Holy warriors of the Caliphate
Stroke of illogical fanaticism or religious nationalism?
Masters Thesis
Abstract

The Islamic State continuously, and successfully, recruits new members from all over the world. Although portrayed by the media as poverty-stricken, ranging in lonely individuals lacking education, these members are individuals who often lead normal lives with good economic and social standing as well as a high level of education. This thesis take us on a new recruits journey from conscription to warfare. Trying to discern the core reasons behind why someone joins, conforms and fights for a modern day Caliphate produce the concept of a typical Islamic State recruit.

Among the findings is the revelation that the recruits, self-perceived socio-economic status, is a major factor when combined with the possibility of great social rewards and a sense of importance and belonging. An individual who has been recruited, then, chose to stay in the organisation based on loyalty, dependence and conformity.

Finally; the thesis uncover the reasons why the incumbents take up arms to defend the prescribed ideological beliefs. Beliefs that rests on a solid religious foundation. The member feels his or her ideology to be under attack — and anew — will take up arms to defend that what is believed to be true.

Based on the study we can conclude that the final stage of the individual members journey is based on a kind of nationalistic view of the Caliphate and the importance of Islamic supremacy.

Keywords

Islamic State, Nationalism, Cult-sect sphere, Religious Nationalism, Relative-deprivation,
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1. Introduction

"Part of me would like to die immediately, to sink beneath the ground and stay there. But another part still hopes to be saved, and to be able to hug my parents once more."

They sent us to tell our story, she says. - "They prefer that our family knows about the abuse."

A 17 year old Yazidi\(^1\) girl was kidnapped by the Islamic State and is facing a life in the Caliphate as a sex slave to its holy warriors. Taken from her home on August 3rd 2014, she is still believed to remain with her captors.\(^2\)

Another story, given to a reporter at *The Christian Today* by a former Islamic State captive tells the story of another Islamic State captive.

A woman captive was begging for food for several days before she was finally fed. She initially traveled to the Caliphate to try to get the jihadists to release her two kidnapped sons; but soon found that she herself had been enslaved by her sons captors. As she began to eat the rice and meat handed to her; the soldiers began to laugh. It turns out that the woman had just been fed the meat of one of her kidnapped sons. Horrified by the event and with tears running down her cheeks she speaks of another mother who had been forced to watch her nine year old daughter being raped to death.\(^3\)

The actions conducted by the mujahidin of the Islamic State are not actions easily carried out by anyone and the reasons behind these actions are being debated on a daily basis.

The chief aim of this study is to try and understand — from an overriding stance — why someone would partake in the journey from being a seemingly normal citizen in the western part of the world to become a ruthless Islamic State soldier.

To be able to achieve this goal we will investigate the journey from the beginning. From the conversion into the Islamic State; to the conforming into an Islamic State loyalist; to the transformation into an Islamic State soldier.

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\(^1\) The Yazidis is a religious minority primarily found in the Ninevah province in Iraq.


2. Problem

There is one or several factors that determine if an individual will join the Islamic State if approached with the opportunity. This or these factors can be brought out into an observable state if one has the tools.

Diving into the world that is the Islamic State one can single out some of the same properties as those of cults or sects. The Islamic State possess many of the same properties as other religious movements. This comparison lends an opportunity to apply scientific theory, originally designed to analyse cults and sects.

Therefore; by applying the once cult and sect bound theories to the case of the Islamic State we should be able to create an analysing tool to try and bring the unsubstantiated facts about the Caliphates pull-effect out in to the open.

The scientific problem and purpose of this thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to bring forth a larger understanding of why one would join, remain with — and in the end — fight for the Islamic State.

To achieve this knowledge we will:

Firstly: Investigate if there are enough similarities between the Islamic State and other religious movements to draw use of the same scientific theories when explaining the reasons to join or remain within the organisation.

Secondly: Isolate the reasons to join and remain in the Cult-sect organisation(s).

Thirdly: Apply these newly acquired insights to the case of the Islamic State; with the intention of fulfilling the purpose of the thesis.

With this expanded knowledge we venture down the path of the mujahidin warrior. From the position of conversion, into the Islamic State, and further unto the conforming stage, ending up becoming a fully fledged Islamic State soldier.

After following the path of the Islamic State -convert loyalist warrior- we will have created a better understanding as to why people might abandon a life of peace and security for a life enveloped by violence. -All in the name of the Caliph Ibrahim-.
Demarcation

To be able to conduct this study within the given limitations of time and space; this thesis will focus on individuals from the west\(^4\) rather than including the african region. The inclusion of Islamic State members from Africa would simply be too time consuming given the meagre information provided regarding african individuals different backgrounds. It might, however, be possible to apply the same conclusions to african individuals that we give to europeans if it turns out to be psychological rather than socio-economic. *We will however not limit the interviews used in part III of the analysis to include only european converts since all members of the Islamic state are assumed to be in the same state of mind at the point of the journey discussed in part III.*

This paper will also *only* use three cults or sects in the comparison part of the thesis; for two reasons. *Firstly,* given the limitation in time and space it will not be practical to include the use of more examples. *Secondly,* the necessity of including more than the already included cults or sects likely wouldn't change the outcome of the comparison since earlier studies tell us that the difference between organisations in the Cult-sect sphere, when looking at perks for members, doesn't differ enough to include additional examples.

**Why is this relevant?**

The cultural, nationalistic and most of all expanding nature of the Islamic State may not be a historically new and unique phenomenon. It is, however, unprecedented in modern times. The influence the Islamic State possess in the world of today is undeniable.

Due to the nature of the Islamic State and the fact that the Islamic State is relatively new; there are plenty of holes in the *web of knowledge* regarding several aspects of the Caliphate. Even though the research in this thesis is very much of the interdisciplinary kind; a mix if you will, between social psychology and political science; I deem it to be the only way to enlighten this very scientific problem. Political science alone simply can not explain the intricate structures behind the unparalleled success of the modern day Caliphate.

*Politicians, civil servants and various institutions* can benefit from sober and unbiased insights explaining the mechanics within the Islamic State and its problematic tension via adjoined members. All research in this field can be of service to those trying to understand and stop the terrors of the islamic States jihad. A continuos cumulative research effort from the world academia must be highly valued and truly desirable.

More than anything else; research depicting the motivations of Islamic State soldiers; will benefit the general public in their composite understanding for this organisation. This may contribute to a more sympathetic audience. We shall never forget that science is not only for academics.

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\(^4\) The *west* being Europe and America.
3. Theory

For the benefit of this thesis; scientific theory will be presented along with the problems investigated in part I, II and III of the analysis.

3.1 Scientific methods

During this journey along the path of the would be Islamic State warrior, several methods of study are applied.

Case study

Described as the choosing of one or several study objects or cases, this method followed, aims at studies conducted for a certain place of phenomena rather than having no certain focus. We know what we are going to study, we have chosen our cases. The study objects in this case are the Islamic State, the Church of Scientoloogy, the Word of life and the Peoples Temple. The phenomena of our focus is the Islamic State, convert, loyalist, turned warrior.

I argue that this thesis use different kinds of case study methods throughout the different stages of analysis.

For parts I and II of the analysis I apply a disciplined configurative case study method; Namely, using existing theories to explain a phenomena. Described by George and Bennett as one of the best methods when one is trying to explain a phenomenon all the while already existing scientific theories exist.

In part III I will be using a theory testing case study method. This method is commonly used when a theory can be used to strengthen or weaken a hypothesis. Introducing Rogers Brubakers theory of religious nationalism.

A third method of case study is also applicable to this thesis. The plausibility probe. George and Bennett advice against using this method to loosely to avoid lowering the standard of the research. However, in this thesis, due to the material at hand and limitations in space- and time; I will deem the result plausible should it prove to follow the line of the hypothesis. Claiming the possible positive result to be an absolute truth is not possible based on the lack of research materials.

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6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.
**Qualitative research**

The basic study of this thesis is that of a qualitative study. Digging deeper into the materials at hand rather than collecting a vast amount of information and barely scraping the top of the information mountain. The aim of this method, as described by Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson and Wägnerud, is to isolate root causes of a phenomenon.\(^8\) The description of the qualitative study method by Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson and Wägnerud is aimed at studying texts. It should however be just as applicable when studying any type of information, be it in writing, spoken or on video.

### 3.2 Previous research

This paper is mainly based upon three books as sources of previous research. Although several additional sources are used as well.

One of the most prominent writers in modern day America; Robert Spencer, has written *The complete infidel’s guide to ISIS*. A book used as a source of information in this thesis but written from another perspective. Infidel’s guide to ISIS focus lies more with describing the organisation as such, and its history. The book is mainly constructed by studies and interviews. One should know, when reading the book, that Spencer is clearly anti-Islam.\(^9\)

In the book *Comprehending cults*, Lorne Dawson, provides a clear picture of the cumulative research — so far gathered — in the Cult-sect sphere.\(^10\) We are also provided with the Church-sect theory, which originated in the minds of Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch. The Church-sect theory lay the foundation connection between the Islamic State and other organisations within the Cult-sect sphere. This book also bring forth Bergers theory of the importance of religion in these kinds of organisations. A theory that is not to be taken to lightly.

The final major contributor to this thesis, in the ways of scientific theory, is Rogers Brubaker. Brubakers theory of religious nationalism is put to the test in part III of the analysis. In his theory Brubaker explain that religion can be one building block among others; but it can also serve as the entire structure of nationalism. While religion often comes with set rules, for how one should live, lead and rule, it creates the perfect foundation for a nationalist nation.\(^11\)

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3.3 Materials

The materials used in this thesis have been a mix of documentaries, studies, books and interviews; thoroughly presented in the following chapter.

Worth to note in this paper is that there is a lack of certain materials in many aspects of research concerning the Islamic State. Facts on organisations in the Cult-sect sphere and the Islamic State is often conveyed by members or former members, which; on the one hand is firsthand information; and on the other hand may be conveyed on behalf of the organisations. Since the chosen avenue of first-hand information is the one left available one must take this into consideration when conducting this kind of research.

The lack of information is also a barrier for any generalisation claims made with this information as a foundation. Further research in this field must be made before any claims of generalisation can be made.

The main research regarding scientific theory and the Cult-sect sphere is collected from *Comprehending cults, Understanding new age religions* and *the Handbook of social psychology*.

Facts collected regarding the main organisations, within the Cult-sect sphere, that are included in this thesis stem from *Livets ord, The fundamentals of thought* and *Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple*.

Facts regarding the Islamic State is collected from the book *The complete infidel’s guide to ISIS* as well as articles and interviews.

The material has been chosen due to its importance, its broad scientific recognition, availability and expanse.

The interviews and articles contain first-hand information given to the inquirer directly by the source. This kind of information is ranked highest in the scale of trustworthiness. However, considering that the source is in fact a part of the phenomenon that is being studied; and considering what actions the source have undertaken; and the circumstance under which the statements have been provided; the reader of this thesis must take into consideration that the source may have cause to deviate from the truth.

Should there not have been limitations in space and time the pile of facts could have been more comprehensive. This could have aided in the quest to make penetrable, more solid assumptions.
4. Background

4.1 The Islamic State

To be able to analyse and grasp why someone would leave the comfort of a safe, peaceful and seemingly normal life to embark on a lethal crusade, we must first understand what the Islamic State really is.

The beginning

Let us first travel back to the 20th century and the year 1924. The last Caliphate, the Ottoman Caliphate, is overthrown. The restoration of said Caliphate is one of the proclaimed goals of the Islamic State. And the restoration of the Umma\textsuperscript{12}, that is to be born from the Caliphate, is an even greater goal.\textsuperscript{13}

The Islamic State is believed to derive from the \textit{jama'at al-tawhid wa al-jihad}, the party of Monotheism and jihad. An Iraqi jihadist group founded in 1999 by Ahmed Fadhil Nazar al-Khalaylah; made famous as \textit{Abu Musab al-Zarqawi}.\textsuperscript{14} Zarqawi became the Leader of a small group of devoted jihadists towards whom he practised a strict sharia discipline. After awhile Zarqawi moved from Jordan to Afghanistan where he then founded the party of Monotheism and jihad. After meeting Osama bin Laden he was granted funding for a jihadists training facility; aimed at training Jordanian, Syrian and Palestinian muslims for terrorist actions in Europe.

