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Effectiveness of Soft Power
Strategy against Daesh
Propaganda

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To my mother for her tolerance and the efforts made for my education.

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Abstract:

Daesh has been one of the most relevant terrorist threats for the Western World. Even if it has been strongly defeated in terms of military action and territoriality, in this paper it is argued that in the field of citizen terror it is yet to be overcome. As ISIS is still part of the collective imaginary, portrayed in general culture material as “the villains”, it is argued that the discourse methods against ISIS have been insufficient. The aim of this work is to create qualitative research in the matter on whether the counter-terrorist strategy could have been more effective.

Keywords:

Terrorism, counterterrorism, propaganda, counter-propaganda, counter-narrative, ISIS, Daesh.

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List of abbreviations

CSCC: Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

CVE: Countering Violent Extremism

ECTC: European Counter Terrorism Center

EU: European Union

FP: Foreign Policy

FPP: First Person Perspective

GCD: Global Coalition against Daesh

GEC: Global Engagement Center

GIFCT: Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism

HP: Hewlett-Packard Company

IS: Islamic State

ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

MS: Member State

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NATO StratCom: NATO's Strategic Communications Center of Excellence

PPPs: Private-Public Partnerships

RAN: Radicalization Awareness

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

US: United States

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Chapter I

1.1. Introduction

Daesh has been one of the most relevant terrorist threats for the Western World. Even if it has been strongly defeated in terms of military action and territoriality, in this paper it is argued that in the field of citizen terror it is yet to be overcome. As Daesh is still part of the collective imaginary, portrayed in general culture material as “the villains”, it is argued that the discourse methods against the terrorist organization have been insufficient. The aim of this work is to create qualitative research in the matter on whether the counter-terrorist strategy could have been more effective.

The emergence of Daesh militants is not only a problem of Iraq and Syria. The nature and magnitude of this threat is beyond this region, affecting global peace and security. Daesh has not only inspired individuals, but also militant groups in other countries. Daesh’ militants are enjoying physical space, holding an area, establishing control, and then expanding to other areas. The establishment of Caliphate by Daesh in Iraq was pathway to other areas in Middle East and South Asia to get more territory and consolidate its position worldwide - to establish the global Caliphate, as dreamed by this group (Khattak et al., 2021).

In the digital world there is the absolute capacity to disguise identities, the possibility of sending encrypted messages, organizing plots, uniting criminal groups, convincing an innocent victim, recruiting naïve people as militants of terrorism (Perceval, 2017). The Internet has served as a tool for spreading terrorist ideology (Stigall et al. 2019). Globalization, the desire for a common identity when lost, the aspiration for common traditional values, and the perception of tyrannical governments; with the polarizing discourse of the opponents and the islamophobia promoted by the Western world, led to the jihadist Daesh. The anti-colonial and absolutist rhetoric of ISIS led to the most violent attacks published on the internet, which spread rapidly (Issaev, 2019).

After the defeat in Afghanistan, we encounter an international landscape where the jihadi movement has succeeded once again, gaining territory. This new context could be an influence for already overthrown terrorist groups; for instance, Daesh could re-emerge. Overall, the Taliban might serve as an example for other insurgent groups. This situation demonstrates the fact that when ideas are not defeated themselves, the re-armament of groups is always a possibility.

The relevance of the study is directly linked to current events. The collapse of Afghanistan is also a role model for us, as it will bring new threats if not managed correctly. Therefore, we should

further study the relationship between ideas, propaganda, its influence, and counter-terrorist action to prevent further attacks from Daesh - and from terrorism overall.

Moreover, Daesh has called to benefit from the instability created by the war in Ukraine to firstly attack Europe, and secondly for a global revenge for the deaths of the leader Abu Ibrahim al Hashimi al Qurashi, and the spokesman, Abu Hamza al Qurashi (EFE, 2022). This verifies that the threat is imminent and will continue attempting to target the West.

My motivations behind this thesis are firstly, the personal impact caused by the Daesh phenomena through the media, specially the Bataclan (Paris) attack of 2015. Secondly, as a student in international relations, we have been embedded in subjects relating international security and threats which pose a challenge in a multipolar world.

1.2. State of art

In the sense of the conceptual understanding of terrorism, it must be noted that the term is difficult to analyze and there isn't yet one single scholarly definition. However, terrorism is understood as the use of violence or the threat of it for a political effect; acts that are premeditated (calculated and intentional/deliberate) to generate panic and coerce certain actions; uses illegitimate force and direct or vicarious violence (including public and private institutions); has a political, religious or ideological motivation; causes psychological damage, generating fear; and acts are directed against civilian targets to attract government attention (Hoffman, 2016).

Terrorism is also entangled with goals. The frustration of goal attainment leads to aggressive behavior; usually terrorists are economically or socially marginalized, believing their only way to achieve their goals is through violence (Dollar et al., 1939). Terrorists are attributed with the irresponsibility of the psychopath, who seeks satisfaction in violence to overcome personal frustrations, and finds an organization through which to channel them. However, they are rational members of organizations that seek a utopia through violence (Perceval, 2017). Finally, from terrorists' perspective, these acts are seen as an instrument "terrorizing oppressors and criminals and thieves and robbers, which is necessary for the safety of people. Every state and civilization must resort to terrorism for the purpose of abolishing tyranny" (Osama bin Laden, 1998).

Primary sources have conceptualized the terms terrorism and counterterrorism, as the US Department of State (2007) and of Defense (2017), the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997), and EU's Framework Decision on Combating terrorism (2002). University of Maryland (2016) reports were used to state the influence of the Internet on the radicalization process. The NSCT (2018) was included as gave a holistic analysis of how an effective counter-propaganda strategy must be. The GTI (2020) measures the impact of terrorist organizations around the globe in statistical terms. The International Centre for Counter Terrorism - The Hague, provides reports with both quantitative and qualitative research through the European Union. The Carter Center (2016) studied action-oriented policies to counter Daesh propaganda from the American perspective. The NATO Strategic Communications Center of Excellence (2019) published a report comparing official Daesh media compiled before and after Daesh' collapse. The Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT) (2015) studied Daesh propaganda, the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, and Boko Haram. COE-DAT (2021) created a framework for good practices in counterterrorism and explored the creation of national and

international policies. The Seal of the President of the United States (2018) published the National Strategy for Counterterrorism of the USA.

In terms of secondary sources, Hoffman (2006), Crenshaw (1981), Enders and Sandler (1993), Galtung, Tore Bjorgo, and Schmid (1988) studied the term terrorism. Shugart (2006), and Schmid and Jongman (2005) concluded that terrorism are acts directed against civilian targets to attract government attention that are not bound by rules of warfare. Criminologists such as Gurr (1970), Margolin (1977), Nachmias, Baron and Richardson (2004), Dollar, Miller, and Doob (1939) studied the causes of aggressive behavior; and the frustration-aggression theory as the foundations of terrorism. Boaz's (2002) perspective is also included, as it avoided a westernized picture of what terrorism means. Reinares (2005) studied the pursuance of goals by terrorists.

Crisan (2016) studied Daesh' historical evolution. Helvali (2020) studied Daesh in depth, its history, ideology, and movements. Fernandez (2015) focused on Daesh' attraction of adherents, stating it had mass movement characteristics. Jordan (2004) explains Al-Qaeda's relationship with technology. While Perceval (2017) includes new technologies as a variable in the equation, further developing on Daesh' strategy. Dolatabadi and Seifabadi (2017) study the role of globalization on fundamentalist identities. Neumann and Smith (2005) studied public opinion's perception of violence. Issaev (2019) explores the effectiveness of Daesh' virtual propaganda and regards it as an Electronic Army. Lerner (1971) studies the efficacy of psychological warfare. Ali, Chambers, Hopkins, Pande, and Phillips (2019) studied depictions of Muslim sexuality and Islam overall in mainstream media.

Lasswell (1927) conceptualized propaganda. Newcourt (2006) explores the connotations the term propaganda has. Ellul (1973) highlighted the means for an effective propaganda. Rapoport (2013) presents the history of terrorism and includes the term propaganda by the Deed. Gunter and Storey (2003) studied the Third Person Effect as a propaganda tool. Archetti (2015) states the relationship with communication technologies and propaganda. While Aly et al. (2017) study the role of charismatic preachers. Skillicorn (2015) studied Daesh' mainstream propaganda (specifically Dabiq). De la Fuente (2016) made a comprehensive study of Daesh' mostly audiovisual material, released by Al-Hayat center. Siboni, Cohen and Koren (2015) studied Daesh' strategy in the cyberspace. Kadivar (2020) studied the various content of Daesh' official media released since 2014. Nader (2020) studied the Daesh' motivations for terrorist attacks and their targets. Cîrlig (2015) studied the coalition against Daesh in the sense of military development and the airstrike

campaign. Cozzens, (2008) studied the jihad as soft power and future challenges and recommendations. Khattak, Ghumro and Abro (2021) studied the challenges on combatting ISIS as a global phenomenon. Gaub (2015) compared ISIS to a cult, studying the psychological techniques used by the latter and applying them to the former.

Dan Stigall et al. (2018) studied counterterrorism in a technological era. Lum, Kenndy, and Sherley (2006) conceptualized counter-terrorism effectiveness. Khasru (2020) studied radicalization in the cyberspace and the digital world, ISIS brand and the concept of surveillance. Schmid (2015) studied the role of effective soft power instruments and its link with counterterrorism. Archetti (2009) studied the narratives used in the “war of ideas” against al-Qaeda. Greenberg (2016) provides a review of counter-terrorism strategies and narratives via the Internet. Berger and Morgan (2015) studied social media and the censorship of Daesh supporters on Twitter.

