Daesh: Riches and Self-Alienation in a Fledging Pseudo-State

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ABSTRACT

Daesh, or Islamic State, holds captive the fears of populations the world over. However, with the advent of this new type of terror organization functioning as a pseudo-state, the approach to eliminating it must also be adapted, but in order to eliminate such a threat, it must first be understood. As of now, the understanding of Daesh widely varies depending upon the source. They are likened to other terror organizations, insurrections, unrecognized states, and caliphates of antiquity. To make the concept and understanding of Daesh more comprehensible to members of the private sector, the author utilizes a framework common for consultancies and management teams, the S.W.O.T. Analysis, to depict the organization's assets, shortcomings, potentials for growth, and hazards. Following this analysis, the author paints Daesh as a product of its environment. With instability in the Middle East, a large population of disgruntled, young men, and globalization via social media, Daesh has become not only a pseudo-state to destroy, but an ideology that permeates inexistent cyber borders. As a result, implications for policy revision and reflection are vital for preventative measures. The author suggests leaders' future approaches involve less armed intervention to preserve governments and greater investment in aid. These two methods create a stable environment in which the populace can focus on economic and personal development, as opposed to ideological conflict.

1.   Introduction

1.1   Background

Increased globalization not only facilitates the exportation and importation of goods and services, but it expedites the exchange of the most valuable products of human ingenuity, ideas. Ideas, doctrines, and ideologies shape societies, movements, and empires. However, the human condition is yet to rid itself of religious and ethnic strife based on an "us versus them" mentality. Malevolent leaders and

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propagandists exploit tendencies such as thesewith such frequency that they cause normally rational beings to lose the reigns. Daesh, also known as the Islamic State, ISIS, IS, and ISIL is the current embodiment of such poisonous tendencies.

Daesh, an acronym for the Arabic phrase *al-Dawla al-Islamiya al-Iraq al-Sham*, or "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant," is simply another name for the jihadist terror organization administering land in Iraq and Syria. For the remainder of the report, the name Daesh will be used, as it is a term particularly despised by the group for closely resembling the word "*Dahes*," or "one who sows discord." However, this author is not particularly sensitive to the group's preferences. Additionally, to succinctly observe the main strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats facing the parent organization of Daesh, this analysis focuses on the pseudo-state entity functioning in Syria and Iraq, not offshoots in Afghanistan, Libya, and elsewhere.

2.   Review of literature

A review of current literature regarding Daesh and its operations suggests that the group's environment and ideology are truly at the heart of its existence. According to Dyer and Tobey (2015), the environmental factors of the region are to blame for Daesh's emergence. Since the end of World War I, the Arab regions have been subjected to traditional and neo-colonialism, leaving trails of economic extraction and dependent societies. Thus, the region is more prone to volatility, but the societal factors are strongly coupled with ideological feelings of inadequacy. As stated by Ross and Mohammadpur (2016), Muslim societies have been subjected to humiliation and a reputation for violence and terrorism stemming from two Gulf Wars, which uprooted societies. The result: a religion and way of life that is persecuted and looking for a strong, redeeming group or sense of belonging. Daesh's use of propaganda and religious justification of their actions capitalizes on this sense of frustration. The group's specific utilization of empowering, violent, and religious terminology and diction paints its actions and existence as that of saviors for Muslims (Nacim, 2016). In an examination of the Dabiq, Daesh's English language publication, Farwell (2014) finds further examples of religious justification and calls for strength. However, there is also crucial information about how the group plans to and is turning their ideology into a tangible system in the "caliphate." The administrative abilities of the group are debatable, but the Dabiq highlights the need for crucial human capital skills. Therefore, the rhetoric of the organization must be adjusted to attract skilled recruits to help the pseudo-state function properly (Farwell, 2014). To attract these educated workers, messages and ideology of the group must be altered to appeal to them, leaving Daesh in a position of mixed signals.

By altering their messaging and target recipients, Daesh leaves itself open to challenges on the basis of information and religious ideology. Around the world, the organization is portrayed and given its specific persona through various media outlets and coverage (Smith et al., 2016). As a result of so many varied channels of information, the group's identity and messaging is highly diluted and manipulated, leaving populations misunderstanding the organization. With greater misinterpretation and straying from fundamental ideological foundations, Daesh is being challenged on a religious level. El Fadl(2005) evaluates how extremist groups have hijacked Islamic doctrine from moderate, contemporary scholars. By doing so, they're able to portray themselves as the true leaders of the faith for a brief period of time, but this eventually leaves them open to religious challenges. As such extremist groups stray further from mainstream, moderate Islam, Islamic scholars, Imams, and populations are fighting back and challenging their legitimacy (El Fadl, 2005).

