



Journalism and Communication Strategies of Modern Terrorism

The ISIS Media Model

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#ReinventCommunication

WARNING

Graphic
Bloody
Offensive
Violent
...
content

The Paris Attacks

a mediated timeline

Nov 12, 2015



Nov 13-14, 2015

9:20—9.40pm

4 suicide attacks
shootings at 4 sites
hostage situation in concert hall

12:20am:

police storm hall
attackers killed (2 detonate themselves).
89 people killed.

Nov 13-14, 2015

1:20am

first pro-ISIS tweets appear
“paris burning” hashtags



Nov 14, 2015



12:55pm

ISIS claims responsibility

Supporters tweet official “press release” immediately



3:00pm

Repurposed ISIS Recruitment video (re)surfaces

Message: French Muslims must travel to IS or fight in France



Nov 15-16, 2015

6pm-

Multiple official photos/videos of “Paris Invasion” celebrations



Nov 17, 2015

6pm-

ISIS-linked Al-Batar Media releases video warning



Nov 18, 2015

ISIS releases 12th Issue of Dabiq (official magazine)

Included stories:

Paris attack
Russian plane
Beirut attack...



Immediate Aftermath

EU plunged in anxiety

Anti-immigrant/Anti-Muslim sentiment

More media exposure for ISIS = more credibility

'ISIS Supporters' Cry 'Allahu Akbar' at Memorial To Munich Shooting Victims, Shouted Down By Locals

26 July 2016 - Video footage has emerged of confrontations between individuals claimed to be supporters of Islamic State and mourning Germans at a shrine to victims of Friday's shooting in Munich, while police stand by and explain they are powerless to get involved.



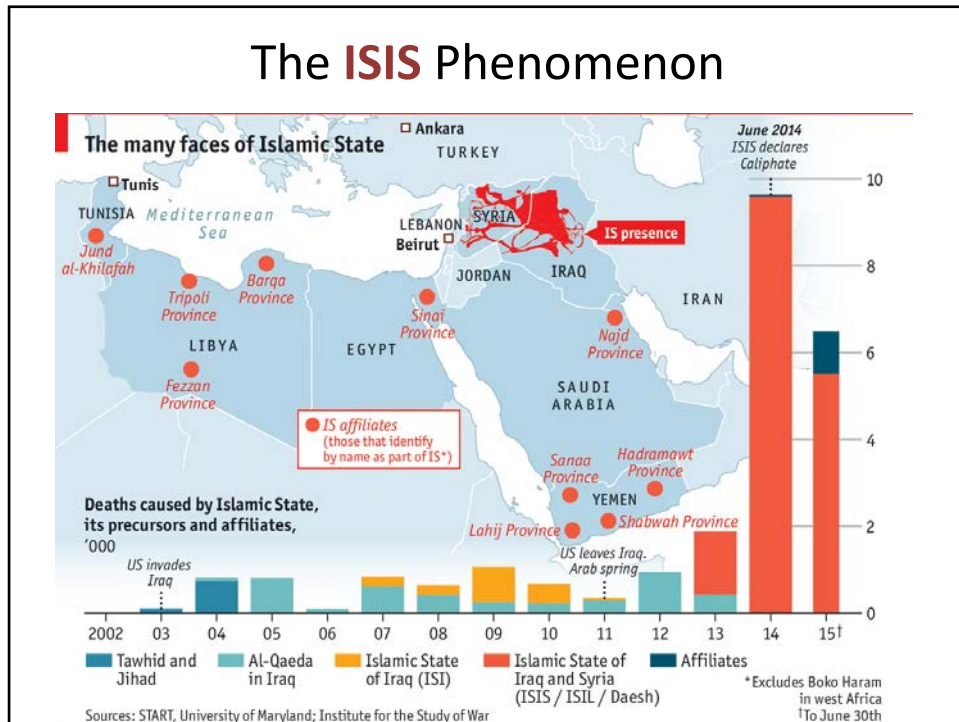
Long-term consequences

ISIS upgraded terrorism models

Enhanced exposure, message, recruitment

Offered a stronger model for future extremists

The ISIS Phenomenon



The ISIS Phenomenon

Live map: syria.liveuamap.com/
Nov-Dec 2016

The **ISIS** Phenomenon

30,000 foreign recruits from **100** countries in 2015

including Women (550), Westerners (4,500), and non-Muslims

The **ISIS** Phenomenon

Reframe Extremism:

- not a “terrorist” group
- Rational/intentional goals
- virtual state/public diplomacy
- populist movement/polarization