Raymond (2015) studied Daesh’ narrative, US military advancement and Daesh’ military capacity. Crelinsten (2014) studied how terrorists exploit democracy and liberalism and gives recommendations in how to counter terrorism. Byman (2017) studied lone wolf jihadists and encourages the US government to take new strategies towards countering Daesh’ lone fighters both online and off-line. Huges (2016) studied the US’ government intelligence efforts against Daesh’ recruitments and makes some recommendations.

Fishman (2019) studied counterterrorism on the internet, how terrorists use this tool for dissemination of propaganda, and how companies and governments can create programs to counter them. Klopper, (2002) studied viral marketing, its elements and effectiveness. Petersen (2008) studied the role of the private sector and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its relationship with counter-terrorism policies. Vidino and Hughes (2005) highlighted the need for online mobilization of individuals and NGOs. David Perry (2012) studied the US’ government use of private military and security companies (PMSCs) against Al-Qaeda after the 9/11 attacks. Heißner, Neumann, Holland-McCowan and Basra (2017) studied ISIS financial resources and structure and their decline. Missiroli, Andersson, Gaub, Popescu, and Wilkins (2016) studied NATO and EU strategic communications in relation to Daesh. Ramos and Pinto (2021) studied the case of the European Union and the tools that military agencies used to counter Daesh propaganda and their effectiveness. Cull (2015) studied counter propaganda cases of the US.

Bjola and Pamment (2019) studied the role of political communication and the countering violent extremism digitally. Zeiger and Gyte (2021) studied how to prevent radicalization online,

specifically in the case of Daesh. Majid (2018) studied the tools used by Daesh for the recruitment of foreign fighters. Conway, Khawaja, Lakhani, Reffin, Robertson and Weir (2019) studied the impact of disrupting online messages of Daesh. Lakomy (2017) studied how Daesh' campaign was starting to experience some setbacks on its cyber-strategy. Pashentsev and Bazarkina (2021) studied ISIS' online propaganda and effective counteraction through social media. Winter, Neumann, Meleagrou-Hitchens, Ranstorp, Vidino, and Fürst, (2020) studied the literature and definitions on online extremism. Marchegiani (2017) studied the online radicalization phenomenon in the case of Daesh, and EU's strategical campaigns. Mobini and Omid (2021) made a discourse analysis of both the United States and Iran on their fight against terrorism. Gaub and Laban (2015) studied future threats for Arab States including terrorism and other security aspects.

After the revision of the literature, some issues are still not answered. For instance, a Western propaganda strategy has not been fully analyzed considering both the public and the private sector. Effectiveness of the counter-methods has not been presented scholarly and the level of effectiveness of Daesh' strategy compared to the Western one has not been proposed.

1.3. Questions, objectives, and hypothesis

The main objective of this thesis is to understand the counter-propaganda strategies used against Daesh by the West. Several questions regarding this thesis are raised, for instance:

1. How do we measure effectiveness?
2. What countering-methods are effective?
3. Has the West created a counter-propaganda strategy against Daesh?
4. Which of the two strategies has been more effective?

The secondary objectives of this paper are:

- a) Analyzing Daesh' propaganda strategy and its consequences
- b) Understanding the role of propaganda and its implications
- c) Studying Western propaganda strategy as a tool to counter terrorist groups.
- d) Build a systematic analysis to create academic materials for future investigations related to ISIS

From the initial research, several main points emerged. Firstly, Daesh institutionalized its propaganda strategy to produce films, audios and videos that would be globally disseminated through social networks and online platforms, as well as mainstream media. And, secondly, the West centered itself on military actions and advances, instead of creating a strong propaganda network that would confront Daesh' (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021).

Although militarily Daesh' has been declared defeated, they have continued expanding their ideology to other States, being a menace today (Khattak, Ghumro, & Abro, 2021). It is assumed that in terms of the public sector no real counter-propaganda strategy has been created to defeat Daesh in the field of thoughts and ideas. The lack of a counter-narrative led to a point where even if militarily defeated, citizens still join the organization both physically and/or psychologically. Even if the public sector were to tackle such a violent threat, the private sector cannot be neglected. Considering that this sector holds much power in areas as media and information dissemination in the Western world, a conjoint maneuver must be designed. It is argued that due to liberal capitalism values, each private company will mostly benefit from making profits instead of combatting the menace. From these points a hypothesis emerges:

H: Only countering physically such enemy (cause) is insufficient (effect)

1.4. Theoretical framework

1.4.1. Theory of Political Propaganda and Propaganda by the Deed

For the conceptualization of propaganda, it is needed to study not only the scholar definition but also the term linked to terrorism and the specific case of study. Propaganda is defined as “dissemination of information, facts, arguments, rumors, half-truths, or lies, to influence public opinion”, which is a “systematic effort to manipulate other people’s beliefs, attitudes or actions” (Smith, 2015). Ellul highlighted the importance to constantly amplify values that already exist in the minds of targets for an effective propaganda. It should penetrate all spheres of a persons’ life, and the influencer and influenced should be interconnected (Ellul, 1973). Thus, virtual propaganda’s effectiveness, as people can be active members of communication (Issaev, 2019).

Propaganda manages collective attitudes, or tendencies to act, by the manipulation of significant symbols. Collective attitudes and individual actions are linked, the collective attitude is a distribution of individual acts (Lasswell, 1927). Propaganda is to present an object in a culture in such a manner that certain cultural attitudes will be organized toward it (Lasswell, 1927, p. 629). War propaganda involves the enemies, the allies, and the neutrals. The propagandist multiplies stimulus favorable to the attitudes he wishes to produce (Lasswell, 1927).

In terms of the relationship between propaganda and terrorism, dating back to the First Wave of Terrorism (1880-1920), terrorists realized that they needed a new form of communication and created “Propaganda by the Deed”. Killing was used not for its direct effects but for its possible propagandistic effects. Islamic groups have conducted the most significant deadly international attacks, which makes this fourth wave of terrorism more effective (Rapoport, 2013).

1.4.2. Counter-terrorism effectiveness

In the sense of counterterrorism, it is important to analyze the term and its evolution to fully understand the framework of this thesis. Counterterrorism is defined by the USSOCOM as “actions taken directly against terrorist networks and indirectly to influence and render global and regional environments inhospitable to terrorist networks” (USSOCOM, 2019). The 2018 NSCT included countering intent and emphasized the use of tools to prevent and counter terrorism both militarily and non-militarily - as law enforcement, intelligence, diplomacy, financial measures, stabilization, development, prevention, and intervention and reintegration programs.

Effectiveness needs to be put in the framework of counter-terrorist strategy. Three main types of effectiveness are differentiated: output effectiveness, the implementation of policies; outcome

effectiveness, the direct and measurable effect that these laws have on the short term; and impact effectiveness, which depends on the behavior of the targeted audience in relation to the long-term objective (reducing or stopping terrorism) (Lum et al., 2006). This topic is challenging, the efficacy of psychological war cannot be studied as there are no common conceptualizations nor theories to establish the basis of an investigation (Lerner, 1971). Yet, important leaders emphasized the importance of expenditure on psychological warfare to damage the enemy's will and determination to fight (Osgood, 2000).

1.4.3. Counterpropaganda

Much of what is understood as propaganda, can also be understood as counterpropaganda. Counterpropaganda can be classified in two types: tactical, meaning a set of messages aimed at countering a specific message from the enemy; and strategic, an entire policy designed against an enemy's propaganda (Cull, 2015).

Counter-propaganda methods include for instance the negative act of censorship, as preventing the adversary's ideas from circulating, silencing the source of propaganda; generate messages at a broader environmental level, diluting the message, or distract the enemy's message (Cull, 2015).

1.4.4. Introduction to Daesh

In 2013 ISIS invaded Raqqa, Fallujah in 2014, and in 2015 Mosul and East Aleppo. In terms of finance, Daesh was considered one of the richest terrorist organizations in the world (Heißner et al., 2017), had a territory and population from which it could collect taxes. Moreover, Daesh held a strong communication network to propagate terror and to attract adherents (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). The West reinforced a militarized strategy in 2014, which made 98% of Daesh' territory fall by the end of 2017 (Khattak et al., 2021). Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was killed in 2019 and succeeded by Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, killed in 2022 (Gómez, 2022).

1.5. Methodology

Starting from an initial hypothesis, its validity will be assessed through a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative data which will prove the effectiveness of Western propaganda against Daesh.

The study will be divided in three parts that will analyze Daesh' propaganda, Western public propaganda, and Western private countermeasures. It is assumed that both the public and the private sector need to be considered in countering-terrorism to have a fully effective strategy.

The thesis will be based on a correlational study between Western propaganda strategy and its actual effect on Daesh. The study will also be synchronic as it studies the relationship between two processes at a particular timeframe. The research will be based on a mixed qualitative-quantitative study. Qualitative sources will provide a framework for the analysis of Western counterpropaganda. Whereas quantitative sources will provide the results and effects of said strategy.

The first part of the study will be descriptive in that it pretends to understand the communications strategies used by both blocks. It is too explanatory as it intends to study the relationship between such variables and the result, the effectiveness of the strategies. The exploratory intent of the thesis is understanding new possible strategies from which the West could have benefited and due to several reasons were unavailable.

