



Qualitative content analysis of images of children in Islamic State's *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* magazines

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Abstract

The Islamic State (ISIS) is infamous for their use of social media and new technologies to recruit fighters and spread their ideology worldwide. Oftentimes, the group exploits children for their propaganda efforts. This study presents a qualitative content analysis of images of children in the ISIS propaganda magazines, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Overall, our findings indicate that the representation of children in the magazines evolves from their depiction as victims of the group's enemies to future fighters in the group. Based on the social identity concepts theory, we argue that these images are used to generate in-group favoritism and out-group derogation.

Keywords: Islamic state, children, propaganda, *Dabiq*, *Rumiyah*, social identity

Introduction

The Islamic State (ISIS) has gained considerable notoriety for its use of social media and new technologies to disseminate its ideology and recruit new members from around the world. The group has extensively relied on visual images in its media campaign: various studies estimate that between 78% to 95% of the group's total media output consists of single images or photo reports (Milton, 2016; Winter, 2015; Zelin, 2015). One of the most alarming aspects of the ISIS propaganda has been the inordinate use of children.

Shocking depictions of children perpetrating gruesome acts of violence, such as the video of five prepubescent boys preparing to shoot Kurdish prisoners (Kumar, 2016) or the image of a seven-year-old Australian boy holding up a severed head (Fraser, 2014), have gained international attention and condemnation. Scholars, policy makers and the public have expressed concern at the effects of this violence on the children who, willingly or unwillingly, have joined the group; furthermore, the question arises whether ISIS intends to recruit and radicalize future generations of fighters. Consequently, we conducted a thematic analysis of the images of children in ISIS's two online magazines, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, to address the following research questions: (1) In what ways does ISIS depict children in its official propaganda? And, (2), How does this depiction of children serve the group's purposes?

The following paper begins with a description of the study's theoretical framework. Based on the social identity and realistic conflict theories, we argue that the depiction of children serves to invoke in-group favoritism, out-group derogation and zero-sum conflict. Following the discussion of the data collection and analysis methods, we describe five identified themes of the depiction of children in the ISIS propaganda: victimization, safety/normalcy, guidance, training and perpetration of violence. In the conclusion, we argue that the use of these themes complements the primary strategic objectives of ISIS's media campaign, which frame the group as the sole defender of Sunni Muslims (in-group favoritism), its enemies as all-powerful and menacing (out-group derogation), and the conflict between them as a decisive battle for the fate of Sunni Muslims (zero-sum conflict).



Psychology of Propaganda

Propaganda is defined as “a form of purposeful persuasion ...to influence the emotions, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages” (Nelson, 1996: p. 232). From a psychological perspective, propaganda serves as a form of persuasion that targets emotional, rather than rational, decision-making processes and is intended to result in a shift in belief systems in accordance with a “pattern of us versus the enemy” (Biddle, 1931). In other words, propaganda uses emotive language and salient images to appeal to the audience’s emotions. Such techniques attempt to associate the in-group, or “us”, with positive emotions, and the out-group, or the “enemy”, with hostility and resentment. For example, the term ‘terrorist’ can serve as more than a simple description of a person who commits certain acts. Instead, the term carries emotional valence, meaning that it is strictly bound to moral values leading to value judgments and potentially triggering emotions of anger and hostility towards the person that it is describing (Frijda et al., 2000). Previous studies indicate that visual imagery is more effective at producing an emotional response than textual content (Joffe, 2007). Violent visual content, such as images of dead or wounded civilians, are most likely to prime thoughts of anger and hostility, which in turn produce more significant changes in belief systems (Anderson et al., 2003).

