations, markets itself as a religious nationalist movement determined to establish a state and a caliphate. In other words, those who join the fight with ISIS do not have to die in order to receive glory in the world to come, rather, they can survive and live in glory under the rule of the caliph in a genuine Islamic State.

The report further finds that the age-range, familial status, and education levels vary widely among recruits. The average age of enlistees was 26 or 27 years old, but some recruits

were under the age of 15, and the oldest recruit was 70 years old. More than 60 percent of the fighters were single, but 30 percent reported being married, and "they had more than 2,000 children between them" (Engel, Smith, & Connor, 2016). The CTC report also shows that these recruits were not an uneducated bunch, as conventional wisdom might indicate; rather, the documents show that nearly 60 percent of the enlistees had a high school education or higher (Dodwell, Milton, & Rassler, 2016). The CTC report also looked at religious education data where they found that only 1.2 percent of recruits attended a religious institution, such as a *madrassa*. However, just over one hundred individuals did report that they studied religion or *sharia* at an education institution, but not an explicitly religious one (Dodwell, Milton, & Rassler, 2016).

The data also show several distinct moments where recruiting numbers peaked, and each of those moments appears to coincide with some kind of statement or action that would potentially inspire and motivate more recruits to ISIS's cause. One peak came in 2013 after the group rebranded itself and became the Islamic State or ISIS. And the second surge, which was significantly larger than the 2013 influx of recruits, came in July 2014 when the Islamic State had recently captured key cities and territory, and after al-Baghdadi's announcement that ISIS was "establishing a caliphate with dominion over the world's Muslims" (Engel, Smith, & Connor, 2016). It would appear that the way the Islamic State markets itself, as a religious-nationalist movement, and the religious-national identity that it has to offer, has been very effective in attracting individuals from all walks of life and from a wide range of contexts and circumstances.

How does this data speak to this behavioral pattern that one would expect from a nationalist state? Given the broad spectrum of individuals who have joined the ranks of ISIS, it is

apparent that the Islamic State's message has a relatively wide appeal, at least among a certain group of Muslims with a particular interpretation of Islam. But due to the fact that so many come from so many diverse backgrounds and from so many places outside of Iraq and Syria, we have to assume that these people will be dedicated to the cause and will be very committed to defending the integrity of the Islamic State. The CTC report showed relatively few individuals were willing to be suicide bombers, but practically all of the recruits were willing to serve in a combat capacity. In other words, their willingness to make great sacrifices in order to enhance the power of the state is evident, as is the Islamic State's ability to effectively appeal to its "citizens" to make such sacrifices.

- *Nationalists are more likely to grant leaders considerable freedom to take risks in defending the country's interests. However, leaders who fail will be punished by nationalistic people. They will not grant those leaders the freedom to accept defeats or the loss of face.*

To say that ISIS's followers grant "considerable freedom" to its leaders to take risks in defending the group's interest is a gross understatement. The caliph has historically been viewed as a direct successor to the Prophet Muhammad and has frequently been considered to be an "absolute monarch" with absolute power (Aslan, 2011). In the case of the Islamic State, al-Baghdadi, or caliph Ibrahim, "is the sole decision-maker in the Islamic State and his decisions are implemented with no avenue for recourse. As the representative of the Prophet Mohammed, he holds absolute power and does not share authority with any of his lieutenants" (Neriah, 2014). Below the caliph are two primary advisory councils: The *Shura* council and the *Sharia* council; and below them are several other councils: the provincial, military, security and intelligence, religious affairs, finance, and media councils. While there is a hierarchy of leadership in the Islamic State, at the top of the pyramid is the Caliph, and his authority is absolute, just as the caliphs of old (Childress, Amico, & Wexler, 2014).

Expected patterns of behavior indicate that a nationalist state will grant its leaders a large amount of autonomy to make decisions for the state. In the case of the Islamic State, all power is consolidated in the caliph, and he has complete authority to do what he deems as necessary to defend the group and further the group's goals. In this sense, the Islamic State follows the expected pattern of behavior to the fullest extent, perhaps beyond the point that a prototypical nation-state would. In a "normal" situation, the nationalistic population can, and will, hold its leadership accountable; but in the case of the Islamic State, holding the caliph accountable would be akin to holding the Prophet Muhammad accountable, which is something almost entirely outside of the realm of possibility.