Throughout the literature, there is sufficient evaluation of Daesh, similar movements, their origins, and their methodology. However, there is a lack of research and discussion of how the organization functions, specifically from a business-oriented point of view. By evaluating the terror organization less as a terror organization and more as a market-disrupting, innovative organization, trends and realities of Daesh become visible that are approachable and can affect the prevention of copy-cat groups, the containment of Daesh, and the dismantling of the organization.

3. Methodology

The analytical procedure utilized in this paper is that of the S.W.O.T. Analysis, a common framework utilized by consulting firms and business development teams to discern target organizations' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This frame work is particularly effective, as it is accessible to a wide audience, easily understandable, and examines internal and external factors. At the completion of a S.W.O.T. Analysis, the information allows for reflection on what has created such strengths and weaknesses, but also what actions can be taken to capitalize on opportunities and mitigate threats. Throughout the assessment of Daesh, the vast majority of information comes from global news sources and other international organizations reporting secondary information. Unfortunately, this is a hurdle in analyzing a secluded, dangerous organization.

4. Main findings

As a result of this survey, the author found that Daesh's strengths and opportunities mainly stem from external geopolitical factors, while the group's threats and weaknesses are predominately rooted in ideological fallacies. Exhibited in the following analysis, Daesh is well known due to the group's ability to capitalize on the environments in Iraq and Syria. However, their hardline ideological foundations and proclamations are being actively undermined by recruits and leaders straying from proclaimed pillars of the organization. Therefore, the group is in a land that has the potential to be susceptible to their indoctrination, but they are actively undermining their public brand.

In this academic review of the terror organization, it is vital to note that the study of these topics is one of pertinence and value. By no means does the author write to condone the actions, ideologies, or methods of Daesh and affiliates, but their processes, opportunities, and strengths must be evaluated for the sake of defense in the short and long terms. By analyzing how a terror group and organization functions and conducts themselves in the international marketplace, global citizens can work to limit the spread of and prevent such happenings from occurring again.

4.1 Contribution to literature

By utilizing concepts of marketing, demographic economics, international political economics, and human capital theory, this work depicts Daesh in an accessible fashion for those outside of academia. Media coverage regarding the organization typically focuses on the atrocities committed, but the actual organizational functioning and reality of the enterprise is shrouded in mystery. To help prevent future groups from mimicking Daesh and its affiliates, it is essential to evaluate and discuss its realities and the marketplace in which it operates.

4.2 Strengths

4.2.1 Human capital

At the core of Daesh's business model, they provide a service to both those within and outside of the self-modeled caliphate, as opposed to producing a good. Therefore, similar to more conventional service sector organizations, they have a heavy reliance on their human capital abilities, processes, and potentials. The human capital of such an organization begins and ends with its ideological pull and validation. By encompassing and designing their own hardline, unique interpretation of Islam, Daesh represents a recognizable, transferable brand that can be adopted by multiple "franchisers."

As seen in the devastating attacks in Paris, Brussels, and across the Middle East, Daesh utilizes highly-motivated single agents or small groups to strike fear into the hearts of foreign populaces through acts of terror. Doing what has not been done by an international terrorist organization since al-Qaeda on 9/11, the group effectively spreads fear and enjoys extraordinary name recognition globally for their

actions. By utilizing their diverse group of agents and "soldiers," Daesh is effectively recruiting, training, and indoctrinating over 12,000 fighters from 81 countries (Barrett, 2014). 81 countries translates to 81 unique passports that make transnational expansion and indoctrination possible by the group. Due to their unique product proposition, they do not require a plethora of fighters in any country, but one lone wolf attacker can act similarly to a franchising system, which allows individuals freedom of operation, while adhering to certain values, in exchange for using the group's name and image. Specifically, over 2,000 EU nationals, almost 100 Americans, and 250 Australians provide the invaluable assets of the strongest passports with the ease of visa-free travel for the organization(Barrett, 2014). Therefore, their export ability and flexibility remain incredible strengths of Daesh until passports are suspended or cancelled, which can take months or years depending on the judicial system, cooperation of international intelligence agencies, and swiftness of security forces.

