

PUTTING THE “ISLAM” IN ISLAMISM: RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE AND THE
MODEL MUSLIM AS TOOLS OF PROPAGANDA

by

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

This work examines how two Islamist forces, the Islamic State and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, use Islamic messages and themes in their propaganda and narrative in an effort to persuade others to their point of view. It does so through the lens of propaganda analysis and narrative theory, and focuses specifically on the efforts of these groups to create an imaginary “model Muslim” for persuadees to emulate, the use of religiously loaded terms, and the intertwining of government and Islamic themes to create Islamic messages with the intent to persuade.

INTRODUCTION

While studying Islamist groups, I am often faced with an important question: “How do these groups persuade people to their point of view, especially when their point of view is often controversial?” Certainly, like any other political organization or religious group, Islamist groups use a plethora of techniques such as logic, lies, and everything in between to convince others that they are right. I have found that while scholars may study some methods of persuasion, they often take for granted the fact that even extremist Islamist groups and persons incorporate Islamic messages into their discourse in an effort to persuade others. One may argue, and I would agree, that other faiths have controversial beliefs and that people within those faiths also use their faith in persuasion and propaganda. However, I seek to elucidate how Islamic groups in particular achieve this goal.

I hypothesize that the most important technique that Islamist forces use to in an effort to validate controversial ideas and actions and persuade others to their views is using Islamic messages and themes as propaganda in their discourse, specifically the creation of their idea of a model Muslim for others to emulate and the use of religious terms, icons, and ideas to establish a narrative. I examine the mechanisms and means through which Islamist forces use Islam as a tool to accomplish this goal. For this project, I use two Islamist forces as my case studies: the Islamic State (IS) otherwise known as ISIS, ISIL, and Daesh, and the government of the Islamic forces in the Islamic Republic of Iran, specifically during the first ten years of the regime when the role of Islam in government was still solidifying. I chose these two Islamist forces because when I examined these methods of persuasion through propaganda analysis (see below) these two forces provided many abundant sources previously translated from Arabic and Persian into English, and my research on their discourse further resulted in various opportunities to examine it further from

the perspective of propaganda analysis. In addition, I felt that these two forces' discourse is often taken for granted in the existing literature.

Most scholars of Islamist discourse focus solely on the main philosophical thinkers of Islamism: al-Banna, Qutb, Maududi, Rida, etc. They tend to attribute all of the thoughts, discourse, and actions of modern Islamist forces to these philosophers who all lived almost 100 years ago, in a very different world than the world we live in today. This focus implies that, for instance, people join the Muslim Brotherhood because they researched Hasan al-Banna and were convinced by what he said, or that people join an Islamist group that engages in terrorism because they were inspired by reading Qutb. For instance, Khaled El-Fadl writes about how Qutb was simply a follower of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and simply reinvigorated his teachings in Egypt in the 20th century, which then began to be disseminated and followed to the letter by his readers.¹ He does not give Qutb's ideas and discourse their due. Instead of focusing on the philosophies of al-Banna, Qutb, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, etc., I examine the actual discourse of the Islamic State and Ayatollah Khomeini of the Islamic Republic of Iran—what they actually believe and say—in my case studies, the discourse that they present to the general public in an effort to persuade them.

Islamism has been defined, redefined, and thrown out the window many times. One book I studied in search of a good definition of Islamism was entirely dedicated to finding a good definition or if there was no good definition, discontinuing use of the term. Two of the definitions the various authors of that book used that I found most helpful included “Islamists are Muslims who are committed to political action to implement what they regard as an Islamic agenda” and “an Islamist believes that Islam as a body of faith has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered in the contemporary Muslim World and seeks

¹ El-Fadl, Khaled M. Abou. *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.

to implement this idea in some fashion”.² The best definition that I encountered however, and the one I use in this work, is “[Islamism] refer[s] to contemporary movements that attempt to return to the scriptural foundations of the Muslim community, excavating and reinterpreting them for application to the present-day social and political world...Islamists may be characterized as explicitly and intentionally political and as engaging in multifaceted critiques of all those people, institutions, practices, and orientations that do not meet their standards of this divinely mandated political engagement.”³ These can be state or non-state forces, legitimate or illegitimate (from the point of view of the state), groups or a single person, violent or peaceful, top-down (in control of the government) or bottom-up (grassroots efforts). As such, Islamism is most definitely not a cohesive ideology; it is expressed in many different ways all over the world. Unique circumstances engender various types of Islamist groups with different methods, goals and inspirations that all act as influences on their discourse. This type of ideology is not unique to Islam. Religion and religious principles play a part in many ideologies and my findings in this paper could be very applicable to other types of religious extremists.

I will examine the persuasive methods of these two Islamist forces using the lens of propaganda analysis. A few definitions are necessary to continue. While even propaganda and rhetoric experts disagree on the definition of propaganda and how it differs from simple persuasion, I have found the following definitions of propaganda useful in analyzing my subjects:

² Emmerson, Donald K. "Inclusive Islamism: The Utility of Diversity." In *Islamism: Contested Perspectives on Political Islam*, edited by Richard C. and Abbas Barzegar Mortin, 17-32. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010. 27.

Fuller, Graham E. "The Spectrum of Islamic Politics." In *Islamism: Contested Perspectives on Political Islam*, edited by Richard C. and Abbas Barzegar Martin, 51-56. Stanford: Stanford University Pres, 2010.

³ Euben, Roxanne L., and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, ed. *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. 4.

- 1) Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.⁴
- 2) Propaganda is more or less the systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols.⁵
- 3) Propaganda is the organized attempt through communication to affect belief or action or inculcate attitudes in a large audience in ways that circumvent or suppress an individual's adequately informed, rational, or reflective judgment.⁶
- 4) The purpose of propaganda is to convince, to win over, and to convert; therefore it must be convincing, truthful, and viable in its own merit.⁷

These definitions differentiate propaganda from persuasion because persuasion tends to involve a dialogue of some kind, and both the persuader and the persuadee stand to have their needs filled. Propaganda on the other hand seeks to fulfill the needs of simply the persuader, while appearing to satisfy the needs of both.⁸ Because persuasion requires a dialogue, much of the mass information that is disseminated on a daily basis across the globe technically qualifies as propaganda. In addition, propaganda is not inherently bad. As the final definition explains, it often must contain some truth. For this paper I will be using the first definition to guide my analyses.

The goals of both propaganda and persuasion are to shape responses, reinforce responses (i.e. maintain feelings and attitudes), and change responses (i.e. switch from one attitude to

⁴ Jowett, Garth S., Victoria O'Donnell. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc., 2006. 7.

⁵ Quoting Bruce L. Smith in Marlin, Randal. *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion*. Toronto: Broadview Press, LTD, 2002. 19.

⁶ Marlin, Randal. *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion*. Toronto: Broadview Press, LTD, 2002. 23.

⁷ Taithe, Bertrand, Tim Thornton. "Propaganda: A Misnomer of Rhetoric and Persuasion." In *Propaganda*, by Tim Thornton Bertrand Taithe, 1-26. Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999. 2.

⁸ Jowett 2006, 32.

another).⁹ In order for the persuader to achieve these goals, they must begin with what is called an anchor. An anchor is a belief that already exists in the minds of the listeners which a persuader can use to build on. Anchors can include beliefs, values (core beliefs), attitudes (a state of feeling towards something), behavior, and group norms.

Most persuaders seek to change attitudes, because the other anchors are more difficult to affect.¹⁰ The idea is to find an anchor to build on that will create resonance in the mind of the listener. If the anchor is sufficiently personal, and the message is successful, it will resonate in the mind of the listener, appearing not to come from an outside authority but from their own mind. Within the context of this study, the Islamic State and the Islamic Republic of Iran use Islam as the anchor on which they build their propaganda. Groups engaging in mass persuasion or propaganda often engage in market research or opinion polls in an effort to discover what the beliefs that can be anchored are, but if the target audience shares a belief (for instance, Islamist groups attempting to persuade Muslims), then this research is unnecessary.

Different types of propaganda include agitative, integrative, white, black, gray, irrational, and rational. Agitative propaganda attempts to rouse an audience to certain ends, usually resulting in a significant change or lead them to action.¹¹ Integrative propaganda attempts to render an audience passive, accepting, and non-challenging.¹² White propaganda correctly identifies a source, and is technically accurate; it simply presents information to convince listeners that the speaker is right.¹³ Black propaganda conceals the source or falsely credits it, spreads lies, fabrications, and deception.¹⁴ Gray propaganda is the middle ground. Sources may

⁹ Jowett 2006, 33.

¹⁰ Ibid. 33-37.

¹¹ Ibid. 16.

Gaunt 1999, 28.

¹² Jowett 2006, 16.

¹³ Jowett 2006, 16.

¹⁴ Ibid. 16.

not be cited correctly, and accuracy is uncertain. A source may be correct, but the information inaccurate, or vice versa.¹⁵ Irrational propaganda is emotive, and uses myths and symbols to create emotional responses. And rational propaganda uses reason, and seems logical or scientific when it may not be.¹⁶

Different methods of propaganda include presenting novelty, emotional appeals, establishing credibility, analogy/transfer(linking one's ideas with people, symbols, or ideas that are viewed favorably in an effort to boost ones image), language manipulation (name calling, removing nouns from sentences to displace guilt), testimonials (respected persons giving their opinion about something), jump on the bandwagon (all your friends are doing it, you should too), quoting out of context, meshing fact with opinion, and logical fallacies. These methods can be used in discourse, photographs, posters, movies, radio broadcasts, letters, speeches, and a plethora of other creative ways. In my case studies I address how these groups effectively use many of these methods in their discourse and speech, in addition to the many other modes of communication in their propaganda, such as photographs and movies. With some reshaping they can use Islamic messages to inspire, spread hate, and change perceptions.

Propaganda analysis consists of examining the source of the propaganda, the message, the goal of the message, and how the message is important. I will follow this model in this paper. The largest portion of my research focuses on the various methods these groups use, and the messages spread.

Another aspect of this project is narrative, and I will use the idea of narratives to further explain these Islamist forces' use of Islamic messages in their propaganda. Narrative and narrative theory is used in many disciplines, most heavily in those having to do with literature,

¹⁵ Ibid. 20.

¹⁶ Marlin 2002, 38.

but can easily be applied to propaganda analysis. A narrative is a story, but also “refers to the ways in which we construct disparate facts in our own worlds and weave them together cognitively in order to make sense of our own reality”.¹⁷ As such, narratives form a substantial part of our reality, from an international level to a personal level. We construct narratives to explain our reality. A narrative is important for the content of the narrative, but also for what it says about the narratives creator. Narratives are influenced by what is significant and important to their creator, and the environment in which they were created.¹⁸ Thus, the creator infuses their narrative with factors from their own life. This makes narratives important for providing a sense of purpose and place for those participants in the narrative.¹⁹ If the creator was affected by some factors in their life, it is probable that others around them could be affected in the same manner by the same factors. This also means that narratives evolve and shift over time, as environmental factors and what is important to people change. In addition, because people have so many different ideas and everyone lives different lives, created narratives can compete for the same niche in society. This creates one of the possible situations where propaganda and narrative intersect. A government or group creates a narrative, and then disseminates propaganda to convince the recipients that the narrative is the true narrative that should be listened to at the expense of a competing narrative. Narrative research involves getting to know the creator through interviews, letters, diaries, or anything that can convey the narrative the creator wants propagated. In this study I use IS’s *Dabiq* magazine and the letters and speeches of Ayatollah Khomeini.

¹⁷ Patterson, Molly and Kristen Renwick Monroe. "Narrative in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (1998): 315.

¹⁸ Ibid. 320

¹⁹ Ibid. 321

The Islamic State is a Sunni Islam non-state actor attempting to create its own community and establish what they view as a Muslim caliphate (A place ruled by a caliph, successor to the Prophet Muhammad, a steward for Islam) where they can rule as they see fit, according to their interpretations of sharia (Islamic sacred law). They seek to do so using violence and terrorist tactics. Because they are a non-state actor, their own idea of borders is amorphous, and while they claim hegemony over select areas in a few countries, with their base of operations Raqqa, Syria, they have claimed attacks on many different countries, and encourage their followers to attack anyone who is not a part of their group. Their narrative revolves around the idea that humanity has fallen away from the pure teachings of God and that to right this calamity before the end of the world they must establish a caliphate where pure Islam can be taught and practiced. This caliphate is viewed as the only true bastion and representatives of Islam, and they view themselves as standing alone in the defense of Islam against the forces of evil. It also includes a much more narrow interpretation of Islam than is practiced by the majority of Muslims, based on very narrow readings of Islamic texts. There is very little margin for sin and error, and they consider any person who does not live up to their standard, whether they be Muslim or not, both a physical and spiritual enemy. Within in this narrative those Muslims who disagree with them, which they acknowledge are many, are seen as liars and heretics.

The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a Shia Muslim state actor attempting to synthesize sharia with democratic government by utilizing the theories of Ruhollah Khomeini expressed as *vilayat-e faqih* (the rule of the jurists) wherein the government answers to the clerical hierarchy of the country to ensure that it is governed in adherence with Islamic principles and sharia.²⁰ As a state actor whose founding leaders²⁰ had substantial support from the populace,

²⁰ Arjomand, Said Amir. *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. 99.

it is a legitimate ruling entity. Its focus mainly lies on its own populace, although they have sought to influence their neighbors' populations. Their narrative (during the timeframe I focus on, the 1980's) revolves around the idea of revolution/battle against evil and the establishment of vilayat-e faqih. Their own revolution against the former secular government was seen as a battle to throw off a Godless ruler who abused them, and they wanted to perpetuate this battle to other countries which they believed were beleaguered as they were. Vilayat-e faqih was implemented to prevent another Godless regime from taking power. As long as holy men were part of the government and helped to rule, the government would be an extension of Islam and could thus not be Godless. This new form of government was seen as an experiment that if successful would be followed by countries throughout the world. They also saw themselves as an example of enlightenment to the world, because of their amalgamation of religion and government. They saw themselves as the only truly Islamic, or even just, government in the world. This view played into another part of their narrative. Because they were the only truly Islamic government, and an example of enlightenment to the world, they saw themselves in an older sibling capacity to other Muslim majority countries, attempting to teach them to become truly Islamic, the way an older sibling teaches a younger how to cross the street.

There are glaring differences between these two forces. The Islamic State adheres to Sunni Islam while the government of IRI adheres to Shia Islam. As such, IS includes IRI on its lists of most hated enemies, and IRI considers IS as a terrorist organization. While IRI has used violence against its population, it pales in comparison to the amount of violence IS has used. I chose these two forces in part because of their differences, which are many, even though both Islamist forces attempt to use the same Islam as their guide. I also want to note that while these two forces are vastly different from each other, they are even more different from the majority of

Muslims worldwide. Their narratives have many detractors within Islam. For instance, Hamza Yusuf and Yasir Qadhi, two well-read and educated scholars of Islam, have repeatedly criticized the Islamic State for their actions, to the point that IS actually issued bounties on their heads. And they are not alone. Countless other Muslim clerics and scholars have condemned the Islamic State's narrative for its exclusivity and brutality. The same applies for the Islamic Republic of Iran. Even during the 1979 revolution, when support for Ayatollah Khomeini was high, Iranian clerics like Montazari condemned the narrative of an Islamic government.

Within these two case studies, I address subthemes that are common to their discourse and narrative. For my case study concerning the Islamic State, I address their use of testimonials (stories about the "model Muslim" and how he or she acts), and loaded words (words that have a religious connotation and background). For my case study concerning the Islamic Republic of Iran, I address their use of Friday Prayer Leaders as a means to propagate the government's message, and their various portrayals of Iraqi soldiers during the Iran-Iraq War, made in an effort to simultaneously persuade Iraqis to defect and Iranians to keep fighting in the war.

Literature Review

Many authors have addressed the interaction between Islamism and politics, what the actual definition of Islamism is, whether the word should even exist, where Islamism came from, when it started, and its future. What has been left by the wayside is research into the current persuasive discourse of Islamist groups.

El-Fadl's book, *The Great Theft* examines the differences between what he labels Muslim Moderates and Muslim Puritans.²¹ He asserts that Islamism arose and continues to grow because of the lack of qualified jurists to interpret Islamic law for Muslims. This vacuum, he

²¹ El-Fadl 2005

argues, has been filled by many underqualified jurists, or more dangerously, lay people who interpret law as they see fit. This results in people selectively choosing which parts of Islam they want to obey or emphasize. They also use hadith and the Qur'an in ways that well-trained jurists of the Middle Ages never would, using apocryphal hadith to validate death sentences, ignoring the context in which certain Qur'anic verses were written, etc. This dearth of qualified jurists, he claims, was a result of colonialism and foreign influence, which led Muslim governments to reform their legal systems and take control of the administration of law from the jurists.

Essentially, in attempting to modernize and progress, these governments damaged the chances of Muslims to do so organically, adapting the law as they themselves adapted. El-Fadl's book is very insightful into why Islamism is a result of modernity, but it is too broad in its application.

He groups all Islamists together in one group that seems to derive directly from the Saudi Arabian government. Additionally, El-Fadl's book focuses excessively on the past. He thoroughly examines Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahab and his influence on many Islamist groups, but he does not address the current reasoning and discourse of modern Muslim Puritans. Abd al-Wahab lived almost 300 years ago, and since then Islamism has spread all over the world, and has many different expressions. El-Fadl's book does highlight very well the different interpretations Muslims can have of their religion and its messages. The Muslim Puritans and the Muslim Moderates use the same sources to come to very different conclusions. The same effect can be seen between Islamist groups, who use the Qur'an and hadith to validate their points of view, but still have different points of view.