Understand Terrorism-media relationship

- how (not) to cover terrorism
- the dual terrorism-media messages
- new approaches to journalism

Reframing the ISIS Phenomenon

FOREIGN
AFFAIRS

ISIS IS NOT A TERRORIST GROUP
Audrey Kurth Cronin

ISIS Is Not a Terrorist Group

Why Counterterrorism Won't Stop the Latest Jihadist Threat

By Audrey Kurth Cronin



After 9/11, many within the U.S. national security establishment worried that, following decades of preparation for confronting conventional enemies, Washington was unready for the challenge posed by an unconventional adversary such as al Qaeda. So over the next decade, the United States built an elaborate bureaucratic structure to fight the jihadist organization, adapting its military and its intelligence and law enforcement agencies to the tasks of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency.

Reframing the ISIS Phenomenon

**Why do groups use terrorism?
What do they want?**

Consider ISIS a **Virtual State**?

recognized virtual states: diaspora

de facto nations: Palestine, Kurdistan

none-state actors: NGOs, "Terror groups"

(Seib, 2011)

Consider ISIS a **Virtual State**?



ISIS: crazy killers, irrational terrorist group

vs

ISIS: virtual state, using terrorism

Public Diplomacy

“that element of diplomacy that involves a government reaching out to a [foreign] public, rather than to another government.”

(Seib, 2011)

Examples of Public Diplomacy

Raising Russia’s global profiles.



Examples of Public Diplomacy

promoting US foreign policy & economic growth
by assisting those in need...



Examples of Public Diplomacy

France targeting French Citizens and Speakers
in Middle East and Africa



Mediated Public Diplomacy

Targeted short-term aims that utilize media technologies “to increase support of a country’s specific foreign policies among audiences beyond that country’s borders”

(Entman, 2008)

Mediated Public Diplomacy

Targeted short-term aims of ISIS:
exposure + credibility + recruitment

Mediated Public Diplomacy

Like targeting “voters” outside your border...
...in a climate of **populism** and radicalization

Consider ISIS a **Populist Movement**?

Populism (Demagoguery)

gaining power/popularity by...

exploiting people's fears, prejudices, grievances, divisions, beliefs, identities, and aspirations...,

and presenting oneself as a solution/alternative/protection to the corrupt elite/status quo/threat.

Populism and Media

"All neo-populist movements... rely heavily on... complicity with the mass media, and all are led by politicians who... are shrewd and capable 'news makers' themselves."

Gianpietro Mazzoleni

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Gianpietro Mazzoleni

Populism and Media

Media and populism have a symbiotic relationship

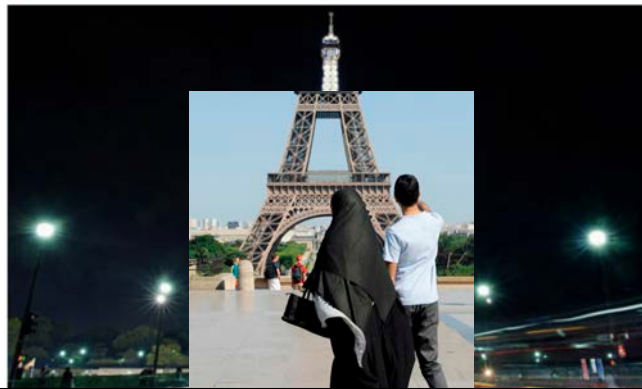
Gianpietro Mazzoleni

US to issue terror warning to Americans in Europe

US government to issue travel alert warning citizens to be vigilant while travelling in Europe as fears of al-Qaida attack rise

Press Association
guardian.co.uk, Sunday 3 October 2010 10.17 BST
[Article history](#)

