

The Allure of ISIS: Examining the Underlying Mechanisms that Helped the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the effects of exposure to media content related to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and its effect on support for the group. Using a survey of Muslim adults living in the United States (N = 396), this study sought to understand the influence of media exposure on identification, empathy and attitudes toward ISIS, and how they relate to behavioral intention to support the group. Using social cognitive theory as a theoretical framework, these relationships were assessed using mediation analyses to measure the relationships between variables. Findings indicate that identification, empathy, and attitudes are all significant predictors of behavioral intention. However, most respondents were opposed to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria's terrorism.