The final part of this study will compare the three cases depending on several variables, going from most general characteristics to more specified and critical. For instance, the goals of Daesh, Western public and private institutions will be analyzed and noted. Deriving from these primary goals, some secondary goals will be raised. In the sense of strategic communications, the target audience will be specified in each of the cases, while an "enemy" is also produced (for instance, the same meaning of the word "countering" implies an entity to be countered).

The main strategic communication structures created in each case will also underline the relevance given to their narrative, and other factors, for instance, the level of centralization or decentralization. Given the case analyzed, both mainstream and "new" or online propaganda need to be included. It is well known that Daesh has been using social media to disseminate information, and it is to be clarified whether the West has also countered it through the same channels used by the terrorist organization. To understand the reach aim of each case, the language in which messages are delivered is a critical factor, which will be added. Propaganda, changing in its message in each country, will also change its form or language depending to the target area.

Moreover, the type of content deployed will explain whether the target audience is reached and how and what each actor intends to communicate their messages. Another important factor is temporality in itself, as it portrays whether the efforts made are for prevention or counterattacks against an already existent threat.

As the main objectives regard understanding propaganda and Daesh' narratives, the latter will be included in the final analysis. Here, characteristics of the narratives, the main messages deployed, and the secondary messages will provide a comparative framework that would clarify the counter-propaganda measures taken by Western entities and their effectiveness.

The strategies used will also be analyzed as these provide the level of professionalization of each entity's communication program. Strategies are also linked with the effectiveness of the propaganda, as there is a directly proportional relationship between both, meaning the better the strategies, the more effective these are. Given that most of the strategies used on the internet are based on audio/visual material, the quality is a very relevant factor, as these too have an impact on the effectiveness of the strategies.

Finally, to fully understand a strategy and be able to continuously re-adapt and update our communications and narratives, a critical assessment needs to be made. Therefore, some drawbacks of each of the three cases (Daesh, Western public and private institutions) need to be raised. The drawbacks of one actor might serve a strengths for another, and one actor may provide necessary knowledge to another with the purpose of creating a more holistic strategy.

Once the analysis is fulfilled, the thesis will provide a series of conclusions and recommendations on counter-propaganda strategies. This will be the way of providing approximations for future studies. This section will also include some limitations which might have hindered the thesis' investigation process.

1.6. Geographical and temporal frameworks

Two main blocks will be analyzed and contrasted, with one temporal framework. The geographical framework is challenging to set, as Daesh has been using world-wide online platforms for the dissemination of propaganda. However, two main blocks are encountered in the thesis, the West (lead by the US, while and regarding Europe), including both private and public institutions, and Daesh, the latter being mostly present in the Arab world.

The peak moment coincides when Daesh held power of Raqqa and Mosul, with all the material and financial resources that this implied, and which impacted on their recruitment. It is understood

that most of Daesh' strategy was developed during the period that it held territorial power, as having physical power – as land - would have helped the terrorist group develop infrastructure centers to promote their narrative. At the same time, this territorial and financial resources would have provided Daesh with a sense of legitimacy that which would have encouraged more foreign fighters and supporters into their network.

It is also understood that the West would have built its strategy to counter a, not only present, but growing, threat. Furthermore, two main activities have served as catalyzers of Western response. For instance, recruitment from and attacks on Western countries have been of direct impact, and interest, on counterstrategies. Therefore, the temporal framework will include since 2014, considered the peak moment of Daesh, and thus of Western countering methods, until 2022.

Chapter II: Analysis of Daesh' propaganda

Daesh strategy was aimed at materializing a Caliphate, pursuing a physical space, establishing training centers and creating a safe space for groups to carry out terrorist activities internationally. They meant the extermination of rivals, prohibition of women education and revival of slavery (Khattak et al., 2021). Despite aiming to build a repressive State with what may be considered outdated laws, Daesh uses the latest high-tech communication tools and highly developed marketing strategies (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). The interest of past terrorist organizations in broad communication also differs from the policy of Daesh toward its own "citizens," bringing the organization even closer to repressive State regimes. The difference in the messages distributed by Daesh to internal and external audiences demonstrates that the organization is following the path traditional of authoritarian regimes (with distinctions in ideology, economic base, and social orientation), creating a closed territorial area of communication (Islamic State). Such a space cannot however seek to form a State in the modern sense (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021).

The enemy of Daesh is the image of a collective West, for instance, one of the first messages of Daesh after the proclamation of the Caliphate was to claim antipathy towards the West – specifically the British and the French - due to the Sykes Picot Agreement, and Daesh victory in the territory was presented as an end of colonialism, constructing a Muslim State (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021)

The ability of Daesh' State machinery is often underestimated, especially concerning its funds or pseudo-achievements on internal and external target audiences (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). Daesh created an advanced infrastructure. In 2014 the Al-Hayat Media Center was established to produce materials in English, German, Russian and French to recruit foreign fighters (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). Daesh implements a strategic communication campaign relying on a multiplatform, multilingual propaganda effort (Carter Center, 2016). Many researchers describe IS as relying on the Internet to disseminate their extremist rhetoric and recruit people. Some describe them seeking to establish a digital Caliphate and the generation of cyber jihadists, expanding the scope of local conflicts to a global appeal (Issaev, 2019).

In their narratives in the cyberspace, we appreciate 6 characteristics. Firstly, extreme cruelty, as foreign citizens' executions undermined the international community and lead to fear. Secondly, forgiveness to people if they were to abandon their past lives and convictions. Thirdly, sacrifice, reminding its followers and the world about the 'just' nature of their resistance. Fourthly,

involvement, which emphasizes unity. Fifthly, utopia, as they pretend the portrayal of an alternative society, proving stability of the State and its followers. Finally, Islamic eschatology, recruiting because ‘the fight is imminent’ (Issaev, 2019). As a mass movement, it also implies fanatic willingness and unquestionable loyalty (Hoffer, 1961).

In the depiction of the Western world, there is a discourse marked by duality (Davydov, 2016). The organization uses in its propaganda historical events significant for the Muslim world. Daesh proclaims the idea of superiority but also military revenge from representatives of Islam. It expanded the area of propaganda to the *Ummah* - the entire community of Muslims. The image of the Caliphate is portrayed as a Muslim ideal State and promises the supporters a return to the “Golden Age” of Islam. It is their ultimate goal, which makes necessary to conquer Spain, Portugal, East-Southern Europe (Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia...) Northern and Central Africa, and the Middle East. An image of the ultimate clash between Daesh and the Crusaders (the latter meaning a collective West and its allies), in which “Islam is certain to prevail,” can be aimed at marginalized sectors of society, as this kind of apocalyptic reasoning is more frequent among ordinary Arabs than among the educated ones (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021).

Violent extremist Muslims share some characteristics as: simplistic understanding of Islamic texts, the belief that following a political or legislative system not Islamic is an act of disbelief, the belief that all Muslims must submit to only one political leader and must be united under one Caliphate where all true Muslims migrate (*Ummah*), the belief that anyone that recognizes any other system other than Allah’s as a disbelief, regarding jihad only as war and disregarding proportionality in combat (use of suicide bombings), portraying those that set peace treaties between Muslims and others as disbelievers, the belief that Muslims have been oppressed and not allowed to govern themselves by their own laws, and that only through jihad can Muslims regain power, and exclusivist definitions used in the Koran (Carter Center, 2016)

In the sense of mainstream propaganda, the study of magazine Dabiq got to the conclusion that it related the words “Islamic” and “State” many more times than in other jihadi magazines (Azan, Taliban; Inspire, al-Qaeda). Dabiq was also much more informative but had much more rhetorical depth and showed greater consistency, suggesting higher editorial control. It presented however, the lowest level of access to Western cultural value (Skillicorn, 2015).

Like Al-Qaeda, which adapted to the technological conditions of the late 20th century (Jordan, 2004), Daesh adapts to the social networks of the 21st century and YouTube videos (Perceval,

2017), while making use of mainstream propaganda (Skillicorn, 2015). The Daesh utilize a sophisticated, long-term, and multi-vector communication strategy involving the Internet and social media to disseminate its propaganda (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021).

Daesh full propaganda campaign in cyberspace was launched in 2014, just before the proclamation of the Caliphate. Daesh already devoted resources to cyber strategies before, many online messages were released in the period from 2012 to 2013, so when the Caliphate was declared in 2014 most tools were already tested and ready to publish (Lakomy, 2017). Daesh' social media strategy took form with Twitter messages in Somalia, seeking fighters for the war in Syria and Iraq. It later expanded to the West, including new platforms (as Twitter, Facebook, email, KIK...), to the extent that they refer to themselves as Islamic State Electronic Army, dedicated to social media messaging and hacking (Greenberg, 2016). Daesh uses strategic communication that implies that all the deeds produce a communication effect. (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). For instance, the group often coordinates "raids" using hashtags on specific platforms (Fishman, 2019), which is exemplary of the relevance of social media as a mobilization tool. Daesh stands among other terrorist groups for its military, economic and propagandistic power, including networking psychological operations (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021).

