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An Analysis of Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's "Call to Global Islamic Resistance"

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Abstract

This article is a contribution to the study of religious radicalization, in particular, religious radicalization that promotes violence. The term "radicalization" will be used here to refer to the process through which individuals adopt or promote an "extremist belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically-based violence to advance political, religious, or social change."[1] This study applies discourse analysis[2] to a prominent radical Islamic text published after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11): Mustafa bin Abd al-Qadir Setmariam Nasar's *Call to Global Islamic Resistance* (2004) – hereafter referred to as GIR (Global Islamic Resistance). As will be detailed in the sections to come, this study analyses the beliefs and worldview evident in GIR, and seeks to elucidate its persuasiveness.

[1] Rogers, L., *Big Brother: House passes the "Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act,"* 2007, available at: *http://www.nogw.com/download/_07_thought_crime_bill.pdf.*

[2] In particular, the frame and narrative (thematic) analysis aspects of discourse analysis will be utilized.

Introduction

Nasar, who is also known by his *nom de guerre* Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, is recognized as al-Qaida's leading theoretician and strategic thinker; he is particularly credited for being its post 9/11 principal architect.[1] Prior to his arrest in November 2005, the al-Qaida veteran was purportedly Usama bin Ladin's top aide, and thus al-Qaida's second most wanted man by U.S. intelligence – who were offering a five million dollar reward for his capture alive.[2] His 1,604-page book, Call to Global *Islamic Resistance* (GIR), has often been likened to a manifesto, and occasionally been referred to as the *Mein Kampf* of the jihadist movement.[3] The fact that it invites its readers to self-recruit and become independent terrorists has led to the suspicion that GIR may have inspired the London bombings of July 7, 2005.[4]

GIR can be downloaded as a PDF document from numerous radical jihadist websites. Following the heavy onslaught that radical jihadists have experienced post 9/11, Nasar wrote GIR while on the run with the aim of transforming al-Qaida from a "vulnerable hierarchical organization into a resilient decentralized movement."[5] Nasar describes his own text as a "comprehensive doctrinal, political, behavioural, and educational method"[6] The U.S. Joint Forces Command issued a condensed translation of GIR, referring to it as a "masterwork."[7] GIR was also strongly recommended by Dr. Ali Gomaa, the current Grand Mufti of Egypt – and the Sunni Muslim world's second highest spiritual authority – as a key text to submit to a frame and narrative discourse analysis with the aim of increasing current understanding of violent radicalization.

Reason for this Study

Although academic interest in Islamist radicalization has increased considerably since the attacks of 9/11, many gaps in understanding remain. The mechanisms by which jihadists construct their worldviews and persuade others to adopt them have thus far eluded comprehensive understanding; this is partly the result of an absence of contemporary radical literature substantive enough to be submitted to analyses.[8] This study attempts to help fill that gap. Another main concern is that the literature that *is* available for analysis is either only partially translated or abridged to the point of being of little use to researchers. Thus, misconceptions about the nature of Islamist radicalization abound; researchers' and de-radicalizers' viewpoints are often "outsider" perspectives, and findings are sometimes contradictory.[9] As a native Arabic speaker, the author of this present article aims to address some of these concerns, and has translated relevant sections of GIR from Arabic into English for this study.

This analysis focuses firstly on the key *beliefs* that make up the worldview conveyed through GIR. Secondly, it seeks to infer the over-arching *narrative* of the worldview. Thirdly, it aims to explicate the *persuasiveness* of this worldview, to help answer the question of why (some) people are willing to follow the dictates of this worldview despite the extremely high costs accruing to self and others. Such insight will hopefully contribute to the prevention of current and future violent radicalization. The article argues

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[1] Lia, B., *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri* (London: C. Hurst & Co., Ltd., 2009).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Lacey, J., *A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab Al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto* (Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 2008).

[4] Ibid.

[5] P. Cruickshank and M. Ali, "Abu Musab Al Suri: Architect of the New Al Qaeda," Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 30 (2007):1–14, available at:
http://www.lawandsecurity.org/documents/AbuMusabalSuriArchitectoftheNewAlQaeda.pdf.

[6] Nasar, M., Call to Global Islamic Resistance (in Arabic), 2004, available at:
*http://www.archive.org/download/The-call-for-a-global-Islamic-resistance/The-call-for-a-global-Islamic-resistance.pdf , 1,*398.

[7] Lacey, J., A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad, vi.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Burke, J., *Al-Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam* (London: Penguin Books, 2007);
Gray, J., *Al Qaeda and What it Means to be Modern* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007).

that the application of a frame and narrative analysis to GIR provides a suitable approach to uncover: (1) how a particular worldview is constructed to appear as a self-evidently 'correct' version of social reality, and (2) what strategies are employed to persuade others to adopt, and act upon, this version of social reality. As will be evident from the selection of a social science analytical framework, this study assumes that GIR (and text in general) can provide a lens on social reality.

Framework for the Analysis

The task of uncovering a person or group's beliefs and worldview by analyzing their written text, in the absence of other reference material, is a complicated and arduous one.[10] Many textual analyses begin by identifying dominant themes. For the frame analysis, Eidelson and Eidelson's (2003) five-belief domain framework was selected.[11] Central to this framework is the idea that a group's beliefs color its perception(s) of the world and, as a result, have a huge influence on the group's behaviour.[12] With the aim of investigating the key role certain beliefs may play in either triggering or constraining conflict between groups, the researchers draw parallels between individual core beliefs and group worldviews. They posit that particular 'dangerous' beliefs can lead to destructive actions when group members formulate their collective worldview based *primarily* on these beliefs and then use that worldview (rather than the greater complexity of objective reality) as a lens through which to judge the intentions and actions of other groups.[13]

This framework is in line with Tajfel and Turner's (1979) contributions to Social Identity Theory (SIT); their efforts are recognized to have enhanced the understanding of the psychological foundations of inter-group discrimination.[14] SIT essentially holds that people function by placing themselves and others into clearly defined categories; by doing so, they delineate themselves as part of an in-group, and others as part of an out-group.[15] The cross-cultural evidence for SIT hints at early human evolutionary origins: the advantage of being able to distinguish strong reciprocators from weak ones is believed to have had survival advantage for early hominids.[16] According to SIT, a decision to join a particular in-group is primarily based on the *beliefs* an individual holds about that group vis-à-vis other out-groups.[17]

Eidelson and Eidelson (2003) selected these specific belief domains after extensive review of literature, as well as consultations with experts in the fields of psychology and sociology. Their main goal was to single out any belief(s) that could be directly correlated with conflict in both the realms of individuals and groups. They posit a five-belief model comprising: superiority, injustice, vulnerability, distrust and helplessness. The first four may be considered 'triggering' beliefs, as their presence signals the potential of inter-group conflict. The fifth belief, that the in-group is 'helpless', however, may be considered a 'constraining' factor – one that would typically act as a demobilizing agent.[18] The researchers suggested that the "relationship between these five collective…[beliefs] and the mobilization of individual members

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[10] Potter, J. and Wetherell, M., *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 1998).

[11] R. J. Eidelson and J. I. Eidelson, "Dangerous Ideas: Five Beliefs that Propel Groups Toward Conflict," *American Psychologist* 58:3 (2003): 182-192.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Tajfel, H. and Turner, J., *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Inter-Group Relations* (London and New York: Academic Press, 1979).

[15] Brown, R., *Group Processes: Dynamics Within and Between Groups* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

[16] S. Bowles and H. Gintis, "The Evolution of Strong Reciprocity," Working Papers 2000-05, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Department of Economics, available at: *http://www.umass.edu/economics/publications/econ2000_05.pdf;* J. M. Alexander, "The Evolutionary Foundations of Strong Reciprocity," *Analyse & Kritik* 27 (2005): 106–112, available at: *http://www.analyse-und-kritik.net/2005-1/AK_McKenzie_2005.pdf.*

[17] Hewstone, M., Stroebe, W. and Stephenson, G. M., *Introduction to Social Psychology*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996).