Moussalli focuses more on how the more famous ideologues of Islamism (specifically Qutb, al-Banna, and Khomeini) were actually working towards modernity; they simply chose to

advance under a different paradigm.²² He uses the term fundamentalist, which may work when describing Islamism, except that he himself pokes a hole in his own logic by saying that he uses the term fundamentalist because these persons interpret the Qur'an literally (as did the original Christian fundamentalists with the Bible), but then says that the Muslim Brotherhood is fundamentalist but does not interpret the Qur'an literally.²³ In place of studying Abd al-Wahab, as El-Fadl does, Moussalli focuses on 20th century ideologues, because he views them as the foundation of all Islamist thought. He examines the writings of these men in depth, laying out very plainly how each of them pictured the future of Islam and society, and how they tried to make their discourse more palatable to the reader. For instance, he relates that Qutb's ultimate goal of an Islamic society was the happiness of its members.²⁴ When they embraced tawhid they would realize that all unhappiness comes from a lack of unity (tawhid), whether it is disunity between people, between man and nature, man and God, etc. He also relates how al-Banna tried to harmonize Islamic thought with "Western" thought in an effort to convince more Muslims of his point of view.²⁵ However, Moussalli only focuses on discourse that is more than 60 years old to illustrate how modern Islamists attempt to defend their points of view. He does not, for instance, address the current discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood, now that the future al-Banna and Qutb desired still has not come to pass.

While many Islamists do reference these ideologues in their discourse, they also bring in many other sources and generate their own discourse with their own ideals and values. Lauziere attempts to address this issue in his analysis of the Moroccan Islamist leader Abd al-Salam

²² Moussalli, Ahmad S. *Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Quest for Modernity, Legitimacy, and the Islamic State*. Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1999.

²³ Moussalli 1999, 23

²⁴ Ibid. 24

²⁵ Ibid. 130

Yasin.²⁶ He examines how Yasin was initially influenced by Sufism in Morocco, and gradually came to be a proponent of Islamism as well. His discourse attempts to reconcile the two (Sufism and Islamism) to the wider Islamist population in Morocco, who had predominantly Salafi leanings and rejected Sufi practices and ideas. Lauziere analyzes Yasin's discourse to look at how his discourse evolved over the years as Yasin attempted to defend Sufism, and explain why Sufism and Islamism went hand in hand.

Ahram also attempts to address modern Islamist discourse in his analysis of letters sent by Islamist organizations to the new U.N. envoy in 2003 coalition occupied Iraq.²⁷ He examines how these letters differently address the envoy, one addressing him as a Muslim and the other as an outsider, how they try to convey new senses of unity and identity to the envoy, such as telling him that certain groups of displaced Iraqis in foreign countries are still Iraqis while others are not, how they attempt to speak for the whole of Iraq, despite being only two groups, and how they criticize the occupation to him while offering new forms of legitimacy, such as democracy not being right for the time being in Iraq, but the members of this group can handle the administration of government. One issue that Ahram brings up is that when groups produce discourse, the analyst can never know who exactly is speaking in the group.²⁸ However, I do not see this as an issue in research because the group would want to appear as a united front, with one official discourse, so if the analyst examines them as a single entity, this issue is moot.

²⁶ Lauzière, Henri. "Post-Islamism and the Religious Discourse of Abd al-Salam Yasin." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Cambridge University Press) 37, no. 2 (2005): 241-261.

²⁷ Ahram, Ariel I. "Symbolic Frames: Identity and Legitimacy in Iraqi Islamist Discourse." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* (Michigan State University Press) 11, no. 1 (2008): 113-132.

²⁸ Ibid. 119.

Ketterman and Marko's analysis of fundamentalist discourse provides an interesting take on how more conservative and extreme members of religions write in general.²⁹ Their work focuses on American Christian fundamentalist discourse, and specifically how ideologues use religious texts in their discourse, whether it is directly quoted, alluded to, paraphrased, etc. and the implications of such writing, and how these ideologues interpret the religious texts and use their interpretations to persuade others to their point of view.

Atran performs an in-depth examination of why Islamists who use terrorist tactics kill and why people "radicalize" to the point that they *can* kill in his book *Talking with the Enemy*.³⁰ His basic hypothesis is that human beings are social creatures and when they go to kill and die (whether it is in war or suicide bombing) it is usually for the love of others, more than any cause or ideology. In other words, suicide bombers and terrorists kill and die as they do because they believe it is the best way to protect loved ones, or to be near to loved ones. He attempts to prove this through hundreds of interviews with Islamists, terrorists, and everyone in between in Morocco, Spain, Palestine, Israel, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Kashmir. In his interviews with Islamist and terrorist groups, and his research into the lives of suicide bombers, he found that the majority of the respondents were involved in extremist activity or suicide bombing because a friend or family member was, and they wanted to support and defend them, or that they participated in an effort to defend those that were part of the imagined community, such as men journeying from Morocco to Iraq or Afghanistan to help their fellow Muslims repel invaders. Most of the men he interviewed did not have a rigorous religious education and did not grow up in ultra-religious families. One interesting aspect of his work is that Islamist ideologies can

²⁹ Ketterman, Bernard and George Marko. "'But What Does the Bible Really Say?' A Critical Discourse Analysis of Fundamentalist Discourse." *AAA: Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* (Narr Francke Attempto Verlag GmbH Co. KG) 30, no. 1/2 (2005): 201-225.

³⁰ Atran, Scott. *Talking with the Enemy*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.

provide a new set of loved ones to protect. For instance, he examines foreign fighters who would journey to Iraq to fight against the U.S. invasion because they felt they needed to protect their brethren there, or because a friend was already going and they wanted to assist him.

However, he mostly focused his work on suicide bombers and “lone wolf” attackers, or focused on these attackers’ ties with al-Qaeda, which were usually funding or technical training. He also focused on Palestinian suicide bombers and Taliban fighters, both of which are not quite cut and dry terrorist groups because of the nationalist and tribal aspects of their struggles. He does not address how large Islamist forces such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic State, or the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran seek to use Islam as a unifier and motivator or how they persuade people to fight and kill, except his focus on fraternal love. While there are definitely aspects of fraternal love to these groups, they themselves do not focus on it extensively in their literature.

In addition, no authors that I have come across have examined Islamism through the lens of propaganda analysis, much less with Islamic messages as the focus of the propaganda. I encountered one dissertation that examined the Islamic State’s use of digital media in their propaganda, but the author focused entirely on their use of videos, Facebook, and Twitter, and only briefly mentioned *Dabiq* magazine in an effort to contextualize the messages of the digital media.³¹ That author raised an interesting point, which I also found to be true, that most of the scholarly work that has been done on the Islamic State focuses on their use of digital media, and does not focus on the actual messages of their propaganda. A similar project I found also analyzed IS’s videos using discourse analysis, specifically looking for the linguistic tricks and

³¹ Tomerlin, Sarah T. "A Message Without Borders: The Islamic State's use of Digital Propaganda for a Western Audience." *Proquest*. August 1, 2016. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy3.library.arizona.edu/docview/1826023464?pq-origsite=summon> (accessed July 18, 2017).

methods they used in their videos.³² An additional article I encountered briefly addressed certain terms military personnel associate with the Islamic State, such as caliph, caliphate, and Qur'an, and only briefly in the conclusion touched on how they manipulate religious themes in their propaganda.³³ Another article focused on locating certain "master narratives" within IS propaganda, narratives that they believed were common to all Islamist groups.³⁴ The narratives from their master list that they were able to locate within *Dabiq* and IS video propaganda were a crusader narrative, which focuses on how IS portrays Western powers, a *jahiliyya* (state of ignorance) narrative, wherein they IS seeks to establish a caliphate as an anti-*jahiliyya*, a place where ignorance of Islam and Islamic law is non-existent, and a hypocrite narrative, in which they portray Muslims who disagree with them as hypocrites to delegitimize them. Their analyses of the uses of *jahiliyya* and hypocrite are similar to my conclusions in my section on loaded terms and religious language, but downplay the importance of these themes. Within their study they only found *jahiliyya* and hypocrite used roughly twenty times each, whereas I found terms used to build into similar narratives more than a hundred times. Their choice of terms led them to give these themes in IS propaganda less attention than it merits. They also focused more on imagery and sound within IS propaganda, and only touched on the use of martyrs in IS propaganda in one paragraph, and did not address the systematic effort in IS propaganda to create a model Muslim. Ingram used statistical analysis to compare *Dabiq* and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's (AQAP) *Inspire* magazine.³⁵ He analyzed how frequently they used a variety identity constructs and crises in their propaganda. His main focuses in his analysis were

³² LaFrance, Alexandra. "Constructing the Appeal of Terror: Manipulative Discursive Strategies in the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's English-Language Recruitment Videos." *ProQuest*. 2017. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy3.library.arizona.edu/docview/1909338348?pq-origsite=summon> (accessed July 18, 2017).

³³ Ford, Theresa. "How Daesh Uses Language in the Domain of Religion." *Military Review*, 2016: 16-27.

³⁴ Mahood, Samantha and Halim Rane. "Islamist Narratives in ISIS Recruitment Propaganda." *The Journal of International Communication* 23, no. 1 (2017): 15-35.

³⁵ Ingram, Haroro. "An Analysis of Inspire and Dabiq: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 5 (2016): 357-375.

the use of eschatological themes in *Dabiq* to motivate readers to join, and the way their maligning of other Sunni Muslims differs from AQAP's approach. Another article I encountered focused on the themes of the caliphate, war, sexual slavery and marriage, and killings and executions that are found in *Dabiq*.³⁶

I did find authors who wrote about Khomeini's propaganda machine, but they for the most part only briefly touched upon the use of the Friday Prayer Leader, and remarked that they were indeed an important part of the state apparatus because they had weekly face-to-face contact with the people.³⁷ One exception was Haggay Ram, who examined the use of the Friday Sermon for the political and ideological advancement of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He analyzed sermons from 1979-1989, focusing particularly on the use of Shia icons and stories to maintain revolutionary zeal and legitimize the revolution and the government. He focuses heavily on analyzing the stories of Shia history, such as the future return of the Mahdi, and their position in the sermons.³⁸ Ram's approach was distinct from my own, he focused on the Friday Sermons themselves, whereas I focus on the building up of the Friday Prayer Leaders and their relationship with the government. One author I found focused on Khomeini's use of religion in wartime propaganda in a few paragraphs, but mostly focused on Muslim support from outside of Iraq, specifically in the Gulf States.³⁹ The propaganda analyses that I found from the field of propaganda analysis focused entirely on government (mostly WWI, WWII, or Cold War) or corporate propaganda, although almost all of them mention al-Qaeda's propaganda in passing.

³⁶ Kibble, David G. "Dabiq, the Islamic State's Magazine: A Critical Analysis." *Middle East Policy*, 2016: 133–143.

³⁷ Golkar, Saeid. "Manipulated Society: Paralyzing the Masses in Post-revolutionary Iran." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 29, no. 2 (2016): 135-155.

Kamrava, Mehran and Houchang Hassan-Yari. "Suspended Equilibrium in Iran's Political System." *The Muslim World* 94, no. 4 (2004): 495-524.

³⁸ Ram, Haggay. *Myth and Mobilization in Revolutionary Iran: The Use of the Friday Congregational Sermon*. Washington D.C.: American University Press, 1994.

³⁹ Takeyh, Ray. "The Iran-Iraq War: A Reassessment." *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 3 (2010): 365-383.

While some authors mentioned above have used *Dabiq* as a source and focus of their research, the focuses of my case studies (creating a model Muslim, the use of particular religious words to persuade, the building up and federalizing of the Friday Prayer Leader in Iran, and the various religious portrayals of Iraqi Muslims during the Iran-Iraq War) are all untouched areas of research; the most similar works have been addressed above.

Source Material

I chose for my source materials the online magazine *Dabiq* published by the Islamic State's al-Hayat Media Center and the public speeches of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini during and after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. I chose these sources because *Dabiq* and the speeches of Ayatollah Khomeini are written with one of their goals being to convince others to their point of view, and do so in part by using Islam-centered messages.

Dabiq is an official online magazine that was initially created in 2014 as a platform to showcase the successes of the Islamic State, their future plans, the rationale behind their actions, and their history. Each issue averages 50 pages and usually consists of stories from within their areas of control, religious sermons, and critiques of world governments and other Islamist groups, and inspirational stories, accompanied by high-definition photos. *Dabiq* was succeeded by a new magazine entitled *Rumiyah* in September 2016, perhaps because of the loss of control of the Syrian town of Dabiq, from which it drew its name. It was printed in Arabic, French, German, and English, although its English versions include a plethora of Arabic words and phrases, making it difficult to read without previous knowledge of Arabic.

Ayatollah Khomeini's speeches are found in a collection named *Sahifeh-ye Imam* which is a collection of all of the speeches, letters, telegrams and decrees of Ayatollah Khomeini dating

back to 1933, and comprises 22 volumes, averaging 500 pages each. *Sahifeh-ye Imam* was compiled in Tehran by the Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works and translated from Persian into English in 2008.

CHAPTER ONE: THE ISLAMIC STATE

Background

The Islamic State (IS) came into existence in its current form June 29, 2014 when it announced a world-wide caliphate and its name change from the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to simply the Islamic State, expanding their goals from just their immediate region to the entire world. This announcement was delivered in the wake of their surprising and rapid advance across northern Iraq where they captured three cities and routed the well-equipped Iraqi army, actions which landed them front and center of every media platform in the world. Previously they had been one of many groups in the region vying for power in the warzone created by the Syrian Civil War and sectarian strife in Iraq. Their meteoric rise came from the conflict and fallout following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Syrian civil war that began in 2011, and the utter brutality and efficiency with which they acted.

IS began as a small anti-establishment terrorist group in 2002 called al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad (Monotheism and Struggle), founded by a Jordanian national named Ahmad Fadeel al-Nazal al-Khalayleh, more commonly known by his nom de guerre Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Growing up in the poorer areas of Zarqa, Jordan, he became a petty criminal, guilty of charges such as drug dealing, theft, assault, and public intoxication. He eventually, at the insistence of his mother who was attempting to help him find his way back to Islam, joined the mujahedeen in Afghanistan following the U.S.S.R.'s invasion in 1989.⁴⁰

There al-Zarqawi became a new man, driven by a desire to lead others to create a more “Islamic” world. He left Afghanistan, returning to Jordan, where his new zeal eventually landed

⁴⁰ Stern, Jessica and J.M. Berger. *ISIS: The State of Terror*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2015. 15.

him in a prison especially for violent, anti-establishment Islamists. Granted amnesty in 1999, he returned to Afghanistan to seek the financial assistance of al-Qaeda in order to carry out his war against local Arab regimes, which he viewed as apostate. His requests were eventually granted, and he was allowed to start a training camp in Afghanistan which he moved to Iraq in 2002, naming his new group al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad. The group's goals were to overthrow what they saw as the corrupt regime of Saddam Hussein and create a caliphate. After the U.S. led invasion in 2003, al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad became one of a plethora of insurgent groups plaguing the government and coalition forces, although they stood out from the crowd because of their utter brutality.⁴¹

This brutality, and their attacks on many Muslims in Iraq, both Shia and Sunni, led to a tenuous relationship with their sponsor in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda. However, in an effort to increase both groups legitimacy on a global scale, it was decided in 2004 that al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad would change its name to al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), and become the official presence of al-Qaeda in the country. Despite this, al-Qaeda had dealings with many of the other insurgent groups in Iraq at this time. A few months after this recognition, al-Qaeda created an umbrella organization in an attempt to unify these groups, known as the Mujahedeen Shura Council. It is significant because another group included in this council was headed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the future leader of IS.⁴²

In June 2006, al-Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. airstrike, but his legacy remains within the rhetoric and discourse of IS today. Al-Qaeda chose two new leaders, Abu Abyyub al-Masri as the de facto leader and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as the new caliph, but more a figurehead than anything else. Later that year the group's name changed again, this time to reflect their new

⁴¹ Stern 2015, 15

Griffin, Michael. *Islamic State: Rewriting History*. London: Pluto Press, 2016. 10.

⁴² Ibid. 14-17

leader and ambitious goals, becoming the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). They claimed their caliphate covered vast territories across northern Iraq, but the powerful tribes that lived in these regions disagreed. Multiple efforts were undertaken to dislodge ISI and they began to fight on the defensive, against former allies in addition to government and coalition forces. Their attempts to create a caliphate began to wane.⁴³

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Abyyub al-Masri were killed in an airstrike in 2010, allowing ISI to reorganize again, beginning with the ascension of the current leader of IS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. By this time the political situation in Iraq had deteriorated to the point that the Shia Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was noticeably choosing other Shia Iraqis for government positions over Sunni Iraqis, providing jobs for Shia and excluding Sunnis across Iraq. This pushed many jobless Sunnis away from reconciling with the new government and back into the realms of rebellion. Unemployment was especially a problem for the thousands of ex-soldiers and military leaders that had been part of the Ba'athist regime but were no longer trusted or allowed to work. It was to these men that ISI turned in an effort to bolster their ranks and better their organization. New leadership included veterans of Saddam Hussein's army. These new leaders allowed ISI to gain a better foothold among the local populations. Instead of simply being an Islamist terrorist group whose slogans were virulently anti-Shia, it now had ex-Baathists who were being politically and economically marginalized the same as many other Sunnis. The rhetoric of ISI began to focus on what they saw as their efforts to assist and defend Sunnis against their corrupt Shia leaders. This assistance went hand in hand with the next phase of ISI's plans: improving their cash flow. Additional funds would allow them to pay their soldiers, and

⁴³ Griffin 2016, 20

when word began to spread that ISI was providing work for Sunnis while the government spurned them, their numbers began to grow.⁴⁴

However, in 2011 the Syrian civil war began, and ISI fighters began to make their way over the border into another battle against what they perceived as an evil regime. Perhaps in an effort to get in front of the issue of dwindling numbers, al-Baghdadi ordered that lieutenants and soldiers be sent to Syria to establish new ISI cells to combat the regime.⁴⁵

As the next two years passed, ISI's ranks grew significantly. In 2012 ISI announced a campaign entitled "Destroying the Walls", in which they spent a year besieging Iraqi prisons and freeing Islamist militants and ex-Baathist soldiers. This campaign involved a shift in ISI strategy that was viewed favorably by some Iraqis: they stopped prioritizing Shia civilians and focused on government forces and facilities. This favorable view stemmed from Prime Minister al-Maliki's continued oppression of Sunnis in the government and without. He had arrested or attempted to arrest various Sunni members of the government numerous times with increasing spectacle. By December of 2012, the majority of Iraqis had reached the end of their rope, and took to the streets calling for al-Maliki to resign. Public unrest continued throughout 2013, with violence sparking in many instances, creating an environment of chaos ripe for the resurgence of ISI.⁴⁶

In April of that year, following successful advances in Iraq and in Syria, ISI announced that it would henceforth be known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and announced that they were declaring a caliphate made up of the two countries. In addition, they announced that the Syrian Islamist rebel group Jabhat al-Nusra was actually a subsidiary of ISIS. Jabhat al-

⁴⁴ Griffin 2016, 33-36

Cockburn, Patrick. *The Rise of the Islamic State*. New York: Verso, 2015. 27.

