Radicalisation: old and new a comparative analysis of the Red Brigades and the Islamic State

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Abstract
This study aims to broaden and refine our knowledge on radicalisation by applying a different lens derived from communication sciences, it also aims to minimise the bias resulting from the several studies focusing on one movement—the Islamic State. The research utilises a qualitative thematic analysis triangulated with a quantitative content analysis to compare 30 documents: 15 belonged to an old radical movement—the Red Brigades and 15 to a new radical movement—the Islamic State, to explore possible strategic communication patterns used by both organizations to establish their legitimacy among their target audiences. The findings revealed a similar division in the construction of the documents of both movements under four main themes, high and equivalent proportions in the representations of 'violence', and an extensive concentration of ideological terms in the Islamic State documents compared to a large focus on organizational aspects in the Red Brigades documents. The principal and wide gap existing between both movements is related to the organisational tactics. Likely to be one of the main distinctions contributed by modernisation in the world today.

Keywords Radicalisation · Terrorism · Extremism · Red brigades · Islamic State · Discourse

1 Introduction

In the academic and historical debate on radicalisation and terrorism, the surge of interest in the radical Islamic movements has been inspired by the 9/11 attack in the United States and the terrorist acts that followed, meaning that, on the whole, researchers are novices in the field. A consequence of the excessive focus on studying one movement, that is, the Islamic State has resulted in limitations and biases in the conceptualisation of radicalisation (Kundnani 2012). Less attention has been paid to the fact that current numbers

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indicate that a revival of several radical movements is occurring. Based on the 2017 European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, the number of Jihadi attacks has, in fact, reduced within the total number of terrorist attacks carried out in 2016. Ninety-nine attacks were carried out by ethno-nationalist and separatist extremists in Europe, and 27 attacks were carried out by far-left extremists (16 of which took place in Italy). Jihadi terrorist attacks decreased from 17 in 2015 to 13 attacks in 2016, of which only six were linked to the Islamic State (Europol 2017).

The appearance of radical movements is not a new phenomenon in recent history; in the late 1960s Europe witnessed the development of terrorism based on the ideologies of the extreme left and nationalist-regionalist beliefs. Some of the European converts who have joined the Islamic State movement believe in the utopian state offered by Islam today in much the same way as the leftist youths of the middle class believed in Marxism or communism in the 1960s and 1970s (Europol 2017). In fact, it is alleged that the Islamic State movement and its emergence in Europe has fed, to some extent, on the collapse of these leftist ideologies which had previously mobilised gatherings in Europe (Khosrokhavar 2008) aiming to serve as warriors for a just cause in a brutal society, and seeking a salvation that brings meaning to their existence.

The perceived legitimacy of a radical organizations relies on its social capital (Heath and Waymer 2014). Therefore, the communication messages used by radical organization need to be powerful and striking in order to gain traction, catch the attention of the intended audience, and to attain message significance (Simons 2018). Therefore, the critical analysis of the language used to express ideas is capable to reveal the objective and the strategy disclosed in the themes and the messages telling the story, plan and narrative (Farwell 2012). The surge of advanced modern technologies, which were used extensively in the case of 'the Islamic State' has multiplied the reach and the significance of such messages to world-wide audiences. Aligned with the presumptions shared among media producers, critics, the public and the academics, that the media has a corresponding impact on the audience exposed to its messages (Boyd-Barrett and Newbold 1995), terrorist organizations have been aware and able to utilize the available communication messages and tools to influence their target audience which has attracted the attention of both academics and policy expert (Holbrook 2014; Heck 2017). Therefore, this research perceives the study of such messages and themes key in establishing new knowledge and in forming an indepth understanding on the strategies of radical groups themselves, comparatively, aiming to minimize the bias element and to refine our powers of description by exploring the similarities and contrasts important to forming a concept of radicalisation (Collier 1993).

2 The study

The main objective of this research is to broaden and refine our knowledge on radicalisation by applying a different lens derived from the communication sciences. The research draws insights from the media effects approach which suggests that the media has an influence on the audience, and aims to analyse the messages and themes underlined in the communication materials prepared by the organizations to draw new knowledge about the strategies used by radical organizations to establish legitimacy and build social capital amongst their audiences. The content analysis and thematic analysis methods are utilised to explore empirical evidence regarding the common features in the establishment, organisation, and communications of both movements to support research on radical movements.