- 1.
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- 3.
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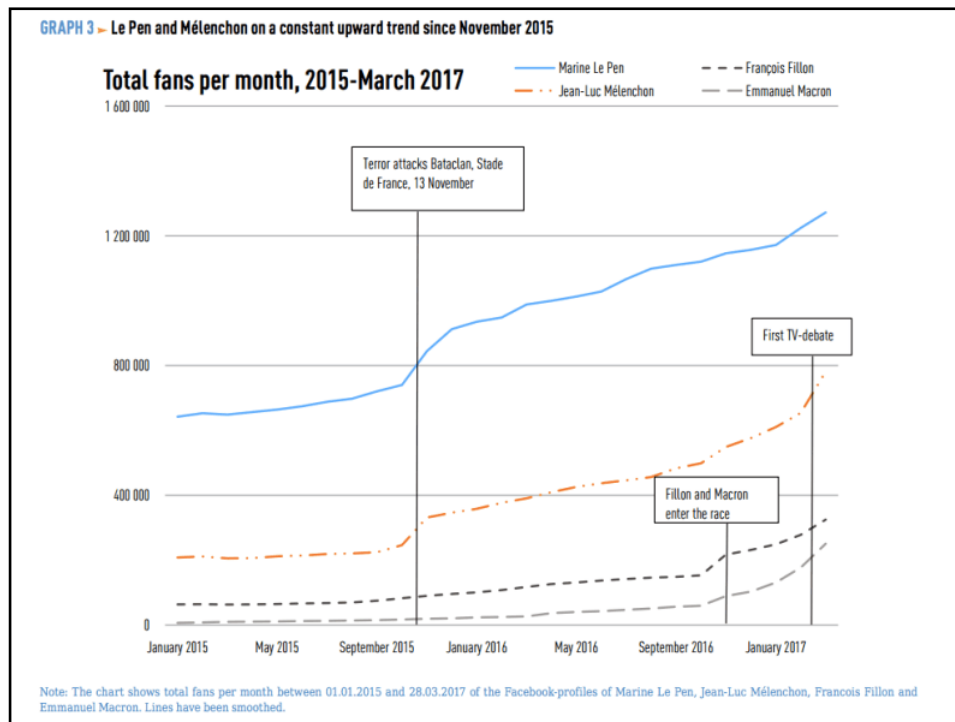
ISIS populist rhetoric rational/intentional

Corrupt Status Quo: the state of Muslims today

Alternative: a solution to real grievances

Polarization: “eliminating the grey”

Managing of Savagery



Populism and Social Media

Elements that make social media favorable for populism:

1. **No gatekeepers:** populists communicate directly with constituents
2. **Short quick messages:** works well with simplistic populist messages
3. **Filter bubbles, selective exposure:** likeminded clusters
4. **Fragmented contradictory messages:** to dispersed networked filter bubbles.
5. **Crowdsourcing:** Inability of tech companies to manage
6. **Global reach...**

ISIS not your typical populist

So, how can mainstream media possibly still serve ISIS?

Terrorism-Media Relation

A premeditated act or threat designed to create a climate of extreme fear; directed at a wider target than the immediate victims; inherently involves random or symbolic targets, especially civilians; used primarily to influence governments, communities or specific social groups.

(Wilkinson, 1997)

Terrorism-Media Relation

A premeditated act or threat designed to create a climate of extreme fear; **directed at a wider target than the immediate victims**; inherently involves random or symbolic targets, especially civilians; used primarily to influence governments, communities or specific social groups.

(Wilkinson, 1997)

Terrorism and Media

Media comprise “terrorism’s oxygen”

(Nacos, 2000)

Terrorism and Media

The duality of terrorism

1. Attracting new youth through operations that attract public attention
2. Instilling fear in the hearts of our enemies...

Management of Savagery

Mediated Terrorism

Terrorism: the journalist's **dilemma**
to cover or not to cover?

Mediated Terrorism



Mediated Terrorism



Ways to cover Terrorism

Execution: UK humanitarian aid worker
Alan Henning
Oct 3, 2014



Mediated Terrorism

Terrorism: the journalist's **dilemma**
to cover or not to cover?

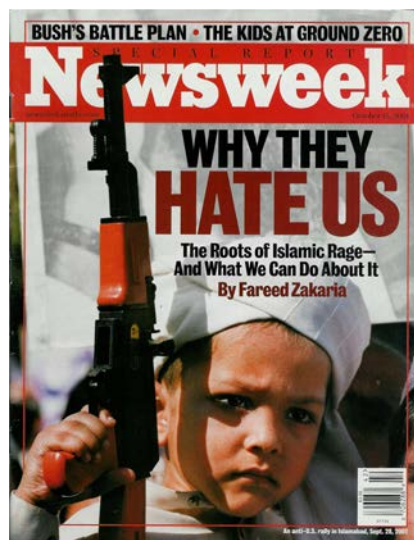
Other approaches to journalism
Peace journalism?

Johan Galtung's Peace Journalism model

PEACE JOURNALISM	WAR JOURNALISM
Peace/Conflict orientated Many parties, goals	War/Violence orientated 2 parties, 1 goal
Solution orientated Multiple stakeholders	Victory orientated Winner/Loser
Truth orientated Critical/Alerting audiences to propaganda	Propaganda orientated Reproducing elite statements
People orientated Grassroots peace	Elite orientated Leaders' peace



“War on Terrorism” ideology (9/11)



New York Post:
“Dubiously deep thoughts”.