In 2002 Zarqawi found himself in Iraq training jihadists for what he believed was an imminent american attack. Zarqawi figured the time was ripe; so he moved to position himself as kingpin for jihadists all over the world who wanted to save Iraq from the americans. Zarqawis rise to International fame had begun.\textsuperscript{15}

In 2004 Zarqawi released the first video, from a jihadist group, depicting a decapitation. The victim was the american hostage Nicholas Berg. More videos containing decapitations appeared in the following months and included that of two american contractors; Eugene Armstrong and Jack Hensley.\textsuperscript{16} Thus, terrorist-made snuff propaganda had found its way to western media.

On October 17th 2004, Zarqawi pledged his loyalty to al-Qaeda and Usama bin Laden. The party of Monotheism and jihad changed its name to \textit{Tanzim Qai’dat al-jihad fi bilad al-Rafidayn}, al-Qaeda in the land of two rivers.\textsuperscript{17} In June 2006 Zarqawi met with his maker as he was killed in an

\textsuperscript{12} Umma or Ummah: The construction of a singel ubiquitous muslim community.

\textsuperscript{13} Spencer, Robert. 2015. Page 168.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. Page 1.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. Page 3.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. Page 4.

\textsuperscript{17} Or the more popular, \textit{al-Qaeda in Iraq}
american airstrike. He did so, however, first after he successfully became one of the most infamous jihadists in modern times.\(^{18}\) 

In April, 2013, in the shadows of the rebellion against Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad; Zarqawis former terrorist group successfully moved in to Syria and yet again changed the name of the organisation. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant was born\(^ {19,20}\) Early 2014 the Islamic State was officially denounced as a part of al-Qaeda and was deemed to be to extreme to be a part of the al-Qaeda alliance.\(^ {21}\) In June the Islamic State posted several images of workers bulldozing the border between Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State never recognised any border between the two countries as they believed that any border dividing the muslim people was yet another way for the West to oppress the muslims of the world. Artificial states was not the goal for the Caliphate.

June 29, 2014, The Islamic State declared that they would form a new Caliphate. A Caliphate that would demand allegiance from all the muslims in the world. And the muslims of the world shall be led by the Caliph, the right hand of God himself.\(^ {22}\)

**Enter al-Baghdadi, Caliph and undisputed ruler of the Umma!**

So who was this new leader of all muslims and Gods' deputy on earth? The Islamic State leader since 2010, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Caliph Ibrahim. The information about al-Baghdadi is in many ways shrouded. Many reports have been made about him and his life; but as he is a very shadowy figure, nothing is certain. What is known however is that al-Baghdadi spent time in an american prison at Camp Bucca. Not for being a fully fledged terrorist but rather as a person who was believed to have some kind of connection to terrorists.\(^ {23}\) There is a biography that is proclaiming several said to be true facts about al-Baghdadi; among others that he was brought up in a religious family, has a doctorate in Islamic law from the university of Baghdad and that he was a well respected cleric in a mosque until he was arrested by the U.S military. This biography, however, is believed to be written by his supporters as propaganda and is therefore to be taken lightly. Even though the biography constitutes more or less his entire history,\(^ {24}\) al-Baghdadi is so shy that he is said not to be recognised; even within his own ranks. The invisible sheikh\(^ {25}\) indeed. It is also rumoured to be al-Baghdadis very strict interpretation of the Qu’ran that constitutes the foundation of Islamic State sharia.

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19 The Islamic state is known as ISIL (The Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant), ISIS (The Islamic state in Iraq and Syria), or simply the Islamic state. The latter being the name they use for themselves as of 2014.
21 Ibid. Page 8.
22 Ibid. Page 10.
23 Ibid. Page 11.
25 al-Baghdadi earned the nickname The invisible sheikh by the media thanks to his ability to stay off of the mediaradar.
Recruiting souls

Made famous in the West by making grisly statements in the media and flooding Facebook and Twitter with seditious messages. The Islamic State uses all the 21th century communication platforms for its extensive recruiting drive. The organisations recruitment drive is so successful that by May 2015, almost thirty thousand individuals from around a hundred countries had enlisted with the newly formed state. Many of these from Europe, Director of the National Counterterrorism center, Nicholas Rasmussen, proclaimed that more than 3400 individuals from the West had joined the Islamic State at this point. According to analysts that focus on terror organisation recruitment, the success of the Islamic State lies within its refined use of social media.

Many of the Caliphate’s media campaigns focus on the pure teachings of Islam. The Islamic States spokespeople display a deep knowledge of the Qu’ran. The question if however the Islamic State would benefit from a less violent approach, or keep its current direction, in its recruitment process has been debated as well; what is clear though is that the organisations own campaign officers have their course set. Although, it is not all blood and gore in the Islamic State, at least not according to themselves. According to the BBC -Director of Inspire- Sara Khan, says that the Islamic State is preying on young women. Trying to make them become jihadist brides by telling them that the Caliphate offers a wonderful family, consists of women from all over the world and that they will live a happy life without want. More than anything else they promise happiness and comfort, says Khan.

In January 2015, hackers from the Islamic State gained control over one of Pentagon’s Twitter accounts. This was a clear display of superiority actually coinciding with President Obamas speech to the nation about cyber security.

The methods they use to recruit and the channels they provide, to recruit, give us an understanding of how they operate. The Islamic State posses a vast knowledge of where to aim their recruitment focus and what kind of focus that should be. The BBC launched a report on January 25th 2016 where they compare Islamic State recruitment of youngsters as a sort of online grooming. A report from Ghana suggests that the Islamic State offered monetary incentives and that “the wealth of IS meant that potential recruits had found the offers made to them to be irresistible”.

26 the islamic state is not really a de facto state.
28 Ibid. Page 68.
29 That is; the interpretation of the Qu’ran by Islamic state caliph Ibrahim, al’Baghdadi.
30 Spencer, Robert. Page 71.
31 Inspire is human rights organisations focused on the rights of women.
33 Spencer, Robert. 2015. Page 74.
In their attempt to gain the favour of the Islamic populace the Islamic State are going about using old Islamic poetry. A successful move according to Oxford academic Elisabeth Kendall.

The Islamic poetry is a way for Islamic State recruiters to reach in to the hearts of the Arabic listeners and muslims all over the world; as they recognise the messages being proclaimed in their own teachings. Kendall says it is a great way to - “.. infiltrate the psyche and to create an aura of tradition, authenticity and legitimacy around the ideologies it enshrines.”

The findings and thoughts of Kendall make us believe that Islam indeed plays an important role of the Islamic State; and can not be excluded as a factor to those who join, remain and fight for their cause.

What makes the Islamic State unique among other jihadist groups?

Maybe the very purpose of forming the Islamic State is to transform it to the jewel in the crown; namely to become the central hub of a globally recognised muslim nation. A sobering observation with a bearing on this would-be empire is however a simple question of definitions. Since becoming a state, require the fulfilment of a number of rules constituted by the United Nations the IS falls foul in its ambitions to be considered a true state. Creating and to some extent ruling the Umma, however, is not as unbelievable. To the secularised world, gathering all muslims into one collective group, may sound unachievable; since most of the worlds muslims probably don’t share the harsh interpretation of the Qu’ran with al-Baghdadi. How implausible it may or may not be; the IS has still managed to plant a seed of belief within its own ranks.

The significance of the Caliphate is an open-and-shut case to the Islamic State. The Caliph being the symbol of unity that will bring all muslims of the world together. As the successor of Muhammad himself; the Caliph is the only earthly power with the right to control the muslim population. This also mean that all muslims owe their obedience to the Caliph and must therefore answer the call to revolution against the infidel western powers.

In a document published by the Islamic State, in June 2014, they declare the restoration of the Caliphate to be a divine imperative. And through the Caliphate, Allah would grant the muslim nation power and authority.

"And he promised to grant the Umma succession to authority”

In the same document the Islamic State makes an ominous promise;

"Without this condition being met, authority becomes nothing more than kingship, dominance and rule, accompanied with destruction, corruption, oppression, subjugation, fear, and the decadence of the human being and his descent to the level of animals."

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The Islamic State is also quick to bind every muslim to the creed of the Caliphate.

"We clarify to the Muslims that with this declaration of khilāfah, it is incumbent upon all Muslims to pledge allegiance to the khilāfah Ibrāhīm and support him (may Allah preserve him). The legality of all emirates, groups, states, and organizations, becomes null by the expansion of the khilāfah’s authority and arrival of its troops to their areas."39

And before the decree from Allah, the arabs were living in chaos, broken, weak and disunited. Once they accept Islam, the Qu’ran, Allah and the caliphate they will be united and strong. This is the message of the Islamic State. And this is what differs the Islamic State from other jihadist groups. The will to bind together all muslims of the world; and through the Caliph Ibrahim, control them.

The Islamic state law, no one can escape the justice of sharia

The harsh interpretation of the Qu’ran enforced by the Islamic State applies to all righteous followers of Allah. For the Islamic State do not discriminate inside or outside its own ranks. According to information released in late 2015; Islamic State spokesmen conveyed its supreme authority to other Islamic groups through out the world, including its former brother in arms; al-Qaeda.40

Inside the Islamic State resides a strict rule of sharia41. For example; women may not leave the house without a male supervisor, thieves will have their hands amputated, blackmailers will be crucified, alcohol and cigarettes are forbidden, those who leave Islam will face the death penalty and graves are forbidden.42 A former executioner in the service of the Caliph was caught smoking in the streets of Raqqa43. He himself got to experience what he had done to so many before. He was found beheaded in January with a cigarette stuck between his lips.

In the former refugee camp in Yarmouk, outside Damascus, one witness claims that "They killed children in front of their parents” for being disobedient. Another witness claims that he saw two members of the Islamic State playing football with a severed head.44

There have also been reports surfacing from inside Raqqa where a critic tells a story of disagreement, violence and power struggles within the Islamic State leadership. The disagreements is said to be about everything from the dividing of spoils of war to over who gets what woman.45 In an article; Reuters claims that a cleric working for the Islamic State was to be put on trial for his

41 Again; as interpreted by al-Baghdadi.
43 Raqqa, a riverside city in central Syria, serves as the capitol for the Islamic state.
45 Dettmer, Jamie. ISIS Barbarians face their own internal reign of terror. The Daily Beast. 2016-02-06 (http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/02/06/isis-barbarians-face-their-own-internal-reign-of-terror.html)
disagreement over the execution, by burning, of a downed fighter pilot. An execution that, according to the article, was even condemned by the al-Qaeda.

Another story emerges from the streets of Fallujah, currently placed inside the boarders of the Caliphate; A barber and sole provider for his family receives 80 lashes for cutting a West-inspired haircut. For in the Islamic State no man is allowed to shave or dress up his hair. And failure to comply will result is savage punishment.

On November 21, 2015, in the New York Times; Dua, a former member of the Khansaa Brigade speaks out about the abuse of women. She talks about severe punishments for wearing to snug Niqabs that could reveal womanly shapes and the beatings the women suffer for wearing makeup underneath their Niqabs. One time, she says, two of her friends came in for wearing clothes that were too revealing. They were to receive 20 lashes for wearing tightly fitted Niqabs. As the woman carrying out the sentence removed the Niqabs from the two women she also discovered that they were wearing makeup. This resulted in an additional five lashes. Dua also talks about a fragile elderly man with white hair that she had seen being lashed in a public square. Apparently he had questioned God. “Thank God that he spoke up against God, because Allah is forgiving, if he had been criticising the prophet he would have been killed”, she says.