[18] R. J. Eidelson and J. I. Eidelson, "Dangerous Ideas": 182-192.

on behalf of the group (and against an out-group) is an important topic for further study."[19] R. J. Eidelson (2002) developed the Individual–Group Belief Inventory (IGBI) in order to be able to measure the presence and strength of these beliefs in subjects' responses; a survey of U.S. citizens approximately six months after 9/11 was conducted.[20] The utility of using the inventory was supported, and further research was recommended with the suggestion of including both text and speeches.[21] The nature of this current paper's object of study (i.e. text only) limits it to the utilization of only the theoretical aspects of Eidelson and Eidelson's work.

The beliefs relevant to inter-group conflict are explained below:

Superiority: The superiority belief domain reflects in-group members' conviction that they are better than an out-group in vital, uncontested ways. They often view themselves as a special people, who are chosen and 'destined for greatness' (Eidelson, 2009, p. 4). The out-group is thus seen as an inferior one on many grounds, which include moral, spiritual and intellectual grounds. Such self-glorifying attitudes often lead in-group members to exaggerate their abilities and to make proclamations of invincibility.[22]

Injustice: The injustice belief domain is reflected in members' perception of having been violated or mistreated by a particular out-group; the out-group is viewed as the sole source of the grievances and difficulties that the in-group has faced. The in-group may frequently attribute unforeseen or unfortunate circumstances to the deliberate work of the out-group, without necessarily resorting to solid evidence.[23]

Vulnerability: The vulnerability belief domain involves members perceiving their own future as precarious; the world is seen as an essentially hazardous place where members are constantly living under threat. Such a perception leads to an increased feeling of in-group solidarity with potentially devastating consequences, since members may start acting preemptively towards a particular out-group in an attempt to ensure their own group's continued survival.[24]

Distrust: The distrust belief domain portrays members of an in-group who believe that an out-group is conspiring to intentionally cause them harm. Within this framework, every action by the out-group is automatically interpreted as hostile, although other explanations may be equally plausible. At times, the deep-rooted feelings of distrust find their roots in historical accounts of inter-group conflict. Such entrenchment of the distrust belief domain ultimately renders the in-group incapable of ever trusting the out-group.[25]

Helplessness: This belief domain reflects in-group members' perception that they are unable to change their status quo. In the selected framework, helplessness is the only belief that contributes to *constraining* conflict; it incapacitates members and leads them to submit to perceptions of absolute powerlessness. Since group members can only be mobilized to take the necessary risks involved in conflict when there is a sensible chance of success, the helplessness belief domain is, in effect, demobilizing. Conversely, if there is a perception that the prevailing status quo can be toppled, then mobilization is encouraged.[26]

This analysis utilizes Eidelson and Eidelson's five-belief model as a lens through which to view GIR, with the aim of fulfilling this study's objectives of identifying the belief system of the in-group that the text represents, and inferring that in-group's adopted worldview. For the third objective – understanding the theoretical bases behind the persuasiveness of GIR's worldview – various ways of integrating the beliefs into a coherent narrative will be considered; the narrative will then be discussed in terms of implications

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[19] Ibid., 189.
[20] Eidelson, R. J., A multi-level analysis of group member beliefs: Development and validation of the Individual–Group Belief Inventory, unpublished manuscript, 2002.
[21] Eidelson and Eidelson, "Dangerous Ideas": 182-192.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

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of Social Identity Theory. For the latter objective, selected works by Savage and Liht (2009), Tajfel and Turner (1979), and Savage et al. (2006) will be consulted.[27]

Methodology

Upon scanning the two-part GIR text with the five-belief model in mind, a few things became clear. Firstly, it was evident that Part One of GIR would be most relevant to this study's purposes. Part One is entitled, "Roots, History and Experiences," and contains numerous passages that reflect deep-rooted beliefs about and perceptions of the social world. It begins with an exhaustive political, social and legal account of the status of contemporary Muslims. It then recounts much of world history, including Muslim history and the history of the struggle between Muslims and '*Al-Room*' (a historical Arabic name which Nasar occasionally uses to refer to the West). Part One culminates by expounding on the efforts of jihadists throughout recent history.

Part Two of GIR, entitled "Call, Methodology, Way," details the theoretical frameworks that underlie the 'Global Islamic Resistance' itself; it is essentially a plan of action that addresses the work to be done on the political, educational, military, financial, and media fronts. Nasar assumes that readers who have reached Part Two of GIR are convinced of the arguments in Part One for the need for a global Islamic resistance. As a result, Part Two contains substantially fewer passages that reflect beliefs and perceptions; moreover, such passages are mainly abridged reiterations of those asserted in Part One. Large portions of Part Two were therefore deemed unnecessary to the purposes of this analysis.

A second point that arose was the need to organize the immense 1,604-page text into a workable selection. This task was made easier by the fact that a huge part of GIR is dedicated to listing Islamic legal proofs as a justification for the writer's claims. These were omitted for this analysis, along with large sections (often reproduced sections from various scholars' writings) that sought to provide strictly spiritual guidance for the recruits. The sections that were retained for analysis were those that reflected *beliefs about the social world.* Owing to the fact that GIR was written over the span of many years while the writer was admittedly unable to edit his writing, GIR is rife with repetition – often verbatim. Once again, this aided the task of further skimming it down to a more usable size.

At that point, the selected portions of GIR were carefully read; every statement that was found to reflect one of the five beliefs was highlighted, and this resulted in 233 pages of material. These pages were again carefully scanned with particular attention to the highlighted sections; due to repetition, 117 pages were discarded and 116 retained. The statements that corresponded to the beliefs were compiled; they were later categorized, sub-categorized, and translated into English.[28]
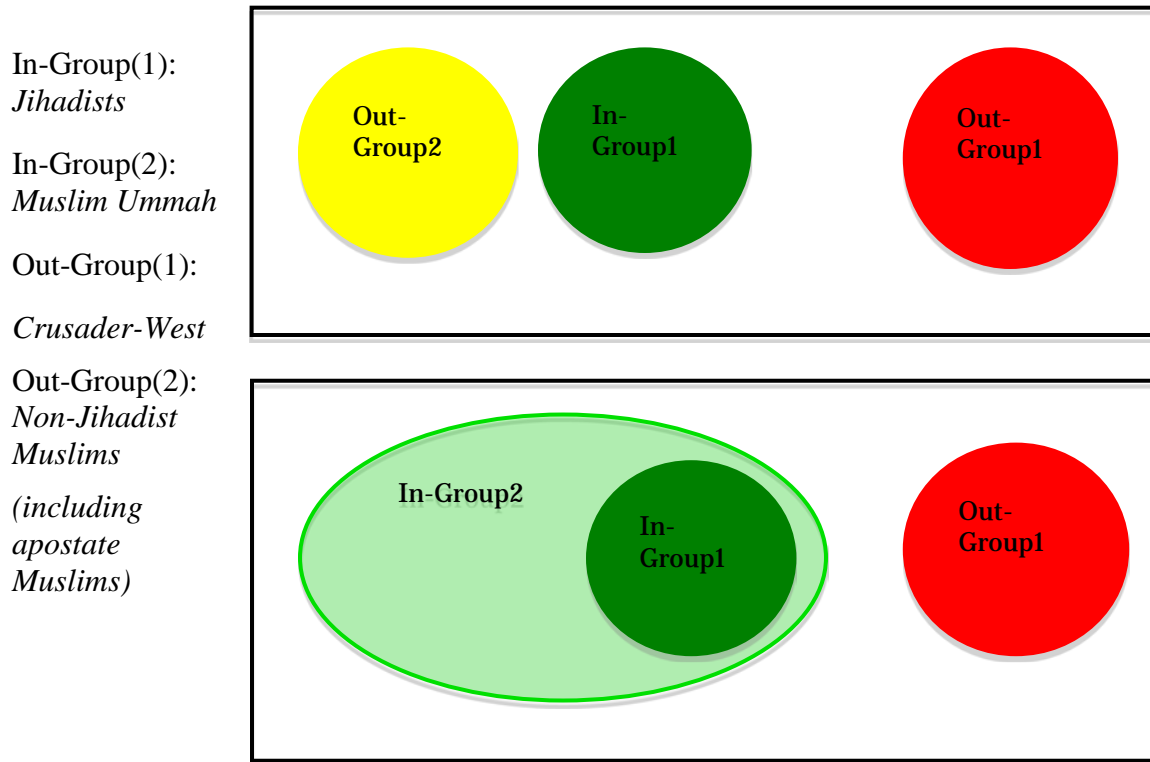
The third point that arose from the initial interaction with GIR is perhaps the most interesting one. Rather than simply delineating, as would be expected, one in-group and one out-group, GIR actually describes two in-groups and two out-groups. Specifically, the writer of the text identifies himself throughout the majority of his writing as a member of an in-group 1 that includes only himself and other committed jihadists. This Jihadist[29] in-group stands in opposition to two distinct out-groups: the Crusader-West – out-group 1, and the Non-Jihadist Muslims (including 'apostate' Muslims) – out-group 2. However, the text is also scattered with instances where the non-apostate Muslims of out-group 2 are combined with the Jihadists of in-group 1 for the strategic purpose of referring to the entirety of the Muslims as the 'Muslim Ummah' or Muslim nation – in-group 2. Diagram 1, below, illustrates these observed in-group/out-group categorizations. Possible impetuses behind such shifts in categorization will be discussed later in this paper.