The psychology of propaganda is based on the social identity concepts theory, which posits that individuals derive their “concept of self” from perceived membership in social groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1986, 1979). Since one’s self-worth is connected to the perceived status of one’s social group, people tend to perceive their in-group members more favorably than out-group members (Taylor and Doria, 1981). In other words, people oftentimes look for a reason to prove to themselves that their own in-group is in some way superior to others. According to the realistic conflict theory (Campbell, 1965), in-group favoritism and out-group derogation arise as a result of perceived competition between two or more distinct groups over limited resources. When individuals view their interactions with other groups as a zero-sum outcome, they are more likely to favor members of their own in-group (Sherif et al., 1961). This way, they ensure that the limited resources are allocated to them and their communities. Propaganda relies on the dual concepts of social identity and realistic conflict theories: it accentuates differences between the in-group and the out-group, presents any competition between them as zero-sum, and depicts in-group members more favorably than out-group members (Biddle, 1931; Nelson, 1996).

Islamic State Propaganda

Since its inception, ISIS has created a media organization that some experts describe as “highly sophisticated” (Christien, 2016: p. 1) and “rivaling those of many nation-states” (Winkler et al., 2016: p. 1). As the group has lost nearly all its territory in Syria and Iraq, some scholars note that its official propaganda production has also decreased significantly. Milton (2018, 2016) found that the number of official ISIS visual media releases has declined from more than 700 in August 2015 to less than 200 in August 2016 and only 44 in June 2018. Furthermore, the group ceased the production of the majority of its online magazines. For example, the latest issue of Rumiya was released on September 9, 2017. Despite the overall decrease, ISIS is likely to maintain a relatively strong online presence in the future. Research previously noted fluctuations in visual propaganda production, with significant increases in the early months of 2018 and in the spring of 2017, when the group was producing 260 to 300 visual images per week from May to June 2017 (Frampton et al., 2017). While ISIS no longer publishes its English-language magazines, it still manages to produce and disseminate the Arabic-language magazine *al-Naba* on a regular basis (Winter, 2018).



Overall, ISIS's media campaign can be described as somewhat diminished, but still threatening (Milton, 2018; Winter, 2018).

ISIS online propaganda serves multiple intertwined objectives. First, it disseminates the group's ideology and distorted interpretation of Islam to potential supporters across the globe (Winter, 2015). Second, it communicates the ISIS "brand" and projects an image of power and sophistication (Ingram, 2014; Winter, 2015). This "branding" acts as a force multiplier, allowing the group to cultivate new recruits, intimidate its enemies, inspire followers to conduct lone actor attacks, and strengthen the morale of its current fighters (Ingram, 2014; Winter, 2016). In-group favoritism, out-group derogation and zero-sum outcome serve a critical role in this process (Ingram, 2015). ISIS's propaganda narrative frames the group as the champion of Sunni Muslims and its enemies as menacing 'others' that pose a mortal threat to the existence of Islam. Consequently, the conflict between ISIS and its enemies is depicted as a zero-sum game, with the complete eradication of non-Muslims needed to save Muslims and their faith (Wignell et al., 2017).

While there is an abundance of literature on the strategic objectives of ISIS online propaganda, there are only a few studies examining the use of children in its media campaign. Most research focuses on the process of recruitment, indoctrination and training of underage fighters into the group, rather than on their depiction in online propaganda (Benotman and Malik, 2013; Morris and Dunning, 2018; Vale, 2018). Bloom et al. (2016) analyzed images of children and youth from their original database of martyrdom propaganda, but the focus of their article was on the nature of the propaganda and not on the psychological motives. Christien (2016) examined the representations of children in *Dabiq* magazine, but the study's analysis of visual content was limited to only thirteen pictures drawn from the first eight issues. In order to fill this gap in research, we conducted a qualitative visual analysis of images of children from all currently published issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. We took an inductive approach to data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), relying on themes to emerge from the data rather than trying to verify any pre-specified themes within the images. The following research questions were developed a priori:

Question 1: *In what ways does ISIS depict children in its official magazines, Dabiq and Rumiyah?*

Question 2: *How does the depiction of children in Dabiq and Rumiyah serve the group's propaganda and recruitment purposes?*

Methodology

The current study is a qualitative visual content analysis (Kuckartz, 2014) with elements of phenomenological design (Creswell et al., 2007). We found this form of analysis to be the most appropriate approach for our study for several reasons. First, it fits the form of our data since it does not require any interaction between the researcher and the subject. Second, phenomenological visual content analysis aims to offer insights into how a given person makes sense of visual imagery (Creswell et al., 2007).