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46 The burning alive of the pilot was later used as video propaganda around the world.
47 Perry, Tom and Williams, Alison. Islamic State punishes cleric who objected to pilot’s killing: monitor. Reuters. 2015-02-06. (http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-islamicstate-idUSKBN0LA0SY20150206)
49 The Khansaa Brigade is a women only morality police within the Islamic state.
4.2 Comprehending cults

As a continuation of our investigation we will lunge into the world of cults. One might wonder what good the involvement of cults will do to our research. The short answer is that members of cults often deviated from their old way of life to embark on their new life in a cult. This is a common denominator between people that join cults and people that join the Islamic State that can not be ignored. This alone of course; is not enough to motivate a solid indicator connecting the two phenomena. It is, however, enough to investigate the possibilities.

If we can find a true connection\(^{51}\) between individuals that join cults and individuals that join the Islamic State it would broaden the possibilities for future generalisation and assist in our search for answers as there can be found quite a lot of research conducted on cults; as opposed to research done in the field of the Islamic State.

**Chosen cults**

For this comparison I have chosen the following cults: the Church of Scientology, the Peoples Temple and Livets ord (The word of life). These cults have been chosen due to the different, obvious, similarities between them and the Islamic State. For example Livets ord carry religious manipulation, the Peoples Temple represent brutality and self sacrifice and the scientologists is a big movement with advanced recruiting strategies. These similarities are fairly obvious to us but there could very well exist others, not yet uncovered similarities. I am not excluding the significance of other religious movements that are not mentioned in this essay; however, due to the limitations in time- and space I have been forced to focus on three specific cults and sects. Due to the obvious similarities, combined with the amount of information that exist about these movements, I have concluded that these will make fine examples for use in this paper.

**The Peoples Temple**

The Peoples Temple; may be one of the worlds most infamous sects and is the very organisation behind the Jonestown murder-suicide of November 1978. A pseudo-christian church under the leadership of pastor Jim Jones.

James "Jim" Jones was seen, not only by himself but also, by the members of the Peoples Temple as the embodiment of a returned Jesus Christ. A fact that had been imprinted in to Jones mind from an early age by his esteemed mother, Lynetta Putnam Jones. A stand she would embrace until her very own meeting with Saint Peter.\(^{52}\)

Pastor Jones spent a large portion of his youth studying the leadership of famous leaders such as Hitler and Ghandi; being intrigued with the art of leadership. During this time Jones also became fascinated, if not obsessed, with theological teachings. Jones later noted that he had felt like an outcast in school and the rest of his community. People who knew Jones during this time describes that he always said he was underprivileged. "Born on the wrong side of the tracks" as Jones himself

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\(^{51}\) Several possible corresponding incitaments for joining

put it. This is in fact not true, The Joneses weren’t in a much worse out economic situation than anyone else around them. Jones is said to have viewed the ministers of the different churches he visited as being great leaders with almost unlimited power; and that this really appealed to young Jim.

Jones later became involved in a small congregation where he was working on recruiting new members. The daughter of a former Peoples Temple’s member, June Cordell, recalls that Jones used to recruit new members to the church by offering an all inclusive existence. During this time blacks in America were still excluded from the white community and not seen as equals in the eyes of many Americans. Jones saw an opening in this ill-treatment of blacks and promised inclusion, friendship and respect in return for their devotion to the church.

In 1954 Jones left his current employer to form his own church, which eventually became the Peoples Temple.

To reach out to as many people as possible the Peoples Temple hosted a radio show where they often spoke about that they offered salvation, not only to whites but also to the righteous black community. The show was really popular, in the mid- to late 50s and a former listener recalls that Jones often asked for funding for his church, and since people realised that the radio show needed funds to operate; they weren't afraid to donate to the cause.

Jones was a great recruiter, one that any army recruitment office would be proud of. He often used compassion for the weak and the greater purpose of God as a lever when he travelled around America to recruit new members.

In a letter to a former member, Earl Jackson, we get an insight of what kind of methods Jones used to persuade his subjects to stay in the church: "My beloved brother in Christ... Earl you will be making a serious mistake if you leave the temple that God have ordained and declared you to be a part of. ...if you leave the place that Christ has set you in, much sorrow and heartache will be the result." Jones clearly use inclusion, importance of keeping true to religion and the fear of God's wrath as a weapon to keep Jackson in the church. Jones and the Peoples Temple had grown to include over 4000 members and dismay grew in the surrounding community. Family members to those indoctrinated within the Peoples Temple began to speak up. This occurrence made Jones move the peoples temple to Ukiah, California in 1965. The members followed Jones as they were told that California was a lot more accepting of their way of life, and more accepting towards blacks. Rebecca Moore, a relative to a former member, recalls that California was told to be the place to - "implement the dream of racial equality ".

As the temple kept growing, Jones started to enquire members assets. Houses, stock, life savings and retirement-checks were donated to the church. In return members would get menial jobs on the Temple grounds, food, a roof over their head and above all; salvation.

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53 Ibid. Page 3.
54 Ibid. Page 4.
56 Ibid. Page 7.
57 Ibid. Page 8.
To apply an even greater attachment to the temple; Jones started to heal peoples illnesses. He would offer healing to those who could not walk or had cancer or were blind. If you were true to his teachings that is. Members who spoke up against something or implicated that they wanted something that pastor Jones did not give them, got punished with beatings or forced labor and little sleep. According to former members the healing and compassion shown by Jones allowed them to forgive or even believe that they had earned punishment when it was distributed.

As time passed Pastor Jones started to act more and more like an autocratic ruler; testing the loyalty of his congregation. Deborah Layton, a former member, recounts that everyone was told to stay after a sermon at the church. Once the sermon was over Jones told everyone to stand in a line and drink poison; for the time had come to end our lives. Everyone did what they were told and afterwards Jones said that it was just all a test. This testimony proves the devotion members had to their messiah. Jim Jones could actually tell people to commit suicide and get people to line up for it. And members would not just line up and drink the faux poison; but they would stay true to the congregation afterwards.

After the loyalty tests Jones slowly started to turn the members against the outside world. With stories about how everyone wanted to crush their movement with government assassination attempts against himself and other members. Now, Jones said, everyone had to stay really true to the cause; if not, evil would prevail.

In December of 1975 the Peoples Temple set sail towards Guyana. A heaven on earth within the rainforest of South America. The new settlement was named Jonestown as a tribute to the Peoples Temple messiah and over the next following couple of years more and more members of the congregation came to live there. As time passed Jones became more and more controlling, dishing out punishments and raising himself up as the only true prophet of salvation. In the summer of 1978 Jones started to become insane according to surviving members. However the members still remained faithful to their diety. In fact, many members defended Joneses actions to the very last moment. In a letter found in Jonestown after the murder-suicide, Peoples Temple member Annie Moore wrote: “…Jonestown, the most peaceful, loving community that ever existed. Jim Jones the one who made this paradise possible.” in Annies opinion the members of the Peoples Temple died not because of Joneses insanity; but rather because of the insanity of the world outside the Peoples Temple.

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58 Ibid. Page 12.
59 Ibid. page 13.
60 Ibid. Page 18.
62 Figure of speech, they actually flew.
64 Ibid. Page 31.
At a special sermon on November 18th, 1978, Pastor Jones revealed his plan of mass suicide. Jones speech was met with applause and roaring cheers.65

A total of 900 people died on that November day in 1978; almost 300 of them were children.

- "We didn’t commit suicide; we committed an act of revolutionary suicide protesting the conditions of an inhumane world.” Jim Jones

Livets ord (The word of life)

In 1983 a swedish man, carrying the name of Ulf Ekman, returns from Tulsa, Oklahoma, after meeting with the american Revival movement. With the blueprints in-hand Ekman started what would become one of the most well known sects in Swedish history; Livets ord (The Word of life).6667

At first Livets ords main function was to educate people through bible studies. But it became apparent that it was not Ekmans intentions. Early on in the 1980s Livets ord got hit hard by a media storm relating to their seemingly odd sermons. Ekmans congregation practised the art of talking in tongs and prayer through false birth.68 Former members testify that the very ecstatic form of the sermons, the social integration of religion and the faith of other members made them susceptible to Ekmans very strict view of the Christian biblical texts.69

When studying Livets ord it pretty soon becomes evident that they practise recruitment and management by fear. Not fear of the congregation, even though members who fail to fall in line gets punished, but rather the fear of everything outside of the church. A lot of the teachings of Livets ord involves Angels and Demons. God is great; the devil is bad; and as long as you stay with us, play by our rules and pray a lot; the devil can not touch you. It is also preached by the ministers of Livets ord that all other religious movements are evil and under the control of demons and bad people doing satans bidding. And the only way to salvation is to follow the teachings of Ulf Ekman.70

The congregation under Ekmans control is not only about fear of the outside world; however, it is also about friendship, belonging, healing and spreading the word of God, or Ekman, to save the world from the legions of hell.71

65 Ibid. Page 36.
67 Livets ord is, since 2013, under the control of Reverend Joakim Lundqvist.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid. Page 137.
71 Ibid. Page 19, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 137, 138, 139, 140.
Per Kornhall, a former member of Livets ord, says that during his 17 years with the sect he was never allowed to make decisions by himself and that his entire way of life was dictated by Ekman and the congregation. This did not seem odd to Per since the teachings along with the greater purpose of his life and his friends within the congregation all had the same idea of how life should be.\textsuperscript{72}

In their mission; Livets ord take great advantage of their schools that cater to all ages. Parents have the chance to send their children to schools controlled by Livets ord as early as elementary school.\textsuperscript{73} Testimonies from these schools reveal teachers laughing at Darwin’s theory of evolution and treating biblical creation as a scientific truth.\textsuperscript{74}

### The Church of Scientology

The Church of Scientology or The scientologists, is probably the most famous cult in the world. And it owes much of that fame to members like Tom Cruise and John Travolta who continuously pledge their allegiance to its cause and its founder, L Ron Hubbard.

The Church of Scientology build their faith upon what they believe to be a scientific approach to the human spirit, or Thethan. They believe that once the individual has achieved a certain level of understanding of the thethan and the world that surrounds us all; the individual can separate herself from the body and achieve an external state of mind. They also believe that a space overlord named Xenu sent aliens to earth 75 billion years ago; using earth, or Teegeeach, as a prison planet of sorts. As many other cults the Church of Scientology claim to have the keys to the big questions of life, purpose and everything. Therefore the only way to achieve this is by staying with the scientologists.\textsuperscript{75}

As other religious or quasi religious movements the Church of Scientology claims to posses the key to not only the truth but to eternal life, through the Thethan. When David Miscavige, Scientology leader since Hubbard stepped down, announced the death of Commander Hubbard he proclaimed that Hubbard was so far in to his studies about the Thethan and externalisation of the same; that Hubbard had made the choice to leave the prison that was his earthly body. And as the congregation rejoiced over this miracle; Miscavige announced a new era of enlightenment within the Church.\textsuperscript{76}

After reading the *Fundamentals of thought*, at least the first five chapters, it is not hard to understand why one would find fascination in this so called scientific approach to religion and spirituality. As many other movements Scientology begins by offering individuals help with their problems; a method of helping one self. And at first it seems logical and sane and the arguments hold up fairly well. Throughout the book Hubbard claims to have scientific evidence for what he says and that may sway people towards his point of view. The goal of Scientology; Hubbard says,

\[\text{Ibid. Page 19.}\]
\[\text{Livets ord fostrar elever till lydnad. Svenska Dagbladet. 2002-01-15.}\]
\[\text{Kornhall, Per. 2010. Page 186.}\]
\[\text{Gibney, Alex. Documentary, *Going clear: Scientology and the prison of belief*, 2015.}\]
"is making the individual capable of living a better life in his own estimation and with his fellows and the playing of a better game"77
So far so good.