Stern 2015, 37

⁴⁵ Griffin 2016, 36

Stern 2015, 41

⁴⁶ Griffin 2016, 60-62

Stern 2015, 39

Nusra was led by one of the men that al-Baghdadi had sent into Syria to set up ISI cells, but he denied al-Baghdadi's claims that they were one and the same, but did admit to accepting funding from them. He instead confirmed that Jabhat al-Nusra was an affiliate of al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda attempted to arbitrate between the two groups, while siding with Jabhat al-Nusra, but to no avail. Al-Baghdadi rejected any attempts to reconcile, and renounced al-Qaeda and affirmed that ISIS would establish a caliphate. Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS began fighting each other along with their wars against each regime, and by February of 2014 al-Qaeda had disowned ISIS and affirmed that the two had different creeds and goals, and that al-Qaeda was not responsible for ISIS's actions.⁴⁷

While the infighting between Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS was worsening, a similar situation was occurring in Iraq in general. Security forces has clashed with and killed demonstrators, and clashes between state forces and the populace had occurred in Mosul and Fallujah. By 2014, the situation had grown so bad that ISIS was able to capture Fallujah in January without any government resistance. Meanwhile, ISIS's power increased in Syria this same month. Raqqah, Syria, had been captured by a coalition of rebel and Islamist groups a year before, and they had each ruled a portion of the city since then, with some infighting between the groups. By January, ISIS had forced out the other groups and ruled Raqqah alone. They then expanded into the oil-rich Deir ez-Zour territory that was controlled by Jabhat al-Nusra, taking the majority of it by June, then advancing further south into Iraq. In June they made headlines world-wide when in lightning-quick succession they captured the Iraqi cities of Mosul, Tikrit and Tal Afar, and routed the Iraqi military forces that they encountered. They then changed their name for the final time, announcing that their caliphate would not be restricted to Iraq and Syria, but would

⁴⁷ Griffin 2016, 79-81
Stern 2015, 42

eventually become a global caliphate, and became the Islamic State (IS). They invited Muslims from all over the world to join them in the territory they controlled, a territory larger than Great Britain and occupied by 6 million people.⁴⁸

Case Study

In the sea of rebel, Islamist, and separatist groups that have emerged in Iraq and Syria in the past two decades, the Islamic State stands out because of its brutality and its core message that it is attempting to create an entirely new state. With so many different groups vying for power in that region, and the differing opinions of Muslims around the globe (almost all of which completely condemn the actions of IS), IS works hard to garner support and attempt to make itself appear as the guardian of true Islam. In this section I address a few ways they incorporate Islamic messages and themes into their propaganda efforts. First, I examine their portrayal of the model Muslim, the Muslim all other Muslims should seek to emulate. Second, I address their use of various religiously loaded terms they frequently use in their rhetoric to change the mindset of the reader. Both sections will show how these efforts seek to shape perceptions and direct behavior. Both use Islam as an anchor in the mind of the reader. These efforts also build off of their narrative of being the lone representatives of Islam, righteous defenders battling against evil.

The Model Muslim

One of the more common themes in IS's *Dabiq* magazine were articles that told the stories of their deceased soldiers. Articles entirely dedicated to this purpose appeared in all but three of its 15 issues. The format evolved somewhat as the creators of the magazine became

⁴⁸ Griffin 2016, 97
Cockburn 2015, 44
Stern 2015, 45

more adept at their craft, and the article eventually became consistently entitled, “Among the Believers are Men”, and related how a shahid (a martyr in Islamic tradition) came to join the Islamic State, his adventures since then, his heroic defense of Islam both before and during his time with IS, and the tale of his death. Sometimes they even include a final personal testimony from the shahid himself. These articles use Islamic messages and themes to persuade others to action on a variety of levels. First, a shahid is a very special person. One hadith states “Our Prophet has informed us our Lord's Message that whoever of us is martyred, will go to Paradise”.⁴⁹ The shahid was someone special enough and brave enough to sacrifice himself for his beliefs and for God; he is someone to be listened to. Second, the way he lived his life allowed him to reach the point where he was willing to be martyred for his beliefs. However he lived his life is to be emulated. Thirdly, the stories themselves are laden with Islamic messages to help connect the ideas of fighting, dying, Islam, and the Islamic State in the mind of the reader. They all coalesce around the central theme of becoming a man like the shahid in the story, a man different from the world around him, more pious even than the fellow Muslims he interacted with in his daily life: the model Muslim. This model Muslim is its own sub-narrative in which IS attempts to challenge the majority-held narrative that their soldiers are murderers. Within this narrative, these men are wonderful and self-sacrificing, and everyone should be like them. These stories also attempt to use Islam to persuade readers by connecting the actions of the shahid with Islam itself. If the shahid died defending Islam against evil enemy forces and did indeed become a shahid, how can the Islamic State’s narrative be false? In this context IS attempts to use the idea of martyrdom that is found in Islamic tradition as an anchor for the reader. It is indisputable that the Qur’an and hadith contain stories about martyrs. The Islamic State seeks to capitalize on that anchor and associate itself and its followers with this religious notion.

⁴⁹ *Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 97, Hadith 155*. n.d. <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/97/155> (accessed May 29, 2017)

The first such story, in the third issue of *Dabiq*, is the personal testimony of a man who was formerly “on the path of jihad” but abandoned it, only to discover how horrible his life was after leaving it.⁵⁰ He felt as though he had abandoned God. He eventually came to the conclusion that the only respite from his guilt and way to salvation was to commit more wholly to jihad by becoming a martyr. He then tells the reader that after one enters the path of jihad, the love of it never leaves his heart, even if the reader forsakes it. Abandoning it will only make the reader feel guilty until he enters into jihad again. He then encourages the readers to join in jihad as well so they can achieve what he has. The writers of the issue add to his final statement, telling the reader that the first step in joining in jihad is emigrating to the lands of the Islamic State to join them, as he did. This story seeks to teach that becoming a shahid is a high form of jihad, that those engaged in jihad (specifically those who have already joined IS) should not leave it, and to fully engage in jihad one needs to join IS.

For the most part the authors of *Dabiq* drew their inspiration from soldiers within their ranks. The next story, however, is actually drawn from the Qur’an, although it is found in the section of *Dabiq* concerning martyrs as the other stories were. They relate the story of the prophet Yahya, Christianity’s John the Baptist, who stood up to the king of Israel and commanded him not to commit adultery.⁵¹ For his testimony, the king had him executed. The authors of the article then point out that his martyrdom was exemplary because he was standing up to a tyrant and forbidding him to commit evil. From this example Muslims can learn that even the prophets confronted hardship in the face of their resistance to tyrants, but they persisted. This article followed an article about IS’s goal to control the land of Sham (which they consider mostly the region comprised of Syria) and Iraq in preparation for the final battle with the Dajjal

⁵⁰ Al-Hayat Media Center. "A Call to Hijrah." *Dabiq*, September 2014, 28

⁵¹ Al-Hayat Media Center. "Remaining and Expanding." *Dabiq*, October 2014, 8

(anti-Christ) which they believe will take place in the region. The final pages of the article concerning Yahya's martyrdom discuss how the soldiers of IS need to be strong and brave like Yahya was in standing up to tyrants, which they name as the coalition governments allied against them, if they want to control Sham as they have been commanded. And like Yahya, they may die but will become martyrs in the service of God.

The next story was the first article in the new section entitled, "Among the Believers are Men". The new format included large, glossy photos of the life of the shahid who was the subject of the article, along with photos of his body after his martyrdom. The first such article tells the story of a shahid who loved God so much that he left his family to engage in jihad two months before his daughter was born.⁵² This man took his relationship with God very seriously. He never forgot to fast, he always prayed five times a day, even waking up to pray in the middle of the night, and always sought correct Islamic rulings when he had questions.⁵³

After he joined in their jihad he was injured in battle, a very commendable thing to experience when fighting for God. In that same battle he witnessed his friend die while saving a comrade, thus becoming a shahid. This experience gave him the desire to achieve it as well. He volunteered for extra ribat (watch duty out in the desert for extended periods of time) and spent days watching for their enemies. He encouraged his comrades to fight against the tyrants they were facing and eventually became a leader.

During his final battle, he and his squad journeyed out to assist another squad that had been pinned down by sniper fire. One of their numbers had already been shot and was lying wounded in the street. They dared not attempt a rescue for fear that they would be shot as well. However, the shahid was brave. He convinced the medic in the group to go out with him to save

⁵² Al-Hayat Media Center. "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone." *Dabiq*, January 2015, 46

⁵³ This means he ascribed to the "correct" opinions of the Islamic State. They use this phrasing very often in their magazine.

the wounded man. He said a prayer then ran into the street, only to see the medic run back to cover. He continued forward and was shot repeatedly by the sniper, finally achieving his goal of martyrdom. This article uses this man's example to persuade in several ways. Focus was given to his personal piety and the sacrifices he made. If he could leave his unborn child to fight then so can the reader. His personal piety is depicted as the steps to his martyrdom, steps that others should take as well.⁵⁴ He fights and goes on *ribat*. These are two themes that are heavily emphasized in *Dabiq*, usually with quotes from scholars and former leaders of extremist Islamist groups, in an effort to convince Muslims of their necessity. More importantly, he did not just do them when asked but volunteered for them. Parallels are often drawn in the articles between the model Muslim, who volunteers, and his compatriots, who are afraid and do not. This can also be seen in the final story of his martyrdom where he volunteers to save the wounded man while the rest of the soldiers cowered hidden in the rubble. Finally, his martyrdom was a wonderful thing as he was attempting to save a fellow soldier.

Another article in that same issue of *Dabiq* uses a personal testimony of two martyrs who wrote the statement in the expectation that they would be killed.⁵⁵ Their testimony was delivered to IS by the third member of their group. They had planned on carrying out an attack in Belgium but the police found their location before they could, and the two men were killed when the police assaulted their apartment. Their last testament urges to all Muslims to join IS and fight against the forces of evil, which are uniting against Islam. They state that their enemies are trampling on the Qur'an, cursing the Prophet Muhammad, killing their children and taking their

⁵⁴ Interestingly enough, this use of personal piety as the steps to martyrdom only appears sometimes in the magazine. Often when talking about "lone wolf" terrorists they remark that the man was sinful before his martyrdom, but decided he wanted to change his life so he announced his allegiance to the Islamic State, and commits an act of terrorism immediately after as a show of his commitment and desire to wipe away his sins. These acts result in the death of the lone wolf, and, IS contends, his martyrdom and absolution of his previous sins. For example, see the story of Man Haron Monis, Al-Hayat Media Center. "Al-Qa'idah of Waziristan: A Testimony from Within." *Dabiq*, December 2014, 3-4

⁵⁵ Al-Hayat Media Center. "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone." *Dabiq*, January 2015, 75

women. They end with a call to all Muslims to join in jihad, because God will judge them for their inaction. This article is interesting because it focuses more on the words of the martyrs themselves than their lives. It gives a small story leading up to their martyrdoms, establishing their credibility, then begins their two page last testament where they, as previously established martyrs and people to be emulated, encourage the reader to join IS and sacrifice as they have.

By the next issue of *Dabiq* the section, “Among the Believers are Men” had evolved to be both a main feature of each issue, and the section where IS showcased their model Muslim. In that issue the writers focused on the story of a man who had previously been a member of the Taliban in Afghanistan.⁵⁶ His duties there included policing the people to make sure they were not practicing false teachings. He was a follower of the Deoband school of Islamic jurisprudence, like most Taliban followers, but eventually came to see the errors there and desired pure Islamic teachings that were not available then because the Islamic State’s caliphate had not yet been established. He continually tried to convince those around him of the errors of the Deoband school, but was censored by the Taliban and eventually demoted. When the caliphate was eventually announced in 2014 he immediately declared his allegiance to it and became their head deputy in Afghanistan. He eventually went to a small town to preach the correct Islam of IS, and while there Taliban forces surrounded the town, forcing him to stay, until he was martyred in a U.S. airstrike. This story takes the focus away from soldiers and focuses more on a preacher. That he was a member of the Taliban is significant because IS views the Taliban as apostates who have left the true path of Islam. This shahid serves as an example to all of those men and women who have joined the Taliban that they should leave and join IS, as he did, because of their more correct teachings. He was a man who tried to find the true teachings (i.e. the Islamic State’s teachings) but could not until the caliphate was declared, then immediately joined it. If

⁵⁶ Al-Hayat Media Center. "Shar'iah Alone Will Rule Africa." *Dabiq*, March 2015, 30

the reader is unsure about who he should follow and is earnestly trying to find his way, he can learn from the example of this man. In addition, this man was not a soldier but was a preacher and was still a valuable asset to IS and was still able to achieve martyrdom. The authors of *Dabiq* often write that they need everyone to join them, not just soldiers. Stories such as this one provide a model to emulate for recruits that may not have the necessary qualifications to be a soldier.

The next story is of a man who was a dentist and had the capacity to make money but only longed to join in jihad.⁵⁷ He turned his back on his career and instead joined the Islamic State in Iraq, the precursor to the Islamic State. He volunteered for the dangerous jobs his fellow soldiers were too cowardly to do, such as setting explosives in roadways to ambush military patrols. He was always obedient to his leaders and to the will of God. He was eventually imprisoned in Iraq but led a revolt against the jailers. He and his fellow escapees drove to a military checkpoint where they made their last stand and became martyrs while attacking apostates. He was a man who was never tempted by the allures of the world. This story focuses on a man who left behind worldly wealth. It is intended to reach those readers who may be hesitant about leaving behind their wealth to join IS. In addition, the shahid in the story is brave and obedient, qualities IS desires in their soldiers. His last stand against apostates is also seen as something commendable, and will be addressed in a later section.

The writers of *Dabiq* tell another story of a man who longed to join in jihad and the Islamic State so much that he quit his university studies and traveled to Syria.⁵⁸ He could not bear to watch the suffering of the Muslims there and felt he needed to help. He always volunteered for *ribat*. He was courageous in battle, and fought in many. He risked his life to save

⁵⁷ Al-Hayat Media Center. "They Plot and Allah Plots." *Dabiq*, May 2015, 40

⁵⁸ Al-Hayat Media Center. "From the Battles of Al-Ahzab to the War of Coalitions." *Dabiq*, September 2015, 38

fellow soldiers. Once in the midst of a battle a building collapsed on him and after his comrades dug him out of the rubble he resumed fighting. He always longed to become a shahid and was eventually granted his wish. This story focuses on this shahid's willingness to sacrifice. He left behind his education for the sake of others. He sacrificed his own safety for that of his comrades. He spent days on ribat. And he was brave, continually going into battle, even after being injured and fighting until he could fight no more. As an example he is intended for those readers who may be afraid to leave their old life behind, similar to the story of the dentist addressed previously, and those who might be afraid to go into battle.

The next story is similar to the story of the shahid who was previously a member of the Taliban. The shahid in this story was a devout Muslim who never forgot to pray and always distanced himself from bad influences.⁵⁹ He too was saddened by the suffering he witnessed on the news in Iraq and Syria and decided he needed to go there to help. He initially joined the Syrian group Jund al-Sham, but eventually decided that they were wicked and tried to find the correct teachings of Islam elsewhere, which he found in IS. After having joined them he volunteered often for ribat and fought in many battles, despite having a family. He preached often to his family about the correctness of the Islamic State and convinced some of them to join as well. He was eventually martyred while on ribat. This story mainly focuses on how he initially was a member of Jund al-Sham, one of IS's competitors in the region, but "saw the error of his ways" and joined IS. This is clearly meant for readers who are members of other groups. IS has no patience for other Islamist groups and is adamant that they are the only bearers of truth. Another focus in this story is his preaching to his family to convince them to join IS. The reader should follow his example with their families as well. In addition, his general bravery and self-sacrifice are things to be emulated by the reader.

⁵⁹ Al-Hayat Media Center. "Just Terror." *Dabiq*, November 2015, 55

In a second story in the same article, the shahid was religious from a young age.⁶⁰ He always stood firm in the face of those who wanted to propose religious innovation (i.e. practices and teachings that deviated from IS's way of thinking). He despised life in the city and longed for a simpler life, which he found when he joined IS. In addition, he brought his entire family with him. He spent his personal time preaching to those around him and in correcting the wrong others did. He volunteered for *ribat* and fought in many battles. He was martyred when he witnessed an airstrike on a mosque and went to see if anyone was killed, then was hit by a second airstrike. This story again addresses the idea of the recruit bringing his family with him into the fold. It also addresses how pious he was in his personal life, preaching, adhering to the "true" teachings of IS, etc. In addition, his martyrdom was achieved while trying to save others, an example the reader can learn from. An interesting new theme was his desire for a simpler life. Life in the caliphate is sure to be less than glamorous with the blackouts and resource shortages that accompany wartime life, but for this shahid, the lack of modern accoutrements is to be celebrated. The reader is to learn from his example that IS has the only true teachings, and that wanting to live in comfort apart from them is undesirable. Those who are willing to die for God do not stay on the sidelines, they join the Islamic State.