In order to maintain even loose control over their geographically diverse personnel, Daesh's meticulous bureaucracy and management system is shockingly reminiscent of the same Western governments they despise. Despite a cult of personality around their leader, or Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the commander is "legally" bound to the regulations of the Shura Council, who is charged with dictating the group's interpretation of Islam and assuring that members and "citizens" are adhering to it(Thompson & Schubert, 2015). As a core part of Daesh's founding doctrine, the Shura Council meets to discuss specific interpretations of Sharia Law, not make its own rules. Furthermore, the organization is separated between (formerly) Iraqi and (formerly) Syrian sections with a multitude of departments within each (Thompson & Schubert, 2015). The structure of the organization itself is not particularly unique, but the management practices are. Even though a particularly harsh methodology of punishment and reward for "employees" or members is used, Daesh has a detail oriented evaluation and review system for their human capital. Per documents captured during the formative years of the organization, Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Baghdadi's predecessor, established a system of routine self and second-party evaluations for fighters. Prior to joining, recruits fill out questionnaires on ideology, background, and skills, and evaluations continue during their time in the self-styled caliphate to assure compliance and unwavering support(Johnston, Shapiro, Schatz, Bahney, Jung, Ryan, & Wallace, 2016). By continuously evaluating their workforce, they are able to better assess the gaps in their human capital capabilities and their recruitment needs. As the industry is particularly prone to high turnover rates (due to desertion, "martyrdom," executions, etc.), Daesh's recruitment efforts are aimed at acquiringhuman capital to fill positions behind frontlines, and their evaluation practices strive to achieve that (Johnston, et al., 2016). Despite common misconceptions, Daesh claims to be selective in their recruitment practices, only providing assistance to those who can provide valuable skills or propaganda material. However, with repeated turnarounds on the battlefield, increased desertion and loss of life, Daesh leadership is loosening regulations on fighters joining the cause.

4.2.2   Communications

Social media is the driving force behind industry disruptions across the Middle East, as seen during the Arab Spring, and Daesh utilizes their strong social media presence to disseminate a clear and powerful message to a wide populace. In market research, the use of social media is varied throughout the Islamic world. While the Levant utilizes Facebook, the Gulf States have much greater market penetration from Twitter (Barrett, 2014). Therefore, Daesh conducts a robust system of social media accounts and personalities from various backgrounds. Per market research, typical social media activity in the Islamic world is heavy on posts and reposts, but there are very few comments and discussions. However, Daesh's propaganda and public relations departments have achieved a reply-heavy social media presence, which emphasizes the support and engagement that recruits can have with the organization in their "caliphate" (Barrett, 2014). This approach to communication with a wide audience is particularly advantageous, as social media accounts are free, endless, can be rerouted via a VPN, and benefit from increased pressure for personal privacy in the West. Contrary to their staunch opposition to the West, Daesh's radicalization communications would not be nearly as robust without the encrypted, privacy-protected servers of the West. Their wide variety of foreign fighters allow for them

to disseminate information and make contact with peoples across the world in a variety of languages, a strong asset to an organization whose sole purpose is to spread an ideology.

Members of the organization utilize social media to portray their idealized, propaganda-heavy reality within the self-styled state, similar to how the average populace uses platforms to portray only the highlights of their lives. Some even go as far as posting photos in military fatigues holding baby kittens to emphasis the humanity in the "caliphate." By creating this online brand of support, adventure, and Islamic idealism, Daesh's communications department and the Shura Council use individuals' accounts to advertise their interpretation of Sharia and Islam (Jaffer, 2015). Similar to believers and idealists joining the new Soviet Unionduring the height of communism, this clear-cut doctrine appeals to those who have grown up with disorder in the tumultuous Middle East (Jaffer, 2015). Very rarely do women and young recruits desire to engage in thoughtful discussions of various Islamic texts, traditions, and interpretations, and social media isn't made for that. In turn, they desire stability, adventure, and the (somewhat illusionary) vision of strength, and that's what Daesh's communications sell (Jaffer, 2015).

4.2.3 Revenue streams

The original founders of ISI, Daesh's predecessor organization, were veterans of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, and they had seen the actions that had caused the organization to stumble and eventually fall from grace. However, they also saw situational aspects of Afghanistan that caused groups such as the Taliban to rise to prominence, even ruling the nation as a whole under a strict form of Islamic law. One of the greatest challenges plaguing the industryis reliance on a small handful of wealthy donors for funding, bin Laden in al-Qaeda for example. Therefore, Daesh's greatest strength is the ability to raise and maintain fundsvia a wide variety of means.