The claims however become more and more unbelievable as the book continues and Hubbard claims to have found evidence of the existence of a human soul, spirit or in his words thethan. A scientific breakthrough of colossal proportion that Hubbard claims no other scientists could ever accomplish, since they did not have the method of scientology.78

Former members of the Church testify that they felt a sort of inner peace and calm when they read the fundamentals of thought and its predecessor Dianetics79. Since they felt that they were lacking something in their lives and were in a state of passive search for answers and meaningfulness they felt comforted when they were approached with this scientific method of explaining life, the universe and everything80. Many members also felt that combining the search for knowledge and purpose with the great social aspect achieved when entering the society of scientologists were a big factor of their decision to join.81

The members of the Church go through a system of progression, the bridge82, on their way to enlightenment. Every step requires more indoctrination, auditing83, and a hefty sum of donations. As one travels across the bridge the traveller gets told more and more truths about scientology, life and spirituality. Until; the level of OT VIII, Operating thethan level eight. The pinnacle of scientological teachings. This is where the member can, supposedly, externalise her soul and enter a state of total spirituality. On the way there the member have already been told about Xenu the space overlord and the prison planet of Teegeeach. This all made sense though since Scientology at the beginning were so believable and self evident; according to former member Sara Goldman, a scientologist for 21 years.84

The church practise a no defence only offence policy towards criticism. During a convention; Miscavige proclaimed that no criticism against Scientology, its members or its leadership should go unpunished; and since 2004 unwillingness or inability to stay completely true to the teachings of Scientology is severely punished. Members are incited to donate all their belongings to the church and cut all social connections to family and friends outside the church. One is free to leave however, all long as they never talk about the church to outsiders or leave any critique what so ever.85

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79 Dianetics was L Ron Hubbards first book in the subject of Scientology.
80 “Explaining life, the universe and everything” was a phrase introduced in the hitchhikers guide to the galaxy but fits well in to summarising the promise given to a newly inducted member of the Church of Scientology.
81 Gibney, Alex. Documentary, Going clear: Scientology and the prison of belief. 2015.
82 In Scientology the ladder or pathway of progression is referred to as The bridge.
83 Auditing is the scientologists equivalency of a catholic confession. The confessor tell the priest or, Auditor, about his or her sins and with this becomes guilt free and free to indulge in his or her spirituality.
84 Gibney, Alex. Documentary, Going clear: Scientology and the prison of belief. 2015.
85 Ibid.
Members of the church stay in the church; seemingly by their own choice although they evidently have to live in a very controlled world without freedom of expression, belongings or thought. Members are made to distance themselves from friends and family and donate their lives to the cause. Still people choose to join and stay within the church. Members that have been punished with forced labor and sent to a special Scientology prison for over one year, rationalise this by saying that they must have done something wrong and probably got what they deserved.\footnote{86}

**How does the Islamic state fit in to this picture?**

One question that quickly arises when you plunge in to these organisations is that they are different in the way of religion. The Peoples Temple and Livets ord are definitely sects due to their derivative nature to Christianity. The scientologists must be classified as a cult since they have their own religion and is not derivative from a church.

Now the question about wether sects and cults are comparable arise. The big difference between the two is that sects usually derive from an already established religion and cults tend to create their own line of faith. This, however, has nothing to do with the type of people, or the incentives they have, who join sects and cults. Max Weber developed the first theory of Church-Sect typology and with Troeltsch extension of the same; the cult typology was created for describing sects that had further developed its faith in to a new line of faith.\footnote{87} This means that we can indeed use cults and sects as the same type of phenomenon in this comparison to the Islamic State as long as we keep in mind that the Islamic State get their beliefs from the Islamic Qu'ran and is not its own religion. Realising this; Let us fel free to use both sources, cults and sects, to enlighten us in our quest.

Let us dig deeper into the *Church Sect* theory. This theory was thought up by Troeltsch and was a comparison between the christian traditions and the sect phenomena. Troeltsch defines churches and sects as being the following: churches are organisations wherein people are born, membership is involuntary. Churches are also inclusive and heterogeneous. Sects are homogeneous and derive from schisms within a faith. The beliefs and practises of sects tend to be much more radical and ethically stricter than their equivalent church. They also constitute an act of protest against the rest of society. Since sects also tend to be very exclusive its’ members often have to meet and maintain certain clear requirements to belong. Members of sects often consider themselves to be an -"elect' group of people specially chosen for salvation".\footnote{88}

Sound familiar? Troeltsch theory catch the true essence that is the Islamic State. While Troeltsch's definition of a church is not completely true, since people can enlist later in life, his definition and explanation of a sect, is more accurate still.

\footnote{86} Ibid.


\footnote{88} Ibid.
Conclusions about life within the Cult-sect sphere

We have seen how the included cults and sects operate and treat their members. We have read about pennisalism, management by fear and manipulation. We have found that members within these organisations commit acts against other individuals that is considered unjust and in many cases illegal by society. We have learned that parents send their children to specialised schools to be indoctrinated into the right system of beliefs; and that parents even send their children to a deliberate death. Above all we have seen the isolation that members of these organisations partake to put up a line of defence towards the outside influence and the outside world. A behaviour that we know is not only occurring in the organisations included in this study.\(^89\)

The allurements of cultural\(^90\) and sect living and research in the field of comprehending cults

So what seem to be the attraction that pull people in to these conformation factories? In Bergers theory about religion and secularisation he suggests that people are drawn to the exchange of commitments between individuals that constitute the group; the Social Aspect. Bergs suggest that abnormality or deviant motivation has nothing to do with the joining of a religious movement.\(^91\) According to the previously mentioned Church-sect theory, originally thought up by Weber; the most important factor of recruitment is the pull-factor of inclusion. Giving people a place to belong and to be a part of something bigger.\(^92\) However; sects tend to be exclusive when it comes to people that won't conform to the organisations wish. This factor creates, or moulds, a community of individuals with the same perspective on life. The Church-sect theory also suggests that one of the most important pull-factors is a strong and charismatic leadership.\(^93\) The leadership is important since it creates a strict, hands on way of life that doesn't really demand an effort from the individual; except following orders.

In the olden days individuals who joined religious movements outside of the established churches, i.e Christianity, Islam, Judaism and so forth, were seen as misfits, poor, uneducated people with a bad outlook on life. This idea have changed drastically through the years. The modern view of who join these movements sten from the relative-deprivation theory, by Glock and the Lofland-Stark model of conversion.\(^94\)

While the Relative-deprivation theory has its origin in older assumptions regarding why someone would join the Cult-sect sphere it does have its more updated insights as well. The idea about the Relative-deprivation itself is interesting as it puts the individuals perceived social status as a reason to join up. The general assumption being that it is only people that are truly deprived that are interested in this way of life.

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\(^90\) Not in its original meaning but rather as; Living in a cult.


\(^92\) Ibid. Page 26, 27.

\(^93\) Ibid.

\(^94\) Ibid. 71.
Glock puts it like this:

"If people think there is a discrepancy between the social rewards they feel entitled to and the rewards they think they are getting or they believe others are getting, and if they do not accept some rational explanation for their deprivation, then there will be an incentive to launch or join a movement that promises change or compensation"95

As Glock suggests it is a question of deprivation, an exclusion from the social group one feels that she belongs to; and the pull-factor that trigger inclusion to that social group.

The Lofland-Stark model introduces the importance of social networks. Claiming that one of the main purposes of why someone aspire to join a cult stem from within their social network.

"Friends recruit friends, family recruit family and neighbours recruit neighbours"96

We can see these recruiting tactics in all our selected study objects, including the Islamic State. The pull in this case being the will to be a part of the friends, families or neighbours social networks.

There is little or no evidence that the decision to join a cult or sect differ from any other social decisions in life. The best explanation, taking in to account all of the above would be that individuals make the decisions that they believe is the best for them at this given time in life. The evidence found so far fortifies this theory as it is clearly shown that individuals are drawn to the promises of inclusion and purpose.

Social psychology

"Who we are as humans has a lot to do with what happens between our ears. What happens between our ears has a lot to do with the social world we traverse, engage, and react to."

Lieberman

One should not feel limited to one field of research if answers may be found in another. For the purpose of this thesis we would be foolish not to seek support for our case within the world of social psychology.

One possible pull-factor represent the combination of empathy and victim. Instilling the belief of a victim, in this case the religious movement, being harmed by someone could trigger an individuals empathy and with that create a need for that individual to engage herself in defending the victim cult.97

95 Ibid. Page 73.
96 Ibid. Page 77.
The study of social rejection, represent another welcome tool from the field of social psychology. This tool helps explain the fear of being rejected, or excluded. According to social psychology the fear of being rejected is along the worst states of mind for a human being. It causes distress and can act as a very strong motivation for conformity and obedience towards authority. This fact also helps explain the pull-factor of social belonging and the belief and purpose offered by many organisations in the Cult-sect sphere.

98 Ibid. Page 168.
5. Analysis

The analysis, discussion and the following conclusions are divided into four parts. *The first* dealing with the conversion from an outsider to a member of the Islamic State. *The second* dealing with the process of conformity of the newly recruited member. *The third* dealing with the Islamic State soldier. The fourth containing conclusions for parts I through III.

As previously stated the scientific theory has been woven into the analysis to provide a better understanding and a clearer picture. Since we are dealing with a number of scientific theories — partly asymmetrical — no simple way is offered to explain and tie the theories to their respective area in any conventional way.
Recruit & Convert
The first step of the analytical process is to provide an idea as to why some individuals decide to undergo the conversion from a seemingly ordinary person's existence to that same person's involvement with the Islamic State.

**Theories**

"Whenever a theory appears to you as the only possible one, take this sign that you have neither understood the theory nor the problem which it was intended to solve”

Karl Popper

The overall aim here is to translate our recent findings into something useful on the subject which our research may benefit from. Working with some of the connections laid bare, between the Islamic State vis-à-vis other phenomena inherent in some cults/sects are indeed helpful for our purposes. It is here submitted that these connections work as tools for decrypting the true causes of enlisting the targeted souls.

As our research has shown up to this point, several theories can be taken in to consideration when approaching this subject.

**The Church-sect theory**

This theory defines the sect and differentiate it from other religious movements such as the traditional major churches, i.e Christianity, Islam, Buddhism etc. The Church-sect theory was originally a work by Max Weber in an attempt to classify religious organisations that deviated from the traditional church. This theory, dated back to 1904, was elaborated on by Troeltsch in 1911.

This theory will help us in our endeavour to find similarities, and eventually make the connection, between what is commonly considered to be cults or sects and the Islamic State.

Troeltsch has made the following description of churches and sects:

**Churches** are organisations wherein people are born and baptised as infants. They tend to be inclusive in the way that everyone is welcome no matter how strong or weak they are in their belief and membership is — typically — voluntary. Churches are also often dogmatic and ritualistic.

**Sects** are exclusionary by nature and the entering into the sect is voluntary. Conversions into sects are usually based on emotional experiences. The beliefs and practises of sects tend to be very strict and more radical than those of traditional churches. Individuals often have to meet certain criteria to maintain their position within the flock. Another peculiarity with sects is that they often drive inspiration and from time to time suffer from volatility.

Troeltsch raises one point in this theory that in more modern schools of thought often is seen as faulty; namely, the fact that people who join sects are underprivileged and derive from a poor, socially depressed background. Our use of this theory however does not falter due to the now outdated thought of the background of individual members. We will find support for that issue within other theories.

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As this theory provide, the definition of what a sect actually is, we will draw use of the entire explanation made by Weber and Troeltsch.

The Relative-deprivation theory

This theory becomes interesting while it analyses the human weakness of want, and the belief of being lesser in comparison to one’s kin. It discusses the issue of deprivation. The Relative-deprivation theory provides us with a more modern look on incentives for joining religious organisations. It might in fact be the most interesting of the theories.

Raised by Glock in the 1960s the Relative-deprivation theory is based on the notion that man is a creature of want and will always strive to be equal to his betters. The theory also raises the point that deprivation doesn’t have to be real as long as it is believed to be real, i.e Relative-deprivation. If one person, rich or poor, believes that his neighbour is richer or happier or more influential than himself he will feel deprived in contrast to that neighbour. Feeling deprived will make this hem more susceptible towards organisations that might bless him with fortune or purpose. The pull towards sects is according to the theory -” ... the promise of reward in the next life...” .

Glock argues that if a person feels that he is being unfairly treated and not getting what he feels that he is entitled to receive, he will have an incentive towards joining a group that provides him with what he lacks.100

This theory is of great value for the propositions of this thesis while it actually provides us with a modern concept for propelling a person to join-up with a Cult-sect organisation. The fact that this theory falls in line with modern day science, regarding socio-economic reasons, only reinforces its importance.