The guiding research question of our study, examining how ISIS uses images of children for propaganda and recruitment purposes, fits within the framework for a phenomenological design. In other words, we seek to recognize the meanings that the group puts on the images. The goal of our study is to generate new ways of seeing existing data and constructing a framework that does not necessarily reflect our own perspective or prior research results.



While our study focuses exclusively on visual imagery analysis, we also recognize that the examined images are not featured alone in the magazines. Instead, they accompany and supplement the textual content. Nevertheless, we can analyze them separately from the text, since viewers examine them differently from the rest of the content (Barry, 1997; Griffin, 2004; Pfau et al., 2008). Images serve to attract viewers' interest (Knobloch et al., 2003), provoke emotional response (Barry, 1997) and enhance their attitudes (Griffin, 2004). In other words, they draw viewers to the story more strongly and quickly than the textual content. Nevertheless, we still explored the relationship between textual and visual components as part of our analysis. Specifically, we coded whether each image is featured by itself (i.e. whether it covers an entire page and does not relate to any article), in a set of multiple images, or as a supplement to an article. Also, we coded whether a text caption accompanied each image.

Data Analysis

As the first step of our analysis, the study's three coders examined all available issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* and independently identified images featuring children. For our analysis, we followed the United Nation's Children's Funds (UNICEF) guidelines of using the age of eighteen as the end point for the childhood category. At the same time, we needed to recognize that this broad cut-off point may not be consistent with some local cultural, social, and legal perspectives. Furthermore, children had to be featured in the foreground of the image; we did not include in our analysis any images in which children were only visible in the background. Each image was coded only once; if any images were to be reused in the magazines, researchers were to code them in the first instance.

After the initial stage of analysis, coders met to discuss any discrepancies between their individual sets of coding. We had to exclude any images for which coders were not able to agree whether the individuals in the images were younger than eighteen. Overall, we identified 104 images of children from the published issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, as of September 14, 2017. Researchers did not find any instances in which the magazines used the same image of children more than once.

Next, we conducted an initial identification of themes and development of a codebook. Although we developed research questions a priori, we derived themes and categories from the images themselves rather than determining them prior to our analysis. To reduce the potential subjective bias in the identification of salient themes, two researchers independently examined a portion of the data and developed a list of themes to be used. We determined potential codes and definitions of the codes once the research team reached consensus. All eighteen coding categories are listed in Table 1. Afterwards, we conducted an inter-coder reliability test to determine measurement consistency, with Cohen's Kappa used to determine reliability. After resolving any remaining disagreements between the coders, each category met Cohen's (1960) minimum inter-coder reliability standard for almost perfect agreement (0.80). We calculated the overall inter-reliability for the coding instrument at 0.94.

Results

Based on our analysis, we identified five themes that best described how children were shown in ISIS propaganda: victimization, safety/normalcy, guidance, training and perpetration of violence. We categorized each image into a single theme. Four images did not fall into any of the aforementioned themes. If an image included features across multiple themes, we categorized it by its most salient theme. We discussed each theme individually before describing the relationship between them and the trajectory of changes in theme prevalence.



Victimization

Twenty-three images (22.1% of all images) featured dead or wounded children as victims of the group's enemies. Out of those, twenty-two images depict children that appear to be prepubescent, or under the age of thirteen. They are featured alone or only with other victims. There are no images of underage victims of ISIS. Instead, the images depict casualties of attacks and bombings conducted by the group's enemies: Russia, the United States, Turkey, or pro-Assad forces in Syria. Notably, the eleventh issue of *Dabiq* features the infamous picture of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year old Syrian boy who drowned while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea with his family in September 2015, alongside the article "The dangers of abandoning Darul-Islam" (*Dabiq*, 2015: p. 22).