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[27] S. Savage and J. Liht, "Radical Religious Speech: The Ingredients of a Binary World View" in Hare, I. and Weinstein, J. (eds), *Extreme Speech and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 488-507; Tajfel, H. and Turner, J., *Differentiation Between Social Groups*; Savage, S., Collins-Mayo, S., Mayo, B. and Cray, G., *Making Sense of Generation Y: The World View of 15- 25-year-olds* (London: Church House Publishing, 2006).

[28] Translated passages from Lacey (2009) were also utilized, and edited when necessary.

[29] Upper case 'J' will be used when referring to the name of the in-group.

Diagram 1: In-Group/Out-Group Categorization in GIR

In-Group(1):
Jihadists

In-Group(2):
Muslim Ummah

Out-Group(1):

Crusader-West

Out-Group(2):
Non-Jihadist Muslims

(including apostate Muslims)

Results

This section reports the passages in GIR that indicate the presence of the various belief domains; their presence in each relevant in-group vis-à-vis each relevant out-group is also indicated. Key examples from each belief domain are provided.

Note: For a comprehensive overview of coded passages, see Tables 1-5 in the appendix, attached as supplemental content. References to the five tables include a row number and a column letter. For example, (6/B) under the header "Superiority" refers to row 6, column B of Table 1.

Superiority *(see Table 1)*
The selected sections of GIR contain 61 passages that reflect the presence of the superiority belief in the Jihadist in-group 1 and the Muslim Ummah in-group 2.

Superiority Belief	Towards Out-group 1 Crusader-West	Towards Out-group 2 Non-Jihadists
In-group 1 Jihadists		38
In-group 2 Muslim Ummah	23	

Muslim Ummah's superiority towards Crusader-West; content reflected:
a) Spiritual, moral, ethical superiority
b) Overly optimistic calculations of military success of in-group
c) Beliefs about great destiny of in-group

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Example:
...I believe that our followers and whoever lives long enough from us, along with whoever God chooses from His servants, will defeat America. (Table 1: row 6/ column B)

Jihadists' superiority towards Non-Jihadist Muslims; content reflected:
a) Spiritual, moral superiority
b) Intellectual superiority
c) Religious Doctrinal superiority

Example:
The jihadists are the exemplars of Islam in today's world...they are the elite. (Table 1: row 11/ column A)

Injustice *(see Table 2)*
The selected sections of GIR contain 57 passages that reflect the presence of the injustice belief domain in the Jihadist in-group 1 and the Muslim Ummah in-group 2.

Injustice Belief	Injustice by Out-group 1 Crusader-West	Injustice by Out-group 2 Non-Jihadists
Injustice against In-group 1 *Jihadists*		4
Injustice against In-group 2 *Muslim Ummah*	53	

Crusader-West's injustice towards Muslim Ummah; content reflected:
a) Occupation, mass murder, violation of sanctity
b) Economic injustices, theft; general tyranny and control
c) Persecution, assassination, capture of jihadists

Example:
Indeed, organized killing campaigns and starvation struck millions of children, as occurred in Iraq. America was not content with the killing of over three hundred thousand persons...[The] siege...killed more than 1.5 million children...The racial eradication and ethnic cleansing operations against Muslims would require volumes of books to detail. (Table 2: row 13/ column B)

Non-Jihadist Muslims' injustice towards Jihadists; content reflected:
a) Collaboration with Crusader-West in aiding 'occupations'
b) Persecution, capture of jihadists

Example:
...the damaging attacks of the Afghan apostates who toppled the Islamic government. (Table 2: row 1/ column A)

Vulnerability *(see Table 3)*
The selected sections of GIR contain 29 passages that reflect the presence of the vulnerability belief domain in the Jihadist in-group 1 and the Muslim Ummah, in-group 2.

Vulnerability Belief	Vis-à-vis Out-group 1 Crusader-West	Vis-à-vis Out-groups 1 & 2 Crusader-West & Non-Jihadists
In-group 1 Jihadists		23
In-group 2 Muslim Ummah	6	

Vulnerability of Muslim Ummah vis-à-vis Crusader-West; content reflected:
a) Fears about ummah's intellectual, cultural, religious identities

6

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b) Fears about ummah's existence
c) Fear of further occupation, destruction, oppression

Example:
This decline...threatens the creed, identity, and existence of the ummah. (Table 3: row 1/ column A)

Vulnerability of Jihadists vis-à-vis Crusader-West AND Non-Jihadist Muslims; content reflected:
a) Fear of 'extinction' and shrinkage in number through assassination
b) Fear of further oppression, suffering, humiliation
c) Fear of lack of sufficient education and training among future jihadists

Example:
...we are under the threat...of further oppression, suffering, torture, hunger, fear, murder, humiliation and shame. (Table 3: row 2/ column B)

Distrust *(see Table 4)*
The selected sections of GIR contain 52 passages that reflect the presence of the distrust belief domain in the Jihadist in-group 1.

Distrust Belief	Towards Out-group 1 Crusader-West	Towards Out-group 2 Non-Jihadists
In-group 1 Jihadists	35	17

Jihadists' Distrust of Crusader-West; content reflected:
a) Historical distrust
b) Suspicions about Crusader-West's intentions to eliminate intellectual, moral, religious foundations of in-group
c) Suspicions about Crusader-West's intentions to economically dominate, occupy, control in-group

Example:
America and its European NATO allies...consider Islam and Muslims the strategic and historical next standing enemy. (Table 4: row 19/ column A)

Jihadists' Distrust of Non-Jihadist Muslims; content reflected:
   a) Political treason: collaboration with Crusader-West; persecution of jihadists
   b) Religious treason: hypocritical scholars, who collaborate with Crusader-West; issue anti-jihadist rulings

Example:
...Arab and Islamic intelligence services work side by side with American CIA and FBI officers...everyone is in America's service today. (Table 4: row 12,13/ column B)

Helplessness *(see Table 5)*
The selected sections of GIR contain 7 passages that reflect the presence of the helplessness belief domain in the non-jihadist members of the Muslim Ummah, in-group 2, before the Crusader-West, out-group 1, and the 'apostate' Muslim leaders of out-group 2.