Glock also stress the fact that there may be several different causes to feel deprived, such as, economic, social, psychic or ethi cal deprivation. All are equally valid yet on their own not enough to push an individual to join a Cult-sect organisation. Other conditions must be fulfilled as well according to Glock. The existence of a group that can fulfil this individual’s sensation of deprivation is also a requirement. Further, the introduction to the group by someone that shares some sort of connection to the individual should be present.101

For the purpose of this thesis we will add the presuppositions of; Relative-deprivation, fulfilment of that deprivation by the group and introduction to the group by an individual with a shared connection.

100 Ibid. Page 73.
101 Ibid. Page 74, 75.
The Lofland-Stark model of conversion

The input in this theory, given by John Lofland and Rodney Stark, presents further requirements to be met for an individual to take the leap\textsuperscript{102}. The Lofland-Stark model was endorsed by the association for the Sociology of Religion in an article published in the Oxford Journals. This theory was put to the test in a study conducted on 92 Dutch adolescents and was found to offer an adequate set of conditions of conversion\textsuperscript{103}. Those fellows offer an interesting view of how a convert would U-turn back to society. However, that story can be left to one side for the moment.

The Lofland-Stark model of conversion imply that for an individual to join an organisation within the Cult-sect sphere that same individual must first meet certain criteria. The theory goes on. \textit{Firstly}; the experience of enduring tension in their lives, \textit{Secondly}; this tension must be within a religious problem-oriented perspective, \textit{Thirdly}; these thoughts must lead them to see themselves as a religious seeker, \textit{Fourthly}; the individual must then get in contact with the sect or cult, \textit{Fifthly}; they must then form a bond with at least one of the members, \textit{Sixthly}; the individual must then eliminate relations with those outside the sect or cult, \textit{Lastly}; the convert must uphold a continuous exposure to other members of the organisation.\textsuperscript{104}

Consequently, the combination of these two theories by Lofland, Stark and Glock, give us a set of requirements forming a framework-situation forceful enough to convince our would be convert to take the leap.

The theory discussed so far — taking the before mentioned conditions into account — brings about hands-on requirements that reflect those elusive jump-on, jump-off triggers to join a Cult-sect organism.

The social network theory

In studies conducted on Nichiren Shoshu, a pseudo-buddhist sect, researchers Wilson and Dobbelaere found that only six percent of its followers were recruited through impersonal contacts; such as the media; while ninety-four percent had been recruited by social interactions.\textsuperscript{105} Wilson and Dobbelaere states that the recruitments to cults or sects is mostly being conducted by a simple case of friends recruiting friends, family recruiting family and neighbours recruiting neighbours.

As this study was conducted in 1994, a time before social media, i.e Twitter, Facebook and the likes, it will in these modern times have to be considered that the various social media platforms count towards the case of social interaction.

Again this theory does not go against what we learned so far. The importance of social contacts with members devoted to the cult or sect is supported by all of the above. Lofland and Stark even brings it forth as a requirement.

\textsuperscript{102} The leap; here in the sentence of taking the leap into a sect or cult.


\textsuperscript{104} Dawson, Lorne L. 2006. Page 75, 76.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid. Page 77.
Adding the importance of recruiting through social networks to our quest we reinforce our analytical tools.

The importance of weak social ties

As mentioned by Lofland and Stark in their sixth condition; elimination of external social contacts; this importance is once again brought forth by Bader and Demaris in 1996.

Disproportionate representation of younger members — based on the fact that younger people generally carry less social and economic relationships — since they have not gotten as far in their lives as older individuals. This also means that younger people are not as likely to make as great economic and social losses if they break up from their ongoing path, as older individuals. Bader and Demaris show, through research involving the Unification Church, that people who are in a transitional state carry a greater risk of ending up in a cult or sect.106

The before mentioned idea is also supported by the previously mentioned theories and further paves our path to a greater understanding. Into the fray comes the importance of weak social and economic ties.

The importance of weak ideological alignments

Empirical studies of the world we live in show that individuals who are connected to a strong ideological organisation aren’t likely to deviate from that organisation. Christians are likely to remain Christians no matter what arguments you bring before them; so are Muslims; so are Jews etc. Therefore it is not hard for this author to imagine the importance of having no former ties to strong ideologically oriented organisations when it comes down to joining a cult or sect.

Stark and Bainbridge introduced the thought that unchurched individuals were more keen on joining cults or sects in 1985.107 They prophesize that the lack of prior engagement to religion and family life make young people, or old people for that matter, weaker in resistance towards cults or sects. The lack of involvement in religious movements also provides a gap in understanding of what is to come. This in turn make them eager to find answers to the great questions. Questions that cults or sects often claim to be able to answer. Lofland and Stark term this phenomenon; third condition - seeker-ship-. 

For the sake of this work we note the importance of not being too tied to a conventional ideological organisation.

\[\text{\footnotesize\textsuperscript{106}}\text{Ibid. Page 79.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize\textsuperscript{107}}\text{Ibid. Page 80.}\]
The weight of direct rewards

Mentioned by several scientists throughout the years and mentioned here, we should not shun to state the obvious. The importance of the reward that is bestowed upon the future subject cannot be disregarded. The reward in itself does not have to be a physical item such as suddenly appear good looking or receiving a lot of money. It may as well be heavenly.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who loved him, who have been called according to his purpose"

Romans 8:28

Stark and Bainbridge suggests that Cult-sect organisations sometimes provide, except for affection and a heightened self-esteem, new career paths, social- or monetary aid.108

In Social Capital and the Creation of Human Capital James Coleman speaks of social capital as a way of creating obligations and expectations from individuals. A group with a certain idiom can instil this idiom on new members; thus creating obligations and expectations towards the new member. This in turn, says Coleman, creates incentive to commit certain actions.109 Coleman insights further strengthen the idea of the weight of direct rewards.

Hence, the obvious importance of the direct rewards.

The emotional retardation theory

In her studies of the Unification Church, Eileen Barker found that the members often came from well respected families with happy upbringings. They also often received encouragement from their parents and achieved well in school. What she noted as abnormal, however, was their emotional development. The individuals subjected to her study seemed to have a somewhat retarded emotional state. Not having gone through the emotional crisis one usually face whilst a teenager; these individuals had their crisis much later in life.

Barker suggests that this late emotional development made the subjects see the hardships of work or university as much worse than those who had indeed gone through the emotional crisis in their teens. Broken down by the disappointment of society these individuals were drawn towards life within the Unification church.110

This theory emphasise the importance of a weak psyche or weak emotional stoutness. We will keep with us this argument both because it strengthens our case.

108 Ibid. Page 81.
110 Ibid. Page 90.
The theory of compliance and social judgement

We may also ask ourselves why someone would comply to a way of living that clearly puts him or her in harms way. Since this was not something the individual did in his or her previous life; we understand that there has been a change of heart along the line.

In Foundations of Social Theory author Coleman exemplifies this through the research of social psychologist Asch; showing that one individuals perceptions of a phenomenon can be altered through another individuals perceptions of the same phenomenon if presented to that individual.111

The claim that ones perception of things is interchangeable is also proven by the research of Muzafer Sherif through the social judgement theory. Sherif show us that one individuals judgement easily may be altered by the references provided to them by others.112

Acknowledging the fact that the individual must change his or her point of view on the world through perceptual change, this theory explain how that change occur. Bearing in mind that one individual is indeed susceptible to another persons influence and therefore prone to changing his or her judgement.

This susceptibility becomes apparent when someone may suddenly act in an abnormal manner having been involved with a cult or sect for some time. It may also add to the understanding of why convert suddenly is prepared to use force against someone of opposite views.

Theoretical summary

"probability is expectation founded upon partial knowledge. A perfect acquaintance with all the circumstances affecting the occurrence of an event would change expectation into certainty, and leave neither room nor demand for a theory of probabilities”

George Boole

In combination, the different theories referred to give a fairly clear picture of the necessities required for an individual to take the step.. nay, the leap.. from a normal safe life onto a life filled with secrecy, hardships, murder and sometimes; slave-like conditions. The theories chosen for this study are chosen due to the fact that they are of importance. They give a clear picture and they are supported by the broad scientific society. Those theories that have been left out have been left out while they are too similar compared to the already chosen ones. "These outsiders” lack the same support from academia.

Along the road we have collected key elements from several theories that together provide us with a picture of what kind of person gets him or herself involved with an organisation within the Cult-sect sphere.

112 Ibid.
We carry forward the following key ingredients that constitute a true child of God.

**One;** the person should suffer a self-perceived state of deprivation.

**Two;** the person should believe that the target group can mend that deprivation.

**Three;** the person should have experienced enduring tension in his or her life.

**Four;** the person should be a religious seeker.

**Five;** the person should not have a strong tie to a conventional ideological organisation.

**Six;** the person should have weak social and economic ties.

**Seven;** the person should experience that he or she will receive a direct reward for joining.

**Eight;** the person should be in a weak emotional state.

**Nine;** the person should be susceptible to another persons influence and by that also prone to changing his or her judgement.

If the individual fulfil these criteria that individual must then be approached by someone that shares a connection with the individual. Most likely someone from within that persons social network.

**Conclusions from the stage of recruitment and conversion**

By now we have constructed a template, consisting of nine characteristics, drawn from various scientific theories. This template show us the collective academic reaction to a person who is likely to join an organisation within the Cult-sect sphere. The support for these theories are strong and the theories themselves validate each other.

Using the Church-sect theory we may hereinafter hold that enough scientific support confirm the link of similarity between the Cult-sect sphere and the Islamic state. Therefore we will no longer be talking about the Cult-sect sphere at all, but rather focus on the Islamic state, as such.

**The Archetype** individual, who will most likely join the Islamic state, then; *either has had an upbringing that was worse than those of his or her peers; or perceived by the individual that way. The individual also consider her self to be underprivileged and deprived by society. She did not have any ideological ties prior to being introduced to the interpretations of the Qu’ran; made by the Islamic State. She was also lacking economic or social ties; such as work, a mortgage and lacking a broad network of close friends. She recently became a religious seeker due to some kind of life crisis that was unanswered by her current society. The individual is also susceptible to other peoples influence due to a weak emotional state of mind. And she was recently approached, either through a friend or through social networks, by an Islamic State supporter.*

Besides enabling us a sound overview and a far better understanding as to why someone converts; the conversion stage also paves the way for what is coming next; *conformity.*
II

Conformity
Having explained why someone joins the Islamic State; The next step will investigate what makes an individual stay within the Islamic state? We know that IS-members suffer much under the unified Islamic law and social practices upheld by the Caliph as any outsider. Many still remain.

The theories in part I teach us that; to remain within the organisation crave additional criteria upon those who have converted. **The convert needs to eliminate external relationships and to keep a continuous exposure visavi other members of the organisation.** The convert also needs to be **able to operate according to the organisations expectations.** These are valid points that we can carry forward down the line. However, yet more elements of interest crave examining.

**Theories**

- "By building relations we create a source of love, personal pride and belonging that makes living in a chaotic world easier."
  
  Susan Lieberman

**Social connections**

The behaviour of social grouping, it seems, is deemed to be one of the strongest pull-factors deeply imbedded in the human condition. Any person will go a great length to connect to, or to please, a social group. In an article in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, *Walton, Cohen, Cwir* and *Spencer* describe an experiment that concludes that any existence, even social connections with a remote nature, between the people within the experiment had an effect on the persons self-perception.  

The will to belong can persuade the convert do things that he or she would not have done in a pre convert period. The importance of the will to belong gains strength from the works of *Walton, Cohen, Cwir and Spencer.* For us; this point is important because it describes an incentive for staying within the Islamic state. **Even though the convert might, early on, oppose a policy; the convert is likely to change his or her mind when upon realising this is necessity to endure within the group.**

**Conformity**

Very much built upon the idea of social connections and belongingness; conformity has its natural place among the arguments of a continuous membership. Conformity, then, is when an individual transform his or hers ways, actions, attitudes, behaviour patterns etc, to match those of the other members. Conformity acts as a compass of sorts. The individuals ability to conform with the norms of society makes him or her more suitable to belong in that society. However, conformity also change the individual to **actually become** more like the surrounding members.