For this particular analysis, the author refers to Daesh as a state, on par with those recognized by the United Nations. To avoid a Dutch Disease situation in which the state is heavily reliant upon one export or commodity, Daesh avoids attempts from the United States and financial institutions to disrupt funding by freezing assets and stopping transfers by diversifying and utilizing their porous border (Swanson, 2015). Financially, the state's coffers have increased from an estimated income of $1 million a month in 2009 to $1 to $3 million a day in 2014 from oil, "taxation," kidnapping, donations, antiquities, banks, agriculture, and natural resources (Swanson, 2015). Despite international pressure, the black market trade of oil from lands under Daesh's control provides the majority of the organization's funding, butwith the group's refining capacity at only ½ of its previous state, a result of coalition airstrikes, oil must be sold at a steep discount, and global oil prices are incredibly volatile (Swanson, 2015). Therefore, this is not a sustainable revenue source in comparison to the group's ambitions, especially as the oilfields surrounding Mosul are threatened.

More spontaneous funding sources provide a strong, yet unpredictable, flow of revenues, such as kidnapping ($35-$40 million a year), donations ($40 million in 2014), antiquities ($100 million a year), and seizure of banks (one-time acquisition of an estimated $1.5 billion in assets) (Swanson, 2015). The territory the state administers has the capacity to produce wheat and barely of $200 million a year, including a 50% markdown, and natural resources of up to $350 million a year, but the group's main source of revenue stems from the citizens of the state. Taxation of their 8-10 million citizens, in the traditional sense of the word, is used to raise funds from transactions and salaries, but it is the extortion of individuals totaling up to $360 million a year that allows the fighters and administrators to continue to live in (comparative) luxury, while their citizens struggle to survive (Swanson, 2014). The diversity and strength of these revenue streams is the stuff of dreams for rival terror organizations past and present, offering Daesh the ability to wage war on all fronts, while providing, despite unreliability, social services, medical care, and utilities. However, these revenue streams coupled with mismanagement puts the wealth of the pseudo-state on par with those of failed, yet legitimate, states like Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but without the aid possibilities (Swanson, 2014).

4.3   Weaknesses

4.3.1   Holding territory

Daesh, or the Islamic State, in its definition outlines its ultimate goal: the establishment of a Sharia-centric state for Sunni Muslims. This break from traditional terrorist group activities emphasizes the industry-disrupting procedures on which this organization is founded. By definition, such an "Islamic State" can only be created by holding and administering land and a populace. However, previous guerilla organizations, such as Ho Chi Minh's Viet Cong, knew that their capabilities were not sufficient to confront opponents like the U.S. Army in traditional combat (Bromund, 2016). However, Daesh prides itself on its ability and "destiny" to create and run a caliphate in the Middle East. In this unique approach and uncanny ability to take land, the group finds itself confronting a gap in skills of the organization between guerrilla group and state management.

Defectors of Daesh consistently speak of the systemic corruption within the land of the self-proclaimed state. According to interviews by Moore (2015), leaders of the organization preach that groups such as the Assad regime, Kurds, and Turks are sworn enemies, but they routinely make deals with opposing groups for the sale of petroleum products to fund the organization. However, these leaders would not make such corruption, indicative of impoverished states, possible if they did not attempt to administer a state. Guerilla groups fashion themselves to "swim like fish amongst men," as the saying goes, but Daesh's determination to capture and hold land is the quality for which it is most infamous. Daesh is notorious for land taking, but taking land disqualifies them from the classification of a guerilla, terrorist group and plunges them into much deeper waters of organized, unrecognized states. This leap bothleaves them with land that hasn't been properly administered since colonial times (if one could refer to colonial powers as proper administrators) and an organization geographically surroundedby enemies.

4.3.2   Economic freedoms

According to the Heritage Foundation, fundamental economic freedoms for a state to flourish financially and monetarily consist of Rule of Law, Limited Government, Regulatory Efficiency, and Open Markets (Weidman, 2016). As Daesh wishes to become a legitimate state, they need, according to the Heritage Foundation's assessment, to develop these freedoms to provide economic opportunities to their citizens. However, the organization's current economic planning is far from attaining those goals. Specifically, they struggle in the Rule of Law category, which encompasses property rights and freedom from corruption and is the basis upon which development begins. Without a guarantee for property and protection, there is no development, as an individual cannot be assured that work will be protected, and under Daesh, there is no guarantee. Due to the rapid influx of cash, Daesh's Islamic Bank (a pseudo-central bank), exhibits authoritarian economic practices (Mecham, 2015). Unsurprisingly, their actions are reminiscent of states such as the former Soviet Union and North Korea. They routinely provide heavy subsidies for staples and vital services, strictly control the management and distribution of wheat and flour, and frequently violate "citizens'" property rights (Mecham, 2015). The group's abandonment of market principles dissuades any type of personal investment or entrepreneurship. With no economic achievement organically growing from the bottom and discriminatory distribution of wealth based on ethnicity and status at the top, Daesh's proto-economy has a strong downward trajectory.