The final story I address is of a man who converted to Islam from Christianity.⁶¹ He taught his brother who also converted to Islam. They both journeyed to Syria to help the Muslims there and joined a group that later merged with IS. They always longed to fight and be martyred. They fought in many battles despite having medical conditions that made it difficult, and were very courageous when they did so. They still performed *ribat* despite their conditions. They eventually were martyred in an airstrike. The new theme in this story was the brothers'

⁶⁰ Ibid. 57

⁶¹ Al-Hayat Media Center. "Break the Cross." *Dabiq*, July 2016, 70

conversion from Christianity to Islam. This was not a random story, but was written for an issue of *Dabiq* entitled “Break the Cross” which was entirely devoted to pointing out the incorrectness of Christian beliefs and imploring all Christians to convert to Islam before they were killed. This story serves as an example for any Christian readers to convert as the brothers in the story did. In addition, it serves as an example for any other readers because of the bravery and strength of the brothers.

The Islamic State uses these stories in an effort to persuade others to join them. Each story is Islamicized by the writers by the language and messages within it. The protagonist in the story is always *martyred* instead of being killed and becomes a shahid, one who dies for God and is assured a place in heaven. This specificity in use of language is intended to change the mind of the reader from the point of view that someone died to the view that he died for God. In the case of stories where a personal testimony was given, his opinion and testimony thus carries more weight. In the case of stories where his story was simply told, his example carries more weight because what he did led him to the point where he could become a shahid and the reader can too, and improve their own end from simply dying to giving their life to God. In both cases, the desired result is that the reader will accept their narrative, come to the Islamic State, act piously, become a courageous, obedient soldier, and be willing to give his life in their service and the service of God. The efforts examined here are both agitative and integrative. They seek simultaneously to rouse Muslim readers to action, and motivate them to join IS themselves and possibly achieve martyrdom, while at the same time attempting to placate Muslim readers who disagree with the actions of IS’s martyrs by equating them with righteousness and making them into the model Muslim. This is in an effort to convince the reader of the veracity of their narrative. First they attempt to mollify the reader, and turn outright rejection into sympathy, and

then they attempt to turn that sympathy into support. These types of stories are also irrational propaganda, in that they seek to appeal to the emotions of the reader. They seek to make the reader feel sad and sympathetic about the martyr, and then seek to take up his mantle, and engender a desire to emulate him. Finally, it is difficult to say whether or not these stories are true, and thus can only be defined as gray propaganda or white propaganda. This is safe to assume because the use of white or gray propaganda would be wise when attempting to establish a narrative, compared to the use of outright lies. If outright lies were used to establish the narrative, and then discovered, the entire narrative could collapse. In this case, the source may be correct (the life story of a man) but the way they portray it is probably not entirely truthful.

Loaded Terms- Religious Language

Words have different meanings in different contexts, and very often propaganda is created by putting words in a certain order, or a certain context to increase their meaningfulness or create an association, good or bad, in the mind of the reader. The Islamic State heavily utilizes this method in their propaganda. This section addresses how they use religiously loaded terms to create associations in the minds of the readers, both to associate themselves with good, and their enemies with evil. This is in an effort to strengthen their narrative in the mind of the reader. All of the terms that I chose to focus on are have negative connotations, which IS attempts to use to cast themselves as the protagonists of their narrative, and those with whom they disagree or consider to be their enemies as the antagonists of their narrative. While there is a plethora of examples of this method in *Dabiq* I focus on four: usages of the phrase Dar al-Kufr/Harb vs. Dar al-Islam, the usage of the word kufr and its derivations, and the usage of the word rafid and its derivations, and the usage of the word riddah and its derivations. I will explain their definition of

each term, its religious significance as they portray it in their narrative, and analyze how they use them as propaganda in their narrative. These efforts seek to use Islam as an anchor in the mind of the reader by using terms from Islamic tradition (or in some cases trying to make the reader believe they are from Islamic tradition) and seem to be used with the expectation that the reader has heard them at some point.

Dar al-Kufr is an Arabic term that translates to, “house of unbelief” and is interchangeable with another term, Dar al-Harb, which translates to, “house of war”. Both are usually used in comparison with Dar al-Islam, which translates to “house of Islam or submission”. Dar al-Islam denotes a region where sharia (Islamic law) prevails and can be practiced without persecution.⁶² Dar al-Harb/Kufr denotes the opposite, a region where sharia is not dominant.⁶³ Both terms were historically used by many scholars of sharia, but because of the fragmentation of the large Muslim majority empires into smaller nation-states, the terminology fell into disuse.⁶⁴ However, IS believes that this state of existence has been revived with their announcement of a new caliphate.

This view of a revival of a world split into Dar al-Harb/Kufr vs. Dar al-Islam as portrayed by the Islamic State is largely imaginary (much like their portrayal of the revival of the caliphate) because their view is something almost entirely new. Their view is that the Islamic State is Dar al-Islam while every other place on Earth, including Muslim majority countries that do use sharia within their legal systems, is Dar al-Harb/Kufr.⁶⁵ This differs from the historical usage, where all countries that used sharia were considered Dar al-Islam, even if they were a different sect of

⁶² Esposito, John L., ed. *Dar al-Islam*. 2003.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195125580.001.0001/acref-9780195125580-e-491?rskey=wOEdjB&result=1> (accessed May 31, 2017).

⁶³ Esposito, John L., ed. *Dar al-Harb*. 2003.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195125580.001.0001/acref-9780195125580-e-490?rskey=4zjZLD&result=1> (accessed May 31, 2017).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Just Terror* 2015, 57

Muslims. In addition, IS believes that Dar al-Harb/Kufr will corrupt any Muslim who lives within its borders. For IS, the world is split into black and white, the house of submission to God's will and the house of those who oppose it. The only course of action for devout Muslims in such a situation is to perform hijrah (Arabic for "migration") to the Islamic State and join it. This alludes to the Prophet Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina, and which was a turning point in the growth and development of Islam. In Medina Muslims were free to practice as they saw fit, while in Mecca they were persecuted. The use of this term is another example of religiously loaded terms that IS uses in their propaganda that I do not address. They often use it in relation with Dar al-Harb and Dar al-Islam to create a parallel between the lives of the reader and the life of Muhammad, fleeing from sin into safety.

Within *Dabiq* magazine they often use Dar al-Harb/Kufr and Dar al-Islam to explain why people should join them. Hijrah from Dar al-Harb/Kufr and into Dar al-Islam is often portrayed as the first step in engaging in jihad or to becoming a shahid.⁶⁶ Hijrah from Dar al-Harb/Kufr to Dar al-Islam is obligatory for Muslims, meaning that joining IS is obligatory.⁶⁷ Living within the borders of Dar al-Harb/Kufr exposes the reader and their family to sin and unbelief, and eventually they will give in to temptation.⁶⁸ The longer one stays in Dar al-Harb/Kufr, the greater the chances of them falling into unbelief and abandoning Islam.⁶⁹ Because IS established a caliphate those Muslims who reasoned that it was permissible to live in Dar al-Harb/Kufr because they had no other place to go no longer have an excuse for living there.⁷⁰ They also use it to intimidate people from leaving the Islamic State. Leaving Dar al-Islam to go back to Dar al-

⁶⁶ Al-Hayat Media Center. "The Return of the Khilafah." *Dabiq*, July 2014, 19
They Plot and Allah Plots 2015, 13

⁶⁷ Shar'iah Alone Will Rule Africa 2015, 35

⁶⁸ Break the Cross 2016, 39

⁶⁹ A Call to Hijrah 2014, 26

⁷⁰ From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone 2015, 61

Harb/Kufr is akin to choosing to place oneself in temptation's way or turning one's back on God, and in their view is apostasy, which they punish brutally.⁷¹

The use of Dar al-Islam vs. Dar al-Harb/Kufr enables IS to place themselves into the good category and their enemies into the bad category. They use it to make the choice seem a simple one: join the Islamic State. If the reader does not, they are not a good Muslim, or will eventually fall into sin and apostasy, or they risk eventually becoming the enemy themselves.

A more common strategy they use is to paint their enemies in a bad light using various negative words from Islamic history and tradition. The first such term I address is kufr, which is Arabic for, "unbelief" and its derivations kafir and kuffar, which mean, "a non-believer" and, "non-believers" respectively. Originally the word kufr is derived from an Arabic root word meaning, "to fail to acknowledge, to reject, to ignore" and thus gains additional meaning as being defined as, "ungrateful", specifically in relation to the things given to mankind by God.⁷² Thus it was often used in the Qur'an and hadith (sayings and lessons attributed to the Prophet Muhammad) texts to refer to various forms of ingratitude and unbelief. It was the opposite of pure faith. However, there were different forms and levels of kufr. For instance, the Qur'an often referred to the "Peoples of the Book", Jews and Christians who Muslims believe worship the same God they do, as having allowed kufr into their religions, but were still allowed to live in Muslim lands and practice their religions as they saw fit.⁷³ Other kuffar the Qur'an condemned to an eternity in hell.

⁷¹ From the Battles of Al-Ahzab to the War of Coalitions 2015, 22-23

⁷² Adams, Charles J. *Kufr*. 2017.

http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com.ezproxy3.library.arizona.edu/article/opr/t236MIW/e0467?_hi=0&_pos=3 (accessed June 1, 2017).

⁷³ Adams 2017

IS uses kuffar to signify all its enemies who do not ascribe to Islam, and stipulates that any Muslim who associates with them is in danger of falling into kufr as well.⁷⁴ In addition, they use kufr to describe any action that they do not approve of, such as voting in national elections, ascribing to Marxist philosophies, promoting democracy or nationalism, being a member of any military that fights against them, speaking against the actions of IS, making peace with any kafir, advocating secularism, and engaging in irja (leaving the decision of whether or not someone is actually a kaffir for God to judge in the afterlife). They take the extreme stance that anyone who engages in kufr can and should be killed.

Their most common usage of kufr is that their enemies are the forces of kufr, united against them.⁷⁵ They name the nation-states allied against them as, “kafir states”.⁷⁶ They claim that their battle is one against kufr in an attempt to definitively place themselves on the side of God, and place anyone who fights against them on the side of opposition to God.⁷⁷ This is often portrayed (similar to the way they use Dar al-Harb and Dar al-Islam) as the only choice available to Muslims. Because IS is fighting against kufr, fighting against them is in turn an act of kufr. This use of kufr, kafir, and kuffar is similar to the use of the term “hun” for German soldiers during WWI, and is an attempt to make the reader see their enemies as unrepentant barbarians who should be eradicated.

They also use it in attempt to damage the image of persons or ideas they do not approve of. They want all Muslims to leave their homes and journey to the Islamic State, so they say that the West is a civilization of kufr, unfit for Muslim habitation.⁷⁸ The media outlets who report

⁷⁴ Al-Hayat Media Center. "The Flood." *Dabiq*, August 2014, 29

⁷⁵ Shar'iah Alone Will Rule Africa 2015, 20

⁷⁶ A Call to Hijrah 2014, 34

⁷⁷ Al-Hayat Media Center. "The Failed Crusade." *Dabiq*, October 2014, 28

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 4

horrific stories about them are kuffar, and thus listeners should not give heed to their words.⁷⁹ Muslims who support democratic government or secular government have betrayed Islam for kufr.⁸⁰ They do not approve of Islamist groups or Muslim governments seeking the aid of Western powers, and vilify it by saying any who does is guilty of kufr, because kuffar should not be consorted with, simply killed.⁸¹ They use this same rationale to vilify those Islamist groups taking part in the Syrian civil war that join forces with secular-nationalist groups against government forces. Because of their willingness to ally themselves with secularists, they are kuffar, and can be killed. These usages are attempts by them to justify their actions, place their rivals on shaky ideological foundations and damage their credibility, and damage the image of those who oppose them, thus bolstering their own image.

They also use kufr in an attempt to justify their actions. To defend and validate their capture of girls and women to be used as slaves, they make the claim that they only capture women of kufr, so they are essentially lesser people with lesser rights, and because they “saved” them from living in lands of kufr those women now had the opportunity to embrace Islam, which they never had before.⁸² In defense of their policy of theft and pillage from the areas they conquer, they assert that God gave humanity money to better serve each other and Him, not to build up kufr. Therefore, Muslims are more deserving of money than kuffar are and it is permissible to take money from the kuffar to build up the Islamic State for the Muslims and God.⁸³ They attempt to validate their use of violence throughout Muslim majority countries by stating that their goal is to cleanse these countries of kufr.⁸⁴ This usage seeks to add a religious

⁷⁹ Al-Hayat Media Center. "Al-Qa'idah of Waziristan: A Testimony from Within." *Dabiq*, December 2014, 3-4

⁸⁰ Shar'iah Alone Will Rule Africa 2015, 26

⁸¹ The Flood 2014, 29-30

⁸² They Plot and Allah Plots 2015, 48

⁸³ The Failed Crusade 2014, 10

⁸⁴ Al-Qa'idah of Waziristan: A Testimony from Within 2014, 28

element to their actions. They only do what they do because of the kufr in the world and if anything they do is perceived as harsh, excessive or barbaric, it does not matter because the victims were simply kuffar, and God would kill them anyways.

This next section addresses their use of the terms rafid, rafidi, and rafidah. Rafid is an Arabic word that translates to, “refusal, rejection”. Unlike kufr, it is not a term that is used in the Qur’an or the hadith, but for IS it holds a quasi-religious significance similar to kufr. It is used to refer to Imami or Twelver Shia Muslims, whom IS believes are heretical at best and polytheists at worst. The term comes from the incidents that sparked the beginnings of the divisions of Islam into Sunni and Shia⁸⁵. After the Prophet Muhammad died, the majority of Muslims believe that he should have been succeeded by his close friend Abu Bakr, but a portion of the Muslims at the time believed that Ali, Muhammad’s nephew and son-in-law should be his successor, and that Muhammad himself chose him. Bitter feelings over Ali’s rejection increased as he was passed over two more times to be caliph, and when he finally became caliph, many Muslims rebelled against him, creating more bitter feelings among his supporters. Even after his death, Ali’s supporters continued to believe that his bloodline were the rightful rulers of the Muslim ummah and believed that the first three caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman, and other companions of Muhammad, hated Ali and conspired against him. They thus reject these first three caliphs, and the teachings of many of the companions of the Prophet. The Islamic State places great credence in the words the first three caliphs, and the other companions of the Prophet, and view this as a departure from Islamic principles.

In their texts they use the term rafidah to refer to Shia Muslims living in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon. They use it pejoratively, the same way they use kufr, in an effort to justify their actions

⁸⁵ I should note here that for many of the Muslims I have talked to there is no divisions in Islam, and Sunni and Shia do not really matter to them, everyone is simply Muslim.

and vilify their enemies. Eventually they dedicated an entire issue of *Dabiq* to explaining why they use the term and what its implications are, using Islamic scholars and religious leaders who share their views as evidences. In this issue they portray Shia Islam as an insidious plot by hypocritical converts to Islam to destroy Islam from the inside out.⁸⁶ They compare Shia Islam to the Jews before Christ and the Christians after Christ, both of which they view as having distorted God's true words and commands. The crux of their argument in *Dabiq* is that if the Qur'an does not expressly say something, then it is not needed, and anything anyone adds to it is considered by them to be sinfully modifying God's will. Thus, they believe that the Shia adoration for Ali and his bloodline is a sin. They also count as sins the Shia practice of building shrines at the tombs of famous Muslims, claiming that they love the dead more than God.⁸⁷ They also say that because they reject the first three caliphs and many of the companions of the Prophet, they in fact reject the hadiths of the Prophet, since many of those were reported through these individuals. For these sins, IS claims they must be rooted out like a cancer and killed because they have turned from true Islam.⁸⁸ They thus use this as justification when they bomb Muslim neighborhoods in Iraq and kill Muslims. Because many Muslims hold the first three caliphs dear to their hearts, IS seeks to capitalize on this by turning other Muslims against Shia Muslims. Their portrayal of Shia Islam as a plot to destroy Islam from the inside is also a ploy to turn Muslims against their Muslim brothers. Their portrayal of them as so sinful that they are no longer Muslims is an effort to alleviate any guilt Muslims may have over turning on their fellow Muslims.

The final term I address is *riddah*, Arabic for, "apostasy" and by extension *murtadd*, "an apostate" and *murtaddin*, "apostates". According to IS's own definition of the word, *riddah*

⁸⁶Al-Hayat Media Center. "The Rafidah: From Ibn Saba to the Dajjal." *Dabiq*, December 2015, 33

⁸⁷ Ibid. 35

⁸⁸ Ibid. 37

usually refers to the complete and utter renunciation of Islam for another religion.⁸⁹ However, IS includes in their definition anyone who allows themselves to sin greatly or fall into any kind of kufr. In contradiction with the majority of Muslims, IS considers this a sin worthy of death.⁹⁰ They believe that fighting murtaddin is more important than fighting kuffar.⁹¹ They use the term in their discourse when referring to Muslims that they view as evil. For instance, they assert that the Devil's current strategy to mislead mankind is to turn Western Islamic teachers into murtaddin and they in turn mislead their followers into allying themselves with Western powers.⁹² They also describe soldiers in the army of any Muslim majority country as, "murtadd soldiers".⁹³ In two issues of *Dabiq* they included interviews with captured enemies, one a Jordanian pilot and the other an Israeli Muslim spy. In both cases they simply referred to the interviewee as, "Murtadd" throughout the dialogue as in:

DABIQ: Tell us about yourself.

MURTADD: I was a first lieutenant pilot in the Jordanian Air Force.⁹⁴

The regimes in power in the Middle East they describe as, "murtadd puppets of the crusaders [Western powers]".⁹⁵ Photographs are used extensively in *Dabiq* and often included are photos of the dead they have conquered, and often the captions on those photos describe the dead as, "murtadd". As with the other terms addressed here, IS uses murtadd in an effort to vilify those they fight and bolster their own image. In their eyes, they are not killing fellows Muslims, something that is forbidden in Islam, but are simply carrying out the extremist punishment

⁸⁹ Al-Hayat Media Center. "The Murtadd Brotherhood." *Dabiq*, April 2016, 8

⁹⁰ Ibid. 8

⁹¹ Ibid. 10

⁹² Ibid. 13

⁹³ Al-Qa'idah of Waziristan: A Testimony from Within 2014, 28

⁹⁴ Ibid. 34

From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone 2015, 27

⁹⁵ Ibid. 40

possible for apostasy: death. In addition, if they are in the right and their enemies are in fact murtaddin, then Muslims should join with them to cast off such wicked leaders.