Helplessness Belief	Before Out-groups 1 & 2 Crusader-West & 'Apostate' Muslim Leaders
In-group 2 Muslim Ummah	7

Helplessness in Muslim Ummah vis-à-vis Crusader-West and Non-Jihadist Muslims

Example:
...the Muslim Ummah is powerless and without volition before its leaders, and its leaders are in turn powerless and without volition before the ummah's enemies. (Table 5: row 6)

Diagram 2: Percentages of Belief Domains in GIR
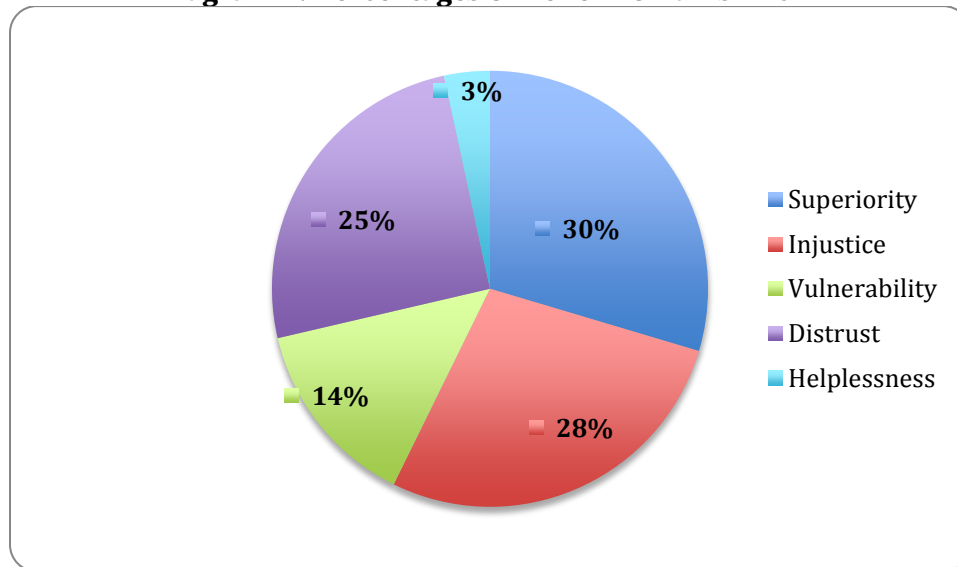
Discussion - By Belief

Applied to GIR, Eidelson and Eidelson's (2003) five-belief model shows utility, particularly in highlighting the shifting of in-group/out-group categorizations and relationships. The text is heavily laden with all four 'triggering' beliefs; the fifth 'constraining' belief, helplessness, is interestingly only present when the writer specifically calls for its *eradication* in the Non-Jihadist Muslims (in-group 2), whom he invites to join the Jihadists (in-group 1). A discussion of each belief follows below.

Superiority

Muslim Ummah's Superiority Towards Crusader-West

(All references in parenthesis below refer to a row, 1-38, in column "B" of Table 1, attached in the supplemental content).

As the results in Table 1 show, there are 23 instances in which Nasar's discourse reflects a belief that the Muslim Ummah (in-group 2) is superior to the Crusader-West (out-group 1). Nasar specifically bases this superiority on spiritual, moral and ethical grounds. An entire section of GIR is dedicated to expounding on modern Western civilization's "crises" that have resulted from a "spiritual void" or emptiness (10/B). He cites various statistics that relate to alcohol and drug abuse in the West, along with the prevalence of psychological disorders, crime, sexual promiscuity, STDs, and suicide (11-17/B). It is very possible that such figures are cited with the hope of immunizing the readers against what he perceives as the temptations of the West. In an effort to downgrade the allure of the West he reiterates a typical jihadist affirmation: "The charm of the Western civilization no longer deceives the eyes or tempts the hearts" (23/B).

Nasar attributes what he describes as the West's moral degeneration to a "fleeing from God" (8/B), and attempts to back his argument with a carefully selected set of ominous quotations by Western

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philosophers that appear to suggest the purposelessness of life. Interestingly, he makes no mention whatsoever of anything positive that Western philosophers have contributed to humanity, nor of any religious realities existing in the West. In order to mobilize the reader against the West, he presents it as completely 'godless' not only in its way of life, but also in its beliefs. This selective bias in GIR supports the idea of beliefs potentially acting as 'lenses' that influence how people perceive the social world.[30] It is noteworthy that Nasar does not substantiate any links between the observations he provides about life in the West and the beliefs he assumes to have caused them.

Among the 23 instances, 6 pertain to his belief that the Muslim Ummah (in-group 2) is destined to rule the earth, to accomplish great things and to undoubtedly defeat its enemies. According to Eidelson and Eidelson (2003), this type of exaggerated optimism about a group's own capabilities (particularly on the military front) reflects its members' belief in their own superiority. For example: "I believe that our followers...will defeat America, the leader of the new Western-Crusader camp" (6/B). Such certainty in future glory significantly catalyzes the mobilization process, particularly in those youth who may be feeling helpless yet are eager to play a part in some grand cosmic plan; it provides them with a purpose and 'guaranteed' future success. It is noteworthy that the assertion of superiority is made most frequently on the grounds of moral and spiritual grounds, a claim less vulnerable to falsification by real life events than military superiority. The assertion of military superiority gains credence from this spiritual/moral superiority.

Thus, in three of the cited instances, Nasar relies heavily on prophecies in order to convince his readers of an imminent and predestined victory. A typical example is his assertion that, "...God will inevitably grant victory to His religion and His party...the glad tidings of our victory -with which we will open Rome- will come to fruition" (4/B). His *conviction* that the Muslim Ummah will "spread across the earth" (22/B) also plays a large part in the impetus to present the world as comprised of a distinct polarity in which his in-group is privileged to be the superior of the two poles. Binary thinking of this sort leads to derogation of the out-group, referring to the entirety of America as a "disease," and to the jihadists' efforts as the "cure" (1-3/B). In a similar vein, he predicts the decline of the West and the Soviet East, claiming that they have lost their turn to rule the earth (18-20/B). His belief in a particular divine 'law' that is applicable to all civilizations leads him to predict the decline of the aforementioned civilizations, and to subsequently see his in-group's efforts as a necessary factor in the divine plan to replace them with an Islamic civilization. The aligning of the Jihadists (in-group 1) with the will of God is a primary strategy for positioning its superiority. More complex ways of viewing either in-group or out-group are screened out: a simple, binary structure of the social world is upheld. Here, Nasar is clearly playing upon readers' social identity needs for self-esteem, belonging, distinctiveness, and continuity over time.

Interestingly, Nasar decides to merge his Jihadist in-group 1 into the larger Muslim Ummah, in-group 2, whenever he makes explicit statements regarding his in-group's superiority to the Crusader-West, out-group 1. There are several possible explanations for this: firstly, in most of these cases Nasar is referring to an ummah–to–be that will eventually be led by his Jihadist in-group; the Jihadist group is perceived as the precursor and vanguard of the rest of the (purified) Muslim Ummah. Secondly, since the prophecies that he bases many of these claims on refer to a large population of people that will save humanity and spread across the entire earth, it would be erroneous to assume that his currently limited (in number) elite Jihadist group is the whole ummah-to-be that the prophecies are referring to. A third explanation could be the effect of contrast: the extreme 'villainousness' of the Crusader-West outweighs the relative differences between the Jihadists and the Non-Jihadist Muslims. A fourth explanation might be sheer salesmanship: when it suits his purposes, Nasar flatters the wider Muslim Ummah, and assuages the lonely anxiety of the jihadist, by subsuming them together into one triumphant mass.

Jihadists' Superiority Towards Non-Jihadist Muslims

(Appendix: Table 1, Section A)

When Nasar's focus shifts to criticizing the Non-Jihadist Muslims (out-group 2), he immediately reverts back to his smaller, more clearly defined in-group 1 (Jihadists) in order to demonstrate the religious

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[30] Hewstone, et al., Introduction to Social Psychology.