4.3.3   Alienation of domestic recruits

According to the doctrine of Daesh, the organization strives to establish a caliphate in the Middle East founded on Sharia Law for Sunni Muslims. Therefore, they find their strongest support amongst those who were marginalized by ruling regimes in both Assad's Syria and Hussein's Iraq. However, the organization is weakening itself by not strictly adhering to is all-Sunni doctrine. In a leaked section of official Daesh proclamation, the leaders announce that they strive to nurture the "spirit of brothers

between the muhajireen [immigrants] and the Ansar [natives]" by making the muhajireen "citizens" of the "Islamic State" (Al-Tamimi, 2015). By proclaiming to directly integrate all of ideological homogeneity, they preach a creed that statesthat those who ethnically and/or religiously conform to their identity have a spot indefinitely. However, this integration may be ideal for new members with foreign skills, but it fosters strong discontent amongst the organization's most devote members.

According to a study by the University of California Berkeley, the integration of foreign jihadis into Daesh's organization is not one of assimilation, but of preference. Foreign jihadis receive higher salaries, better standards of living, free housing, better medical care, and are paid in U.S. dollars, not Syrian pounds (Peterson, 2015). Not only does munasir, the name of domestic recruits, directly translate to "helpers," but they are insufficiently compensated, despite the fact that they are frequently deployed to rural areas prone to airstrikes, while foreign fighters live in cities (Peterson, 2015). Daesh is utilizing two categorically opposed labor forces, which directly counters their stated mission of Sunni unity. Through leaders' lack of concern for the wellbeing of domestic recruits, munasir are frustrated with the organization and are defecting in increasing numbers. Additionally, well-paid and well-looked-after foreign recruits lose loyalty due to lack of interaction withand sense of belonging amongst the munasir, leading them to utilize their high salaries to bribe their way out of the organization(Peterson, 2015). Therefore, the perks designed to attract more high-level foreign fighters lead to increasingly strong discontent amongst domestic fighters, the labor force on which Daesh was founded.

4.4   Opportunities

4.4.1   Populations

Focusing on Daesh's main branch in Syria and Iraq, the regions' demographic trends and human capital availability provide recruitment opportunities to the organization. Due to Daesh'sreliance on a steady stream of loyal followers, the group is nicely poised to continue to exist, operate, and spread ideology in the Middle East's current climate. Capitalizing on disenfranchised, vulnerable, restless young men, Daesh has an abundance of potential recruits in their main sphere of operations. Iraq's Sunni population is currently between 32% and 37%with male births outpacing those of females by 1.05:1 and a male median age of 19.6 years("Iraq", 2016). Additionally, in the land of their pseudo-capital, Raqqa, Syria is dominated by 74% Sunnis, male births outpacing those of females 1.06:1, and there is a male median age of 23.7 years("Syria", 2016). With these demographics, the organization sees a young, male-dominated population that is growing up with a heavy online presence, their main medium of indoctrination, and increased senses of independence as millennials. However, they also live with foreign occupations, loss of livelihoods, and degradation of Muslims internationally, providing a perfect base of recruits for radicalization. Via a case study of Sunni sentiment towards Daesh, an Iraqi firm, covertly, concluded that the organization is not as unpopular amongst at-risk Sunnis as previously thought. The organization presents itself as the lesser of multiple evils in the region, and measured Sunnis in Mosul, Iraq overwhelmingly do not want the primarily Shi'ite Iraqi army to liberate the city (74%), and 100% do not want to be liberated by Shi'ite militias or the Kurds (Bromund, 2016). Therefore, Daesh recognizes an opportunity to win the trust of Sunni populated areas in the face of such undesirable opponents.

4.4.2   Migrations

Resulting from ongoing unrest in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Libya, Muslim-majority migrations to the European Union provide Daesh an opportunity to continue to recruit dissatisfied European Muslims and execute attacks. It is estimated that, after current migrations, Germany and France are expected to have Muslim populations of 4,760,000 and 4,710,000 respectively (Hackett, 2016). Naturally, the vast majority of these Muslims are not radicalized, thinking of becoming, or at risk of becoming. However, there is a disparity between "ethnic" French and Germans and foreign Muslims as far as poverty, educational opportunities, and discrimination is concerned (Hackett, 2016). Therefore, if even a fraction of 1%, say 0.3% of these people are at risk of radicalization, that is a total of 28,410 men and women