IS uses these terms, and others like them, to further validate their narrative in the mind of the reader. The use Dar al-Islam vs. Dar al-Harb seeks establish IS as the only representative and true bastion of Islam in the world. Kufr, rafid, and riddah are used to establish that they are, in their narrative, fighting complete and utter evil, from those who are non-Muslim and those who claim to be Muslim. While they use these terms to build themselves up in comparison to their detractors, they also use them to in general vilify them. The usage of these terms is both agitative and integrative. The Islamic State uses them in an effort to make their efforts and goals seem necessary and something that the reader should participate in to be a good Muslim and to become included in the narrative. It also uses these terms to mollify critics into accepting their actions, because they are simply adhering to Islamic principles found in the Qur'an and Islamic tradition. However, their use of these terms is gray propaganda. While they use real words that for the most part really do have a presence in Islamic tradition, many Muslims would disagree with their interpretation of these terms. For instance, when I was taught the word kafir and kufr, my Muslim Arabic instructor informed me that it simply meant a non-Muslim person. This use of white and gray propaganda was an attempt to strengthen the foundation of the narrative. If outright lies were used to establish the narrative, and then discovered, the entire narrative could collapse. The use of these terms attempts to use rationality to sway the reader. When using these terms they often explain them or defend them by citing various famous Muslim scholars or by using the Qur'an to prove they are right.

CHAPTER TWO: THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Background

The Islamic Republic of Iran came into existence following the events of the revolution of 1979, which has been dubbed the Islamic Revolution due to the role Islam played in the mobilization of people, the messages the revolutionaries propagated, and the end result of the Islamist government. The revolution happened because of a variety of issues within Iran. Key among them were a disconnect between the populace and Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, who had been the shah (king) since 1941, the perceived threat to Iranian national identity, culture, and sovereignty from outside powers (most notably the United States), political marginalization of much of the populace, and the regime's lack of ability to change and adapt to changing population demographics and needs.⁹⁶ There were many different types of groups involved in the revolution, from leftist and Marxist groups to secular groups to religious groups, which by 1979 had formed tacit alliances to oust the Shah. However, it was the religious groups that eventually wrested control from the other groups to decide the country's fate. For this reason, and because of the scope of this work, I will mostly focus on the religious revolutionaries' impact and participation in the revolution in this section.

Large scale resistance to the Shah, at least as far as clerical resistance is concerned, began in 1963 when he attempted to introduce sweeping reforms throughout Iran, which he dubbed his "White Revolution". The clergy was largely opposed to these reforms because they saw it as removing their traditional God-given authority, which was in fact true. Some of the reforms included taking education out of the hands of the clerics and placing it under the purview of the state, enfranchising women, and removing the clerics from the process of mediating legal

⁹⁶ Arjomand 1988, 4

disputes. The Shah had attempted lesser reforms to achieve the same goal two years before, and had bowed down in the face of clerical pressure. One of the leading voices of the clerical opposition was Ruhollah Khomeini, a rising star within the clergy, a status he had attained not so much because of his juridical acumen but more for his popularity. He eventually publicly denounced the Shah, accusing him of being un-Islamic, and claimed that the reforms were un-Islamic and against Iranian interests. He then called on Iranians to protest. The Shah ordered his arrest, and sent in the army, who killed many protesters. Khomeini was released, but in 1964 denounced the Shah again for granting diplomatic immunity to US Army personnel, which was viewed by many as capitulating to the wishes of foreign powers and surrendering Iranian sovereignty. For this the Shah exiled him to Iraq. But Khomeini and the religious establishment had already laid the foundation for themselves as the defenders of the people, and the Shah as an out of touch ruler more worried about the perceptions of Westerners than the opinions and needs of his own people. Khomeini continued to train disciples while in exile, and through the years they would record his teachings and smuggle them into Iran, where they would in turn teach them to others. He eventually would form his famous theory for theocratic government, *vilayat-e faqih*, during this period of exile in 1970. This argued that the 12th Imam of Shia Islam, who was in occultation, should rule both politically and religiously to prevent any corruption of society as had been witnessed during the Shah's reign, and in the absence of the 12th Imam the jurists should take up this mantle.⁹⁷

Throughout this time in Iran (1964-1978), the Shah continued forward with his White Revolution, which many came to associate with attempting to Westernize and do away with traditional Iranian culture and values. Part of this program was to increase literacy and create an

⁹⁷ Dorraj, Manochehr. *From Zarathustra to Khomeini: Populism and Dissent in Iran*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990. 156-157.

environment where much of the poor rural population that made up the majority of the populace could migrate to the urban centers. Both of these goals were achieved; although both factors would go on to contribute to the downfall of the Shah's regime. Increased literacy rose at the same time as an increased religiosity in cities, which created a need for more trained clerics. Because of the dearth of trained clerics, the people instead listened to cassette tapes of sermons of the existing ayatollahs, including Khomeini, most of which were against the Shah and his progressive agenda. In addition, this growing literate population was realizing that they remained marginalized politically. But it seemed that the clergy were hearing their concerns and working to address them. While the populace had little to no say in the government, mosques were always open and their clerics always ready to listen.⁹⁸

Also during this time the secular opposition to the Shah began to work together with the religious opposition, as the religious opposition was so influential with the people. Khomeini's popularity grew as his messages spread throughout the country. Eventually some of his followers began referring to him as Imam, the title reserved for those twelve descendants of Muhammad who spiritually led the Shia community for the first centuries after his death. This only heightened his popularity. He did not discourage this, and eventually many began to assert similarities between his life and prophecies concerning the return of the 12th Imam, the Mahdi. Eventually this popularity helped to spark the unrest that led to the revolution.

In January 1978 a government official published an article in a popular newspaper claiming that Khomeini (who was still in exile but was increasingly becoming a thorn in the regimes side with his popularity and rhetoric) was a British spy of Indian descent. Protests erupted in the holy city of Qom, mostly from the clerics and their students. They clashed with government personnel and some protesters were killed. Following Shia tradition, 40 days after

⁹⁸ Arjomand 1988, 85-93

this incident a vigil was held in Tabriz to commemorate the deaths of the protesters in Qom, which resulted in more protests and more deaths.⁹⁹

This began a cycle of vigils held to mourn the deaths of protesters, followed by protests, and clashes with government forces, occurring in March and May, and generally sparking unrest and protests across the country in reaction to the brutal response by government forces. The Shah began to concede to the protesters. By summer 1978 the protests worsened to the point that the Shah dismissed the head of SAVAK, the secret intelligence organization, and pledged free elections by summer of 1979. But protests continued. Prime Minister Amouzegar declared martial law in order to restore some semblance of government authority, but the military had little effect. Amouzegar resigned after an incident in the city of Abadan where arsonists burned down a cinema, causing the deaths of 477 people. His replacement, Prime Minister Sharif-Emami, attempted to placate the masses by reversing many of the White Revolution's policies, such as reinstating the Islamic calendar and closing casinos. In September, the Shah ordered martial law again in Tehran, which was followed by troops opening fire on a group of protesters in an event that became known as Black Friday. Following this incident the Shah curbed the ability of the military to act with such a free hand again, and the prime minister fired three more SAVAK officials and released 1000 political prisoners. In addition, the Shah granted freedom of the press. In truth, he had been attempting to liberalize the country since US President Jimmy Carter had announced his campaign to improve human rights throughout the world, but the citizens of Iran were receiving a mixed message as freedoms such as freedom of the press and freedom of assembly were granted while the government cracked down on those who exercised them.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Arjomand 1988, 95-101,117

¹⁰⁰ Arjomand 1988, 108, 114-115

The release of the prisoners at the same time as the granting of freedom of the press was not wise on the part of the Shah. Newly untethered journalists interviewed prisoners, publishing articles that related graphic stories of torture at the hands of SAVAK agents. This was simply more wood on his regime's funeral pyre. Ayatollah Khomeini increased his criticisms of the regime, calling on the people to riot, stay home from work, etc. to the point that the regime finally convinced the Iraqi government to censor him. Unwilling to stay silent, he left the country for Kuwait in October, but was denied entrance, and so moved to Paris, France.¹⁰¹

In Paris, he was a newsworthy oddity, and began to entertain journalists in his home, exponentially extending the reach of his message to all Iranians. Previously his message was confined to cassette tapes that disciples smuggled into Iran, but now he was on television, radio, and in newspapers. With his encouragement Iran descended into chaos. Groups of workers went on strike across the country, from the National Iranian Oil Company to bank clerks. The strikes ground business and life in Iran to a halt. Power, water, and food shortages were accompanied by a lack of government bureaucracy to handle the issues, because many of the government employees themselves were on strike. By November the military had grown tired of having their hands tied by the regime, and so soldiers were ordered to simply let the rioters destroy property. Prime Minister Sharif-Emami resigned in disgrace and the Shah announced that he was approving a military government, while in the same speech announcing that he approved of this ongoing revolution. It had little effect. By December the people were in the streets calling for his resignation and the return of Khomeini. In a last, desperate attempt to placate the masses the Shah selected Shapour Bakhtiar, one of the leaders of the opposition, as the new Prime Minister. Despite this, the people continued to call for his departure, and he complied in January 1979,

¹⁰¹ Arjomand 1988, 115

Daniel, Elton. *History of Iran, 2nd Edition*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2012. 171.

following the example of many of his officials who had already fled the country. To facilitate the impending regime change, Khomeini created a Revolutionary Council that would ensure the wishes of the people were met. He also began negotiating with Prime Minister Bakhtiar in an effort to have a seamless transition of power when Bakhtiar decided he would resign as well. In February Khomeini then returned to Iran, where millions lined the streets to greet him.¹⁰²

Although the Shah was gone, his regime still existed under Bakhtiar. But it was quickly losing power and authority. By this time millions of Iranians has joined Khomeini's line of thinking and were calling for an Islamic Republic, and in some places had actually wrested power from the crumbling regime and established their own. In addition, Khomeini announced that Mehdi Bazargan would be the new interim prime minister while Bakhtiar was still in power, causing more governmental chaos. Because the government was in shambles, the revolutionaries and clerics took over distributing food and fuel from mosques. By mid-February, the army had declared neutrality between the various forces at work, including the Shah's old regime, the new semi-secular regime under Bazargan, the Islamists calling for an Islamic state, and the various leftists and liberal groups vying for power. Without any military support Bakhtiar finally resigned and the Shah's regime fell.¹⁰³

This brought Khomeini's solidification of power to a new level. In March Ayatollah Khomeini began to push Islamic government even more. In speeches he emphasized the importance of naming the new Iran the Islamic Republic of Iran and not including "democratic" in the title because it would detract from Islam. In May he began to criticize his partners in the revolution, the leftists, liberals, and secular intellectuals, more heavily, and warned them to scorn everything Western. He also stated that anyone who was against Iran being an Islamic Republic

¹⁰² Daniel 2012, 172
Arjomand 1988, 102, 115-116, 134

¹⁰³ Arjomand 1988, 135

was against Islam. Also at this time Ayatollah Khomeini reinstated the Friday congregational prayer, a practice that had fallen out of use among Shia because of the lack of an Imam to lead the prayers. The Friday prayers became an outlet for the clerical factions of the government to convince people to their point of view, and would eventually become an interface between the government and the people. This support, and the attacks on the secularists, was necessary in order for Khomeini to achieve his next goal: an Islamic constitution.¹⁰⁴

Initially the process of writing a constitution had begun in January and did not include any clerical influence, and Khomeini himself approved these first rough drafts that did not include any language concerning vilayat-e faqih. As drafts continued to be written it was decided that the people needed more say in the process, and that an elected Assembly of Experts should help in the process. Khomeini and his supporters worked hard to secure their own compatriots as the delegates. More drafts were written, each one with increasing amounts of religious language, and each time the secularists protested and called for a new, less religious constitution. Khomeini responded by constricting the freedom of the press. He began to publicly advocate vilayat-e faqih, stating that Iran needed no foreign influences in their constitution, and the only fully Iranian constitution would be an Islamic one. By October, the final draft was almost complete, and had been approved by the Assembly of Experts. It now fully included Ayatollah Khomeini's theory of governance that included a supreme jurist who had the power to veto any other decision in the government. While the battle over the constitution was waging, Khomeini began increasing his rhetoric against foreign powers, specifically the United States, which he famously referred to at this time as the "Great Satan". This rhetoric led to a great fervor against Western imperialism and influence. By the time the constitutional referendum came about in December, voting against the new, Islamic, anti-Western constitution was akin to political, and possibly

¹⁰⁴ Arjomand 1988, 136- 137

literal, suicide. The Majlis (parliament) approved the constitution that enshrined vilayat-e faqih and approved Ayatollah Khomeini as the supreme jurist.¹⁰⁵

Throughout 1980 the new Islamic government set about Islamicizing Iran. Khomeini began a “Cultural Revolution” that focused on the Islamicization of schools and universities, judicial and legal systems, and dismissal of government employees for un-Islamic behavior. By 1983 the Friday prayers leaders were preaching over the pulpit that support of the Islamic government was a religious obligation. In September 1980, Iraq invaded the Islamic Republic of Iran, providing Khomeini with a new way to consolidate power, an outside enemy. As the years progressed, Khomeini began to equate Iran with Islam, and anyone who was against Iran was against Islam. Thus the war with Iraq became a holy war to preserve Islam. The Islamicization of Iran was now complete.¹⁰⁶

Case Study

While Ayatollah Khomeini rose to power with substantial popular support, he was not universally loved, nor was the populace of Iran a homogenous group unified behind him in support of vilayat-e faqih. Even after silencing the leftist and Marxist groups that helped carry out the revolution, there was still dissension. In addition, beyond the borders of Iran not all Muslims saw this new government as the beacon of Muslim hope Khomeini thought that they would. In this section I address two themes in which the Iranian government, through the mouth of Khomeini, attempted to sway the public to their point of view. I first examine the role of the Friday Prayer Leaders, or imam jom’ehs, in the propagation of vilayat-e faqih. I then examine the attempts by Ayatollah Khomeini to persuade Iraqi soldiers to defect to Iran during the Iran-

¹⁰⁵ Arjomand 1988, 138
Daniel 2012, 191-192

¹⁰⁶ Arjomand 1988, 143-153

Iraq War, or Sacred Defense as it is known in Iran, (1980-1988) and his attempts to simultaneously persuade Iranians to join the war effort and fight against their fellow Muslims in Iraq. In both cases I will examine the ways in which he used Islamic themes and messages to achieve these ends. Both of these studies use Islam as an anchor in the mind of the reader. These efforts worked to strengthen the Islamic Republic's narrative that the Islamic government was flawless, an example to the world, and the older sibling ready to teach other countries how to govern.

Making the Secular Sacred-Friday Prayer Leaders in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Prior to the Islamic Revolution in Iran most Shia Muslims did not participate in the standard Muslim Friday Prayer. After the Revolution, however, Ayatollah Khomeini reinstated and invigorated the concept of the Friday Prayer for Shia Muslims. One reason for this reinstatement and invigoration was to use the mosque and the Friday Prayer as a venue to further the message of both Islam and the Revolution.¹⁰⁷ In order to ensure that his new experiment in Islamic government worked, the people needed to support it. One of the best ways to make contact with the people was through the Friday prayer and sermon. The Friday prayer needed to become an interface between the people and the government. It essentially needed to become an Islamic government propaganda machine, convincing the people of the veracity of the narrative. As a part of this process Ayatollah Khomeini selected men from among the ulama (Muslim religious clerics) to be the Friday Prayer Leaders and guide the visitors to the mosque in their worship. The position of Friday Prayer Leader rapidly evolved to become not simply a clergyman instructing worshippers, but a political and religious propagandist and a face of the Revolution, constantly seeking to remind people of their victory against Godlessness. Because

¹⁰⁷ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to the Friday Prayer Leaders of Khorasan" (November 24, 1982) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 17 2008, 100

the government and the religious hierarchy were united in the new narrative, government issues needed to become Islamic issues, and Islam needed to become a government issue to perpetuate the narrative. As such, politics, in the mind of Khomeini, was an Islamic subject. Subjects that previously were not religious became religious: elections, the army, banks, etc. The importance of the Friday Prayer Leaders was enormous because they communicated this new paradigm to the people and put it into practice themselves. His efforts sought to create a link between Islam and the government in the eyes of his readers and listeners. This method used Islam as an anchor, specifically the correctness and purity of Islam. Islam could not be corrected, and by attempting to associate the government with Islam, he sought to make the secular become sacred.

Ayatollah Khomeini called the Friday Prayer a “fruit of this [1979] revolution”.¹⁰⁸ He explained that he made this statement because Shia Muslims no longer practiced the Friday Prayer by 1979 and he felt that Sunni Muslims had allowed their Friday Prayers to become rote, leaving much to be desired. But with the advent of the Islamic Republic he could re-implement the Friday Prayer, making it a place for both Sunni and Shia to gather and worship together. He taught that the Friday Prayer “stands on top of all affairs”.¹⁰⁹

He rationalized that one reason Friday Prayers had become rote was because Muslims were no longer using the mosque, and by extension the Friday Prayer, as the Prophet Muhammad intended. The answer was to inject politics into the mosque. He explained:

We have not seen anywhere in history that somebody has said that the honorable Prophet of Islam and the Commander of the Faithful adopted isolation and sit in a mosque and utter invocations; rather on the contrary they were present in all places and were much involved. Therefore, a group that sits down and says that one must withdraw is not right.

¹⁰⁸ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to the Friday Prayer Leaders of provincial centers" (October 26, 1983) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 18 2008, 163

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 163

The clergy must be an active member of the society and must guide and enlighten the people.¹¹⁰

For Khomeini, the clergy engaging in politics was simply emulating the life of the prophet and an Imam/caliph. His reasoning was also based in vilayat-e faqih, his “rule of the jurists”, as can be seen in the final remark in the previous quote. One reason he conceived of the rule of the jurists was to allow the clergy to be guides to Muslims, in all aspects of their life, not just religion. Friday Prayer Leaders engaging in the political process while encouraging others to do so and allowing the mosque to be used for governmental purposes were simply realizations of that precept. In fact, Khomeini said that, “...the Friday and congregational prayer is the great base of... politics in Islam”.¹¹¹ Because clergy should rule both secularly and religiously, according to vilayat-e faqih, then the place to instruct people about their lives is the religious gathering everyone attends: the Friday Prayer.