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inferiority of the non-jihadist members of the Muslim Ummah. This strategy further suits his aim of 'converting' the non-jihadist Muslim reader to in-group 1 by playing on their desire for divine favor and by intimidating them into choosing sides. Depending on their choice, they will either become among those who are 'beyond the pale' or among those who are so favored by God as to have been 'selected' into the elite group.

As Table 1 shows, there are 38 instances in which the Jihadists (in-group 1) are depicted as being superior to Non-Jihadist Muslims (out-group 2), 20 (53 percent) of which reflect moral and spiritual superiority. The Jihadists are regularly referred to as the "pure-hearted" and "noble elite," and occasionally as being "the divinely-aided group" and the "saved group" (1-3,15,17,24,38/A). Non-Jihadist Muslims are described as being cowardly, worldly and hypocritical, and this is contrasted with the Jihadist in-group's chivalry and sacrifice (5-9,13,23,32/A). This contrast is highly instrumental since no Muslim would consciously opt out of a "divinely-aided group." Similarly, chivalry is particularly praiseworthy in the Arab world – clearly GIR's intended primary audience. The following statement captures the essence of Nasar's depiction of the inferior out-group 2: "An ummah that has slept for too long, has abandoned war for too long...in whose hearts the attachment of the world and fear of death have seeped in both its lay person and its elect, and its religious scholars have spent too much time at the tables of its sultans" (5-10/A). Nasar even unabashedly mentions the names of various religious leaders whom he calls the "hypocritical scholars," and sarcastically makes a mockery of them and their actions. [31] By uncovering the 'truth' about these scholars via the use of caricature, Nasar apparently aims to weaken the religious allegiance of any wavering reader to such leaders, by portraying them as detested outcasts.

At other times, Nasar highlights his belief in his Jihadist in-group's religious doctrinal superiority. When analyzing the condition of the modern Muslim world, he attributes its maladies to the "corruption of the pristine faith of monotheism among most Muslims" (20/A). This stands in stark contrast to the 'real faith' that is portrayed as exclusively belonging to his Jihadist in-group. To the Muslim reader, again, this is alluring, since religious doctrinal correctness is considered an essential prerequisite for salvation in the hereafter. Furthermore, the Jihadist in-group is depicted in 3 instances as being intellectually superior to the Muslim out-group. They are described as "understanding both their religion and the contemporary world," and as "combining fighting with religious knowledge" (4, 16, 26/A). This is also likely to be particularly tempting to a religious reader, since the attainment of deeper knowledge in both the domains of 'religion' and 'world' is a clear goal in a religion that has traditionally valued both domains of knowledge.

The results reveal 15 more instances that reflect the Jihadists' superiority beliefs vis-à-vis the Non-Jihadist Muslims. It seems that Nasar assumes that more energy is required to convince the reader of the Jihadists' superiority to the rest of the ummah than to convince the reader of the ummah's superiority to non-Muslims. There are four possible reasons for this. First, the ummah at large perceives that much injustice has been perpetrated against it by the 'West' and therefore many of its members have an incentive to feel superior to their oppressors. Second, the Jihadist in-group has been negatively portrayed by both Muslim and Western media, and the average reader may have been convinced by such negative press. Third, mainstream Muslim scholars have regularly condemned the actions of the Jihadists, and so not only was there much legal convincing needed to justify the jihadist position in GIR, but also a negative portrayal of the condemning scholars, along with a highlighting of their inferiority, was required. Fourth, the majority of Muslims today harbors deep suspicions towards secularism in general, and thus feel that their 'religious' status is by default higher than that of the West. Given these emphases, it appears that the depiction of the Non-Jihadist Muslims as inferior to the Jihadists is one of the most critical means to achieving GIR's purposes of violent radicalization.

Two interesting observations arise: firstly, Nasar's *a priori* assumption of Muslims' superiority to non-Muslims and his adherence to a binary worldview seem to have led to a much harsher critique of the Crusader-West out-group 1. The Crusader-West's flaws are much more pronounced and permanent, while the Muslim Ummah's are necessarily temporary since, according to Nasar's logic, God is (at least potentially) with the latter, not the former; the Non-Jihadist Muslims of out-group 2 can still reform, and become 'better' (i.e. jihadist). Thus Nasar provides many statistics to support his criticism of the

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[31] Nasar, Call to Global Islamic Resistance (in Arabic), 901.

Crusader-West's way of life and does not provide any when discussing the Muslim Ummah's way of life. Secondly, it is intriguing that of the 38 instances that depict the Jihadists' superiority vis-à-vis the Non-Jihadist Muslims, 31 (82 percent) are in Part One of GIR. It is possible that Nasar sought to cement in his readers' minds the idea that the Jihadists are of a higher rank than other Muslims early on in his writing, since this idea is more crucial in the primary stage of 'indoctrination' than in the second stage of 'action'.

Injustice

Crusader-West's Injustice towards Muslim Ummah

(Appendix: Table 2, Section B)

As the results in Table 2 show, there are 53 instances in which Nasar highlights the Crusader-West's (out-group 1) injustices towards the Muslim Ummah (in-group 2). Once again, Nasar finds it useful to merge his Jihadist in-group into the larger Muslim Ummah, as the injustices highlighted have afflicted the entirety of the Muslim Ummah and not simply the Jihadists alone. In effect, he tries to relate to his readers by subsuming them into one group, in order to create 'in-group bonds' and then say 'look at what *they* have done to *us*.' For example, he states: "The Infidel Crusade-Zionist powers led by America...[are] killing lives, violating Sacred rights, occupying Sacred lands, stampeding our nation..." (1-4/B). The possessive adjective 'our' is used in reference to the larger Muslim Ummah (in-group 2), while the Crusader-West (out-group 1) is regularly referred to as an "occupying" force, that is guilty of "oppression" and "injustice" (3, 8, 10, 11, 27, 28/B). Many of these instances refer to the loss of Muslim lives; some refer to "genocide," and others to death from starvation-inducing policies (11, 13/B). By presenting an exhaustive account of injustices perpetrated by a monolithic Crusader-West entity led by America, GIR not only incites hatred towards the out-group but also gradually legitimizes any pre-emptive or retaliatory attack against them.

Nasar also refers to economic-related injustices and control (5, 25, 26/B). For example, he mentions an incident in which the "IMF forbade Sudan from reaching self-sufficiency with wheat after al-Basheer took over rule... America then enticed Sudan by supplying them with ten years' worth of wheat through interest-free loans and with quantities of food grants in the form of gifts with nothing in return!" (20/B). Large sections are dedicated to delineating the out-group's dominating control over the in-group's wealth and markets; this is referred to as a "new system of subjugation."[32] These 'real' threats (in contrast to the symbolic threats to identity and culture) are intended to be all-pervasive; it is as though Nasar is saying 'even if we Muslims can manage to stay alive, we cannot be prosperous and independent.' The situation is thus presented as intolerable, with the only possible outlet being violent change.

There are 10 instances that highlight the injustices that have specifically afflicted Nasar's Jihadist in-group 1 at the hands of the Crusader-West, out-group 1 (22, 23, 35-39, 50-53/B), the most prominent of which is considered the "destruction of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan" (35, 50/B). This is bitterly highlighted as one of the Crusader-West's worst transgressions; Nasar perceives them to have aborted the only hope of an Islamic state since the fall of the Islamic Caliphate. His logic runs in this manner: since the Crusader-West out-group has essentially obstructed God's will by destroying the 'Islamic Emirate,' then they are certainly God's enemies and must be fought and killed, with an even greater incentive than the one engendered by them 'merely' oppressing and killing us. Furthermore, the frequent mention of the persecution, assassination and capture of jihadists serves to promote feelings of revenge among the already radicalized members of the small Jihadist in-group who may have become demoralized (and are admittedly losing sight of the true mission post 9/11), and thus need reinvigoration.