Ten images include a caption or other text disclosing information about the group responsible for the attack, such as: "The following are pictures of the US massacre of the Muslim families supposedly to preserve American 'interests'" (*Dabiq*, 2014: p. 49). For eight images, the accompanying caption does not make it clear who is responsible for the casualties. For example: "The crusaders' indiscriminate bombing shows no mercy to the young" (*Rumiyah*, 2017: p. 22). Nineteen images are included with articles, while four are featured as a part of "Selected 10" (i.e. a full-page graphic featuring images from the group's ten selected videos and encouraging the viewers to watch them online) or other collections of images. While five images do not have captions, they accompany articles that clarify the perpetrator of the depicted atrocities. Thus, the viewers always know that the children are the victims of the enemies of ISIS.

Past psychological research can inform our analysis of this theme. ISIS uses images of dead and wounded children to elicit a strong emotional response in its target audience and depict the out-group (i.e. its enemies) as menacing, powerful and threatening to all Muslims. The images imply that Muslim children are constantly in danger of attack from the group's enemies. The lack of other individuals in the images also suggests that they are alone and defenseless. Images of dead refugee children denote that the threat is not limited to certain areas. In other words, ISIS seeks to present the current socio-political situation in the world as a deadly zero-sum conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims. While some of the magazine's captions identify the perpetrators, it is implied that all of the group's enemies are in some way responsible for the victimization of children. In sum, ISIS propaganda seeks to present its enemies as a homogeneous entity, a single threat to all Muslims.

Worth noting, most of the images featuring victimization are found in the early issues. Specifically, there are sixteen images of victimization in the publications of 2014-2015, and only five in those of 2016-2017. We believe that shifting needs in the group's propaganda may explain this trend. In the first few years since its creation, the recruitment tactics of ISIS focused mostly on promoting their cause and justifying their violence. Thus, the group used images of young victims of their enemies to excuse their own violent acts and provide evidence for their claims of the war between Islam and the West.

Safety/Normalcy

Twenty-one images (20.1%) depict children playing, attending school, or receiving medical treatment while living in the ISIS Caliphate. Fifteen of those images feature children that appear to be under the age of thirteen. They are either in groups or with at least one adult present and they display symbols associated with ISIS, such as the group's flag or the raised index finger. Seventeen images include captions, which typically indicate that the photographs come from the ISIS Caliphate and that the children are living in accordance with the ISIS Islamic doctrine: "Muslim children being raised in the land of Islam" (*Dabiq*, 2016: p. 39). Images of safety are featured regularly throughout



the issues, with an average of five images per year. Twelve images accompany articles on the everyday life in the ISIS Caliphate, while nine images are included in “Selected 10” or other sets of images.

The theme of safety and normalcy can also be explained in terms of social identity constructs and in-group favoritism. Specifically, these images serve to depict the in-group (i.e. ISIS and its members) as innocent, virtuous and strictly adhering to its doctrine. While images of victimization are meant to elicit a negative emotional response towards the out-group, images of children’s safety are intended to produce a positive response towards the in-group. The ISIS Caliphate is portrayed as the only safe haven for Muslim families, while ISIS members are the only ones capable of defending them. The images imply that Muslim refugees fleeing to Europe are still in danger, while Muslim children in the ISIS Caliphate are safe, happy and well-protected.