Richard Perle: “We need to decontextualise terror... any attempt to discuss the roots of terrorism is an attempt to justify it. It simply needs to be fought and destroyed”.

Mediated Terrorism

crafting and delivering the message...

...in the era of digital and social media

Mediated Terrorism + Political Contest Model

Equation to turn political power into power over the media

Value to the media / Dependence on the media

(Wolfsfeld, 1997)

Value to media =


political/social status
+ organization/resources
+ exceptional behavior
+ control over political environment

Dependence on media =


need for external support
+ need of political access

Mediated Terrorism + Digi/social media

Pre-internet

One (gate-keeper)  many

Post-internet

Many individual/amateur  many +

Social/Mobile media

Many organized/professional groups  targeted many ++

Mediated Terrorism +

“by any media necessary”

Henry Jenkins

Mediated Terrorism + Branding

Branding entails giving products and services an emotional dimension with which people can identify...

(Gilboa, 2008)



Mediated Terrorism + Branding

A state brand is a public's **mental image** of a state. It aims to create emotional resonance for global publics with the image of a state or place...

(Van Ham, 2001)



Mediated Terrorism + Branding



Libya



Iraq



Syria



North Iraq/Syria (Kurdistan)

Mediated Terrorism + Branding



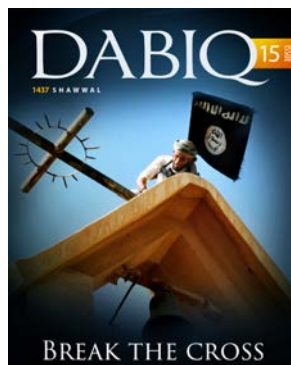
Mediated Terrorism + counter Branding



"Syrian Jihadist Group Turns Tables On ISIS Fighters..."

Mediated Terrorism + Branding

Magazines



Mediated Terrorism + Branding

The “positive” side of ISIS



Mediated Terrorism + video games



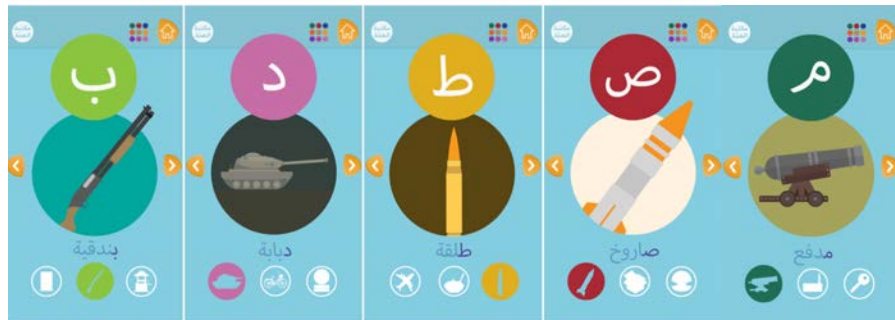
Mediated Terrorism + hacking/spamming



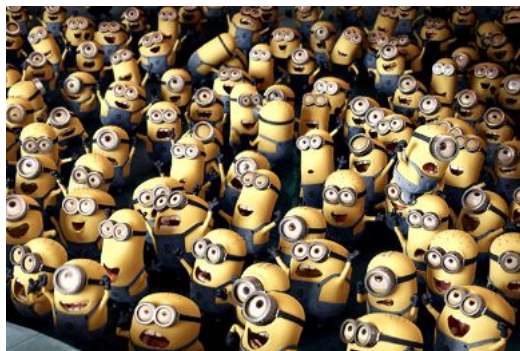
Mediated Terrorism + Active PR



Mediated Terrorism + cartoons



Mediated Terrorism + **counter** cartoons



Countering ISIS symbols: Clashing of Swords chant صليل الصوارم

Mediated Terrorism

Key:

“the modern communication model used by terrorist organizations is audience based, **meaning centered, culture dependent and always tied into an ongoing narrative stream** that is part of the socio-political context...”

(Seib and Janbek, 2011, p. 1).

Mediated Terrorism

- = media exposure/attention/credibility
- = generalized violence/eliminate the grey
 - = recruitment/deter
- = community of supporters
- = **State building/power**

Journalism & Mediated Terrorism

Reframe Extremism:

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Understand Terrorism-media relationship

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Strategies to “Counter” Extremism

- 1. Reframe Extremism**
(reactive, short term)
- 2. Understand Terrorism-media relationship**
(reactive, short term)
- 3. Build a movement, the next wave...**
(proactive, long term)

Build the next wave

Social movement : Social Justice

Media Literacy

Peace Journalism

Resolve Grievances

Learn from the models