To this end Ayatollah Khomeini instructed the Friday Prayer Leaders to, “awaken the people and make them understand that they should pay no heed to this tune that is being heard in all the Islamic countries to the effect that the ulama should not take part in politics”.¹¹² He discusses this “tune” in many speeches, which he clarifies was a conspiracy created by the Islamic Republic’s enemies to destroy their new superior form of government.¹¹³ These instructions were necessary because without the faith of the people in the clergy to guide them correctly, the clergy would not be able to establish itself as a governing body. People have to believe in a governing system for it to function properly. Knowing foreign powers’ histories in Iran, Khomeini played on popular fears of conspiracies to drive them to support this idea of

¹¹⁰ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to the Friday Prayer Leaders of Khorasan" (November 24, 1982) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 17 2008, 102

¹¹¹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Letter to the Central Secretariat of Friday Prayer Leaders" (June 21, 1987) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 20 2008, 268

¹¹² al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech to the Friday Prayer Leaders of Iran" (December 24, 1980) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 13 2008, 370

¹¹³ Ibid. 366

combining clergy and politics. Having established that clergy should engage in politics over the pulpit, he instructed the Friday Prayer Leaders what to say in their sermons to convince the people of the necessity of the Islamic government.

Even amongst the ulama the theory of vilayat-e faqih was not completely accepted. Often Khomeini had to work to convince them that what they were attempting was based in Islam, so that they could in turn convey that idea to the people. To achieve this he framed the issue in such a way that if the government ever failed, Islam would fail. He could not stress enough the importance of preserving the regime.¹¹⁴ As the nation had just gone through a revolution only a few years before, Khomeini knew the power of the masses when they no longer supported their government. He needed the people to support the government. He said to the Friday Prayer Leaders:

Today, the people are behind the Islamic Revolution and the government. The support of the people for the government is because they regard this government to be Islamic and they are aware that supporting the government is supporting Islam. It is only for this reason that they support the government; you must sustain this support.¹¹⁵

Without this support, the government could not stand. To this end, Khomeini stressed in his instructions to the Friday Prayer Leaders several vital points pertaining to their relationship with the government: cooperation, support, interdiction, unity, and propaganda.

Khomeini desired that the government run smoothly, and that dissension did not become a thorn in the side of the government as it had been for the Shah. As Friday Prayer Leaders were in weekly communication with the people, but also in weekly communication with the government, they were in a unique position to both see any issues there were in the government or with its employees and to be told about issues that civilians were having with the government.

¹¹⁴ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech to the Deputy Interior Ministers and governors of Iran" (December 6, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 13 2008, 329

¹¹⁵ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech to the members of the central committee of the Friday Prayer Leaders of Tehran" (May 25, 1983) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 17 2008, 421

In both cases, a Friday Prayer Leader reporting any issue could drive a wedge between the government and the people. Khomeini said:

I ask all of the gentlemen who are among our ranks, no matter where they are, to cooperate with people and the representatives of the governments and push forward the works with assistance of each other and with one and the same mind. If a mistake is made supposedly by a government official, you should not disclose it in Friday congregational prayers. Rather, you should advise him to do the proper thing. If he fails to listen to the advice, report to the center about the wrong done by the person concerned. However, it is not advisable to criticize him in public as this may weaken the government. We should not now do such a thing.¹¹⁶

Khomeini did not want either foreign news agencies or the people to have a bad image of the government. He did not want any Friday Prayer Leaders to attempt to improve upon what they might think of as a bad situation by going directly to the people, but instead to work with government officials to try and find solutions. It is interesting to note that he was now forbidding what he himself had done to bring about social change in Iran in the first place. Many of Khomeini's speeches before his exile and during his exile employed showcasing the many downfalls and problems with the Shah's government.

One theme that ran throughout Khomeini's instructions to the Friday Prayer Leaders and went hand in hand with cooperating with government officials was being unified with the government and providing a united front of government and clergy to the people. Just as the Prayer Leaders were to teach unity to the people, Ayatollah Khomeini taught it to them. He instructed, "All strata of the nation must be together; all the distinguished ulama and the Friday prayer leaders must be in unison; they should support one another, the government, the Majlis, the judiciary and the executive".¹¹⁷ Because the government was an Islamic one, it was the

¹¹⁶ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech to the Friday Prayer Leaders of Azarbayjan and the Islamic Revolution Prosecutor General" (April 13, 1983) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 16 2008, 163

¹¹⁷ al-Khomeini,Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to the Friday Prayer Leaders of Iran andthemembersof the Central Secretariat" (September 29, 1987) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 20 2008, 373

Friday Prayer Leaders' religious duty to show a face of unity to the people so they did not perceive weakness in the government. They were allowed to advise officials if they noticed something amiss, but never in the presence of civilians. If the official still did not change his ways, the Friday Prayer Leader was to report him.

Because the Friday Prayer Leaders had so much contact with the people they were bound to receive the brunt of peoples' complaints about the government. They were to try and resolve these complaints with the individual themselves. Khomeini instructed:

The ulama in cities are aware that they should not fall for the complaints of people who come to them. They, also, should not talk about them lest the radios or other media take advantage of it. Do not speak like this. Do not discuss it in gatherings. Friday prayer leaders should not deal with these subjects in gatherings. If they can, they should resolve the problem; if not, they ought to keep it to themselves.¹¹⁸

The need to preserve the government exceeded almost everything. Discussing such complaints in the sermons could inspire more complainants as they realize that perhaps they are not the only person with a problem. This could lead to civil strife if people began to organize.

In one letter he outlined the general procedure for achieving unity, and the punishment affixed for those Friday Prayer Leaders who did not comply. He instructed that they were to have open dialogue with government officials to ensure both entities were sharing the same message, and if it was determined that a Friday Prayer Leader was not cooperating with the government or sharing the governmental message, he was to be reported to the Central Council of Friday Prayer Leaders for punishment.¹¹⁹

As stated previously, because the Friday Prayer Leaders had so much contact with the people, there was a very real fear that they would say something to damage the government and

¹¹⁸ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to the members of the Commercial and Distribution Commission for investigating into questions and organizations affiliated to the Prime Minister's office" (December 17, 1983) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 18 2008, 210

¹¹⁹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Decree issued in Tehran to Sayyid Hashem Rasuli Mahallati " (July 15, 1983) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 18 2008, 9

it would have a major impact. For this reason Ayatollah Khomeini declared interdiction of speech if they disagreed with the government or the clergy. He instructed:

The gentlemen [Friday Prayer Leaders] should watch their behavior and words and not express things that are detrimental to the Islamic Republic... the Friday prayer leaders who are in contact with many groups, should watch for their words and deeds, which should be Islamic. You should avoid making statements that might weaken a governor-general or a judiciary official in a city.¹²⁰

In this quote Khomeini refers to their speech being Islamic. In the Islamic Republic the government *is* Islam, thus speaking un-Islamically could mean speaking against the prophet Muhammad or it could mean speaking against the government.

Ayatollah Khomeini remarked more than once to the clergy that the Islamic Republic “stand[s] in need of propaganda” to help preserve the nation and counteract the propaganda of Western nations that was directed at destabilizing the Islamic Republic.¹²¹ Again, because of the proximity that the Friday Prayer Leaders had every week with the people, they were in a prime position to be employed as propagandists. He said to them:

However, we should promote Islam as much as possible. Assure the people at Friday prayer ceremonies, in congregational prayers about the Islamic Republic and explain how good Islam is for them. Assure the people that the government now existing in the Islamic Republic and the top officials will not act against Islam.¹²²

While explaining to the people how good Islam was for them is inherent in the job description of a Prayer Leader, in this context it is used a slightly differently. Without Islam there would be no Islamic Republic, and the joint clergy-government experiment would fail. If people turned away from Islam, the government would lose its legitimacy. It is also to this end that he instructs them

¹²⁰ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to interior minister, commander of gendarmerie, governors from across the country, and officials and personnel of religio-political departments of gendarmerie" (August 8, 1982) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 16 2008, 361

¹²¹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to Friday Prayer Leaders of provincial centers" (October 26, 1983) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 18 2008, 163

¹²² al-Khomeini Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to Friday Prayer Leaders of the Mazandaran Provinces and Dasht-e Gorgan " (March 9, 1983) in, Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 16 2008, 89-90

that the government will never act against Islam. This idea is an interesting one considering that only Muhammad and possibly the Twelve Imams are considered above sin. To never act against Islam would imply that the government is filled with Imams.

The Friday Prayer Leaders were instructed to relate to the people all of the achievements of the Revolution.¹²³ They were to include in their sermons stories from the Revolution, and how people with nothing took everything from the government. They were to relate the victories of the army. These would again elevate the nation in the eyes of its citizens. They were also instructed to always assure the people that even though there were saboteurs present in the country “they [the Islamic Republic] will come out victorious”.¹²⁴ Or they would as long as they observed the tenants of Islam.

In addition to promoting the government, their propaganda was to include warnings of enemy plots. “They [Friday Prayer Leaders] should tell the people that there are sinister hands trying to doom the revolution to failure”.¹²⁵ They were to clarify that the plots had been found and dealt with, but there would always be saboteurs. They should bring to the attention of the masses the involvement in Muslim lands of other countries, such as the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., and the damaging actions they did there.¹²⁶ If they were to again have influence in Iran, Iranians would have the same problems. With these ideas in their minds the people would always remember why they needed the Islamic government.

One issue Ayatollah Khomeini instructed the Friday Prayer Leaders to include in their sermons was the importance of voting and of the populace being involved in politics. He said

¹²³ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to Friday Prayer Leaders of Iran" (October 14, 1982) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 17 2008, 42

¹²⁴ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to Friday Prayer Leaders of Semnan Province" (December 12, 1981) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 15 2008, 363

¹²⁵ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to Friday Prayer Leaders of Yazd, Hormozgan, and the south of the country" (December 1, 1981) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 15 2008, 340

¹²⁶ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to various governmental leaders and journalists" (January 2, 1983) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 17 2008, 195

“... The Friday and congregational prayer leaders and the propagators should call upon the people to be present in the [political] arena...remind them that their presences in the arena was the key to the victory they have earned”.¹²⁷ During the 1979 revolution, it was the mass demonstrations of millions of people desiring a change in the political order that finally ousted Shah Pahlavi and forced him to abdicate. Khomeini did not want them to overthrow the government again, but he did want people to participate in elections, both running for office and voting. If people did not participate in the electoral process, to the outside world it would appear that Iran had traded one dictatorship for another, and he desperately wanted to inspire other Muslim majority countries to follow the path of Iran. Bad press concerning their voting habits could inhibit that. “You [the Friday Prayer Leaders] should call upon the people to participate in the elections and the people prove...with their participation in the elections, prove that they have not turned away from Islam [the Islamic Republic]”.¹²⁸ The Friday Prayer was also the perfect occasion to do this.

In addition, the Friday Prayer was the perfect location to promote candidates. The clergy would endorse certain individuals in their campaigns, and they invited the people to vote for those candidates. Khomeini stated that the clergy and the people were not obligated to vote for the endorsed individuals, but it would be the wisest course of action because they had been investigated and vetted by the clergy who were experts in the matter.¹²⁹ His only concern was that people engage in the process¹³⁰.

¹²⁷ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to the Friday Prayer Leaders of Hamadan, clerics of Isfahan, residents of Khark Island, and various government authorities," (December 2, 1982) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 17* 2008, 114

¹²⁸ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to Friday Prayer Leaders of Khorasan province" (November 24, 1982) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 17* 2008, 102

¹²⁹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to Friday Prayer Leaders of Hamedan province, clerics of Isfahan, various governmental authorities" (December 2, 1982) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 17* 2008, 115

¹³⁰ By 1987 Khomeini had changed his stance somewhat on the idea of promoting candidates and politics so blatantly in the mosque. In a letter to the Central Secretariat of Friday Prayer Leaders, which was in charge of all the

Beyond the propagation of government candidates and voting ideals, the most important idea stressed by Khomeini to the Friday Prayer Leaders was unity. When Ayatollah Khomeini chose new Friday Prayer Leaders he issued decrees officially elevating them to this position, and gave them brief instructions pertaining to their responsibilities. In these brief instructions he always, in one form or another, instructed them to promote unity. Inviting the people to piety was often included, but not always, because it was usually elaborated on in other speeches. Unity was not discussed as often in other speeches other than the decrees, but the amount of time dedicated to them in these decrees shows its importance in Khomeini's mind. One example of this is "(I am hopeful) that besides delivering upon this divine obligation [leading the Friday prayer], you will, God willing, invite the people to unity and solidarity...and prevent them from discord and disunity".¹³¹ The importance of unity in the Islamic Republic stems from the need for the Islamic Republic to flourish and grow. The unity he desired was unity both between civilians and between civilians and the government. Disunity among the populace would breed discontent in general which might become discontent with the government. Discontent with the government was both un-Islamic, because Ayatollah Khomeini equated the government with Islam, and could be damaging to the general image of the Revolution. If people were unhappy with the Revolution, then other Muslim majority countries might not want to follow their example. Not only were the Friday Prayer Leaders instructed to "...strive to maintain peace and

Friday Prayer Leaders, he outlined a few new rules concerning politics. First, the Friday Prayer Leaders were no longer allowed to promote candidates, or allow candidates to use the Friday Prayer as an occasion to campaign. Second, Friday Prayer Leaders needed to resign if they wanted to engage in politics themselves. Third, they could no longer have government employees speak to the congregation during the Friday sermon. Fourth, if they did want to get involved in politics they should not let it affect their responsibilities as Prayer Leader. And fifth, any violation of any of the previous rules would result in immediate dismissal. The letter indicates that there were issues in previous elections that inspired these changes. Many of these rules were the complete inverse of previous ones. Khomeini changed his stance wholly on the mosque supporting candidates and Friday Prayer Leaders' involvement in politics. However, this did not diminish the importance of their role to the government or the religion.

¹³¹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Decree issued in Tehran to Hadi Barikbin on his appointment as Friday Prayer Leader in Qazvin" (October 14, 1982) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 14 2008, 439

harmony within the country through their speeches and sermons [but] should refrain from making speeches that could result in public apprehension and dissent".¹³² They were not to discuss anything that could result in public distress, such as complaints worshippers may have shared with them, any problems the government was having, concerns people had with the government, etc., because these issues could weaken the Islamic government and the peoples' relationship with the government.

The other duty Khomeini stressed in every decree when raising a member of the ulama to Friday Prayer Leader was the importance of acquainting the people with their duties to the Revolution, the Islamic Republic, and to Islam. He said to one new Friday Prayer Leader, "God willing, in the course of the performance of this divine obligation, you make the honorable people of [your] city more acquainted with their important and sensitive duties in relation to Islam and the Revolution".¹³³ Key among these duties was involvement in politics and elections, participating in the military, participating in cultural and social affairs of the country, helping the economy by spending money and investing their money in state run banks, joining the Basij (militia), and receiving an Islamic education. The need to encourage these activities in the Friday sermon stems from the fact that the Friday sermon drew vast crowds of Iranians and that the perpetuation of the Islamic Republic was, in Khomeini's opinion, a religious obligation. He said, "Today, preservation of this government is obligatory-a religious obligation".¹³⁴ As has already been discussed, if people did not participate in politics, it would appear to outsiders that the Islamic Republic was a failed experiment. In addition, throughout these years Iran was at war

¹³² al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Message issued in Tehran to the Iranian nation and government officials" (March 16, 1981) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 14 2008, 175

¹³³ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Decree issued in Tehran to Sayyid Kazim Husayni Miyanji on his appointment as Friday Prayer Leader in Khorramabad" (September 26, 1982) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 17 2008, 6

¹³⁴ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to Friday Prayer Leaders of Zanjan" (June 6, 1982) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 16 2008, 264

with Iraq and lack of volunteers for the army and the Basij could mean failure for the government because it would be bad press outside the country but also because their enemies might overrun them. Participating in cultural and social affairs promoted the government as well. Because of the war with Iraq and international sanctions on Iran, as well as the general economic difficulties caused by the mismanagement of the economy under the Shah, the Islamic Republic needed the economy to grow, and if citizens tried to save their money or did not invest in state banks, it would stagnate.

As an additional duty, the Friday Prayer Leaders were instructed to teach the people to engage in martyrdom. Khomeini stated, "...it is the martyrdoms that ensures victory. Such martyrdoms bring disgrace to our enemy in the world".¹³⁵ These instructions were given during the war with Iraq, when the Islamic Republic needed more troops in the army. Martyrdom was already a very significant theme in Shi'ism, harkening back to the martyrdoms of Imams Ali, Hasan, and Hussein. Khomeini instructed the clergy to focus on martyrdom during the month of Muharram, the commemorative month of Imam Hussein's death. In Iran this month is already filled with mourning and tributes to Imam Hussein's death, and would be the perfect time to monopolize on the strong feelings of the people to encourage them to join the war effort.