Non-Jihadist Muslims' Injustice Towards Jihadists

(Appendix: Table 2, Section A)

It is noteworthy that the number of instances that highlight the Crusader-West's (out-group 1) injustices towards the Muslim Ummah (in-group 2) are substantially higher than the number of instances that

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[32] Ibid., 112.

highlight the Non-Jihadist Muslims' (out-group 2) injustices towards the Jihadists (in-group 1). This is consistent with Nasar's clearly stipulated objective in GIR, that the strategic military target for the post 9/11 phase of 'jihad' is no longer the apostate Arab and Islamic governments and their accomplices (out-group 2), but is now the Crusader-West out-group. If, as assumed, injustices are cited to incite hatred and in turn mobilization, then it would naturally follow that the injustices of the newly targeted out-group 1 be much more accentuated. When the injustices of out-group 2 *are* mentioned, all instances are related to the "effects of...the cooperation of hypocritical governments that control the Arab and Islamic world."[33] Nasar mentions the "damaging attacks of the Afghan apostates who toppled the Islamic government," and the "crises, bloody battles, and heavy calamities" that the Jihadists (in-group 1) have undergone at the hands of the 'apostate' governments in countries such as "...Syria, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Egypt among others" (1-4/A). Examples of this kind serve to delegitimize the authority of these respective Muslim governments in the potential recruit's mind. This is a vital step towards removing a primary constraint to mobilization, since it is possible that some citizens may harbor jihadist intentions that are prevented from coming to fruition out of fear of their own governments. The governments are thus *consistently* referred to as 'apostate' throughout GIR.

As with the superiority belief, here too, we find that almost all instances of injustice were found in Part One; this is, once again, consistent with the possible explanation that Nasar is devoting the first part of GIR to indoctrinating his readers, and the second part to inviting them to action.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability of Muslim Ummah vis-à-vis Crusader-West

(Appendix: Table 3, Section A)

As Table 3 shows, six of the 29 instances of vulnerability found in GIR explicitly state that the Muslim Ummah (in-group 2) is being threatened on religious, intellectual and cultural grounds. At one point, Nasar even states that "This decline [in religious identity]...also threatens the creed, identity, and existence of the ummah" (2/A). This would likely engender a sense of in-group solidarity in the readers as well as the need to desperately defend the ummah against the perceived oncoming threat. Apparently, Nasar is here appealing to those readers who are not likely to be mobilized at the mere mention of the Jihadists' vulnerability (see next sub-section); since they are not members of that group, they may not fear for its continued survival.

One particular instance highlights the economic vulnerability of the Muslim Ummah (in-group 2) by mentioning fears about the future that are directly related to the 'occupation' of oil reserves: "Occupying Iraq for an indefinite period of time, and thus controlling the largest oil reserve in the world" (6/A). Thus, the Crusader-West out-group is portrayed as having even more unjust future plans for the in-group that will prevent its ability to ever achieve self-sufficiency. By depicting the Muslim Ummah's vulnerability on multiple levels, Nasar effectively inculcates perpetual fear in the potential recruit's mind.

Vulnerability of Jihadists vis-à-vis Crusader-West AND Non-Jihadist Muslims

(Appendix: Table 3, Section B)

When Nasar turns to the vulnerability of the Jihadists (in-group 1), he does so vis-à-vis both the Crusader-West (out-group 1) and the Non-Jihadist Muslims (out-group 2). This is because the 'global war on terror' is an initiative that has been undertaken by governments from both out-groups. There are 4 instances in which fear of extinction and shrinkage in number are explicitly stated. For example, Nasar states that the 'war on terror' has "led to the near extinction of the mujahideen," and that "the elite who resist the invading enemies are a frighteningly small segment of the ummah" (10, 12/B). The potential effect of this is to worry both the potential recruit and actual jihadist enough to lead them to the conclusion that action must be taken *immediately*. It effectively creates a scenario where the continual survival of the in-group is dependent upon the eradication of the out-group. Moreover, it capitalizes on the already established

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[33] Ibid., 27.

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fears about the ummah's religious, cultural, and intellectual identities, since the ummah's vanguard 'elite' – the only people who will protect it – are becoming extinct.

Nasar presents his readers with fears regarding all sorts of future tribulations. For example, he states: "And there is no doubt, if things persist as they are, that we are under the threat...of further oppression, suffering, torture, hunger, fear, murder, humiliation and shame" (2-9/B). The mobilizing potential of this statement is high, since it is likely to scare the readers into a long-term 'limbic-state' of fight-or-flight, a prolonged sense of stress that produces a binary view of the world (i.e. low integrative complexity).[34] It also offers them a solution that might prevent the feared future from coming into existence: remaining steadfast on the radical path.

Nasar himself seems genuinely concerned about the Jihadists' ability to stay on the 'correct' path, especially after the fierceness of the attacks of the post 9/11 'war on terror.' Two instances also reflect Nasar's personal fears about the future, manifested in his grave concern about the lack of jihadist literature and the consequent lack in the education and training of recruits (22, 23/B). In particular, Nasar is disheartened by the lack of literature specifically addressing the post 9/11 situation of the Jihadists "on the theoretical, philosophical, jurisprudential and conduct levels" (23/B). He fears that, without properly understanding *why* they are fighting, and without knowing exactly *who* and *what* they are fighting, "The jihadist-fighting creed is under severe threat of loss in today's Jihadists." Nasar admits that this fear, along with his strong belief in the Jihadists' acute vulnerability, have together played a key role in the birth of GIR.

Distrust

Jihadists' Distrust of Crusader-West

(Appendix: Table 4, Section A)

As the results have indicated, Jihadists (in-group 1) are heavily distrustful of the West (out-group 1) (Table 4). Furthermore, this distrust directly emanates from encounters in the past; thus the current struggle is defined as one between Muslims and '*Al-Room*' (a historical Arabic name for the West) (32/A). Nasar specifically names a section in Part One of GIR, "The struggle with *Al-Room* and its Power Equilibria Throughout History." This historical lens has Nasar presenting the Muslim Ummah's current enemies as "crusaders" and their plans as a "*third* crusader campaign" (2, 9, 25, 27, 35/A). Nasar interprets *all* the actions of out-group 1 in one specific way, stating: "And it is enough for me to say that all the details clearly indicate that this is a crusade with occupation goals, and it is led by America, Britain, and Israel, and they are aided by all NATO's European countries, Russia and America's allies" (26/A).

In many instances, the 'crusaders' are portrayed as seeking hegemony over the Muslim world's wealth via occupation and economic control (6, 7, 11, 12-18/A). For example, an entire section is dedicated to describing what Nasar sees as the process through which the "illegal appropriation of Muslims' wealth and their primary riches" takes place (11/A). He lists various stages that begin with the "fortunes...being stolen from their very source," and end with the "last stage of stealing, when our country's share of the profits is transferred to Western...accounts they run their economy with, and do not permit our governments to withdraw from it except in limited and calculated amounts" (12-16/A). He then further states that "Most of what they let us withdraw goes toward buying industrial materials, weapons, and our necessities from their industrialized world; and they impose any price they desire for that material" (17/A). As with the unsubstantiated instances of superiority to this out-group, the reader is here not offered any evidence or citation to back up statements about the out-group's appropriation of Muslim fortunes. The assumption is probably that none are needed, since the majority of the Muslim Ummah (in-group 2) is already distrustful of the West (out-group 1) because of the injustices it perceives the West to have perpetrated against it (discussed earlier). Nasar's apparent capitalization on this already-existing distrust in the form of adding new – and possibly previously unknown – scenarios serves the purpose of fostering more hatred towards the out-group. This is, of course, highly conducive to mobilization.