Daesh makes an effective choice of images in its propaganda, in a much more developed way than al-Qaeda's. Daesh propaganda is not centered in the leaders, fewer than 1% contained images of them, and try to appeal to ordinary people (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). However, charismatic preachers act as 'mediators' between ideological pronouncements of the group's leaders and the target audience through online sermons and other materials spread on the Internet (Issaev, 2019). Starting with websites and blogs, being secondary backup channels of distribution as were more difficult to find through traditional search engines and were frequently deleted. They gravitated toward the radio, al-Bayan, which broadcasts locally. Finally, it exploited communication applications as Skype and WhatsApp, for recruitment. According to the material released there are four categories: audio (radio), visual (pictures and memes), audiovisual (allegations, reportages, documentaries, Nasheed, interviews and mujatweets) and text (websites) (Lakomy, 2017)

Each of the categories of audiovisual materials has their own production and purpose. Nasheeds, through canticles, call for fight and exalt the heroism of combatants, death is a punishment for enemies and a reward for martyrs. Allegations portray speakers who join to recite text from the

Koran and reproach Muslims that don't join Daesh are common. Reportages construct an image of Daesh as a safe, prosperous sharia State, it pretends to portray Western information as false and present Daesh as a heaven. Mujatweets are short videos, easily spreadable, that depict the same environment as reportages. Documentaries are aimed at legitimizing Daesh' actions through the Koran (de la Fuente, 2016). The primary message of Daesh is proving to their audiences that it is in fact a State, thus the deeds involve the creation of structures that perform the functions of State institutions. This is also expressed in Dabiq, where the results of the development of State institutions (tax and judiciary systems) are described in detail and stating that the crime rate has dropped significantly compared to other governments in Iraq and Syria. Messages focused on social achievements (for instance the lack of tribal or religious clashes) instead on executions and repression, always making an emphasis on the fact that Daesh is a State (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). The religious rhetoric emotionally colors the messages and actions whose support is caused by historical, political, and social factors, emphasizing the problems of any Muslim country as common ones for all Muslims (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). It has been demonstrated that Daesh videos do contribute to the process of radicalization, as in almost every case when terrorists have been arrested, they had these kinds of videos in their possession. Thus, we should not underestimate the power of Daesh propaganda (Carter Center, 2016). The elements of editing of the videos – lighting and special effects - are used for a powerful rhetorical effect. Visual arguments, made implicitly through the imagery, are very persuasive as it is more difficult to stand up against them than against direct messages –images of shelves full of food (Carter Center, 2016).

The use of Daesh propaganda has two functions: the psychological warfare against the enemy's soldiers; and gaining support from Western Islamic groups, ultimately to unify the *Ummah* (Siboni et al., 2015). It targets sympathetic and hostile audiences: recruiting supporters and generating fear among its opponents, but also asserting its legitimacy and gaining acceptance of its status as a State (Williams, 2017). To maintain and expand the Caliphate, Daesh must recruit Muslims to substitute the fighters lost in battle, skilled workers to help infrastructures work, women to procreate, acquire funds, overpower its opponents, maintain the loyalty of its members, and expand its territory (Carter Center, 2016).

The main topics covered in the publications of Daesh comprise justification of the terrorist attacks and calls to make donations and join it. Much attention is paid to the allegedly growing joy of the population caused by the formation of the Daesh (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). Some of

the strategies the group employs are artificial dichotomy (us vs. them), band wagoning (presenting Daesh as the only valid future for Muslims), and testimonial deification (appealing to Koran and Allah) (Carter Center, 2016).

Daesh propaganda audiovisual aesthetics fits with the evolution of the horror film language of the early years of the 21st century (Perceval, 2017). The group has created a brand that promotes a utopian community in which marginalized Muslims are encouraged to pursue a dangerous life like the one from videogames and Hollywood action films. The “Daesh brand” targets its enemies through terrorism as psychological warfare (Carter Center, 2016). The jihad had a global scope, the productions were unconventional with the aim of these going viral, with high technical quality, the cruelty referred to popular games (for instance, using FPP) and movies, and used social media channels (Lakomy, 2017). In terms of how the content is communicated, as stated above, the Hollywood-style action movie is the inspiration. This is a universally popular item of enjoyment, where there is a hero and enemies, cities are burnt, there is no cultural depth, and often makes profit globally. Another entertainment method for young men is the first-person shooter digital game, which Daesh has also mimicked. This point is crucial because for the target audience, usually being marginalized people, Daesh gives them the possibility to “play the starring role” in one of their “movies” (Carter Center, 2016).

Daesh deploys four main messages: the war against Islam, winning, the Caliphate as a project, and the apocalypse as imminent (Carter Center, 2016). Meaning, urgency (Muslims are being slaughtered now); agency (decision of a Muslim to fulfill their religious duty); authenticity (of the organization); and victory (proof of Daesh divinity) (Archetti, 2015). Firstly, Daesh states it is that the only one that is truly following the original interpretation of Islam and that the rest are traitors. Secondly, its propaganda always displays Daesh as winning battles. Thirdly, the Caliphate is a state-building project. Finally, the apocalyptic discourse is described as a battle between good and evil, that will end up with the victory of Muslims (Carter Center, 2016). Daesh also uses agitation to urge to action, and integration of ideas generating images and myths (Issaev, 2019). Rational (facts and statistics) and irrational propaganda gives arguments to demonstrate the superiority of the organization (Issaev, 2019). The urgency aspect is crucial as the promise of social justice remains a core concept in Daesh propaganda, which contributed to the addition of Baathists disappointed with social problems in Syria. The messages of Daesh compared to al-Qaeda differ, while the latter preached self-discipline and martyrdom, the former promises a life of pleasure,

sexual satisfaction and thirst for murder (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). Some of these narratives have been changed after the military collapse of Daesh, for instance, the victorious claims made, are now substituted by claims of embattled resistance (still appealing to adherents) (NATOSCCE, 2019).

Daesh states that it is filling both a politico-military (security and stability) and values vacuums, these are addressed by influencing people's perspective to shift them towards the organization's. It targets "glocal" audiences (characterized by both local and global considerations), through the synchronization of deeds, words and images and their impacts on the minds (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). Although Daesh propaganda is mostly in Arabic (97% of the content), it is also translated to many other languages (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021), reaching a broader public. Stated by the University of Maryland, "the Internet contributed to the radicalization of 83% of those who attempted to travel for purposes of joining a foreign terrorist organization by 2015" (Robinson, 2016).

Daesh mixes indoctrination and mind-control methods. It relies on targeted approaches on social media and personal contacts. The organization identifies individuals vulnerable to indoctrination, as those estranged from their families and societies, or those in a transitional phase of life (recently divorced, loss of job...). Once contact is established, Daesh propagates a narrative of utopia and friendship. Finally, from its totalitarian nature emerges the fact that life outside is unimaginable because of the harsh reprisals, or because even if ex-members manage to return to their homeland, they will be imprisoned. Daesh reinforces isolation and brainwashing through ritualistic tasks and repression. Extreme violence reinforces ISIS' internal cohesion, for instance suicide bombings for military purposes makes the fighters stand closer to their goals (Gaub, 2015). Daesh's impact on psychological fear was much more relevant than in previous terrorist organizations. The most important part of Daesh's strategy was the psychological factor transmitted through mainstream and new media, using a strong audiovisual machinery and several messages that justified their cause. Thus, Daesh' war is on the field of ideas and persuasion of minds rather than on the military field (Golan & Joon Soo Lim, 2016). Daesh possesses an ultimate agenda, the future adherent just receives a small fragment of grievance, humiliation and/or aspiration. The objective of the terrorist is to widen adherence to the whole agenda and the participation of the subject (Carter Center, 2016).

Daesh is spectacularly successful in its marketing, propaganda, exponential growth, and achieving global prominence. Branding-wise, Daesh has identified a target audience (generally

young men) and an existing mindset (the values and beliefs of these young men). Daesh strategy differs depending on the target: internal or external audience. For instance, visual images are used extensively when targeting potential recruits globe-wide, while less infographics are used to attract adherents from the MENA region. Daesh thus shapes its message based on local and international ideas and conditions. It is also assumed that the advantageous channel would be the Internet as almost everyone has access to it (Carter Center, 2016). The target group consists in vulnerable young Muslims, around 27 years old, (Greenberg, 2016), who might become foreign fighters or domestic terrorists if they are not stopped on the trajectory of radicalization (Schmid, 2015). These vulnerable people are usually isolated individuals tied to their computer in an echo chamber (Greenberg, 2016). Daesh' strategy pretends to make use of a snowball effect, where the "share" function would make a message reach thousands of users. The use of online communications also creates a more direct conversation between the terrorists and the future adherents, the content reaches the user unfiltered, and it has not the typical propaganda/advertisement format. Its activities are also increasingly focused on children, targeting them as future soldiers (Lakomy, 2017)

Daesh' jihad was creative, there was a careful edition of audiovisual production, high quality of post-production (including special effect), high definition, multilingual, and referred to up-to-date political events (NATO, EU), although using manipulated statistics. These characteristics institutionalized Daesh' propaganda machinery, where professionals worked in the productions and methods of distribution similar to viral marketing were employed (Lakomy, 2017). What could be the most important feature of Daesh' propaganda has been its complex audiovisual media for radicalization and recruitment. Unless conditions change it is unlikely this level of quality will be seen in any terrorist-produced material. Production was centralized and organized by provinces until 2015, when it was dispersed, multiplying their capacity, but maintaining one single control central. This highly qualitative audiovisual material pushed many adherents towards radicalization (Robinson, 2016). Daesh militants are also developing their own social media platform to circumvent existing social media censorship and run their agenda. During a Europol crackdown more than 2.000 extremist items were identified on 52 social media platforms, with the message of "State". Daesh is thus now centered on strategic communication (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). Terrorism ensures a temporary media boost but not continuous media access and Daesh is aware of it, so the strategists make follow up terror and recruitment campaigns – even endorsing lone-wolf attacks as part of a decentralized strategy (Carter Center, 2016).