The office of the Friday Prayer Leader itself was a tool to convince others to his position. In Khomeini's mind, their image to the world, both inside and outside of Iran, could help convince people that vilayat-e faqih was right and just, or confirm fears that it was corrupt and evil. It was imperative that they comport themselves as model Muslims. Ayatollah Khomeini instructed, "Your actions should present the true picture of Islam...any kind of deviation among you...will only encourage those who are against you and Islam to attack you with their pens and

¹³⁵ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to the Friday Prayer Leader of Tabriz, theologians, clergymen and eulogists of Qum, Tehran and Azarbayjan" (October 17, 1982) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 17 2008, 53

their words and to even blow matters out of proportion".¹³⁶ Khomeini was worried that the sins of Friday Prayer Leaders would be used against the regime to prove that the Islamic Republic was fraudulent. He instructed them to first purify themselves before they preached piety to the masses.¹³⁷ If they themselves were not following Islam, they would not be able to convincingly preach it. In addition, when people discovered that they were impure, their office, and the rest of the clergy, would be discredited. The enemies of the nation could generalize and say that all the clergy were sinners. This could mean people turning away from Islam. They were also instructed to lead simple lives.¹³⁸ Then the people would never grow jealous of them, or think they were corrupt. Above all they were instructed to at all times strive to keep the "prestige of the clerics" intact.¹³⁹

Khomeini's instructions to the Friday Prayer Leaders were an important part of the new narrative. Because the new narrative revolved around the successful meshing of politics and religion, the Friday Prayer Leader's relationship with the government and how he portrayed the Islamic Republic to the people were two of the most important aspects of his calling as a Friday Prayer Leader. Khomeini implored these men time and again to build a good relationship with the government. Because the narrative now portrayed the government as an extension of Islam, he often emphasized that their responsibilities concerning the government were so important that the fate of the Islamic Republic, and by extension Islam, rested on their shoulders. The efforts examined in this section are both agitative and integrative, albeit with different audiences in mind. They are agitative when their audience was the Friday Prayer Leaders themselves, because

¹³⁶ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to clerics from the Bureau of Propagation of the Qum and Mashhad Seminaries" (March 5, 1981) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 14 2008, 162

¹³⁷ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to the president, members of the Experts Assembly, and Friday Prayer Leaders of Iran" (February 3, 1985) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 19 2008, 122

¹³⁸ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to Friday Prayer Leaders of Tehran" (May 25, 1983) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 17 2008, 420

¹³⁹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah , "Speech in Tehran to Friday Prayer Leaders of the Mazandaran Provinces and Dasht-e Gorgan" (March 9, 1983) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 16 2008, 89

they sought to motivate them to follow Khomeini's counsels and to exuberantly support the new narrative. They were integrative when their audience was the populace, speaking through the mouthpiece of the Friday Prayer Leader, in that they encouraged the populace to accept the new narrative and maintain the status quo: the Islamic government. Khomeini mostly used white and gray propaganda, his sources were usually the Qur'an or his own mind, but he did infer future black propaganda on occasion. For instance, his command to the Prayer Leaders to never criticize government leaders, even if they merited criticism, implies that their misdeeds were to be covered up, and the populace lied to about any such misdeeds to maintain the narrative in their eyes. This use of white and gray propaganda was an attempt to strengthen the foundation of the narrative. If outright lies were used to establish the narrative, and then discovered, the entire narrative could collapse. He usually used rationality in his efforts to convince his readers and listeners.

Portrayals of Iraqi Muslims during the Iran-Iraq War 1980-1988

The Iran-Iraq War presented an interesting situation for the burgeoning new regime in Iran, and for Ayatollah Khomeini himself. The Iran-Iraq War began on September 22, 1980 when Iraqi forces invaded Iran. One of the goals of many of the new narrative was to spread the Islamic Revolution to other Muslim majority countries that in the minds of the regime were afflicted with un-Islamic leaders like the deposed Shah.¹⁴⁰ Their neighbor Iraq fit this criterion, which made the Iraqi government very nervous, especially the new head of government, Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi government began to combat the ideologies of the Revolution and the new narrative by imprisoning outspoken supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini and focusing more attention on the Shia majority in the south of Iraq, who had begun to see a possible end to their

¹⁴⁰ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Message issued in Tehran to the nation of Iran" (February 11, 1980) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 12 2008, 125

oppression at the hands of the Ba'athist regime in the form of the mostly Shia Islamic Revolution in Iran.¹⁴¹ Tensions between the two countries stretched to the limit on September 17th 1980 when Saddam Hussein abolished the 1975 Algiers Accord that established the Shatt al-Arab river as a shared body of water between the two countries, and claimed it for Iraq. After several border clashes with the Iranian army, Hussein ordered the invasion of Iran on September 22. Over the course of the war the Iranian army gradually pushed the Iraqi army back into Iraq, and then pursued them into Iraq. However, after eight years neither army made significant headway and a truce was called.

In an effort to persuade different audiences to accept the government's narrative, Khomeini portrayed the people Iraq to his people in many different lights throughout the war, ranging from poor, defenseless innocent brothers and sisters in need of rescuing to blood-soaked apostates who needed to be forcibly helped on their way to Hell, and addressed the people of Iraq themselves as both proponents of the Islamic Revolution and sinners in need of salvation. The situation was a difficult one. The government narrative focused heavily on overthrowing evil leaders to implement true Islamic government. They believed that Saddam Hussein was such a leader. However, because the narrative portrayed the Iranian government as Islamic and as an example to other Muslim majority countries, it had to act according to Islam. To stay within the narrative, the government needed to portray their enemy in such a way that good Muslims could join in the fight, an especially difficult problem since their enemies were also Muslims. Thus, Khomeini's goals were at various times to persuade more Iranians to join the fight and persuade Iraqi Muslims to lay down their arms and join the Islamic Revolution. His efforts sought to use Islam as an anchor in the minds of his readers and listeners. He capitalized on the notions of the

¹⁴¹ Momen, Moojan. *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985. 263

Muslim ummah (that all Muslims are part of one cohesive group), wicked deceivers similar to the Devil, and Islamic tradition concerning those who abandon Islam or fight against it.

The first aspect of Ayatollah Khomeini's rhetoric about Shia Iraqi citizens during the war that I address is who his audience was. One of the difficulties he faced during the war was that he was a Muslim leader instructing troops to fight against other Muslims. In addition, Khomeini himself had lived in Iraq for the better part of fifteen years, and so was possibly ordering his friends and acquaintances attacked. When speaking to Iranians, he usually portrayed Iraqis as good people with a terrible leader (Saddam Hussein, of whom Khomeini had an intense personal dislike) who were being used or oppressed and needed to be saved. When speaking to Iraqi citizens, via radio or television, he usually spoke to them as if they were his brothers and sisters and encouraged them to overthrow Saddam to ensure they did not get caught in the crossfire of war.

When he addressed Iraqi soldiers he routinely switched between referring to them as good Muslims who were forced into a bad situation by an evil leader, and horrible apostates because they were fighting against the true Islamic state, Iran, in an effort to draw them into the government narrative. To maintain the narrative for his own troops, he instructed Iranian soldiers not to harm civilians and to save the wounded. However, he also needed to lift their morale to keep them willing to engage in combat for eight long years, which he did by instructing them that the Iraqis were apostates and enemies of Islam and that Iran's fight was a holy war.

In a speech to the families of martyrs on September 5, 1982, Ayatollah Khomeini said, "The People of Iraq are like our own people. We love Iraq. In Iraq lies the heart of Shi'ism...The Iraqi people are Muslim. We love Iraq because it is an Islamic country..."¹⁴² This illustrates one

¹⁴² al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to families of martyrs, military reconstruction boards, government organizations, and affiliated companies" (September 5, 1982) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 16 2008, 411

manner in which Khomeini portrayed Iraqis. He depicts them as brothers and sisters of the Iranian people, through their shared bond of Islam. Khomeini used this motif quite often in his speeches to the families of martyrs and to the people of Iran at large. He was still hoping to export the Islamic Revolution to Iraq¹⁴³. He faced a difficult dilemma because he claimed that the Islamic Republic was a perfect example of Islam in the world.¹⁴⁴ If it was indeed a perfect example of Islam, they needed to be seen practicing Islam perfectly, and so he did not desire long-term animosity between Iranian Muslims and Iraqi Muslims. The families of martyrs were no doubt angry and upset over the deaths of their children, and Khomeini needed to tame or channel those emotions. He gave them a reason to keep supporting the Sacred Defense, which was because Iraqis were Muslims too and they needed to be freed from their godless leaders.

His portrayals did not change over the course of the war. The audience he was speaking to very much influenced Khomeini's portrayal of Iraqis, and this caused his rhetoric to shift from one speech to the next throughout the war, changing from pacifying to hostile sometimes within days. I discuss how the audience affected his rhetoric in more detail within the context of each type of portrayal below.

By the time of the invasion of Iran in 1980, Iraq had undergone internal strife for years because of the government oppression of Kurds and Shia Muslims, two groups that make up a substantial percentage of the population.¹⁴⁵ The Iraqi government worried that the advent of the Islamic Revolution, which had distinct Shia symbols and ideologies, would bolster the Shia

¹⁴³ In 1980 Khomeini mentioned "exporting the revolution" in speeches or interviews, such as "We shall export our Revolution to the entire world, because our Revolution is Islamic". al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Message issued in Tehran to the nation of Iran" (February 11, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 12 2008*, 125

¹⁴⁴ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to Ayatollah Hakim, the combatant clerics of Iraq, and the expelled Muslims of Iraq" (April 9, 1981) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 14 2008*, 240

¹⁴⁵ Momen 1985, 263

majority of Iraq into attempting to create a similar revolution.¹⁴⁶ Khomeini himself believed this would come to pass. The Islamic Republic did all it could to make this happen, even financially supporting Shia groups in Iraq that were trying to replace the secular Ba'athist regime with an Islamic regime.¹⁴⁷ Iranian support for Iraqis did not end with the eruption of conflict along the Iran-Iraq border, if anything it intensified.

Ayatollah Khomeini changed the governmental approach¹⁴⁸ from giving monetary aid to assist Iraqis in freeing themselves from oppression to portraying them as an innocent people who needed to be saved by Iran. To the people of Iran he divided the enemy in Iraq into two groups, the innocent Muslim civilians and the evil apostate rulers. In a speech to the people of Iran Khomeini said "Some godless people are now ruling over the country [Iraq], it is a despotic government worse than any dictatorship... In Iraq, the people do not agree with the usurper government which is, therefore, not able to maintain calm in the country".¹⁴⁹ He established a firm dividing line between the government of Iraq and the people. In the same speech he asserted that the people of Iraq were Muslim and the government was not.¹⁵⁰ In his rhetoric this further divided the Iraqi people from their government and placed them closer to the cause of the Iranian people, who were Muslim with an Islamic government. This allowed Khomeini to establish that Iraqis were innocent and their government was at fault in the war.

If the Iraqis were innocent of any wrongdoing, then after the Islamic Republic completed their Sacred Defense victoriously they would be able to befriend them even further and assist

¹⁴⁶ Tousi, Reza Ra'iss. "Containment and Animosity: The United States and the War." In *Iranian Perspectives on the Iran-Iraq War*, by Farhang Edited by Rajee, 50-61. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997. 50.

¹⁴⁷ Yavari, Neguin. "National, Ethnic, and Sectarian Issues in the War." In *Iranian Perspectives on the Iran-Iraq War*, by Farhang Rajae, 75-89. Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 1997. 77.

¹⁴⁸ In rhetoric if not in action. The Iranian government was still supporting the Da'wa Party, a Shia Islamic underground group in Iraq, in 1982 (Hiro 1984).

¹⁴⁹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to clergymen and various groups of people of Bakhtaran " (August 19, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 13 2008*, 120-121

¹⁵⁰ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to clergymen and various groups of people of Bakhtaran " (August 19, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 13 2008*, 121

them in establishing their own Islamic government. To achieve such an end, Khomeini painted the picture of the poor, innocent Iraqi with gusto. In one speech he said, “How much the helpless people of Iraq have suffered in this war. What losses they have undergone!”¹⁵¹ Two years later he gave a similar speech to the armed forces saying, “The Miserable commander of Qadisiyyah [Saddam Hussein] extends his begging arm in every direction and has pinned his hopes on the bankrupt criminals to continue his crimes against the innocent people of Iraq and the Arab Muslims...in the region”.¹⁵² He does not focus on the war’s impact on Iran in these lines, only on how difficult it must be for Iraqis to be put in this situation by their leader. The establishment of Iraqis as innocent people who need to be freed also gave Khomeini a quiver of inspirational arrows to fire into the hearts of Iranians. He had achieved a similar feat in naming the conflict the “Sacred Defense”. This granted the Iranian army moral authority. They were not invading another country for financial gain; they were defending their homes, wives, children, and Islam. More people would be likely to volunteer to fight, and keep volunteering for such a worthy cause. If the Iraqi people were innocent Muslims and needed to be saved, then the Sacred Defense was also military action to free oppressed Muslims who could not protect themselves. This would bolster the people even more into continuing to fight.

To this end, Ayatollah Khomeini’s speeches were brimming with calls to free the Iraqi people. “We have to get rid of this evil enemy. I have pointed out repeatedly, as have the esteemed officials, [that] we do not and will not have any intention of aggression, and our advance in Iraq is in self-defense and defense of the Islamic country of Iraq”.¹⁵³ His use of

¹⁵¹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to preachers and religious orators " (November 5, 1980) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 13 2008, 282

¹⁵² al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to officials of the Islamic Republic system, the armed forces and other strata of the nation of Iran " (February 11, 1983) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 17 2008, 294

¹⁵³ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to members of Tehran Society of Ruhaniyat Mubarez, propaganda officers, and theology students " (October 5, 1983) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 18 2008, 146

‘defense’ and ‘Islamic’ in this passage seemed intended to evoke strong emotions. The army was not invading Iraq, it was defending it from an insidious evil that permeated it, and to do this they must be present in Iraq. In addition, the country that this evil permeated was Islamic, making the people there brothers and sisters of the Iranians. Another speech along the same lines states, “We want to defend Islam! ...We want to defend people against Saddam, who [is] doing injustice to Iraqi Muslim people. The people of Iraq want us to defend them. We want to defend them. We do not mount offensive”.¹⁵⁴ Again, in this example he used the words ‘defend’ and ‘Muslim’ seemingly to evoke a strong reaction from his listeners.

Ayatollah Khomeini portrayed the Iraqi people as helpless and innocent throughout the Sacred Defense. This allowed him to present a situation to the Iranian people where they would be fighting a war to defend their Muslim brothers and save them from oppression, and eventually help the Iraqi people to establish their own Islamic state. This rhetoric helped ensure a constant stream of volunteers for the war effort for eight years, a war effort that resulted in an estimated one million casualties.

While Ayatollah Khomeini portrayed the Iraqi civilian as innocent and in need of saving, he portrayed the Iraqi soldier very differently throughout the course of the war. At times he portrayed the Iraqi soldier as a good Muslim who was being tricked or forced to fight by wicked apostate leaders, and at other times as a wicked heretic.

After the initial Islamic Revolution in 1979, Khomeini set about drawing lines in the sand. The establishment of the Islamic state ruled by *vilayat-e faqih* in conjunction with Shia Islam as the state religion created a symbiotic relationship between religion and government, which in his own words meant that if the government fell, Islam fell. This meant that any

¹⁵⁴ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to the president, prime minister, Majlis, and various other governmental authorities" (April 18, 1985) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 19 2008, 207

Muslim who opposed the government was in reality opposing Islam and God, and Khomeini used this to his advantage.¹⁵⁵

The first portrayal of the Iraqi soldier was that of the Muslim man being tricked into fighting by evil apostate leaders. “I am really sorry to see so many valiant Iraqi youths being deceived and forcibly sent to fight their Muslim brothers because of the desire and lust for fame of one or more godless persons”.¹⁵⁶ In this speech Khomeini was addressing the Iraqi people, most notably the armed forces, personally. His goal, which he made abundantly clear in the speech, was to motivate the Iraqi soldiers to abandon their post, or better yet to turn their weapons on their rulers. He used the image of brave young men, no doubt the pride of their parents’ eyes, being taken from their parents against their will to fight against good Muslims just like them. His use of “deceived” gave Muslim soldiers an option to stop fighting. If the Islamic Republic was in fact the center of Islam in the world, as Khomeini portrayed it, then fighting against it may indeed be a sin, but if soldiers were fighting against it not because they wanted to but because they were forced to, or only doing so because they were deceived, then they were not sinning and could correct their mistake. In another speech Khomeini reiterated this portrayal with a different take on who the leaders are, “I also hope that the Iraqi army that has been tricked into fighting for the non- Muslims against the Muslims, will also wake up”.¹⁵⁷ In this passage he again made the claim that the Iraqi soldiers had been tricked, but referred to their leaders as non-Muslims. He still maintained that they needed to “wake up” and correct their error of fighting for apostates.

¹⁵⁵ Momen 1985, 294

¹⁵⁶ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Letter written in Tehran to the nation and army of Iraq" (October 16, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 13 2008*, 231

¹⁵⁷ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to the graduates of the Officers’ Training College" (November 16, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 13 2008*, 300

In a third passage he did not portray the Iraqi soldiers as tricked into committing wrong like the previous examples: “We are defending a nation that has been entangled; this nation’s [Iraq] army has been afflicted, its administrative personnel and all others have been afflicted with a hellish party”.¹⁵⁸ In this passage the army was not at fault because their leaders, the Ba’ath Party, were forcing them to fight. The speech this passage comes from was given during Ramadan to the whole of the Islamic Republic, and was about how purification and fasting during Ramadan would prevent Muslim peoples from being oppressed. From the context in the speech this passage seemed to be a life lesson for the Iranian people; the Iraqi army was afflicted with such horrible, hellish leaders who forced them to fight other Muslims because they did not purify themselves during Ramadan. The Iranian army would be more pure, again giving them a moral high ground.

The second portrayal of Iraqi soldiers is that of sinners and heretics. This portrayal stems from the notion that if the Islamic Republic is the bastion of Islam, then fighting against them is akin to fighting against God Himself. We have seen how Khomeini used the plight of the Iraqi people as a stimulus to motivate the Iranian populace to continue the war, and love is a powerful motivator. He tried to persuade people to join the conflict out of love of their fellow man. But fear and hatred are other powerful motivators, which Khomeini employed in this second portrayal of Iraqi soldiers.