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113 Walton, Gregory M; Cohen, Geoffrey L; Cwir, David; Spencer, Steven J. *Mere belonging: The power of social connections.* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. Vol 102(3) 2012-03.

114 Belongingness is the emotional human need to be an accepted member of a group. Fiske, Susan T.

To reiterate; conformity help to explain why some people suddenly seem to have completely changed their ways that does not fit their earlier persona. The concept of conformity explain why converts remain within their new group as they are now living according to new ideals, new attitudes and behavioural patterns.

**Acceptance and rejection**

The feeling of contributing to a group is undisputedly important for a person. When friends laugh at a joke, e.g or one among them manages to fix something, the Group once again can enjoy the machine. As we all know and appreciate the feeling of being accepted; we also recognise the feeling of rejection. Buckley, Winkle and Leary -in a series of two experiments- explain that the test subjects submitted to rejection evolved greater anger and sadness than those submitted to constant acceptance.\(^{116}\) **Being in a group where there is a consensus of thought and appreciation for the actions of the recently converted is therefore likely to get the convert to remain within the group.** Even more so if the world view of the convert-grouping thoroughly divert from that of the outside world.

**Depression**

As the feeling of acceptance is likely to make the individual feel happier and give the individual a sense of worth within a group; rejection and exclusion is likely to create a state of depression. In an article by Steger and Kashdan they conclude that individuals who are in a depressed state get a greater sense of well-being when they belong to a group. The studies show that people who suffer from depression have stronger sensitivity towards both acceptance and rejection.\(^{117}\) As made clear earlier in this thesis; people who suffer from depression and who feel excluded are more likely to join up with the Islamic State. Therefore the studies of Steger and Kashdan fits well with the scheme of the mindset of those who decide to remain within the fortified walls of the Caliphate. **Once again the exclusion, at least for these individuals, create such a psychologically burdensome state of mind that rejection isn’t an option. -Making them more keen to linger within the organisation.**

**Brainwashing**

The issue of brainwashing is a classic explanation as to why converts choose to remain within their preferred organisation. Although perceived by the bigger part of the scientific community to be a simple way to whitewash their own actions. It is not all together dismissible. However, the judicial system have deemed cult brainwashing as scientifically implausible\(^ {118}\). Thus we cannot; not fully dismiss concept of brainwashing, but deem it implausible.

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The fear of repercussions

Mentioned in the part examining the Church of Scientology, there are, in certain cases, an underlying fear of repercussions. We can also see an open threat towards members who choose to deviate from the organisations laws or policies. In the Islamic State, brutality is not something reserved for those who, from the outside, oppose the regime. Brutality is also very much something exerted against those who fall from grace. Previously I pointed to a case regarding an Islamic State executioner who was beheaded because he did not follow the laws of the proclaimed Caliphate. Another case visited earlier on was that of the women of the Khansaa brigade who punished women who broke the laws of the Caliphate, whether voluntary IS members, or not. It has proven hard to find quotes from Islamic State members who speak about the fear of repercussions. **That there is an understanding among the members about what is to happen to those who oppose the Caliph is undisputed.**

Religious ties the importance of Islam

The importance of religion in the case of the Islamic State should also be undisputed. Those who claim that religion plays no part in the Caliphate, or to those who join the Caliphate, evidently did not read interviews with members of the Islamic State. They also haven’t read any issues of Islamic State run newspaper *Dabiq*. More or less all communiques from the Islamic State contain some sort of divine message. The members of the State almost always refer to the role that Islam played in their mind when deciding whether to join or not. In fact, those interviewed who claim to not fully agree with the brutal methods performed in the Islamic States war against the west; still consider the growth of the Umma and the extermination of infidels to be reason enough to fight along side the caliph. **As with other organisations within the Cult-sect sphere the Islamic state has a pull factor that unites its members. That pull-factor seem to be Islam and the hate against those believed to violate it.**

Theoretical summary

Conclusions from the stage of conformity

As of now, our convert subject feel loyal towards the Islamic State as if it were the converts birthplace. From now on the policies of the Islamic State are not just the policies and ideals of the Islamic State. They are in fact the policies and ideals of the convert. Now, things boil down to defending those ideals from being violated.

The convert who became a loyalist will stay on because it makes him feel good. The loyalist is consumed by the fact that other members are depending on his skills and social contributions. The fact that the loyalist has a clear place, a purpose within the Islamic State, carry major importance to his will to remain within the Caliph’s good grace. Fear of repercussions play a natural part as well, as it would in any society.

The loosely put together group of people from all over the world has now become a closely knit band of Brothers and Sisters who are quite ready to defend and be part of the Islamic State. They have undergone a process of conviction and intricate social schemes. They have come to share the same values and the same goals. They will not only fight for each other; they will die for each other.
In the works of Plato, he has an interesting approach to conceptions of the mind. In his work the Republic, he presents us with a conundrum commonly referred to as the Allegory of the cave.

In his story Plato narrates the alleged dialogue between his brother Glaucoma and Plato’s teacher, Socrates. The story depict the life of people who were born in a cave, chained to a wall, forced to watch a wall who had shadowy projections projected on it. Since this was the only picture of reality the cave dwellers knew, this was also their conception of reality. Plato goes on to tell us about a prisoner that gets freed and put outside the cave. Since he had been living in the cave his entire life his eyes hurt and his sight was blurred when he stepped out in to the light. If he then was told that the blurred things he was now watching was the true form that cast the shadows in the cave; he would not believe it; for the shadows in the cave was a lot clearer. After awhile the former prisoner vision would get accustomed to the world outside the cave and came to believe this was in fact the true world.

The former prisoner who now have seen the beauty of the real world will naturally want to bring his fellow prisoners out to watch the beauty. But when the former prisoner returns to the cave, he is blind; because the cave is dark and his eyes are now accustomed to the light. The other prisoners will believe that the outside world have hurtled their companion and would refuse to step out themselves. Plato goes on to tell us that the prisoners would be so afraid of the outside world that they would try to kill anyone who tried to force them to leave cave.

Such could also be the case within the Islamic State. Those who have grown accustomed to the dark life within the Caliphate, and it’s projected truths, and see it as the true conception of the world; would naturally eliminate those who try to demolish their comprehension of the world and bring them out in to the harmful light.
III

The warmongers
We have explored the reasons behind why one would convert into this line of thought. We have also explored the reasons behind why someone would choose to stay within the grace of the Islamic State. One question remains unanswered. Why would someone choose to fight for the Caliphate? It must be considered a difference between those who join the state to aid, teach or in any other way support the government machine and those who choose to be on the front lines and take up arms for the caliph.

**Theory**

- "There is a fuzzy but real distinction that can and I believe should be made, between patriotism, which is attachment to a way of life, and nationalism, which is the insistence that your way of life deserves to rule over other ways of life.”
  
  Todd Gitlin

**Religious nationalism - the hypothesis**

Based upon the ideas explored and the conclusions made this far; the idea of religious nationalism appears as a possible explanation as to why someone would actually take part in an Islamic State military offensive against the world.

Rogers Brubaker raises an interesting point as he suggested that religion can indeed be a cause of, or explanation to, nationalism. According to Brubaker religious motifs, narratives and symbols can very well be the foundations of nationalism. In fact, there are several scientific works that suggests that religious motifs and symbols were incorporated into the political sphere and contributed to create nationalism. Brubaker cites Smith and refers to this as *ethnic election*. Brubaker also points to the Jewish symbols, motifs and texts as a major player in sixteenth and seventeenth century political struggles in England and the Netherlands. Brubaker once again goes back to Smith as he says that religious texts, motifs, symbols and narratives are "*deep cultural resources*” that "*provides the basic and ideological building blocks for nationalists*".119

Religion intertwined with politics, can according to Brubaker, contribute to the creation of nationalism in three ways. The creation of social and political relationships founded on common cultural and religious ties; promoting a universal language and bringing policy and religion closer together.120

Through the religiously governed state the members get a direct line between individual, government and God. With clear laws and policies to follow and a regimented way of thinking; shared between all the members.

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120 Ibid. Page 8.
The idea of an intertwined religious and political structure is by no means a new idea. There are several religiously governed nations in the world today. Israel and Iran might be two of the most common examples and the Zionist movement in Israel serves as an example of Jewish nationalism.\textsuperscript{121}

**Nationalism**, according to Brubaker, "centrally involves a distinctive organisation of sameness and difference: nationalist ideology demands — and nationalist social, political and cultural process tend to generate — cultural homogeneity within political unites and cultural homogeneity between them."\textsuperscript{122}

Nationalism can very well exist without the boundaries of a regular state. Especially when the common denominator is religion. "A nation may just as well be composed of all, and only those, who belong to a certain religion", Brubaker says. He exemplifies this with Sikh and Jewish nationalism.\textsuperscript{123} In the case examined in this thesis the nation is described by the Islamic state as the Umma, governed by the Caliphate. And very much follow the model described by Brubaker.

Religiously governed nations often use religion to regulate public and private life as well as rules relating to the individual members behaviour and social policy.\textsuperscript{124}

Based on the theory regarding religious nationalism by Rogers Brubaker; the third and final part of this journey to enlightenment, and understanding of the Islamic State, will try the hypothesis that the Islamic state warriors motivation, indeed, is a case of religious nationalism.

Rather than a simple case of fanatical, religious, persuasion, a view often conveyed by those who have none or little understanding of the social phenomena behind Cult-sect culture.

\textsuperscript{121} Herzl, Theodor. The Jewish state. M. Breitenstein's Verlags-Buchhandlung. Leipzig 1896.

\textsuperscript{122} Brubaker, Rogers. 2012. page 10.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid. Page 11.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid. Page 18.
Divine intervention

"I kick ass for the lord"


As material for this part of the thesis I have used interviews with and testimonies from Islamic State soldiers and articles from Dabiq.

Together with what we have already found out, while observing our convert, the interviews with Islamic State soldiers, plus articles written by Islamic State journalists, we put the hypothesis of religious nationalism presented to us by Rogers Brubaker, to the test.

Defending one’s nation, ideals and culture

In an article named Kill the Imams of Kufr\textsuperscript{125}, in the Islamic State news magazine Dabiq, a clear picture of the motivation is painted. The death sentences of several Islamic State jihadists was announced by a court in Saudi Arabia on the 29th of December 2015. The event is described in the article as a crime against muslim ideology by western agents (The royal family of Saudi Arabia). The Dabiq writer says that - ”... their only crime was preaching tawhid\textsuperscript{126} and waging jihad in the path of Allah.”

The article continues to belittle Saudi Arabia and claim that they are guilty to slandering Islam. The writer also aims critique against the Saudis friendship with the United States, calling for action from the fighting brothers of the Islamic state.

- ”They are undoubtedly mushrikīn, and Allah said, { Then kill the mushrikīn wherever you find them} [At-Tawbah: 5].”
- ”Indeed it was already obligatory to spill the blood of these palace scholars, for they had apostatised years ago, defending and supporting the tāghūt in the war against Islam. However, the reason to kill them now is even greater…”

The message of this article is clear, the ideals of the Islamic State and Caliph Ibrahims Islam must be defended. It has been attacked by the unfaithful in what the author highlights as an obvious assault against the Islamic way of life.\textsuperscript{127}

Even if there is a large discrepancy between different ways of muslim life. The Islamic States way of life is true to all of those within the organisation. The articles journalist is not calling for a hateful non-motivated attack against an innocent bystander. He is calling for those who believe to defend that which they believe in; from an obvious assault.

The author is promoting cultural homogeneity, one of Brubaker’s sings of nationalism.

\textsuperscript{125} Kufr, Those who operate from the shadows.

\textsuperscript{126} Tawid is the belief of one monotheistic God.

In an interview with a former Islamic State soldier, the CNN has uncovered some of the motivations fighting for the Caliphate.