withfreedom of movement in the European Union and the ability to cause unforeseen damage. The greatest opportunity presented to Daesh's operations outside of the self-styled caliphate rely on the interactions between disgruntled Muslims and indoctrinated fighters returning to their homes. As noted by Barrett (2014), it is irrelevant how many fighters return to Western society, as increases in technology boosts availability of weapons, communications, recruitment techniques, and effectiveness of an individual. As seen in horrific attacks such as Nice, France, one indoctrinated follower can singlehandedly affect a very large community and shock the world, spurring further attacks by inspiration. Therefore, advances in security technology must be utilized and funded to counter Daesh's strong opportunity to spread their service indefinitely across borders made invisible by IP addresses and smart phones.

4.4.3   Politically

At the time of writing, populist movements captivate the political landscape of the Western world. Regardless of affiliation and creed, it is a fact that many populist movements gain their momentum and attract followers by the alienation and targeting of specific groups. Despite the (falsely) impenetrable oceans surrounding the United States, the nation has experienced its own populist revolution in the form of Donald Trump.

Daesh, reliant on propaganda and depicting a constant struggle between Islam and anti-Islam, welcomes the victory of such populist parties. On a lesser scale, the movements in Austria, Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Netherlands have the blessing of the organization, but the victory of Donald Trump provides ample ammunition for the propaganda-ideologues. The group's affiliate media group, al-Minbar Jihadi Media Network, proclaimed "Trump's win of the American presidency will bring hostility of Muslims against America as a result of his reckless actions, which show the overt and hidden hatred against them" (Onyanga-Omara, 2016). Despite Trump's repeated calls to "beat the hell out of ISIS," his bellicose and reckless proclamations, such as calling for a ban on Muslims entering the United States, advocating the killing of terrorists' families, and reinstating torture of terror suspects, "prove that jihadists are right to fight against the West because the West is fighting against Islam," a Daesh defector told TIME Magazine (Olsen, 2016). Daesh, not known for its subtlety, is already using Trump's speeches and threats in propaganda videos targeting vulnerable Muslims.

However, the greatest opportunity for the organization's continued impact and operation following an inevitable fall of the physical "caliphate," is the mainstream reaction to Trump's victory in the United States. On a moderate note, idealistic millennials, many voting in their first presidential election, overwhelmingly supported Hillary Clinton, 68% to be exact, and were heartbroken following their candidate's surprise loss, prompting protests and feelings of an unfair political system (Page & Shedrofsky, 2016). Due to the fact that over a quarter of American Daesh sympathizers are between 18 and 20 years old, these formative political years can have profound effects on a young adult's outlook (Vidino & Hughes, 2015). It is irresponsible to claim that Daesh has an opportunity for expansion and greater influence based off of dissatisfactory election results for Muslim-Americans, but the overt wave of post-election Islamaphobic discrimination can reassure on-the-fence youth that this is not a society for them. Ibrahim Hooper, Communications Director for the Council on American Islamic Relations, said "Donald Trump ha[s] mainstreamed Islamaphobic … and this was just taking [hate crimes] off the charts" (Eversley, 2016). With hate crimes on the rise and a president preaching hardline anti-terror (pseudonym for anti-Islam) messages, Daesh has four years of propaganda material and an environment of increasingly polarized radicalization within its greatest enemy, the United States.

4.5   Threats

4.5.1   Enlisting difficulties

As many failed recruits attest to, one of the greatest hindrances to Daesh's recruitment numbers is the sheer difficulty of enlisting in their ranks and providing them the human capital they need. Similar to a

group marketing a conventional product on a global scale, Daesh is encountering stiff international barriers to entry. These come in the forms of surveillance programs, increased coordination of intelligence agencies, and personal conflicts of enlisting. As a direct result of their overwhelmingly hostile approach to market, Daesh's product/service, terrorism, is harshly resisted by all nations. However, this exportation of ideology and radicalization and the importing of skills and labor are vital to the group's survival and development. Thus, events such as the Paris attacks prompt a greater coordination of effort from Daesh's competition to stem the tide of fuel to this fire (Wilson, 2015).