Even though in the past five years terrorist attacks have declined notably, there has been a rise of Daesh affiliates around the world (moving from Middle East and North Africa to sub-Saharan Africa) (IEP, 2020). Although the IS might be considered defeated after Al-Baghdadi's death, the extremist ideologies remain widespread. Globalization has led to the enhancement of fundamentalist identities of the ISIS (Issaev, 2019). What is argued in this work analysis is that the strategies, although militarily effective, where output and outcome effectiveness acquired, impact effectiveness is yet to be gained. Daesh's strong propaganda infrastructure keeps radicalizing groups and gaining adherents. In the sense of the public opinion, there is a decrease in general violence throughout the world and an increase in the catastrophic perception due to the immediate exposure of specific cases of extreme violence (Neumann & Smith, 2005, p. 571-593). The notion of 'soft power' is thus part of Daesh's media strategy, which attracts adherents. Daesh has skillfully instrumentalized this strategy, turning itself into a popular and attractive 'global brand' (Issaev, 2019). There are more than 300 Americans and hundreds of British young Muslims in IS ranks and now they are problematic to their own countries. This tendency must be disrupted, and vigilance should be increased on social media along with introduction of strict cyber laws to punish the offenders (Khattak et al., 2021).

An example of the aforementioned characteristics are the 2015 Paris attacks, which signaled a shift in Daesh' strategy toward attacking Western countries. The terror campaign against Paris was not only meant to instigate horror, but also utilizing it as a public diplomacy tool to reach foreign publics. Mainstream media's extensive coverage of the attacks is questioned as such coverage could attract potential recruits and terrorize Daesh' enemies. The 2015 Paris attacks used terrorism, mass and social media, and branding tools to gain recognition. The attacks generally are justified with the apocalyptic religious narrative previously stated (Carter Center, 2016).

Just after the attacks, numerous tweets supporting Daesh emerged, which effectively created a so-called storm. Daesh opts for a decentralized strategy, built on crowdsourcing, hashtag hacking and bots, to target different audiences. For instance, after the Paris attacks, Daesh' linked users used the trending topic #PrayForParis to diffuse pictures and Daesh narratives, a strategy referred to as Twitter storm. Those sympathetic celebrated the victory and the enemies felt fear. The immediate happiness of the supporters tapped into deep-rooted resentment towards the West, one of the characteristics present in Daesh' narrative. By justifying violence within an apocalyptic narrative and using Muslims' grievances, Daesh not only uses social media to propagate its

narratives, but also guarantees that mass media coverage of its terrorist operations will reproduce them. Daesh provided both real action and a story, the perpetrators of Paris' attacks were exalted as heroes by Daesh videos, while these being also a warning to those that oppose the Caliphate (Carter Center, 2016).

After the Paris attacks, Daesh diffused propaganda material celebrating them across its territories. The materials evoked joy, connection, pride, exploration and impacting society, representing a harmonious life despite France's promise of intensifying airstrikes. The Caliphate is portrayed as functioning as an alternative to the West (Carter Center, 2016).

In the sense of perception, globalization of information and its immediacy allow the existence of a decrease in general violence worldwide and an increase in the catastrophic perception due to the immediate exposure to specific cases of extreme violence. The population becomes accustomed to a tolerable level of terrorism (Neumann & Smith, 2005). The growing perception of insecurity allows controls at airports and large stations, cameras increasingly monitor citizens' movements. Daesh is a guerrilla force that does not have an organizational infrastructure divided into headquarters, with barricades and supply depots that can be destroyed by missiles and bombs (Cockburn, 2015), so to achieve the global Caliphate it no longer responds to a hierarchical strategy but diffused into independent cells or individual actions. This responds more to the intention to terrorize Western public opinion (Perceval, 2017).

Finally, the most novel invention of ISIS has been to introduce in Western intelligence services and journalistic media the idea that Western jihadists returning to act in their countries of origin were being prepared, thus turning thousands of Europeans into suspects (Perceval, 2017). Since 2016, there have been post-production mistakes in the editing and montage, lower quality, materials are re-used as in compilations, and the frequency on publishing has decreased. They have lost their uniqueness, which was striking in 2014 and 2015, as the messages, the audiovisual content and the recordings have not changed significantly (Lakomy, 2017).

Chapter III: Western Public Analysis

Current measures to counter Daesh propaganda can be divided in physical (military) destruction of propaganda centers, measures of censorship (blocking terrorist websites), communication measures (counter-messages), and information operations (predictive analytics that can put terrorist organizations into confrontation) (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). However, killing foot soldiers or mid-level commanders is not the permanent solution of this problem. Because the recruitment of IS never stops; killed commanders and fighters are quickly being replaced. Modern technology would be critical in the fight against highly motivated Daesh fighters. As a compelling force with an effective organizational structure, IS would require equal amount of counter efforts for elimination. To defeat such a force there is a need of enhanced intelligence sharing and coordination among all stake holders (Khattak et al., 2021). Communication measures are useful to demoralize potential recruits. Russia has been a leading power on this aspect, which Ministry of Defense posted several videos. Military operations that destroyed propaganda centers were valuable, as its propaganda machine fails. For instance, the number of videos published on the internet describing their victories has been decreased in the last years. There has been an overall reduction in its ability to produce new materials. Censorship measures are effective in the short term, however, on the Internet, where it's impossible to control all content, long-term effects of censorship are unclear (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021).

Hypocrisy and inconsistency are popular forms of blundering and the West's favorite Muslim allies are mostly Wahabi, a quite intolerant branch. Another inconsistency is the West condemning the manifestations of political Islam, while embracing States in which Islam is institutionalized. The extremists transform these interpretations to amplify grievance and hatred of Muslims (Carter Center, 2016).

According to the UN Security Council Resolution 2170 "terrorism can only be defeated by a sustained and comprehensive approach involving the active participation and collaboration of all States" (UNSC, 2014). It was a successful event that the US has been successful in getting the support of around 60 countries against the IS. To overcome this threat a five-prong strategy as mentioned below, has been devised to counter IS in Iraq and Syria (Khattak et al., 2021). One of the main objectives of the Resolution stated the need to "expose ISIL's true nature" (UNSC, 2014), answering question three (3) of this thesis. It is assumed that this point is the one centered on a communication strategy that would counter Daesh. For this end, the US stated the need to counter

Daesh branches in and out of Syria, improving information sharing, strengthening the civil society and disrupting Daesh' sources. The US also stated the need to build a messaging strategy that would counter Daesh propaganda (USGAO, 2017).

One of the main focuses of the West is Daesh financing, as it has had immense financial assets. It has been countered through the Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), militarily, and through the UNSC Resolution 1267, which imposed sanctions on Daesh. Disrupting Daesh' finance would halt their expansive process of establishing new branches in other countries and the resources to continue with their propaganda strategy (Khattak, et al., 2021)

The International Center against Terrorism in The Hague has identified different types of counter-narratives for counter-terrorism fighters. An independent Western message should contain a common vision of the situation, for instance the religious aspect (where a religious leader has authority). Furthermore, statements on behalf of the State are considered unproductive in comparison with statements by civil society or religious organizations. The Center recommended answering Daesh' messages in any way within 24 hours after the posting of the terrorist content, which corresponds to the recommendations in the field of crisis communications. Correspondence with ISIS militants is considered an effective mean of discrediting terrorism, after which all negative information about them is published. When forming a counter-narrative, it is useful to study and popularize the perspectives of the clergy or well-known Muslims regarding the issue of Daesh. Muslims and non-Muslims have reinforced the idea that Islam in itself, especially Muslims living in Western countries, criticizes ISIS' violence. They have constructed a counter-discourse that has challenged ISIS' actions and proclamations, and anti-Muslim commentators' attempts to present ISIS as representative of Islam and its core values (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021).

Terrorism became a threat for the US following the 1983 bombing of the embassy in Beirut. However, it was after the 9/11 attacks that the American government saw terrorism as a challenge to their security (Perry, 2012). In the sense of discursive analysis, US foreign policy (FP) has been centered on its portrayal as superior and overall hegemony over the world. Its identity is based on liberalism, democracy, Christianity, and exceptionalism. An essential role for US' identity is the creation of a benevolent "self" against an evil "other", making the existence of an enemy essential. This is ascertained in US foreign policy in the early 40s against Nazism, and in the Cold War period against the USSR. The US, thanks to its media empire, has consolidated its definition of terrorism for the world. US' conceptualization of terrorism is thus now accepted by all, but which contains

biased portrayals and knowledge (Mobini & Omid, 2021). After the 9/11 attacks, American FP veered towards a counter-Islam strategy, with the War on Terror discourse, which depicted Islam as terrorism. US discourse on terrorism considers allies as members of an anti-terrorism alliance, while labelling the rest of States as terrorists, or “an axis of evil”, using the confrontational discourse as a political tool to invalidate those that try to challenge US hegemony. US authorities suggest that there is good or permissible and bad or illegitimate terrorism, the former being one that supports US’ interests and the latter one that damages them, while rejecting such terminology. For instance, Reagan met with al-Qaeda members in 1985 to counter the USSR, supported extremist groups in Libya and any insurgent against Bashar al-Assad (Mobini & Omid, 2021). The American discourse is also based on the denial of creating propitious conditions for terrorism. During the Syrian Civil War, the US supported militia terrorist groups that operated in the country to counter Assad. Some claim that the US, by overthrowing Hussein, created a power vacuum that contributed to the emergence of terrorist groups, and that Daesh as a terrorist group and its desire to revive the Caliphate is the outcome of the Americans’ attempt to overthrow the Syrian regime (Mobini & Omid, 2021).