Guidance

Twenty-two images (21.1%) depict young children with ISIS soldiers serving as father figures. While it is unclear in most of the images whether the child and the adult are in fact related, we categorized these images based on the body language, actions within the images and the accompanying text captions or articles. Specifically, the adults in the images are interacting in a paternal manner with the children: taking care of them, teaching them a specific task (e.g. how to hold or aim a gun), or simply playing with them. In most images, the children have positive facial expressions, and there is physical contact between them and the adults. Accompanying captions also denote that the depicted soldiers are grooming these children to be their potential successors: “My father told me” (Rumiyah, 2017: p. 2) or “So follow their guidance” (Rumiyah, 2017: p. 3).

Eighteen of those images feature children that appear to be under the age of thirteen. In contrast to the theme of safety/normalcy, children carry fake or real weapons and often wear military uniforms. Adults are likewise in uniform and carrying group symbols or weapons. Images of guidance are featured regularly throughout the issues, with an average of five to six images per year and a slight decrease in 2017. Eleven images accompany articles, while 10 serve as a part of collections of images. One image is featured on the cover of the eighth issue of Rumiyah: it depicts Abu Sulayman ash-Shami, the magazine’s chief editor, holding an unidentified infant (Rumiyah, 2017: p. 1).

The theme of guidance is conceptually related to that of safety: it serves to depict members of the in-group (i.e. ISIS soldiers) as benevolent, patriarchal and protective. It seeks to elicit a positive emotional response towards the in-group by suggesting that ISIS soldiers are the only ones capable of protecting Muslim children. This theme stands in contrast to images of victimization, in which enemies of ISIS are targeting Muslim children. Furthermore, it serves to suggest that ISIS is raising a new generation of soldiers. Children in these images are carrying weapons and displaying group symbols, implying that they will take on the fight from their father figures in the future. Consequently, the theme of guidance also functions to assure the readers of the prolonged existence and continuity of the ISIS Caliphate.

Training

The theme of training is the most predominant one, with twenty-six images (25.0%). Notably, ISIS uses this theme most widely in later issues: there were only eight images of training in 2014-2015, but this number increased to eighteen in 2016-2017. These images depict children engaging in military training or posing with weapons and group symbols. They are alone or with their peers,



wearing matching uniforms and serving as their own military units. Importantly, children in these images seem to be older than those in the images of guidance: in nineteen images, they appear to be over the age of thirteen years. Three images are presented by themselves, nine accompany articles, and 14 are included in "Selected 10" or other sets of images. Six images have no captions, while the other 20 images feature captions such as "The generation of epic battles" (Dabiq, 2016: p. 77).

Just like images of guidance, this theme serves to support the idea that there is a new generation of ISIS soldiers in the making and that the ISIS Caliphate will be preserved in the future. Notably, the images never depict children as current soldiers: they do not engage in direct combat with the enemy troops, but rather train or pose as future fighters. The theme of training is most prevalent in later issues, as the group's propaganda needs shift from justifying its actions and establishing its cause to assuring its audience of the group's long-lasting survival. ISIS claims to be the only legitimate authority that can undertake the leadership of jihad and purify Islamic society. Therefore, preservation of the group and its territory is central to maintaining this claim. In recent years, military and territorial losses challenged the notion that ISIS is invincible and destined to control the Middle East. Images of children depicted as future soldiers of ISIS can be used to assure the group's supporters that, despite recent losses, their ideology will continue to live on.

Perpetration of Violence

The theme of perpetration is the least common one, with only eight images (7.6%). It is the most disturbing theme, however, as it features children perpetrating acts of violence. All of these images depict young boys, between the age of thirteen and eighteen, executing the group's captives. They wear military uniforms, carry group symbols, and are often accompanied by older ISIS soldiers. Importantly, none of the images actually depict the moment in which the child is executing a captive. In six images, children are posing with captors prior to an execution; in two images, they are posing with the dead bodies. Based on the images themselves, it is unclear whether the children actually conducted the execution, although the accompanying articles often make this claim. In some cases, additional published information, such as videos, reiterate or confirm the claim of responsibility. Importantly, most of these images come from later issues: two images in 2015, three images in 2016 and additional three in 2017. Four images accompany articles, and four are part of "Selected 10". All images feature captions, such as "The lions of tomorrow" (Dabiq, 2015: p. 20).