Not only does greater international coordination threaten the organization, but publicity surrounding the damaging effects to families, friends, and beings of those who have joined the organization is detrimental to recruitment. Their strategy to gain followers, spread doctrine, and import human capital "plays upon desires of adventure, activism, romance, power, belonging, along with spiritual fulfillment," but it is quickly coming to light that this is not the reality of involvement (Wilson, 2015). Similar to false advertisement for traditional corporations, the internet and wide-spread, global news sources can be a blessing and a curse. Yes, highly-publicized attacks made the group infamous, notorious, and well-respected in their industry, but increased exposure into the drudgery of life under Daesh's flag de-romanticizes that illusion (Wilson, 2015). It is similar to how a company can market their new toy with how much kids love it, but online reviews and news stories saying otherwise can rapidly devalue beneficent claims and expose an undesirable reality. Not only is it physically difficult to escape to the self-styled caliphate, but it is increasingly hard to sell a vision of losses broadcasted across the world on a daily basis.

4.5.2   "You're no Muslim, bruv"

Immortalized through the phrase above, a bystander to a failed terror attack in the London Tube shouted this devaluation to the would-be attacker. Daesh has long championed itself on being a force for Muslims, by Muslims, against those fighting Muslims. However, with increased media exposure, it is becoming blindingly obvious that their preached doctrines do not align with their actions. According to the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad says "[d]o not go near adultery, surely it is an indecency, and an evil way [of fulfilling sexual urge]" (17:32) ("Chapter Three: The Islamic Sexual Morality," 2016). In the doctrine of Islam, the religion that Daesh claims to uphold to its most literal degree, extramarital fornication and adultery are severely condemned. Additionally, pre or extra-marital sex is condemned by the Prophet and Imams as an immoral act against the rights of Allah and one's own physical body (Peritz & Maller, 2014). If this isn't enough, Daesh strictly adheres to and enforces the doctrine that "the woman and man who fornicate scourge each of them a hundred whips; and in the matter of God's religion, let no tenderness for them seize you" ("Chapter Three: The Islamic Sexual Morality," 2016). These hardline doctrines appeal to the most conservative Muslims, but in their humanity, Daesh's own soldiers not only violate these rules, but they do so overtly. Deserters, eye witnesses, survivors, and intelligence agencies document the organization's members forcibly marrying, raping, and violently attacking women and girls of the vanquished towns and cities. At first, reports highlight the victims of other groups (i.e. Yazidis and Assyrian), but this spreads to Muslim Kurds, Shi'ites, and even Sunni women (Peritz & Maller, 2014). This abandonment of hardline doctrine not only disassociates Daesh from their doctrine (i.e. their identity), but it displays that their value proposition, founded in brutality and strictSharia Law, isa hollow facade masking the true Daesh: just another group of thuggish jihadists.

The greatest threat to Daesh's survival and continuation as the most feared and effective jihadist organization of recent history is their ability to preserve their strong, distinctive culture. Even the most ruthless organizations define themselves through their cultural identities. Daesh is founded upon their strong Sunni Islam pillars, but reports from defectors highlight the disparities between inflowing recruits' knowledge and beliefs and those of the organization. The increasing number of defections from the pseudo-state shows the lack of faith of fighters, but their recounts of experiences highlight much more. According to former members, potential recruits gather at the Turkish border prior to arrival and answer questionnaires regarding religious piety and knowledge of Islam. Reports say that

70% marked that they have a "basic" knowledge of the religion, the lowest rating. Additionally, virtually no recruitscan recite the Qur'an from memory(Batrawy, Dodds, & Hinnant, 2016). In their desperation for numbers and foreigners with vital skills, Daesh is moving away from strict acceptance standards. By bringing in ignorant Muslims, who the Imams can radicalize with ease, but this produces fighters who are not devoted and actively violate the organization's hardline Islamic rules (Batrawy, et al., 2016). By welcoming those of ignorance, the organization disavows their own doctrines and ideologies in exchange for human capital. Straying from the proclaimed doctrine, they risk alienating founders, ideological leaders, and doctrine-based funding. When the organization needs dedicated members the most, thosewithout ideological reasons for joining will not be the recruits the organization needs, leaving Daesh to function as an empty shell of Islamic doctrine simply run by thousands of ill-informedcriminals wanting to play soldier.

5.   Conclusion

5.1   Policy recommendations

The author recognizes that in the realm of international politics, the speed at which situations and circumstances develop is so rapid that by publication, Daesh's situation will be different. However, aspects of this work display the circumstances that provide such fertile land for these movements, and they can help ensure peace in the future via policy recommendations.

Going forward, terror organizations such as Daesh cannot be allowed the perfect breeding ground of post-intervention Iraq. On a political level, the weakness of the Iraqi government and armed forces cleared the path for Daesh to rapidly gain control of vast swaths of land. In order to avoid such an environment, the author recommends that there is a greater international policy of non-intervention. This does not apply to requested peace keeping missions, such as the United Nations or the African Union, but the targeted interventionism of powers such as the United States and Russia simply creates a false victor. When nations and groups of people are allowed to have their internal political and armed conflicts remain internal, that is when victors emerge organically, leading to greater post-conflict stability. If a group is propped up by an outside force, when that outside force withdraws, the group is simply left as an artificial ruler in a land with festering, unresolved conflicts.