From the post 9/11 era, extremists online have expanded from secretive online communities to have a more visible role in the existence of real-time news. After 9/11, Daesh profited on the “War on Terror” discourse, as the narrative offered the group publicity and, to some extent, legitimacy by official institutions. News institutions, particularly in democracies, don’t resist covering terrorism. Public institutions enter in a panic-like approach, where states of emergency and lockdowns are imposed. And despite the negative mass media coverage on Daesh, the group enjoyed access to a global audience for recruitment and fear. Media coverage capitalized Daesh’ violence to awaken potential recruits (Carter Center, 2016).

In the sense of mainstream communications, the US invited the media not to broadcast Daesh’ material, which has had a positive impact on mass consciousness (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). Using the internet in countering violent extremism (CVE) has taken three forms: disruption, diversion, and counter-messaging. Firstly, disruption means the take down of propaganda and recruitment sites by Internet companies on behalf of the US government. Some experts believe that disruption of materials limits Daesh’ ability to spread, while others see the strategy as inefficient, as other materials will keep emerging. Daesh has been then shifting into other webs in which materials are more difficult to take down, and this secrecy encourages the echo chamber effect

(Greenberg, 2016). Secondly, diversion are programs designed to promote peaceful change through social media. Thirdly, counter-messaging represented Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC), created in 2011, in the context of Al-Qaeda (Carter Center, 2016). When in 2014, Daesh gained control of Mosul and declared the Caliphate, the CSCC changed its focus from Al-Qaeda to Daesh. Despite the change in focus, the CSCC maintained the same low budget and staff. The Center released 93 videos in Arabic in 2014 (Fernandez, 2015), this sets the basis for answering question four (4) of the thesis. The CSCC was replaced by the Global Engagement Center (GEC) in 2016 (Carter Center, 2016). It was aimed at sending counter-messages against Daesh and using so-called “negative advertising”. These counter-narratives fell into two categories: discussions of Islam and of the Koran and refuting the idealization of life in the Caliphate (Greenberg, 2016), this answers question three (3) of the thesis. CVE counternarratives should also explore how to inspire through multimedia forms, just as violent extremists’ narratives do (Bjola & Pamment, 2019).

The most known strategical video published by the CSCC, Welcome to ISIS Land, was part of the campaign “Think Again Turn Away”, published in 2014 on YouTube (Fernandez, 2015), this answers question three (3) of the thesis. This video presented in a satirical way the life in the Caliphate with phrases as “travel is inexpensive because you won’t need a return ticket”. The video went viral and had to be re-posted after the complaints of Daesh supporters caused its removals (Fernandez, 2015), which answers question two (2) of the thesis. Comparing CSCC’s and Daesh’ material, it must be said that the latter has much higher quality in graphics, images, and editing. US government’s videos look amateur (Carter Center, 2016). The work of CSCC has had limited impact due to its narrowness and lack of consistency, consequently, the US government has opted for other, unspecified approaches to counter-messaging (Fernandez, 2015).

Combating radicalization and terrorism is one of the priorities of EU’s strategy. EU’s Counter Terrorism Strategy was adopted in 2005 and revised in 2008 and 2014. It has four pillars: prevent, protect, pursue, and respond. It specified that the fight against terrorism is under each Member State (MS) competence but highlighted the importance of cooperation between EU Members and of building a strong and unitary European narrative, as well as the role of the internet as a tool used by terrorists for both internal and external communications. It included relevant aims as trying to understand the radicalization phenomena and ameliorate individuals’ lives to avoid that these adhere to violence (Marchegiani, 2017).

International organizations like NATO and the EU depend on MS, communication is thus crucial to keep the organization together. NATO's approach to terrorism has been mostly limited to military capabilities. However, it has taken relevant steps towards strengthening its information warfare capability, mostly against Russia. NATO has created the Strategic Communications Center of Excellence (NATO StratCom), which counters Russian propaganda, and its publications have covered the use of social media (Bjola & Pamment, 2019).

Although the EU seeks to promote a unitary strategy to tackle this international threat, each MS has different perceptions of the threat it composes. This is since terrorist attacks have taken place in certain countries as France, Spain, and Italy (Bindi, 2010). For instance, Western European countries focus on jihadism as a priority on the agenda, while Eastern European States believe that terrorism is not that of a threat comparing to for instance Russia (Milt et al., 2017). States are still reluctant to cede information to European authorities, and each have their own national legal framework (Bindi, 2010). Finally, the EU created the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) which includes communication and narratives, education, empowerment of civil society and remembrance of victims of terrorism (Marchegiani, 2017). Expert agencies as the RAN and the European Counter Terrorism Center (ECTC), opened in 2016, are relevant as conduct constant monitoring of Daesh (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). A feature of preventive work is the need to offer the "risk group" an alternative life, an opportunity to succeed in work and communication, on which only strategic communication can be based. In the EU, "exit programs" are used with to return extremists to normal life. They are organized by highly trained staff, including those who have moved away from extremism. The State must participate pro-actively, including assistance for people, as financial support for young, targeted people, their families and loved ones, as well as in employing them, and establishing communication with peers. (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021)

The UK created the program Prevent in 2011, in the context of Al-Qaeda (HM Government, 2011), this answers question three (3) of the thesis. However, it has long been criticized as it has not involved Muslims in the process, turning out ineffective and hypocritical (Greenberg, 2016). It is vital that Muslim scholars and voices are involved in the counter-narrative. Policymakers must listen not only to the grievances of young people but also address their hopes and expectations for the future (Schmid, 2015). Emphasis needs to be on the contributions religious leaders have made to countering extremism apart from Western assistance. For instance, Imam Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani's public statements and condemnations of ISIS have inspired hundreds of Iraqi Shi'a to join

the fight against ISIS. In the UK, local imams have taken an approach to countering violent extremism that treats radicalization and recruitment of youth in the same manner that community leaders would address gang influence — through after-school community programs, interfaith dialogue sessions, and community service projects for at-risk youth (Carter Center, 2016).

France, motivated by the Think Again Turn Away Campaign, created the #StopJihadisme campaign in 2015 (Fernandez, 2015), this answers question three (3) of the thesis. After the Paris attacks, the French government created a video to debunk myths spread by Daesh and to stop potential recruits from becoming foreign fighters (Bouchaud, 2015). The video, titled “*Ils te disent...*” (They will tell you...) portrays what would be a process of radicalization: following extremist jihadi Facebook accounts and receiving a message from one of them to join the fight. It then portrays a series of phrases and a response, for instance “they will tell you: sacrifice yourself next to us and you will be defending a just cause”, while the next image has a script saying: “in reality: you will discover hell on earth and will die alone, away from your home”. The video switches from colorful images, resembling Nasheeds, and where the phrase is one of the ones “they will tell you”, and, when the image depicts “in reality”, black and white images are seen and sounds of crying heard. It too contains graphic imagery and quickly went viral, eliciting some 150.000 views within an hour of its release (Bouchaud, 2015), this answers question two (2) of the thesis.

Another relevant strategy has been the Global Coalition against Daesh (GCD), which launched a Twitter account in 2016. It publishes all kinds of multimedia material in English in two main sections: the horror of life under Daesh and its hypocrisy. It mostly depicted a corrupt image of the terrorist group, stating that it shares nothing with Islam, and focusing on liberation, rehabilitation, and reconciliation (Bjola & Pamment, 2019). Some, however, doubt the efficiency of these video strategies, which are believed to reach targets which already oppose jihadism, not those that are thinking of joining (Bouchaud, 2015). Furthermore, analyzing GDC content, it was stated that materials that elicit negative emotions are for instance negatively received by audiences (Bjola & Pamment, 2019). This answers question one (1) of the thesis, on how to measure effectiveness.

Chapter IV: Western Private Analysis

Because terrorism is nowadays a global security threat, no distinction can be made between private and public actors in the engagement against terrorism (Petersen, 2008). The private sector, since the spread of neoliberalism in the 80s, was revolutionized and gained traction. However, the role of non-State actors has largely been overlooked in counter-terrorism strategic studies (Perry, 2012). The private sector has also had input in the War on Terror. For instance, the threats on private companies, and these being seen as Western images of market and capital. This association makes companies potential targets of terrorism (Petersen, 2008).

Due to national security concerns, the shipping industry have had to add control packaging, food companies to protect their production, and insurance companies to add terrorism as a risk (Petersen, 2008). Terrorism affects private companies through severing supply chains and shaking stakeholders' confidence. Furthermore, the private sector is becoming increasingly aware of these potential effects (Rosand, & Millar, 2017). Terrorism is an importance threat for businesses because it's not part of the calculated risks that the company has already considered, but an external threat that cannot be anticipated (Petersen, 2008).