Conclusion and Future Direction

This study has shown that there is ample evidence to suggest that the Islamic State, and its followers, exhibit behaviors and ideological claims that correlate with religious nationalism and nationalist movements. While not actually a nation, ISIS provides its members with a religious nationalist identity that carries with it a purpose that is perceived to be eternally important and politically necessary. It seeks territory in order to establish a Muslim state or nation in the form of a caliphate and has appealed to thousands of disenfranchised and marginalized Muslims from around the world, largely because of the attraction these individuals feel toward the vision of safety, security, and glory that is associated with the caliphate. The Islamic State appears to fill a national-identity-void that exists in the Middle East as a result of colonialism. Many Middle Eastern Muslims have found it difficult to hold a strong national identity and devotion to a state that was arbitrarily created by foreign European powers. They have an identity-crisis, so to speak, and the Islamic State provides a religious national identity that transcends national borders and is grounded in a shared religious commitment. Finally, the

political psychology literature has produced several patterns of behavior and attitudes that one can expect from nationalist groups or states. The Islamic State appears to exhibit all of these expected behaviors, which would ultimately indicate some type of relationship or similarity between the nature of ISIS, and the nature of a nationalist group.

As stated above, this paper is only the theoretical foundation of a larger project, still in its infancy, that aims to empirically examine the various research questions addressed above. For the next step in this project, I am currently developing a measure of religious nationalism for systematically analyzing the use of religious-nationalist rhetoric and images in ISIS' English-language publications, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. A systematic content analysis of these publications will provide much greater insight into how ISIS uses its religious-nationalist message to target specific populations for recruiting, and to further its causes more generally.

References

Almukhtar, S. (2015, May 19). ISIS Finances Are Strong. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from
http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/05/19/world/middleeast/isis-finances.html

Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities.* London: Verso.

Aslan, R. (2011). *No god but God.* New York: Random House.

Bajekal, N. (2015, May 15). ISIS Releases Message From Its Leader Calling for Muslims to Join Him or Fight Where They Are. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from
http://time.com/3859965/isis-baghdadi-message-recruits/

BBC. (2014, July 1). ISIS Leader Calls on Muslims to 'Build Islamic State'. *BBC News*.
Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28116846

Block, M. (2016, March 28). ISIS Recruiters Feed On Working-Class, Heavily Muslim Molenbeek. *NPR News*. Retrieved from http://www.npr.org/2016/03/28/472105541/isis-recruiters-feed-on-working-class-heavily-muslim-molenbeek

Brown, R. (2000). *Group Processes.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Callimachi, R. (2014, October 25). The Horror Before the Beheadings. *The New York Times*.
Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/26/world/middleeast/horror-before-the-beheadings-what-isis-hostages-endured-in-syria.html

Carothers, T. (2002). The End of the Transition Paradigm. *Journal of Democracy, 13*(1), 5-21.

Childress, S., Amico, C., & Wexler, E. (2014, October 28). Who Runs the Islamic State? *PBS Frontline*. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/who-runs-the-islamic-state/

Cottam, M. (1994). *Images and Intervention: U.S. Policies in Latin America.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Cottam, M. (2006). *Image Theory Interpretive Manual.*

Cottam, M., Huseby, J., & Baltodano, B. (2016). *Confronting al Qaeda: The Sunni Awakening and American Strategy in al Anbar.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Cottam, M., Mastors, E., Preston, T., & Dietz, B. (2016). *Introduction to Political Psychology.* New York: Routledge.

Cottam, R., & Cottam, M. (2000). *Nationalism & Politics: The Political Behavior of Nation States.* Lynne Reinner.

Dodwell, B., Milton, D., & Rassler, D. (2016). *The Caliphate's Global Force: An Inside Look at the Islamic State's Foreign Fighter Paper Trail.* United States Military Academy: Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.

Emerson, R. (1960). *From Empire to Nation.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Engel, R., Smith, M., & Connor, T. (2016, April 18). The ISIS Files: What Leaked Documents Reveal About Terror Recruits. *NBC News*. Retrieved from http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-uncovered/isis-files-what-leaked-documents-reveal-about-terror-recruits-n557411?cid=eml_onsite.

Gambhir, H. K. (2014). *Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State.* Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War.

Gibbons-Neff, T. (2014, August 11). ISIS Propaganda Videos Show their Weapons, Skills in Iraq. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2014/06/18/isis-propaganda-videos-show-their-weapons-skills-in-iraq/

Giovanni, J. d., Goodman, L. M., & Sharkov, D. (2014, November 6). How Does ISIS Fund Its Reign of Terror? *Newsweek*. Retrieved from http://www.newsweek.com/2014/11/14/how-does-isis-fund-its-reign-terror-282607.html

Graham, D. A. (2015, November 17). What's the Matter With Belgium? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/11/belgium-radical-islam-jihad-molenbeek-isis/416235/

Gurin, P., Peng, T., Lopez, G., & Nagda, B. (1999). Context, Identity, and Intergroup Relations. In D. Prentice, & D. M. (eds.), *Cultural Divides: Understanding and Overcoming Group Conflict* (pp. 133-172). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Haltiwanger, J. (2014, November 24). How ISIS is Trying to Become the New Ottoman Empire. *Elite Daily*. Retrieved from http://elitedaily.com/news/politics/isis-wants-to-be-the-new-ottoman-empire/861328/

Hussein, Z. R., & Kubis, J. (2015). *Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq: 1 May - 31 October 2015.* New York: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

James, P. (1996). *Nation Formation: Toward a Theory of Abstract Community.* New York: Sage Publications.