Some researchers hypothesize that Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) mobilize children in an attempt to replenish dwindling military manpower (Beber and Blattman, 2013). While ISIS may possibly use children in a desperate bid to boost its military strength, our analysis clearly suggests that children are not depicted in the group's propaganda as active members of the military, engaging in direct combat against the enemy or conducting suicide attacks. Instead, they are shown exclusively at executions of captives, which do not require extensive manpower. These images may solely serve propaganda functions to shock the audience and gain international attention. ISIS gained considerable notoriety in the summer of 2014 with the execution of journalist James Foley. Since then, it has used numerous, more shocking forms of execution to dominate the media. The use of children in executions is likely a part of this trend of resorting to more extreme tactics to gain media attention.



Additional Images

Four images included in our analysis did not fall into any of the aforementioned themes. All of these images supplement articles and have their own captions. These images depict children of the enemies of ISIS: two show children in a Saudi elementary school, one in a Syrian elementary school, and one at a pro-LGBT rally in the West. These images serve to show that the group's enemies are 'brain-washing' children with their own ideology. For example, the caption for the pro-LGBT image states, "An example of the perversion the West seeks to spread" (Dabiq, 2016: p. 32). They are always juxtaposed against the images of safety and guidance. Two images are featured in the twelfth issue of Dabiq with the article "O you who have believed, protect yourself and your families from fire" and an image of a group of young boys from the ISIS Caliphate learning Quran (Dabiq, 2015: p. 33-34). The image from a pro-LGBT rally is featured in the fifteenth issue of Dabiq, along with an article "Why we hate you and why we fight you" and two images of children from the ISIS Caliphate playing in a park (Dabiq, 2016: p. 32). While there are not enough of these images to include a new theme in our analysis, it is important to note that they serve as juxtaposition to the previously described themes.

Discussion

This study provides some preliminary insights into ISIS propaganda and recruitment efforts by examining its use of images of children in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* magazines. We examined the content and features of images, allowing themes to emerge naturally and unprompted. Overall, the focus of images of children has shifted from depicting young victims of the group's enemies (i.e. theme of victimization) to portraying them as future soldiers of ISIS (i.e. theme of training). The ISIS Caliphate is depicted as the only safe haven for Muslim families from the group's enemies (i.e. theme of safety/normalcy), while its members are depicted as moral, compassionate and protective of Muslim children (i.e. theme of guidance). In a few extreme cases, children are depicted executing prisoners (i.e. theme of perpetration of violence); these images most likely serve to shock the audience and attract media attention.

Limitations

In our analysis, we were unable to determine the precise age of the individuals featured in the images. All coders had to agree on an approximate age range before including images in our analysis. Whenever possible, we also used additional sources of information to triangulate our research and identify individuals in the images to determine their actual age. For example, one of the children featured in an image of five underage boys executing captives, published in the first issue of *Rumiyah* in September 2016, was identified as 11-year old "JoJo" Jones from the United Kingdom. However, it is still likely that we omitted some images featuring underage youths from the study or that we unintentionally included some individuals over the age of eighteen.

Due to the nature and source of this data, we cannot describe or examine the characteristics of the intended audience of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. We had no control over the analyzed content, no opportunity to report ages or other demographic information about the readers, and no option to conduct interviews with the potential readers. Still, although qualitative analysis cannot predict psychological responses to images of children, our analysis can lay the groundwork for developing hypotheses to test different theories and models.

Finally, it is important to note that the study focuses exclusively on two online magazines, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, and consequently missed out the vast majority of the group's propaganda. Therefore, any



conclusions drawn from the study are only relevant to the context of these two foreign-language publications. Further studies need to re-examine the use of children in the group's audiovisual productions, as well as other magazines, such as *al-Naba*.