The relationship between terrorism and technologies has evolved as the latter has too. Social media has become a key channel for terrorist organization to achieve the distribution of propaganda, recruitment, radicalization, and decentralized facilitation of operations, and Daesh has been the ultimate capitalizer of social media platforms (West, 2019). Daesh' use of the Internet has brought the private sector to the forefront of the fight (Fishman, 2019).

Although Daesh is ideologically rigid, it imagines itself as the vanguard of a populist movement, which recruits massively (Fishman, 2019). Companies cannot stay passive when extremists and terrorists are using their platforms to spread content. Social media is used not only for the internalization of an extremist ideology, but also recruitment and attack planning (Greenberg, 2016). The propaganda of the deed, for which terrorism is famous, leads to the desire of terrorist groups to control their political messages, and creating a branding strategy. Daesh has used web forums, pages, Twitter handles and Telegram channels to reach their target audience. The maintenance of brand control requires consistency, for which technological platforms are particularly important (Fishman, 2019).

Daesh uses online services, as fundraising and financial transfers for financing. It also uses the Internet to collect information, for instance, the use of mapping tools to plan attacks and identify

potential recruits. Each online platform has its own purpose. Daesh used Twitter for audience development and brand control, while YouTube and Justpaste.it are used for content hosting, and Telegram to securely communicate. Each platform also depends on the level of adherence, for example, community maintenance does not require a mainstream social platform because adherents are already interested and willing to adopt a new tool (Fishman, 2019).

Daesh uses content hosting and audience development. The former meaning a variety of cloud services as media repositories and consistently use video-streaming to distribute propaganda. The latter refers to engaging the target population, attracting media attention, and identifying potential recruits. Daesh aimed to build a global social movement and encourage lone wolf attacks but has risked its brand control because of focusing so heavily on audience development and content hosting (Fishman, 2019).

Secure communication is achieved through the obscurity provided by fake accounts, multiple users, and secret webs only accessible by invited members. This way, terrorist organizations circumvent the scrutiny of online platforms. The secure information provides community maintenance, where the in-group reinforces antipathy to the out-group, creating an echo chamber. Community maintenance can also be accomplished in more open environments, using symbols and phrases to denote in-group membership, but this lexicon must have been established in a secure environment. Platforms used for content hosting should prioritize the identification of terrorist propaganda. However, platforms used to maintain a community, communicate securely, and organize financing, may need to identify signals, or share information with partners (Fishman, 2019).

Social media and technology companies, as vectors of terrorist propaganda, have attempted to counter it. This attempted response was a result of political leaders' pressure on Facebook, Twitter, and Google (Rosand, & Millar, 2017), which answers question three (3) on whether the West has created a counter-propaganda strategy. In 2017, Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter, and YouTube jointly announced an agreed text, the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) to hinder the impact of the terrorist threat (Conway et al. 2019) Twitter and Facebook are the most popular social media platforms used, as these are among young populations (Greenberg, 2016). Before the escalation of usage of social media by terrorists, there were already policy-oriented discussions of the utility of social media. However, it was Daesh' usage what drove major incorporation of activities in the social media domain. The GIFCT provided an ongoing platform

for the sharing of knowledge. This reflected the relevance of private actors in the mitigation of threats (West, 2019).

The platform which poses the biggest risk is Facebook, which has the biggest user-set – for audience development –, it is easy to create specialized groups – for community maintenance –, most forms of media can be uploaded – for content hosting –, and persistent accounts can be used – for brand control (Fishman, 2019). Facebook announced in 2017 that it can eliminate 99% of Daesh material prior to it being flagged by users, while 83% of this content is removed within an hour of being uploaded (Conway et al. 2019).

Twitter claims disruption of Daesh in their platform, however the former's disruptive activities are inadequate as Twitter is still a conducive channel for Daesh' accounts to develop and its propaganda to expand. Some content upload destinations are neglected by official authorities like Google Drive, Google Photos, and the Web Archive (Conway et al. 2019), this answers question one (1) of this thesis on how to measure effectiveness. However, taking sites down can stem the spread of Daesh recruitment, users should be given the opportunity to report dangerous content, shifting the burden to the consumer (Greenberg, 2016). Telegram is now the most preferred platform of Daesh, it has a lower profile, with a smaller user base and higher barriers to entry. The community present in the latter platform is much more committed than the Twitter one, and this factor creates an echo chamber effect (Conway et al. 2019). However, online counter-terrorism activities should be understood as a part of a counter-radicalization effort. The internet is just one of the places where counter-radicalization makes sense, relying on it exclusively has negative consequences (Greenberg, 2016)

The messenger matters, Muslim voices need to be involved and policymakers have made no effort to include the individuals with the necessary knowledge (Islamic law experts, scholars, religious leaders...) (Greenberg, 2016). The role of religious figures, leaders and scholars cannot be ignored. There must be a counter narrative with logic and supportive arguments from Koran and Hadith. In September 2014 a group of 152 religious scholars wrote a letter to Al-Baghdadi outlining gross violations of Islamic values. They said it is forbidden in Islam to force people to convert, deny women their rights, kill the innocent; re-introduce slavery; torture people; declare a Caliphate without consensus from all Muslims; and that Jihad in Islam is a defensive war. Their criticism was validated by references from sacred texts (Khattak et al., 2021).

Counter-ISIS online messaging delivered by individuals and nongovernment organizations can, at times, be more effective than government-sponsored communications (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021). Nonetheless, apart from social media and cybersecurity companies, many private sectors are still unaware of the contribution they can make to tackle the threat (Rosand, & Millar, 2017). However, a good example of engagement, although not professionally produced, in the tackling of the threat is the company HP, which produced the video Happy British Muslims in 2014 and was published on YouTube (Carter Center, 2016), this answers question three (3) of this thesis. The video portrays a set of people, all probably Muslim, dancing and singing the song Happy by Pharrell.

Terrorist violence peaked between 2014 and 2017, when Daesh' capabilities were stronger, and lone-actor terrorists undertook attacks because they had accessed online material that would radicalize them (West, 2019). Daesh' Twitter presence has diminished, consequently, radicalization, recruitment and attack planning opportunities on this platform have decreased (Conway et al. 2019), this answers question two (2) of this thesis on effective countering methods. However, Daesh users remain persistent, the accounts are suspended within a day, but not before they have had the chance to promote links to content in other platforms (Conway et al. 2019).

It may be added that the media is an important factor in the conceptualization, as it has stretched the term terrorism to the point of insignificance (Reinares, F. 2005). The measures taken by social media (mostly censorship) have been inadequate as extremists and terrorists have shifted to encrypted platforms, where the content remains accessible (West, 2019), this answers question one (1) on how to measure effectiveness.

Chapter V: Conclusions

To conclude the investigation and comparing the characteristics analyzed, firstly, we must state the goals of the three cases. For instance, Daesh' main objective represents establishing a Caliphate, territorially limited, including Spain, Portugal, East-Southern Europe (Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia...) Northern and Central Africa, and the Middle East. On the other hand, Western public and private institutions have no single aim defined, as their goals depend on the perspective of each State and company, which creates divisions in their approaches and narratives. This lack of unitary response also comes from the fact that every State has its own legal and priority framework, and, to some extent, the same happens in the private sector. Meaning that each policy is implemented in a different way, and each has different views on whether terrorism is a threat. This situation divides even more the formerly mentioned unitary response and discourse. Taking in mind the measures taken, States would however include countering Daesh as main purpose in this thesis, while private organizations will be prone to protecting themselves from terrorism as a threat.

Taking this in mind, Daesh secondary goals would be to generate fear among its enemies (being a collective image of the West), while, at the same time, recruiting new adherents to fight for their cause. Western public institutions have been centered on countering Daesh' financing and military strength, as well as halting adherents from joining, while private businesses have protected their packaging, production, and distribution.

Daesh has created a single unitary institutionalized propaganda system, where key messages were identified according to each target audience. In the sense of target audiences, Daesh has a clear ambition, young (27-year-old), marginalized Muslims that would join them. However, the West has not defined a specific target audience, although Muslims in the process of radicalization could be considered as such due to the measures taken.

As formerly noted, enemy-wise, Daesh has created an image of a collective West that must be countered. The West, on the other hand, has considered terrorism overall as a threat which cannot be anticipated; this is appreciated in the War on Terror discourse and the institutions created to counter both Al-Qaeda and Daesh at the same time.

Daesh has centralized its structure in a single institution, Al-Hayat Media Center, created in 2014, however, Daesh' efforts started in 2012, where the propaganda machinery was being tested. On the other hand, the West has based its strategy and structures on several joint efforts, seen in

public efforts in the UNSC resolution of 2014, the creation of the CSCC (2011), later GEC (2016), in the US, NATO for military response, UK's Prevent strategy (2011), France's #StopJihadisme (2015) and the GCD (2016). The private Western analysis has too approached the threat with the same strategy, a co-joint effort depicted in the GIFCT (2017), including several social media platforms. The data presented questions whether the West is creating strategies or playing to a sort of "cat-and-mouse" game, where efforts are made after imminent threats of terrorism. At the same time, the low budgets of private institutions and the neglect of platforms in the GIFCT strategy are drawbacks to be considered.

In the sense of mainstream propaganda, Daesh was too well organized and structured, for instance the Dabiq magazine and al-Bayan radio center oversaw publishing its messages and aims. However, in the sense of Western response, since these are liberal democracies, each center would publish separate messages, overall portraying a negative image of Daesh and stretching the term terrorism to the point of insignificance. Moreover, in the sense of private response, most companies involved were only in the social media sector, so including new businesses in the initiatives could be a critical aim.