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[34] Savage and Liht, "Radical Religious Speech."

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Furthermore, the Crusader-West is portrayed as seeking to remove "the religious, intellectual and moral foundations of the region...[and re-shape] them on the basis of Western thought, specifically American-Zionist thought" (5/A). The Americans and Europeans are portrayed as "plotting to weaken the Muslim people's faith," and their leaders as seeking to eliminate the "religious, political, economic, social, and cultural existence of Muslims" (1, 2/A). This is understood to be one step away from totally taking over the Muslim world; Nasar informs the reader that the American president (at the time, George W. Bush) and his administration are "now preparing everyone for their next step: Syria, or maybe Iran, and he is hinting at dividing Saudi Arabia and taking Egypt over" (31/A).

It is recognized that when the distrust belief domain is strong, hostile intentions are assumed to be harbored by the out-group even when there is lack of evidence or when alternative explanations are available.[35] This is well demonstrated in the following instance in which Nasar states that "The expansion of the NATO, and the raising of crusader slogans...clearly indicates their crusading objectives" (27/A); this claim is not backed up by any evidence.

In two instances, Nasar portrays the Crusader-West (out-group 1) as 'opportunistic' and deceitful (22, 24/A). For example, "we are now witnessing an opportunistic American-Jewish carefully programmed media campaign, that blows the events of September out of proportion, in order to justify its invasion to the rest of the world..." (22/A). Deep-rooted distrust of this kind almost completely eliminates the Jihadists' (in-group 1) ability to compromise, seek non-violent solutions, or attempt dialogue or reconciliation with the out-group. The Crusader-West is presented as a historical enemy with *religious intentions* to occupy and eradicate the Muslim Ummah; this increases the resolve of the recruit – and the potential recruit – to fight back. In this sense, the presence of the distrust belief domain in the Jihadist in-group is heavily mobilizing.

Jihadists' Distrust of Non-Jihadist Muslims

(Appendix: Table 4, Section B)

As the results indicate, there are 17 instances depicting contemporary Muslim governments as completely untrustworthy. For example, Nasar states that "Arab and Islamic intelligence services work side by side with American CIA and FBI officers" (12/B). He also states: "The Muslim governments today are infidel and apostate, for they have substituted God's *Shari'a* and ruled according to laws that are not His. They have also allied with God's enemies and as a result have betrayed God, His messenger, and the believers" (15, 16/B). This depiction of the Muslim leaders as treacherous is repeated and exaggerated persistently in GIR. Such emphasis is highly conducive to the text's radicalizing aims; by labelling the governments as God's enemies, their forgiveness by the reader (whether the recruit or potential recruit) is made nearly impossible. This is yet another angle from which Nasar seeks to delegitimize the authority of the Muslim governments, and to subsequently weaken – if not eradicate – the reader's allegiance to them.

The results also reveal 7 instances in which Nasar categorizes the religious institutions of the Muslim world in the distrusted out-group 2 (1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 14, 17/B). For example, he states that "The official religious establishment and a large portion of the ulama and their religious institutions are unflinchingly poised to become a part of the new world order... having officially chosen to go along with their infidel governments that function within the new Crusader-Jewish campaign" (9,10/B). Once again, Nasar presents this phenomenon as one with historical precursors in the ummah; thus he names an entire section in GIR, "The spread of the phenomenon of 'Sultan Scholars' during the Abbassid period." As with the governments, here the religious institution is likewise completely delegitimized. The influence of its scholars' religious opinions – which are contradictory to Nasar's – is also weakened considerably. Even the mosque pulpit of Islam's most sacred site can no longer be trusted since "...from the pulpits of Friday prayer at the al-Haram mosque in Mecca the sultan's hypocritical ulama condemn jihad and the mujahideen...and call for protecting the blood of the unbelieving invaders" (14/B).

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[35] Eidelson and Eidelson, "Dangerous Ideas": 182-192.

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In one instance, Nasar goes even further in his vilification and states that "These collaborating groups are not confined to intellectual movements, nor to specific ethnic or religious groups. Within this vile column are those who claim a variety of identities...[including] every color of secularist and political group in our lands" (8/B). Such explicitness in the discourse likely aims to eliminate the reader's trust in any Muslim group other than the Jihadists. Ipso facto, the Jihadist group presents itself as the new in-group for the religious reader, by igniting the strong human motivations to maintain a positive, distinctive social identity that enables both belonging and identity continuity. A possible explanation for this transformation is discussed in the next section.

Helplessness

Helplessness in Non-Jihadist Muslims

(Appendix: Table 5)

Although Nasar himself never exhibits any beliefs about his own in-group's helplessness in GIR, he occasionally (only seven instances throughout text) acknowledges the presence of the helplessness belief domain in the larger Muslim Ummah (in-group 2). Hence, as early on as in page 5, Nasar asserts that the text's purpose is to alleviate the ummah of "the heavy burden of helplessness and laziness and the woes of oppression" (3). Elsewhere, he acknowledges that there are those within the Muslim Ummah who ask: "what can any one of us do in the face of this onslaught from the Crusaders and Jews and their supporters from the apostates and the hypocrites among us?" (1). Fully aware of the demobilizing nature of this belief, Nasar makes it clear that GIR itself provides the answer to such a question; he hopes that his writing will eliminate the ummah's helplessness and facilitate the mobilization process. This is a likely explanation for the fact that he intermittently spends time deconstructing various – existing and imagined – cries of helplessness.

Discussion - Integrating the Findings into an Over-Arching Narrative

One way to holistically understand the results is to view them in the form of a *narrative* arising from the logical order and convergence of the five beliefs.[36] The five identified beliefs can potentially be 'read' in the following manner:

We Muslims are God's chosen people who are meant to rule the earth (superiority), but we have been deprived of this right because 'others' have oppressed us (injustice). If things continue as they are, the ummah's religious and cultural identities – and possibly its very being – are under the threat of extinction (vulnerability). This is because the Crusader-American-Zionist-West wants to occupy and subjugate us and appropriate all our wealth and riches; and our apostate Arab and Islamic governments are their accomplices (distrust). The ummah must wake up and join the Jihadist vanguard elite to defend itself and reclaim its God-given right to rule the earth (mobilization/radicalization). Let no-one say 'there is nothing we can do about it, we can only accept our fate'; the prophecies have destined us for greatness (anti-helplessness).

This narrative's content is consistent with a three-part narrative that Savage and Liht (2009) have proposed based on the discourse of a range of radical Islamists. The researchers point out how the structure of a basic story is one of humanity's main tools for explaining causality. They argue that accounts of social reality that follow this three-part structure, with its build-up and resolve of tension, present themselves as self-evidently correct to their hearers. Their narrative reads:

1) *The initial sequence:* There once was a golden age of Islam.
2) *The obstacle and the help:* The West intervened through colonization, the imposition of secular states, support of Israel, and a host of illegitimate wars. The purity of Islam was compromised within the Muslim world and Muslims are now oppressed around the world by the secular and godless West. There is one solution, enshrined (purportedly) as the centrepiece of the Qur'an: it

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[36] Ibid.

is the duty of all Muslims to struggle for the institution of Sharia law, and to reinstate the Caliphate in order to usher in the perfect Islamic society.

3) *The resolution:* The prestige, power and purity of Islam vis-à-vis the West is a zero-sum game that Islam will win. The perfect Islamic society is the will of Allah; martyrs will be rewarded. Both internal (compromised Muslims) and external (Western) enemies are fair game.

The complementarity between Savage and Liht's (2009) basic story with the narrative arising from this analysis suggests the existence of a narrative-based *worldview* that jihadists seem to share as their dominant lens on social reality. It is a story that meets social identity needs (for self-esteem, continuity over time, distinctiveness and belonging) and through its binary structure, precludes any behaviour other than violence against the out-group. In both narratives, the 'West' and 'Islam' are presented as mutually exclusive realities.