This portrayal seemed to have two goals, to frighten the Iraqi soldiers into deserting and repenting of their wicked ways and to weaken their links to Islam in the eyes of the Iranian soldiers. As stated previously when discussing the notion of the Sacred Defense, it is unlawful in Islam to fight other Muslims unless one is attacked and acts in self-defense, but it is perfectly

¹⁵⁸ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to the officials of the Islamic Republic, civil and military authorities and people from all walks of life" (July 1, 1984) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 18 2008, 416

lawful to fight with apostate Muslims or non-Muslims. Thus, Khomeini tried to present the war as both a defense and a fight against non-Muslims or apostate Muslims to justify the conflict for his soldiers, at least for this portrayal. The following passage is from a radio broadcast to both Iranian and Iraqi soldiers, in which Ayatollah Khomeini discussed the motivations for each army. He says:

The Baath Party is one that has nothing to do with God. It is not familiar with God. Therefore, you are not giving up your lives for God. What is your motive? We are using our power to fight for the cause of God. He has given us everything. We are from Him and will give our all to Him. Herein lies the motive of the army of Islam. It was the same at the advent of Islam, and it is the same now. What is your motive? Are you opposing Islam for the sake of God? Are you opposing the Quran for the sake of God, or for the sake of Saddam Husayn? There is no way for you to claim that you are fighting for God; it is meaningless for you to say this. That means you are fighting for Saddam Husayn. Are you fighting for the purpose of making Islam powerful?! Well, we have Islam here; and it is also powerful...It is said here [in Iran] that giving our lives [for God] will take us to stations in heaven higher than those of the earth. What about you?
O army of Iraq: return to Islam! O armed forces of Iraq: return to Islam before it is too late! You cannot return when the time to do so has passed. Repent while there is still time, just like many of your brothers who repented and came here and joined the army of Islam. You, too, must return [to Islam]. It would be for your own good both in this world and the next.¹⁵⁹

In this passage Khomeini used the Iranian army to contrast the Iraqi army. Since the Islamic Republic was the bastion of Islam to the world, Khomeini referred to the Iranian army as the “army of Islam”. Because they were the army of Islam, the soldiers they fought against must not be Islamic. Instead, they gave up their lives for the sake of a man (Saddam Hussein) instead of for God. He finished by calling the Iraqi soldiers to repentance, a course they must take because fighting against the army of Islam is a sin. He then implied that to continue fighting

¹⁵⁹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Radio/television message in Tehran to the nations and armies of Iran and Iraq" (September 26, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 13 2008, 207

would mean death and damnation, because repentance “would be good for your own good, in this life and the next”.¹⁶⁰

In another speech to the Iranian military Khomeini advised, “the Iraqi army not to fight for the devil in vain, because this way they are [sending] themselves to Hell”.¹⁶¹ Here he portrayed Hussein as the devil. The Iraqi soldiers who followed him were thus essentially committing apostasy by following him over the leaders of the Islamic Republic, and the consequence would be damnation. In a similar speech Khomeini stated:

“Who does the Iraqi army want to fight? Whom does it support; whom does it oppose? Is it supporting Saddam who is a communist and an infidel? Against whom? Against Islam? The Iraqi army must know that this person...is their enemy... He is actually the enemy of Islam. The Iraqi army should realize that this war is a war against Islam. It is in support of heresy such a war is against the pleasure of God. The Blessed and Exalted Lord will never forgive [those] that rise against Islam for the sake of supporting infidelity as according to religious ruling, Saddam Husayn is an infidel himself and also supports infidelity”.¹⁶²

In this passage Khomeini again used the idea that the Islamic Republic was the stronghold of Islam for the world. Because the Iraqi army was fighting against the Islamic Republic, they were fighting “against Islam”. In addition, they were following a man who was a sinner and an infidel in his fight against Islam. Thus, they would never be forgiven by God. This speech was given to the Iranian nation specifically, but was broadcast on the radio no doubt in the hope that it would reach some soldiers in Iraq. It seems to have had the two-pronged goal of intimidating the Iraqi army into abandoning their posts and inspiring the Iranian army and citizens to continue the fight, which was a holy war for God.

¹⁶⁰ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Radio/television message in Tehran to the nations and armies of Iran and Iraq" (September 26, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 13 2008, 207

¹⁶¹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to students of the military college, and members of the military" (December 2, 1981) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 15 2008, 345

¹⁶² al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Radio/television message in Tehran to the Iranian nation" (September 22, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 13 2008, 195

In the following passage Khomeini widened the divide between Iraqi and Iranian soldiers, “Mollify the prisoners of war. Although they are sinful, you should treat them according to Islamic and human standards”.¹⁶³ While this passage does enjoin the Iranian soldiers to help the wounded Iraqi soldiers, it differentiates them. The Iraqi soldiers were sinful. The Iranian soldiers must show that they themselves were not sinful by treating Iraqis according to Islamic standards. Thus the divide between pious Iranian Muslims and sinful Iraqi apostates was further solidified.

Ayatollah Khomeini’s different portrayals of Iraqi soldiers seemed to have a few goals in mind. His portrayal of the Iraqi soldier as being deceived, misled, or forced to go to war by evil leaders is similar to his portrayal of Iraqi citizens. Its goal was to encourage Iranians to help and save them. His portrayal of Iraqi soldiers as sinners and apostates drove a wedge deeper between the two armies, making it easier to go to war with Iraqis because of their seemingly dissimilar nature from Iranians. In addition, it attacked the self-image Iraqi Muslims might have had and attempted to instill a fear of fighting against the Islamic Republic in their hearts.

The final portrayals addressed are Ba’athist and non-Muslim. Khomeini did not often use these portrayals in his writings, reserving them for the moments when the enemy was simply no longer to be given quarter. For Khomeini, Ba’athists were atheist, greedy, Western, blood-thirsty enemies of Islam, akin to the Meccans who fought against the prophet Muhammad. In this context, his portrayal of non-Muslims was essentially the same.

After the Iranian army turned the tide of the war by forcing the Iraqi army back into Iraq, the government of the Islamic Republic decided to pursue them into Iraq. This initially caused some debate within the government over the legitimacy of such an act if Iran was simply

¹⁶³ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Message in Tehran to the Iranian nation" (May 27, 1982) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 16 2008, 234

defending itself.¹⁶⁴ At this juncture, Khomeini gave a speech to the government and armed forces in defense of the invasion. In his speech he drastically changed his rhetoric from previous speeches, “Today, we are in a defensive position. The mercenary army of Iraq was in Iran for 20 months, occupying many sensitive places and committing so many crimes that history should record...”.¹⁶⁵ In this passage Khomeini modified his portrayal of Iraqi soldiers. While they were usually portrayed as misled, forced to fight, or as apostate Muslims, in this speech he refers to the Iraqi army as a “mercenary army”. This implies that they were in fact not even Iraqis, but probably loaned to Iraq from another country and probably non-Muslims¹⁶⁶. They were not, therefore, a subject of Khomeini’s rhetoric about saving the innocent Iraqis, or helping the sinner Iraqi soldiers to repent. They were outside of this paradigm and could be justifiably hated, pursued, attacked, and killed because they were accepting money to kill Muslims. He used this portrayal at this time to further validate the invasion of Iraq.

A similar idea runs throughout several of his other speeches. Khomeini claimed that the soldiers who followed Saddam were in fact not real Arabs or Muslim. “...Our country and our army adhere to Islamic principles. This country and its armed forces are Islamic. The one who strikes and attacks Muslims and renders the Arab Muslims homeless and destroys an Islamic country simply for being Muslim, cannot be considered a Muslim”.¹⁶⁷ And “He [Saddam Hussein] claims to be an Arab. Not so; he is an American [stooge]. He and his regime are not

¹⁶⁴ Tousi 1997, 51

¹⁶⁵ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to the superintendent of the holy shrine of Imam Rida, the governor-general of Khorasan, his staff, personnel of the air force, and members of the Islamic Republic Party of Mashhad" (July 25, 1982) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 16 2008*, 338

¹⁶⁶ For instance in a different speech Khomeini remarks that Iraq was compelled to fight by America (al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Message in Tehran to the Muslims of the world" (September 12, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 13 2008*, 183).

¹⁶⁷ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to Ayatollah Hakim, the combatant clerics of Iraq, and the expelled Muslims of Iraq" (April 9, 1981) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 14 2008*, 240

Arabs as Arabs are Muslim. They are not Arabs; they are Americans".¹⁶⁸ These passages have several layers. First, Khomeini made the claim that all Arabs are Muslim. Second, Muslims do not attack other Muslims. Third, he differentiated between the Arab identity of the victims of the Iraqi soldiers, presumably in Khuzestan¹⁶⁹, and the soldiers' identity. He then proposed that the soldiers who were fighting in the Iraqi army could not be Muslim or Arab because they were attacking Muslims. In addition, by applying this same line of reasoning to Saddam Hussein and his regime, he was by extension painting anyone who upheld the regime with the same brush. Thus, the Iraqi soldiers were not Arab, not Muslim, and were in fact essentially Americans. This description would help to galvanize his own troops and citizens into action at the memory of all the times America, the Great Satan, had wronged them. These speeches were also addressed to Iraq and their general themes were for Iraqis to overthrow their government. Khomeini's goal was also that these might serve as an impetus for more pious Iraqi Muslims to turn on the army and the government, and that even not so pious Iraqis would still identify with their Arab identity enough to rid themselves of the "Americans".

For Khomeini the vilest of Iraqis were the Ba'athists, whom he viewed as atheists. In one speech he said, "As long as this filthy tumor [the Ba'athist regime] remains in the body of the Islamic country of Iraq, the region will continue to burn in the flame of insecurity and mishaps".¹⁷⁰ In another he discussed how much the war has hurt Iran and remarks:

The experience of the Islamic Revolution in Iran [from the context he means the war] was achieved at a great cost: thousands of martyrs and wounded people whose blood was spilt, thousands of homes that were destroyed, the crops and harvests that were burnt to ashes, the many lives that were lost in bomb explosions and bombing of civilian areas,

¹⁶⁸ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Radio/television message in Tehran to the nations and armies of Iran and Iraq" (September 26, 1980) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 13 2008, 208

¹⁶⁹ Khuzestan is a region of Iran that is mostly populated by ethnic Arabs, located along part of the border with Iraq. The majority of Iranians are ethnic Persian. Because he does not specify in his speech where the Arabs he is describing live, it is safe to assume he is referring to Khuzestan as that region was invaded.

¹⁷⁰ al-Khomeini, , Ruhollah, "Message in Tehran to members of "*Labbayk ya Imam*" Seminar " (April 4, 1986) in *Sahifeh-ye Imam* Vol 20 2008, 27

the captivity of the sons of Islam and the revolution in the prisons of the Ba'athist executioners of Iraq....¹⁷¹

He used the term "Ba'athist executioners" to evoke rage at what they had done to Iran, which he listed poignantly in the preceding lines. The speech does not actually discuss prisoners of war being executed, leading this author to conclude that his "executioners" remark was an allusion to Iraqi army aggression throughout the war.

In another speech to the army he spoke of the Ba'athists saying, "These deviants who accuse Iran of why we fight Muslims, we should say we do not consider the Ba'ath Party to be Muslim. We even consider them against Islam".¹⁷² In Khomeini's view Ba'athists were not Muslim. This is the notion that he wanted to convey to his army. This would make it easier for the Iranian army to fight their foe, and motivate them. In his speech he grouped the Iraqi soldiers with the Ba'athists. He remarked that Iran was being accused of fighting Muslims, and the actual people in the battles were the Iraqi soldiers. He then said they were not fighting Muslims because they were fighting Ba'athists, thus the Iraqi soldiers were Ba'athists as well.

While Ayatollah Khomeini did not always portray the Iraqi army as Ba'athist or non-Muslim, the speeches in which he did make it clear that in Khomeini's eyes the Iraqi soldiers were not always the Muslim brothers he most often portrayed them to be. At times he needed them to be evil, murderous apostates to galvanize the military into gaining victory when fighting to free Iraqis no longer worked.

Khomeini's portrayal of Iraqi soldiers as misled, coerced, or deceived into fighting by evil leaders seemed to be intended to achieve the same end, to save the poor Iraqi soldiers from wicked masters who forced them to fight against their God. His portrayal of Iraqi soldiers as

¹⁷¹ al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Message in Tehran to Muslims of Iran and the world " (July 28, 1987) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 20 2008, 306

¹⁷² al-Khomeini, Ruhollah, "Speech in Tehran to residents of southern Tehran and army personnel" (April 4, 1985) in Sahifeh-ye Imam Vol 19 2008, 192

apostates and heretics seemed intended to give the Iranian soldiers further impetus to fight not to free but to destroy in the name of God. His portrayal of Iraqis as Ba'athists or non-Muslims was intended to further distance Iranian soldiers from the Muslim men they fought. The Iran-Iraq War lasted eight years and much of it was a war of attrition. Ayatollah Khomeini often changed his rhetoric in the face of changing situations to achieve a more favorable outcome. However, the central theme of his persuasive rhetoric was Islam, and always worked towards including others in the Islamic government narrative. These portrayals created a model Muslim, like the Islamic State's efforts, but for a different purpose. Often the model Muslim here was created in the negative space. This was a part of the government narrative as well, since they viewed themselves as an example to Muslims around the world. For example, portrayals of enemies as innocents needing to be saved implied that by saving them the Iranian soldier would improve themselves, becoming more of a model Muslim. On the other hand, portrayals of enemies as wicked weakened any connection Iranian soldiers would make of Iraqis being model Muslims themselves, instead painting them as less than the model Muslim.

Khomeini used his portrayal of Iraqis as innocents usually when speaking to broad audiences of Iranians. In his speeches it was the most used portrayal. When there was a policy shift, such as the decision to invade Iraq, or a defeat, or when addressing only the military, or when defending the actions of the army or the government Khomeini used his portrayal of Iraqis as apostates, sinners, Ba'athists, or non-Muslims. This allowed him to change the rules, so to speak, of Iran's relationship with the Iraqi people, but still maintain the narrative that Iran was seeking to help Iraq establish an Islamic government, and that it was itself righteous and Islamic. In these efforts Khomeini used agitative propaganda. His goal was always to motivate the reader or listener to some action, whether it be to rise up against their leaders or continue fighting

against their enemies. In addition, these efforts were almost entirely irrational. He focused almost completely on creating emotional responses in the listener that would in turn motivate them to action. This may have been a result of the fact that many of the sources in this study were speeches to be listened to rather than something to be read and studied. When giving shorter speeches it is easier to motivate using emotional appeals rather than in-depth historical and religious analyses.

CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

This project has answered the question, in part, “How do Islamist forces use Islam in their discourse to persuade others to their point of view?” I say in part because I have only addressed a small portion of the methods two of the many Islamist groups use. Further research could be done to address other methods. I addressed this question through the lens of propaganda analysis and narrative theory. My case studies generally use white and gray propaganda, both agitative and integrative propaganda, and irrational and rational propaganda. The testimonials used by IS in *Dabiq* could have been true stories or they could have been fabrications, it is almost impossible to verify, and can thus be either qualified as white or gray propaganda. These testimonials were agitative and irrational, seeking to rouse Muslims to action by following the life examples of the protagonist, and doing so by using emotional appeals. Their use of religiously loaded terms was both agitative and integrative, often seeking to rouse Muslims to action in support of them, and at other times seeking to mollify them into acceptance of IS’s actions. The speeches of Ayatollah Khomeini to his Friday Prayer Leaders attempted to use integrative, rational propaganda to convince them of their own necessity and that of the Islamic government that they could in turn use with the general populace. His speeches concerning Iraqi citizens during the Iran-Iraq War sought to use agitative, irrational religious terms and portrayals to rouse Muslims to action in a variety of settings, all of which revolved around the continuation of the war. The use of white and gray propaganda by both parties is indicative of the tenuous foundations their narratives were built on. Outright lies, or black propaganda, would possibly be discovered and alienate potential newcomers to the narrative. By using real sources these forces sought to legitimize their narratives. Both of these Islamist forces used irrational propaganda to

elicit an emotive response when the reader could possibly die as a result of heeding the propaganda, possibly in an effort to encourage the reader to act violently without thinking. Both groups sought to persuade by creating a distorted perception of the model Muslims that others should emulate and by using religious language that could play off of the religious ideals so many Muslims hold dear. In essence they used their propaganda to distort Islam and equate it with their narrative.

This work elucidates the usage of religion to motivate people to action. In many cases the interpretations of Islamic messages and themes by the groups in my case studies would be considered wrong by many other Muslims, but until these groups' discourses are analyzed to see what they are actually saying, different, more moderate persons with differing views cannot have a chance to contend with or contradict what these groups say. For example, Hamza Yusuf and Yasir Qadhi, to U.S. Muslim clerics who have a history of speaking out against the actions of IS. Hamza Yusuf and Yasir Qadhi preach a different path for Muslims to take, which most of them do¹⁷³, and a different view of Islam for the world. Instead of spreading hate and dissention, their messages encourage Muslims to be good examples to their neighbors, be good parents, engage in dialogue with others about shared beliefs, do no violence except to defend yourself when you are personally attacked, and other positive messages. While they are not given the limelight in the media as much as IS, they are just as adamant about their belief in Islam and just as firm in their resolve to spread its message as IS, but they do so through words instead of violence. This analysis of Islamist propaganda and narrative shows how religion can be twisted and distorted to

¹⁷³ For example, studies have found that the majority of people who join IS, like any terrorist organization, are not the average person. One study found that the majority of people who joined did so because they wanted to "prove themselves, or they felt like outsiders and wanted to find a sense of identity, or they were seeking revenge". The propaganda and ideologies of IS simply gave already troubled Muslims an avenue for their feelings. See Tucker, Patrick. "The Atlantic." *Why Join ISIS? How Fighters Respond When You Ask Them*. December 9, 2015. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/12/why-people-join-isis/419685/> (accessed June 05, 2017). These are the Muslims that are susceptible to such propaganda.

achieve goals, and unfortunately the desires of the media (violence, conflict, and strife sell papers) mean that these twisted and distorted propaganda portrayals and narratives are what the general public see, which helps the propagandists to achieve their goals even more. I have shown, like Yusuf and Qadhi, how these propagandists distort reality, but this needs to happen in a more far-reaching way. The answer is educating people. Propaganda relies on people making judgements based on the information someone else gives them and often hinges on the hope that the listener will not dig deeper. Governments and media need to showcase the distortions the propagandists make to create their narratives so that the majority does not view twisted religion mixed with narrative as the real religion practiced by every-day adherents.

The two groups I studied often tried to portray themselves as the only viable sources for Islamic thought and the bastions of Islam for Muslims all over the world. This cannot be proved false unless what they are saying is first analyzed to see how they twist and distort the messages that most Muslims see as messages of peace and freedom.

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