Although partnerships between private businesses and intelligence services have been crucial (Petersen, 2008). More conjoint effort between the public and private sectors needs to be achieved. For this end, PPPs (Private-Public Partnerships) between communication strategists of both the private and public sectors could be useful tools. With this, private organizations could have both objectives and guidance provided by public organizations, while technical resources and knowledge could be provided by companies. This could be applied too to media centers, to avoid divisions and create a common strategy.

In the sense of so-called "new" or online propaganda platforms, Daesh has relied on social media platforms to disseminate their messages. Public Western institutions, based on soft power, have too included the importance of online strategies to counter such enemy, however, no clear, defined points have been mentioned. In the private Western analysis, we did ascertain a common effort made by social media companies to counter the messages, however, most private initiatives were a result of the pressure of governmental leaders to act against the threat. More commitment however needs to be achieved, for this end, the inclusion in the tackling of terrorism could be included as CSR. In this case, the prevention of marginalization, the creation of support networks

to help Muslim communities and the creation of new narratives could be included in the definition of CSR as this threat affects all.

Language-wise, Daesh has maintained a glocal strategy, where its materials were published mostly in Arabic but also in other – Western – languages, as French, English, German and Russian. On the other hand, both private and public Western institutions have focused on publishing materials in English or would issue propaganda in their national languages (for instance, French in France, English in the UK, and the US). The lack of a common strategy and the neglect of other languages could have hindered Western efforts to halt Daesh' recruitment and power.

In the sense of “new” propaganda content, Daesh has used a variety of types, including audio, visuals, audiovisuals, and text. The West, contrarily, has focalized on punctual video posts (Welcome to ISIS Land, #StopJihadisme, or Happy British Muslims). The lack of consistency in the publications of Western institutions is also a drawback, considering the high regularity in which Daesh was posting. Quality-wise, Daesh has been much more effective than Western audiovisual materials. However, Western videos went viral quickly, which could be a sign of the reach potential the institutions have. However, some have argued whether these videos targets Muslims who are thinking of adhering or just people that already opposed jihadism.

Daesh has also several well-defined characteristics in their narratives - cruelty, forgiveness, sacrifice, involvement, utopia, Islamic eschatology, fanatic willingness and unquestionable loyalty. On the other hand, in the Western analysis, no unitary narrative was created. However, we did observe a dual discourse between a benevolent West against an evil all-encompassing terrorism, and the use of negative emotions to portray Daesh, which was already questioned along the thesis.

Daesh has also defined clear main messages – urgency, agency, authenticity, and victory, the latter has recently shifted towards resistance claims due to the loss of territory. This portrays too the high organizational design and Daesh employs, as well as its adaptability. In the sense of Western analysis, mostly based on soft power, the US has proclaimed its hegemony, while all Western powers have based their messages on liberalism and democracy as strong points, and peaceful change as a secondary message. Privately wise, specific cases like HP's video portrays integration and happiness as primary messages. For instance, the HP video Happy British Muslims was an effective way to portray non-marginalized communities, to engage with the public and send a positive message to counter Daesh' propaganda. In this case, Daesh portrays urgency (Muslims are being slaughtered now), whereas HP's video shows images of happy Muslims dancing and

singing, countering unconsciously the terrorists' message. Having stated along the thesis the lack of effectiveness on the use of negative emotions, efforts on HP's initiative must be positively noted.

Daesh has also used well defined marketing strategies as well as mimicked videogames and Hollywood movies in the production of their videos, which directly spot their target audience. On the other hand, States have entered in a panic-like approach internally after attacks; and externally have been too centered on physical counter reactions as sanctions, military destruction of propaganda centers... Private companies' efforts are based on knowledge-sharing and the disruption of materials. These measures' effectiveness can be questioned on whether they specifically counter the narratives of Daesh.

The conclusions of the thesis thus answer the question on whether it is enough to fight this kind of enemy just territorially. The answer is negative. Firstly, while the internet has contributed to a significant percentage of radicalization, it has not been jointly tackled. At the same time, the efforts made have only portrayed Daesh' adaptability, for instance shifting from social media to platforms to create echo chambers or changing the message from victory to resistance. The number of affiliates keeps rising even if terrorist attacks have declined. Moreover, hundreds of Americans and British Muslims keep joining Daesh. Even if hard power is effective, it is to a limited extent, and soft power should be considered as relevant a strategy as hard one.

Daesh' drawbacks, as its simplistic understanding of Islam, has been exploited by Muslim scholars and leaders individually, for instance in the 2014 initiative of writing a letter to Al-Baghdadi. However, it has not been taken advantage of by Western institutions, or even completely neglected Muslims in the making process (as UK's Prevent strategy). This could be a point for future investigations, on how to include the use of Muslim influential people in Western strategy.

The narrative based on the countering of two opposite sides (us vs. them), although common in nowadays politics, should be regarded with skepticism. Other future investigations might regard the efficiency of the strategy based in duality by Daesh, Western public and private institutions. Other interesting investigations might concern the focus of US' FP in creating an image of a hegemonic power that has to counter an evil. In this sense, a comparative effort might be made between US' propaganda against Nazism and the efforts made to counter terrorism, particularly Daesh. Future investigations might also concern the approach to create a unified narrative and strategy between all Western actors. It might be interesting to analyze how there could be more centralization strategic-wise and what this common narrative might be.

Regarding limitations found during the analysis, first, it should be questioned how much of the information is actually disclosed. Being such a sensitive topic and where secrecy is crucial, we are counting on a lack of transparency from Western governments. Moreover, although many analyses are made on Daesh' narratives, there is a strong lack of study on Western discourses against the terrorist group. At the same time, in the sense of private strategies, there was a lack of initiatives which also hindered the process of studying, as there was not much content to be analyzed.

Lastly, in the next page, a conclusive table will be provided. The purpose is to make a clear and comprehensive conclusion. The variables used in this thesis can be of use for future investigations in the field of terrorist narratives, specifically Daesh.

	<i>Daesh</i>	<i>West public</i>	<i>West private</i>
<i>Final goal</i>	Establishing the Caliphate	Countering Daesh but depends on State	Protecting the business
<i>Secondary goals</i>	Generate fear among enemies and recruit adherents	Countering Daesh' financing, military strength, adherents...	Protecting packaging, production...
<i>Target audience</i>	Young, marginalized Muslims	No specific target audience (Muslims in radicalization)	No specific target audience
<i>Enemy</i>	Collective West	Terrorism overall, particularly Islamic	Terrorism as external threat that cannot be anticipated
<i>Main structure(s)</i>	Al-Hayat (2014)	UN 2014, US' CSCC (2011), in 2016 GEC; EU Counter Terrorism Strategy (2005, 2008 and 2016), NATO (military but StratCom counters Russian propaganda), UK's Prevent (2011), France's #StopJihadisme (2015), and GCD (2016)	GIFCT 2017 (joint effort of Twitter, Facebook, Microsoft, and YouTube)
<i>Mainstream propaganda</i>	Dabiq (magazine) and al-Bayan (radio)	Negative portrayal of Daesh	Stretched the term terrorism to the point of insignificance
<i>New propaganda platforms</i>	Social media platforms	Mentioned as relevant in important documents but no clear strategy	Social media platforms (GIFCT)
<i>Language</i>	Mostly Arabic (97%) but also in English, French, German and Russian	Mostly English but overall national, France's propaganda in French, UK's and US' in English	English
<i>New propaganda content</i>	Audio, visuals, audiovisuals, and text	Video posts (US' Welcome to ISIS Land, #StopJihadisme)	Punctual organizations' video initiatives (HP)
<i>(Counter-) propaganda temporality</i>	Started in 2012, launched in 2014, in 2015 it decentralized	Started after 9/11, but peaked against Daesh in 2015	2017

<i>Characteristics in narrative</i>	Cruelty, forgiveness, sacrifice, involvement, utopia, Islamic eschatology, fanatic willingness and unquestionable loyalty	Mostly creation of a benevolent “self” against an evil “other”, propaganda elicits negative emotions	No unitary narrative
<i>Main messages</i>	Urgency, agency, authenticity, and victory (now resistance claims)	US’ hegemony; all liberalism, and democracy	Specific cases like HP’s Happy British Muslims (integration and happiness)
<i>Secondary messages</i>	Superiority, revenge, Ummah, life of pleasure,	Peaceful change	
<i>Strategies</i>	Glocal, marketing, mimicking videogames (FPP) and Hollywood movies	Internal: panic (States of emergency and lockdowns) External: sanctions, prevent, pursue, and respond, military destruction of propaganda centers, measures of censorship (disruption), diversion, counter-messages, and information operations	Sharing knowledge and disruption of materials
<i>Quality</i>	High until 2016	GEC’s low and France’s low; but went viral quickly	HP’s low, but went viral quickly
<i>Drawbacks</i>	Simplistic understanding of Islam, disproportionality in combat, religious leaders individually have used this to counter Daesh	Lack of consistency in publications, lack of unitary narrative, different perceptions of threat, not including Muslims in the process, videos reach targets who already oppose jihadism, low budgets, changes made after Daesh’ strategy	Pressured by governments to do changes, changes made after Daesh’ strategy, mostly social media companies, neglecting platforms (Google Drive), censorship is not enough, echo chamber effect, lack of involvement of religious figures and lack of unitary response

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