One of the most powerful ways in which a worldview's story can be conveyed is through the highlighting of shared cultural symbols; these can take various forms ranging from images and artefacts to events and even scriptural verses.[37] Symbols help people delineate clear 'social boundaries'; 'insiders' are people who demonstrate an ability to interpret shared symbols, while 'outsiders' find them meaningless.[38] By highlighting shared symbols, people with different worldviews (i.e. Jihadists vs. traditional Muslims) can 'relate' to each other and an unconscious 'free flowing' between worldviews can possibly occur. If the story of one worldview provides more appealing answers to existential questions, adherents of the other worldview may very well swallow it whole, uncritically, and thus adopt the new worldview. GIR's discourse reveals the presence of a story that traditional (non-radical) Muslims share numerous symbols with; these include prophecies from the Qur'an and Sunna that both traditional and radical Muslims believe in (albeit with radically different interpretations), historical events that are recounted by members of both worldviews, and the common desire of both traditional and radical Muslims to be 'favored' by God. *Fertile ground for radicalization lies in these areas of overlap in shared symbols between traditional and radical Muslims.*

Moreover, since worldviews are more elaborately expressed through praxis – as a way of *being* in the world, being mobilized in effect becomes a way of bringing the GIR worldview to life. In fact, it may be argued that GIR's story *needs* praxis in order to be perceived as genuine, since the conflict that it sets up can only be resolved through action – through violent mobilization; and a story is never complete without a resolution. This view complements Savage and Liht's (2009) Integrative Complexity (IC) approach to radicalization; the understanding of the low IC binary worldview is given further substantiation through the inferring and analysis of its basic story.

Applying Social Identity Theory (SIT) to GIR also provides useful insights into the nature of its persuasive power. Tajfel and Turner (1986) have demonstrated the crucial role that social identity plays in individuals' lives, and the different demands which groups place on their respective members. Indeed, since SIT suggests that part of people's 'self-concept (identity) is defined in terms of group affiliations,' it may be argued that the potential recruit's sense of identity itself becomes *dependent* upon their membership in the Jihadist in-group.[39] An outlet from desperation is offered, albeit with the very high price and imminent risks that come with being part of the Jihadist group, and is nevertheless accepted because the beliefs together formulate a story that meets strong urges in the reader's psyche. It provides them with high self-esteem and a desirable social identity – benefits which can only be retained through mobilization. Once the new binary worldview and its respective story are deemed convincing, were the path of mobilization consciously abandoned, both the ensuing cognitive dissonance and the loss of social identity benefits would likely be unbearable.

When attempting to relate this to Muslim youth today, one finds that their shared sentiment of despair is appropriately captured in the title of Bernard Lewis's book: "What Went Wrong?" As Lewis states: "For many centuries, Islam was in the forefront of human civilization and achievement. In the Muslims' own

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[37] Savage et al., Making Sense of Generation Y.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Brown, R., *Group Processes*, 312.

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perception, Islam itself was indeed coterminous with civilization..."[40] Yet eventually the 'West' seems to have taken over this role, and Muslims are now far from even being second place. Many Muslim youth today find this to be bewildering and are demanding a satisfying answer; the debasement of the Muslim Ummah has effectively challenged their meaning system and subsequently their sense of identity. This renders them extremely vulnerable to radical discourse which suggests that it can preserve the soundness of their meaning system, by offering a new worldview that recovers their lost sense of identity.

It is in this context that the radicalizing appeal and mobilizing power of GIR can be understood. Since many Muslim youth today are experiencing an extreme threat to their identity, the presence of symbols in GIR's discourse, which are shared by traditional and radical Muslims, potentially allows for the uncritical acceptance of GIR's binary worldview and its three-part story – along with its mobilization demands. GIR essentially puts together a compelling rational and emotional argument that meets the short term needs of the potential recruit, and is temporarily yet powerfully able to eclipse the harms that will inevitably emerge in the long run out of accepting it.

Limitations

Generally, a weakness of qualitative research is that it only searches for material that confirms theoretical expectations.[41] Here, both GIR and this study's results were scanned for contradictions and incompatibilities with Eidelson & Eidelson's (2003) five-belief framework, and the narrative that this author has inferred from it. An apparent contradiction was detected. At one point (Table 3, 2A), Nasar's beliefs about the ummah's vulnerability seemed to be inconsistent with his elsewhere stated (Table 1) numerous claims about its superiority; specifically, we have GIR in one place informing the reader that God's promise will come to pass and the Muslim Ummah will rule the earth, and in another place voicing fears about the continuation of the ummah's existence. A possible explanation is that this is a rhetorical tactic that is deliberately used to exaggerate and over-emphasize the direness of the ummah's vulnerability, and thus heighten the sense of fear necessary for urgent mobilization. Such an understanding is more consistent with the conviction in the ummah's superiority and its destined greatness that is reflected throughout GIR. The assumption that Nasar simply forgot the alleged divine promise that he has continuously risked his life for is unlikely.

Another concern that arose was that some of the statements seemed to fulfil the criteria of two beliefs at the same time; these instances, however, were very rare. The implication of this category ambiguity was an ability to read a few statements that fell in the *distrust* belief domain as also possibly falling in the *injustice* belief domain at times, and at other times in the *vulnerability* belief domain. This was handled by resorting to the context of the statements in their original Arabic form; the belief domain that appeared to be overriding was then selected.

Lastly, for the sake of intellectual honesty, upon approaching GIR, this present study earnestly endeavored to adopt a stance of intellectual vulnerability that actually allowed for GIR to persuade the author. This stance has helped mitigate the unavoidable impact of this author's personal standpoint, as someone who has spent many years studying traditional Islamic texts and has substantial experience in the field of Muslim youth de-radicalization. Nevertheless, it is equally important to note that both the author's standpoint and experience have in many ways been enablers of this research.

Further research

It would be very useful for Eidelson's (2002) Individual-Group Belief Inventory (IGBI) to be completed by individuals who admittedly harbor radical jihadist beliefs. Furthermore, the recording of 'natural' discourse (as opposed to written discourse) by way of individual interviewing would allow for the conducting of more comprehensive analyses. It would also be promising to apply both the five-belief

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[40] Lewis, B., *What Went Wrong?* (London, Phoenix Press, 2002), 3.
[41] Potter, J. and Wetherell, M., *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 1998).

model and the IGBI to normative, traditional Islamic discourses, and to subsequently compare the findings with those from radical Islamic discourses. This article supports the hypothesis that a stark contrast will be evident in the results of such comparisons. Likewise, studies that specifically seek to uncover the various rhetorical devices used to position radical worldviews and beliefs as unquestionably the 'correct' view of social reality would offer useful insight. Current processes of de-radicalization can certainly be informed by research of this sort; a deep-rooted understanding of the foundations of the dangerous beliefs harboured by religious radicals will greatly aid in the circumvention of ideologically-based violence in the future.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to probe into the beliefs, structure, and persuasiveness of radical religious discourse that promotes violence. This was done by applying a selected model – Eidelson and Eidelson's five-belief model (2003) – to a key radical Islamic text, with the aim of inferring the worldview that promotes ideologically-based violence in the world. The findings revealed GIR to be heavily laden with four 'conflict-triggering' belief domains, namely, superiority, injustice, distrust, and vulnerability; and that the beliefs built up to binary categorizations of in-groups and out-groups. The findings also revealed the various in-groups and out-groups that the text divided the world into, and that these categorizations were not fixed but actually *shifted* according to the mobilizing purposes of the writer. The confluence of the beliefs logically formed into an overarching narrative that served to meet social identity needs in the contemporary Muslim reader's psyche. GIR's worldview presents the reader with a powerful story that they can connect to (via symbols) and one that they can potentially play a leading role in; a story that will not properly climax to its resolution *for the reader* without them *actively participating* in it – by joining the Jihadist in-group.