The man interviewed is in his 20s and says that the fighters -“marry ideology”. This is interesting as it is the same as claimed by the Islamic State magazine *Dabiq*. If we are to believe the former holy warrior of the Caliphate, the soldiers share the vision of the Caliph and are therefore willing to fight, or die to protect their ideals.\(^{128}\)

In another article from the Islamic State run magazine *Dabiq*; the author updates the readers regarding recently conducted military operations.

”... operations conducted by the mujahidin of the Islamic State that have succeeded in expanding the territory of the Khilafah, or terrorising, massacring, and humiliating the enemies of Allah.”

Yet again it is clear that the Islamic State warriors wage war under the Islamic banner. Defending ideals that play a large part in their lives. The Islam connected to the Islamic State may very well be that of al-Baghdadis interpretations; but the ideals are religious none the less.

The article goes on naming several military operations aimed at civilians who, due to their work, were mocking Allah. The way of Allah must be allowed to rule, the writer says.\(^{129}\)

The warriors of al-Baghdadis state repeatedly proves their religious stance and conviction by *using religion to regulate public and private life*; another of Brubaker’s signs of nationalism.\(^{130}\)

The promotion of patriotism and a sense of national pride, is through Islamic State media, constantly projected upon the Caliphates population.

”The best shuhada\(^{131}\) are those who fight in the front ranks. They do not turn their faces aside until they are killed.”

In another article the Islamic State shower praise over Abu Muharib al-Muhajir, better known in western media, as Jihad-John, as one of the most prominent fights for the worthy cause of Allah. According to Dabiq; al-Muhajir spent his days living in London where he grew to hate the false ways of the europeans and the way that they had slandered the golden age of Allah that al-Muhajir was accustomed to from his birth place in the Arabian Peninsula.

This article is aimed at raising the ideals of the Islamic State above those of the west by presenting them in the form of a local Islamic State hero, Jihad-John. All through his life, al-Muhajir, was able to obtain great wonders for the Islamic State.


\(^{129}\) A selection of military operations conducted by the Islamic state. Dabiq. Issue 13. 2015.

\(^{130}\) Brubaker, Rogers. 2012. page 18.

\(^{131}\) Shuhada is a holy warrior or holy warriors.
"Despite the efforts of the MI5, Abu Muharib never ceased in his struggle to make hijrah for the sake of Allah."[132]

Authors from Dabiq magazine goes on.

"The Ummah today has been afflicted by the treacherous, apostate rulers and leaders who have even violated the rights of Allah in addition to the rights of his tradition."

The Islamic State is very good at bringing forth the enemies violation of the Caliphates ideology. The same ideology that the soldier of the mujahidin are sworn to protect.

"... it is known that the authority of these rulers is invalid, and that it is obligatory to oppose them and wage war against them."

In the same article - the authority as Allahs army on earth - is bestowed upon the mujahidin and listening to and unifying around the word of Allah gives them monopoly on Jihad against those who will not gather under the Islamic rule of the Caliph Ibrahim.[133]

Again the Caliphates newspaper brings forth the defence of ideology and the protection of the Islamic nation as a divine purpose for the mujahidin. Of course it is not without first speaking of the horrors that would face those who fail to follow the holy word of Allah. It is apparent that the ideology of al-Baghdadis Islam is fed to the members of the Caliphate as the only acceptable policy; and it seem apparent also that the soldiers of the mujahidin willingly share this world view.

In an article in The nation, Doctor Lydia Wilson of Artis International travel to Iraq to interview captured soldiers of the Islamic State.

The young man doctor Wilson first interviews gives few answers, but she finds out that the man has two children, Rasuul and Rusil, meaning, prophet and prophet in its plural form. This, says doctor Wilson show that Islam plays a central role in this young mans life. The young man says that he only fought for the Caliphate for the money, to provide for the family; others, however, might have done it for beliefs. Wether or not this is because this boy is in prison condemned to die for his involvement with the islamic state we will not hypothesise about. But the thought can not be dismissed.

Doctor Wilson would later find out that the boy was found and proven guilty of several car bombs that killed a lot of people and weakened the cities ability to fight the Islamic State.

Doctor Wilson says that she also found in her journey interviewing Islamic State soldiers that they are not necessarily tied to the harsh Islamic faith connected to the Islamic State, but other practise other Islamic beliefs. They are however convinced that Islam is important to life and society and that the need and right of an Islamic State is true.

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Answering a question about what truly motivated the boy; he says to Doctor Wilson and her colleague

"The americans came, they took away Saddam but they also took away our security. I did not like Saddam, we were starving then, but at least we did not have war."

Other interviewees tell their story of suffering during the occupation of America; growing up during humiliating forms in constant fear of repercussions and without freedom to live by their ideals.

They are not fueled by the idea of the Islamic State itself; but rather that the Islamic State offer security, order and dignity. The Islamic State offer: "the promise of living in pride as Iraqi Sunni Arabs, which is not just a religious identity but cultural, tribal and land-based..."[134]

The research of Doctor Wilson and the article of The Nation enforces the belief that the men and women fighting for the Islamic State is indeed fighting for the ideals they believe is true and right. The idea of a country of their own, a nation and the right to security and to practise their beliefs without harassment.

The necessity to agree with the nations leadership is not true to nationalism. The desire for a nation with a regimented thinking regarding religion, culture and politics, is.[135] Even though some of doctor Wilsons interviewees did not fully agree with the Islamic states ways of waging war, they still saw it as a necessity to achieve their goal of an Islamic State.

In an article in The Rudaw, Amir Ahmed Ali, a captured Islamic State soldier who finds himself in custody is interviewed regarding his thoughts about the Islamic State.

Amir says that he was indeed a muslim with a strong faith before joining the Islamic State and that he saw the Islamic State as the only viable option for the middle east. He does not believe that Islam should oppress anyone, but that anyone outside the Islamic State should convert to Islam. Regardless of their own will. Jihad is a necessity to rid the world of infidels like the Christians. Although Amir admits that he thought that many of the fatwas ordered by the emirs of the Caliphate were extreme he and his brothers followed them directly without question. Amir claims that he was brainwashed to join the mujahidin, but says that he would still join Jihad to rid the world of infidels.[136]

Once again the interviewee claims to not fully agree with the leadership — he even claims to have been brainwashed — he still feel obligated to rid the world of infidels and wage Jihad in the name of Allah to secure an Islamic State, which is noteworthy.


[136] ISIS fighter: we wanted to take over the world. Rudaw. 2015-03-30. (http://rudaw.net/english/interview/300320151) 2016-03-01
In an article aimed at shaming the ways of the west; Umm Sumayyah al-muhajirah writes that the westerners looks down on muslims for having more than one wife when in fact polygamy is part of western societies history.

One might not find this article to be very important; however, it does show the hypocrisy that the Caliphates Brothers see in western societies. The west is seen as an empire operating through false gods and trying undermine Islamic ways of life - not only in their own society but in muslim countries as well.

To phrase Dabiq, the westerners have thrown the holy Qu’ran in the mud and trampled on it.\footnote{al-muhajirah, Umm Sumayyah. \emph{Two, Three or Four}. Dabiq. Issue 12. 2015.}

The creation and the maintenance of an outside enemy is vital to the idea of nationalism. Once the entirety of the world is conformed there would be no more reasons to fight.

Another example of the Islamic States way of thinking with regard to westerners is presented in an article under the name of \emph{O you who have believed}, in the Islamic State newspaper Dabiq. The westernised Syria is portrayed as brainwashing children in to Kufr agents under the control of the west. Leaving the faith of true Islam to embrace western teachings.\footnote{al-Hijazi, Abu Thabit. \emph{O you who have believed}. Dabiq. Issue 12. 2015.}

Thus portraying the western civilisation(s), or the state of Syria in this case, paint a vivid picture of hate and disapproval by the west towards the Islamic States practises. Yet again showing west as the enemy; trying to disassemble the Islamic faith of the Caliphate.

".. how terrible as these vices may be, the fact remains that many still downplay the severity of kufr in comparison with other sins."

The worst of all, are those who oppose the ideals of the Caliphate.

al-Hijazi writes that the westernisation of Syria’s youth is not only an attempt to wash away inherent ideals; but also an endangerment to Islam itself. The more children that are taken away from the Caliphates vision the more limited the future for Islam.\footnote{Ibid.} These are words of profound religious significance.
Of course the Islamic State also motivates bravery and successful raids. The revival of Jihad in Bengal by the uprising of the Caliphate is much depending on the work put into the dedicated efforts of the Jihad by the mujahidin. This is a notion that the writer, in yet another article from Dabiq, is not late to declare.

Giving the soldiers the recognition that they deserve is along the line of defending ones ideals. "If you fight, we can win; if you do not, we loose". The importance of letting the soldiers know that they make all the difference is very important. The Islamic State knows this.

"By Allah’s grace, the call of jihād reached various madāris in Bengal and people started joining the jamā’ah in great numbers.”

"Then, by Allah’s grace, the Khilāfah was revived from the blessed land of Shām on 1 Qa‘dān 1436. The rise of the Khilāfah and its effective media campaign brought the light of hope to the hearts of young mujāhidīn in Bengal, just as it did in every other part of the globe.”

Stand up Ye’ soldiers for your rights, ideals and beliefs and the masses will yield to your ways.

**Theoretical summary**

**Conclusions from the stage of warmongering**

By contrasting the theory of *religious nationalism* against articles from Islamic State newspaper Dabiq and from interviews with Islamic State soldiers we can clearly see that there is indeed a link between religious nationalism and those who choose to fight for the caliphate.

There is an ongoing nationalistic and patriotic theme in the articles of Dabiq. And there is an outspoken agreement for that context in the interviews with the soldiers. The only disagreement mentioned is aimed at the harshness in certain acts committed by the Islamic State. This harshness does not, however, seem to be conceived as a major problem as long as the goal is clear. It is simply the necessary means to an end.

Brubaker said *nationalist ideology demands cultural homogeneity*. And this is exactly what both the articles in Dabiq and the interviewed soldiers assert. *The goal is an Islamic State; that is conformed in culture, religion and political life; and the annihilation or conversion of non muslims*.

One thing that is important to keep in mind is that religious and ideological nationalism isn't necessarily very far apart. Religion may very well be a part of ones ideology or vice versa.

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140 Madāris is Islamic schools.

141 1436 in the Islamic calendar is the year 2014 in the Georgian calendar.

Conclusions
Arriving at the final destination

Every journey begins with one step, followed by another, until it finally reaches its climax. The end of the path. The pearly gates. Jannah.

The purpose of this thesis was to create for others, and ourselves, a greater understanding for as to why one would join, remain with — and in the end — fight for the Islamic State. Our goal was to achieve this by creating an understanding of three crucial stages;

**Firstly:** *Create understanding as to why someone joins the Islamic State.*

**Secondly:** *Create understanding why that someone remains with the Islamic State.*

**Thirdly:** *To create an understanding for why someone would fight for the Islamic State.*

We have been bound by limitations in time and space. Therefore the research material was restricted to derive from limited information. We focused on interviews from western sources and articles from Islamic State newspaper Dabiq; when it came to understanding the motivation behind Islamic State soldiers.

We began our quest for understanding of the Islamic State by starting at the very beginning of — the would be warriors — own journey. We ventured from conversion, to conforming, to warmongering.

Due to the limitations in research materials, the nature of the sources available, and the goal of this study, a more expanded, differently angled, study would have to be conducted in order to allow generalisation.
Conclusions from ‘Recruit & Convert’

During this process we have been able to make a series of conclusions regarding the different stages of an Islamic State recruit. We must understand why someone joins an organisation like the Islamic State if we are ever to comprehend why they would later choose to wage war on the Islamic States behalf.

As with any organisation there has to be an incentive to join. The Islamic State markets itself as being the true and only alternative for those who believe that the Umma has the right to its own territory. An idea that has proven to work fairly well.

The Islamic State converts journey is presented in this thesis as comparable to that of the converts in the Cult-sect sphere. A successful comparison for several reasons. The Church-Sect theory acts like a bridge, connecting the two seemingly different organisations and clusters; the Islamic State and the Cult-sect cluster.