Johnson, H. (2016, March 16). Mapped: The Islamic State is Losing its Territory - and Fast. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/16/mapped-the-islamic-state-is-losing-its-territory-and-fast/

Johnston, P., Bahney, B., & Shatz, H. (2014). *Financial Action Task Force.* Washington, D.C.: Rand Corporation, Congressional Research Servie, U.S. Department of the Treasury, Institiute for the Study of War.

Juergensmeyer, M. (1996). The Worldwide Rise of Religious Nationalism. *Journal of International Affaris, 50*(1), 1-20.

Juergensmeyer, M. (2001). *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence.* Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Kirkpatrick, D. (2014, September 24). ISIS' Harsh Brand of Islam Is Rooted in Austere Saudi Creed. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/25/world/middleeast/isis-abu-bakr-baghdadi-caliph-wahhabi.html?_r=0

Kumaraswamy, P. (2006). Who Am I?: The Identity Crisis in the Middle East. *Middle East Review of International Affairs, 10*(1), 63-73.

Leigh, K. (2014, August 2). ISIS Makes Up To $3 Million a Day Selling Oil. *ABC News*. Retrieved from http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=24814359

McCants, W. (2015). How the Islamic State declared war on the world. *Brookings Institute*. Retrieved from http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/11/17-how-isis-declared-war-on-the-world-mccants

McCants, W. (2015). *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of The Islamic State.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Michaels, J. (2016, February 4). New U.S. Intelligence Estimate Sees 20-25K ISIL Fighters. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/02/03/isil-fighters-new-estimate-25000-iraq-syria/79775676/

Nasr, S. (1999). European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States. In J. L. (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Islam* (pp. 549-600). New York: Oxford University Press.

Neriah, J. (2014). *The Structure of the Islamic State (ISIS).* Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. Retrieved from http://jcpa.org/structure-of-the-islamic-state/

Obama, B. (2016, April 24). *Statement by the President on ISIL*. Retrieved from The White House: https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/10/statement-president-isil-1

Otterman, S. (2005, April). Iraq: Debaathification. *Council on Foreign Relations*.

Porter, T. (2014, August 17). The Reason Behind ISIS Beheadings: Terror. *International Business Times*. Retrieved from http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/reason-behind-isis-beheadings-terror-1461513

Quataert, D. (2005). *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rogin, J. (2014, June 14). America's Allies Are Funding ISIS. *The Daily Beast*. Retrieved from http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/06/14/america-s-allies-are-funding-isis.html

Schmitt, E., & Sengupta, S. (2015, September 26). Thousands Enter Syria to Join ISIS Despite Global Efforts. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/27/world/middleeast/thousands-enter-syria-to-join-isis-despite-global-efforts.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=0

Searle-White, J. (2001). *The Psychology of Nationalism.* New York: Palgrave.

Semple, K., & Schmitt, E. (2014, October 26). Missles of ISIS May Pose Peril for Aircrews. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/27/world/middleeast/missiles-of-isis-may-pose-peril-for-aircrews.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=first-column-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&_r=1

Staub, E. (1989). *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stern, J., & Berger, J. (2016). *ISIS: The State of Terror.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Tafjel, H. (1978). Social Categorization, Social Identity, and Social Comparison. In H. T. (ed.), *Differentiation Between Social Groups* (pp. 61-76). London: Academic Press.

Tajfel, H. (1970). Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination. *Scientific American, 223*, 96-102.

Weiss, M., & Hassan, H. (2015). *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror.* New York: Regan Arts.

White, G. (2007). *Nation, State, and Territory: Origins, Evolutions, and Relationships.* New York: Rowman & Littlefiled Publishers.

Winter, C., & Bach-Lombardo, J. (2016, February 13). Why ISIS Propaganda Works. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/02/isis-propaganda-war/462702/

Wood, G. (2015, March). What ISIS Really Wants. *The Atlantic*, pp. 79-94.

Zakaria, F. (1997, November/December). The Rise of Illiberal Democracy. *Foreign Affairs*.

Zakaria, F. (2001, October 14). The Politics of Rage: Why Do They Hate Us? *Newsweek*. Retrieved from http://www.newsweek.com/politics-rage-why-do-they-hate-us-154345