In addition to the political doctrine of non-interventionism, the author recommends that radicalization on a personal level be mitigated through increased wellbeing. Potential recruits are much less likely to be radicalized and persuaded to join a jihadist group if they are pleased with their current environment, have a sense of belonging in the community, and a belief that they have opportunities. Therefore, international organizations and governments can best serve populations abroad and build good will through increased international aid. When analyzing the current aid levels with the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals set forth by the United Nations, there is a serious gap between the current amount of funding and the level necessary to spur development that would stabilize a region. Increased international aid to better the plight of those on the ground has the ability to drastically reduce future military expenditures in those same regions. A nation could, theoretically, save percentages of GDP that would have been spent on the armed forces by preemptively providing international aid to at-risk regions.

5.2   Discussion

By evaluating such an anomalistic entity via methodology utilized by private sector organizations of the West, Daesh is more easily conformed to the West's expectations and lenses of analysis. Thus, the strong points within the group come to demonstrate examples of systematic failure for the West, and their weaknesses display opportunities for Daesh's enemies to regain control.

When evaluating the strongest aspects of Daesh, the human capital of the group, communication abilities, and external political climate should immediately receive particular attention. As far as human capital theory is concerned, a Western concept within itself, the abilities of the group are certainly not limited to the populace of their pseudo-caliphate. Their ideology serves as an indoctrinating system as strong as any religious or political movement of the 20th century. However, this time it is not the fear of communism and the rise of fascism that nations must fear, it is simply the radicalization of one able "soldier." This, from a containment point of view, is a particularly frightening concept because of the group's second greatest strength, its communications channels. With the advent of rapidly-replaced social media platforms, internet anonymity, and the capabilities of increase global connectivity, groups such as Daesh have endless, cost effective methods through which they can reach disgruntled individuals. Finally, these individuals denote the last highlighted strength of Daesh, the current, Western political environment. As populist politics become more widely condoned and even rewarded, the marginalization of groups, usually impoverished immigrants, grows along withincreasing ridicule and blatant hatred. Naturally, one always attempts to preach and expect forgiveness and love in the face of adversity, but that is not the natural human reaction. By further subjecting those of hardship to overt animosity, our societies run the risk of creating a generation of disgruntled individuals who can be attracted by promises of respect, love, greatness, and power. Such political rhetoric might resonate with predominately white electorates, but this author feels it creates too great of a risk.

The evaluation of Daesh's shortcomings and points of weakness highlight the aspects that officially disqualify the organization from being seen as a legitimate political body and threaten the viability of the group's operation and that of similar groups in the future. Despite being the group's unique accomplishment, the holding of land will ultimately lead to the organization's downfall, and the popular resistance from Muslim communities around the world has the ability to destroy its ideology.

By taking land, the self-proclaimed caliphate created a large target on the map for all of its adversaries, but it also demonstrated its fallacies. Without land to administer, an armed insurgency can operate focusing on its sole purpose, violence. However, when millions of citizens are left to care for, more problems arise. Yes, the group has gained significant financial funding by raping the land, but by holding land, they change from an insurrection to a rebel group/quasi-breakaway state. These states, such as Somaliland and Transnistria function due to their existence based on popular demand. These breakaway states, or at least they claim, exist to fulfill a demand by the populations for their founding, making the areas subject to the whim and consent of the governed. On the other hand, Daesh may claim to represent the interests of Muslims, but reports overwhelming suggest that their treatment of the populace is criminal. Therefore, they more closely resemble an occupying army, which must constantly worry about threats both from outside and within its borders. The organization's inability to indoctrinate all of its occupants is a result of its greatest threat, the popular resistance of Muslims. As the dilution of hardline Islamic doctrine continues, Daesh further alienates the most fervent believers in their cause, and their propaganda efforts must both radicalize recruits and defend the group's image in the wake of Western news outlets. The group's straying from Islamic doctrine, preferential treatment of foreign recruits, and increased attacks on Muslim groups all paint the organization as one that is not religiously motivated, but is simply bloodthirsty. Coupled with deafening calls from Muslim religious and secular leaders to put an end to Daesh, there is still hope that this high-profile, murderous group won't taint Islam in the eyes of the world for long.

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