Once we found the similarities between the Islamic State and other organisations within the Cult-sect sphere; we were able to continue with researching individual motifs and creating an archetype of the perfect would be convert. This study has shown that a person who suffer from a set of self-perceived states and pre-understandings, such as; relative deprivation, weak social and economic ties, lack of rewarding experiences, a weak emotional state, lack of purpose and the notion that joining with a certain group could mend the shortcomings of the would be convert. Such candidates are likely to join an organisation within the Cult-sect sphere such as the Islamic State.

The conclusion made from the stage of conversion, gained through the theories of compliance and social judgement, emotional retardation, the weight of direct rewards, the importance of weak social ties, the social network theory, is clear. The Lofland-stark model of conversion, the relative deprivation theory and the church-sect theory, provide us with the perfect candidate for the Islamic State.

The convert may not possess all of the traits contained within the archetype, nor does the person who do possess all of the traits always end up joining the Islamic State or any other organisation. One would still have to suffer the element of circumstance.

We have shown that a person who possess these traits and gets in contact with the Islamic State has a fairly large chance to succumb to their lure. We have shown that an individual who suffer from these weaknesses is more likely to convert than an individual who does not suffer from these weaknesses.

We have provided a template model for further investigation. This may aid the scientific community or any other party who could benefit from the knowledge of knowing who is ‘eligible’ to fall for the Islamic State recruiters messages.

We have also unearthed the root causes that could persuade someone to leave his or her current life; and take a chance on a more purposeful existence within the Islamic State.
Conclusions from ’Conformity’

After the convert has undergone the joining procedures of the Islamic State; there must be a mechanism that keeps the convert within the organisation. Also vital for us to understand if we are to understand why the convert finally chooses to take up arms for his new found cause.

The field of Social psychology provided a good foundation of theories to help explain why one would remain with the Islamic State even though there can indeed be certain disadvantages in staying.

In the power of social connections; Walton, Cohen, Cwir and Spencer explains that even though the convert might oppose certain policies in the beginning; the convert is likely to successively conform to the common policies of the Group as time passes. The will to belong to a Group is so strong that the individual is very likely to abandon the ideals he previously possessed; just to fit better with the Group.143

Conformity then; is a natural part of any Group. According to Cialdini and Goldstein; the process of conformity, undergone by the individual; is likely to actually change the individuals ideals. It is not only an act to fit in with the group.144

The power of acceptance and rejection also plays a very important part. In two experiments conducted by Buckley, Winkel and Leary; it is shown that being in a group where there is great consensus towards — and appreciation of actions conducted by — the individual; bestowed happiness upon the subject. Therefore the convert is more likely to remain within that Group.145

In the case of the Islamic State we know that the members of the organisation are very aware about the repercussions of disloyalty. Partly due to the known policy of the Islamic State leadership; partly because of the Caliphates propaganda and partly because of the fact that punishments is conducted out in the open.

Then there is the importance of religious ties. Lastly we know from articles in the Islamic State controlled newspaper Dabiq and reading interviews with Islamic State members; that they consider themselves to be harbingers of muslim justice.

Based upon these theories we can conclude that the convert will remain within the Islamic State due to several reasons. A sense of purpose due to acceptance and consensus from the Group. A sense of belonging. due to the same reasons. Conformity. And fear of repercussions from other members of the Group.

When looking at these facts it is not hard to comprehend why someone would in fact remain within any social group. All individuals are in some form tied to ideals and policies of their peers. In the west we are bound by the notion that all people are created equal and should enjoy the same rights.

143 Walton, Cohen, Cwir and Spencer. 2012.

144 Cialdini and Goldstein. 2004.

This might appear as odd to anyone born in an autocratic society as the ideals of the Caliph appear to those born in the liberal west.

Ideals, after all, sprung from social morality.
Conclusions from ’The Warmongers’

Having gone through the initial stages of conversion and conforming, the now clear cut Islamic State loyalist might decide to set out to defend that newly found inherency. The will to fight for your new nation and its ideals boils down to one thing. Nationalism.

The idea that your new way of life, your new ideals and your new culture, deserves to rule over all others.

But why is this a case of religious nationalism?

First we have to define what religious nationalism is. To do that we look to Brubakers theory of religious nationalism. As previously mentioned:

**Nationalism**, according to Brubaker, “centrally involves a distinctive organisation of sameness and difference: nationalist ideology demands — and nationalist social, political and cultural process tend to generate — cultural homogeneity within political units and cultural homogeneity between them.”\(^{146}\)

Since we at this point know that the once, possibly, wavering -convert to be- is now a fully fledged loyalist due to the previously explained state of conformity, we can safely assume that he will defend his new nation to protect the ideals of himself and those of his Brothers and Sisters.

Do note that this is about the soldiers, who do decide to engage in active warfare, not those who choose other paths to contribute to aiding the Islamic State. Even if one can assume that doctors, teachers, social workers, builders and so on; share the same love for the Islamic State ideology as the holy warriors; there could still be something that differ the civilians from the soldiers.

Religion is not a vital factor for every organisation that deviates from societies regular rules of conduct. It is however a unifying factor in many aspects of life, as is language or nation-based culture. Seeing as neither a common language or a common nation-based culture can be the unifying factor in an organisation like the Islamic State; while its member base consist of individuals from all four corners of the world. Religion, a strong ideological belief and the dream of a Caliphate; are the only common denominators.

The motivation behind the mujahidin warriors of the Islamic State will to fight for the Caliphate comes down to mainly three things.

**Firstly;** They believe in a nation consisting of only one — or under the rule of only one — culture. Namely; Caliph Ibrahim’s Islamic culture and the necessary rule of sharia law.

**Secondly;** They believe that this culture with its associated ideals deserve to rule over all other cultures and ideals.

**Thirdly;** They believe that individuals not belonging or succumbing to their rules of law and conduct must be neutralised due to their inferior ways of life.

\(^{146}\) Brubaker, Rogers. 2012. page 10.
The entirety of the foundation which this organisation rests upon may not be induced by religious beliefs. Other ideological incentives; such as social and economical do play their part. What is clear, however, is that religion plays a major part as a unifying factor and a motivational spur for fighting members. It plays such a great part, in fact, that it cannot be wrongful to view the Islamic State and its members as essentially religiously driven.

**Concluding summary**

Summarising the conclusions made in this last part of the thesis bring clarity in the discoveries made throughout the journey along the path of the Islamic State warrior.

*They join because* they seek, and believe that they can find, purpose and a sense of belonging within the Islamic State that they cannot find anywhere else.

*They stay because* they found what they were looking for. They stay because of loyalty towards their new Brothers and Sisters and the safety of consensus. But they also stay because of the fear of what might happen, not only to themselves but also to their new family, if they fail in their endeavour.

*They fight because* they want to protect what they have come to love. They fight to protect their ideals, their way of life and for what they believe is right.

There you have it! A boy or girl brought up by a middle-class family in a safe neighbourhood. Fairly successful in school and who completed the university have left their lives in a liberal world to claim membership in — and fight for — one of the most notorious organisations in modern day history.
Exit

Future endeavours and further research

More research in this area is necessary. I can only hope for someone to continue this mission.

More interviews with active mujahidin soldiers would be of vital importance. As would researching the power base and structure of the Caliphate itself.

The only way to provide a larger understanding for the Islamic State phenomenon is to examine every aspect and trying to understand the root causes for converting. Even if we have made some things clear in this thesis; further research will have to be done to understand all pull-factors; luring new members to the organisation.

Since the Islamic State are openly announcing major actions, strategy and policy, one angle is to invest more research regarding their strategy of recruitment.

One might also consider continued studies within the fields of social psychology to be able to foresee and possibly prevent the root causes leading up to the conversion of an Islamic State member. Such as preventing negative self-esteem and major socio-economic differences.

As a last note. What we have essentially created is a template for analysing members of the Islamic State. Future expeditions should aim at researching the differences between fighting and otherwise engaged members. To create a clear picture of the structure of the Islamic State we need to be able to understand all angles of devotion, all angles of leadership and all angles of this ideology as an entity. There are endless possibilities; some of which require field research. A full investigation of the Islamic State would crave resources, personnel, ability and a vast amount of man-hours.
Authors own thoughts

During this venture along the route to Raqqa I have shown why someone converts; I have shown why someone is conformed and I have shown why someone is prepared to bleed. The Islamic State, to my mind, no longer seem as covered in mystery and as hard to comprehend as it once was.

The Islamic State is by no means a new phenomenon. It is relatively easy to explain its’ expansion, its’ members motivation and its’ ideological strength when tested against theories of nationalism. The actions of its’ members are comparable with that of the americans in Vietnam in the 70s, when communism was the threat. The second comparison is the NSDAP in 1940s Germany when jews were the threat. Or any liberal refusing to bend to the will of socialism or vice versa for that matter.

The nationalist organisation capitalise on social weakness; no matter if it is social injustice or religious inferiority to gain members. Those members adapt to the norms of their peers, share ideals and attitudes and are soon ready to fight for those ideals just like many other nationalists or idealists.

Imagine if you will; belonging to a group that constantly get degraded, ill treated and told that they are not worth as much as anyone else. Imagine then that you get presented with the opportunity to stand up and defend your rights, your principle, your ideals. If we think about how we would act if our interests and our freedom was under attack by someone trying to undermine our way of life; it is not very hard to comprehend why someone, like our figurative convert, would defend his or her interests. If you, then, is presented with the use of violence as the only viable option; wouldn’t you then use that option to avoid the chains of repression of someone else's abuse fired by ludicrous ideology?

The Islamic State should not be written off as an irrational jihadist movement. They should be seen, rather, as a religious nationalist organisation that was on the border of becoming a nation. If the wish is to defeat such an organisation one must look at history; at nations like Nazi Germany. Find what brought them to power and eliminate the root causes. We know that unemployment and a self-perceived relative-deprivation led to the rise of nationalist Germany; how about exploring those options?

It would be wrongful to blame Islam for the Islamic State’s uprising, but it would be equally wrongful to overlook its importance. Just as it would be faulty to overlook the importance of Christianity in Europe's bloody history. No matter what interpretation of religion; religion serves as a beacon of light and unity to those living in a dark and unfair world; for good and bad.

We should never seek answers in the future without first looking over our shoulder for what we already know.
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**Other media**

Glossary

- **Auditing**: A form of interview used in Scientology; not unlike the catholic version of a confession.

- **Belongingness**: The emotional human need to be an accepted member of a group.

- **Brainwashing**: The manipulation of ones mind with extreme psychological pressure.

- **Caliph**: A religious, Islamic steward, ruling the entirety of Muslims.

- **Caliphate**: A religiously controlled territory where the social foundations are based on Islam.

- **Daesh**: Is the direct translation of the Arabic name for the Islamic state. The translation however; is very similar to another word that the Islamic state does not consider to be favourable. Since this essay is objective we will not be using the word Daesh when referring to the Islamic state.

- **Jannah**: Paradise, heaven.

- **Kufr**: Those who operate from the shadows. Liars, provocateurs, profiteers.

- **Madâris**: Islamic schools or a place where Islamic is the foundation of what is taught.

- **Mujahidin**: Meaning ”the ones engaged in Jihad”. Refers to the warriors of the Islamic State.

- **Polygamy**: Marriage with several spouses at the same time.

- **Sect/cult**: A sect, or cult, is a subgroup of a religious movement or belief system. In this paper we equate the sect and cult movements and create instead the Cult-sect sphere.

- **Tawid**: The belief of one monotheistic God.

- **Thethan**: The scientologists equivalent of a soul.

- **The Khansaa Brigade**: A women only morality police within the Islamic state.

- **The West**: In this thesis ”the west” aims at Europe and America.

- **Raqqa**: The Islamic State capitol, located in Syria.

- **Shuhada**: A holy warrior.

- **Umma or Ummah**: A single ubiquitous muslim community.

- **Warmongers**: Someone who advocates for -and partake in- war.

- **Yazidis**: A religious minority found in the Ninevah province in Iraq.