Future Directions

In the future, researchers may potentially examine whether other VEOs replicate ISIS propaganda strategy. Any differences between the groups can help us identify distinct propaganda and recruitment objectives of ISIS and other VEOs. Furthermore, as the group continues to lose territory in the future, researchers need to track changes in prevalence and trajectory of themes of images of children in its propaganda. The theme of training may become even more dominant as the group tries to assure its supporters of its sustainability and longevity. On the other hand, a potential addition of images of children serving as suicide bombers or foot soldiers may suggest that ISIS is losing manpower and has to resort to deploying younger soldiers.

Although we focus on visual image analysis in our study, we also find that the presented images are conceptually related to the accompanying text. The majority of analyzed images include text captions and over half of them supplement articles. Also, images in "Selected 10" are used to promote the group's videos, encouraging readers to explore other sources of ISIS propaganda. Subsequent studies need to further examine the relationship between various components of ISIS propaganda (i.e. images, videos, texts) and how the group brings them together to effectively present its ideology to its audience.

Conclusion

The representation of children in the online magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* offers a better understanding of ISIS propaganda. While this study cannot determine whether the group currently recruits children for military efforts, it clearly shows that the group's media campaign uses them to further promote its propaganda objectives. Images of children serve to promote the narrative of 'us vs. them', depicting all Muslims in a state of deadly zero-sum conflict with non-Muslims. Additionally, ISIS uses such images of children training and posing as future soldiers to assure its readers of the Caliphate's survival and longevity. The group views the existence of the Caliphate, which is depicted as the only true Muslim state and the restoration of early Islamic caliphates, as its greatest achievement. Its collapse is a tremendous blow to the group's credibility, making it more difficult for ISIS to claim itself as the only legitimate authority in the Muslim world.

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Table 1: Intercoder reliability by coding category

Coding Category	Coded Items	Cohen's κ
Group Composition	0 = None (child alone) 1 = Yes (one adult) 2 = Yes (one other child) 3 = Yes (multiple other children) 4 = Yes (multiple adults) 5 = Yes (multiple, both children and adults)	0.93
Age Category	0 = Mixed 1 = Under 13 2 = Between 13 and 18	0.94
Physical Contact with Others	0 = No 1 = Yes (with other children) 2 = Yes (with adults) 3 = Yes (with children and adults)	0.95
Facial Expression	0 = Not applicable 1 = Positive 2 = Neutral 3 = Negative 4 = Masked (incl. partially covered)	0.95
Weapons	0 = No 1 = Yes	0.93
Weapon Type	1 = Bladed weapons 2 = Small arms (e.g., handgun, rifle, shotgun, submachine gun) 3 = Light weapons (e.g., rockets, missiles, RPGs) 4 = Mixed	0.97
Militant Clothing	0 = No 1 = Yes (e.g., camo, sand-colored uniforms, "ninja" uniforms)	0.97
Blurred Individuals	0 = No 1 = Yes	0.93
Group Insignia	0 = No 1 = Yes	0.94
Type of Insignia	1 = Flag 2 = Patches 3 = Hats 4 = Others (specify) 5 = Mixed	0.93
Activity	In one statement, describe what the child is doing in the picture (e.g., posing, gesticulating, etc.)	n/a
Looking Directly at Camera	0 = No 1 = Yes	0.96
Setting	0 = Indoor 1 = Outdoor (incl. inside vehicles)	0.97
Post-Production	0 = No 1 = Yes	0.96
Type of Post-Production	1 = Banners 2 = Flags 3 = Emblems 4 = Other	0.92
Text Caption	0 = No 1 = Yes	0.94
Article	0 = No accompanying article 1 = Accompanying article 2 = Part of series of images	0.95
Visual Properties/ Qualities	1 = Extreme Long Shot 2 = Long Shot 3 = Full Shot 4 = American Shot 5 = Medium Shot 6 = Close-Up 7 = Extreme Close Up	0.95