This paper approaches the concept in a comparative manner, in an attempt to minimise bias and to explore similarities and differences in the details through which the publications of the radical movements are being constructed. Selecting the two cases is based on a Diverse Case selection strategy (Seawright and Gerring 2014), which serves the exploratory aspect of the study by achieving maximum variance across relevant aspects to the research objective (Seawright and Gerring 2014).

The Diverse Case selection strategy entails the fulfilment of two main aspects. Selecting a sample that is representative, and identifying variations of dimensions between the two cases that are useful for the research objective (Seawright and Gerring 2014). Accordingly, to fulfil the first aspect, two radical movements that present plausible cases in the demonstration of their effectiveness are selected for an in-depth analysis of the documents; The Islamic State and the Red Brigades. The Islamic State is the largest Islamic Terrorist Organization that succeeded to reach an unprecedented number of international audience than any previous terrorist organisation in history (Cook and Vale 2018) while the Red Brigades was the largest (Khosrokhavar 2017), most solid and consistent leftist ideological extremist organization among several leftist terrorist organizations in Europe (Sundquist 2010). Both organizations gained a reputation for the frequency and effectiveness of their violent acts, reaching over 4300 attacks (Cook and Vale 2018), and causing 27,947 terrorist deaths in the Islamic State case (IEP 2019), and reaching 14,000 violent acts in the first ten years of the Red Brigades case (Martin 2006).

To fulfil the second aspect of the Diverse Case selection strategy, which entails identifying variations of dimensions, the maximum variance element that is set for this study is the ideology; The Islamic ideology in the Islamic State movement and the Marxist-Leninist communist ideology in the Red Brigades movement. The ideologies are perceived as diverse and fitting to minimise the bias and to explore possible patterns that could vacillate despite the fundamentally diverse ideologies that they were established upon.

The research concedes other variances between the two cases that were not primarily pursued in the selection but are considered to serve the exploration by enhancing the variations of dimensions. These variances include the time gap between the establishment of the Islamic State between 2014 and 2019, and the Red Brigades between 1970 and 1984. The geographic location variance which is Syria and Iraq in the Islamic State case and Italy in the Red Brigades case. Implying diverse historic and contextual backgrounds. Additionally, the Islamic State has built transnational legitimacy of effective support and an imagined community that was perceived as innovative and powerful. This was made possible by the utilisation of the new media channels and by globalization in general (Layton 2015). On the other hand, the Red Brigades was active in their country of establishment, with logistical and arms support provided by the Soviet Union (Khosrokhavar 2017), and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) (Sundquist 2010).

3 Background

3.1 The Islamic State

The Islamic State declared its official name and Caliphate on June 29, 2014. In addition, it has continued to be known as ISIS/ISIL globally. The group has its origins in the early 2000s as a principal participant in the Iraqi revolution during the American occupation. Due to a hostile response from the community and increased pressure from U.S. and Iraqi

forces, the group weakened until 2011, then began to flourish again through its participation in the Syrian Civil War (Stanford University 2012).

Since its inception, the Islamic State has pursued the establishment of an Islamic caliphate based on its extreme interpretation of Islam and Shariah and for this reason, as a political entity, the Islamic State is inconceivable separated from its ideology (Bunzel 2015). External influencers include Al Qaeda, however, the relationship between the two groups has been ambiguous. Iran has also been reported as supporting the group, however, in 2014 Iran reversed its policy by instead offering assistance to the US, aiming to support their counterterrorism efforts against ISIS (Laub 2016). The Islamic State, however, received declarations of allegiance to the caliphate from militant groups all over the world in 2014 and 2015 (Stanford University 2012).

The first attack by the movement took place in October 2002 when members of the group assassinated USAID officer Laurence Foley outside his home in Jordan. Throughout 2012, the number of Islamic State attacks increased significantly. In 2012 and 2013, two separate terror campaigns in Iraq were conducted: the 'Breaking Walls' campaign in 2012, which prioritised the freeing of its members from prison and the 'Soldier's Harvest' campaign in 2013 which targeted the security forces in Iraq. Their most recent attack was conducted in May, 2017, when an Islamic State operative detonated a bomb at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, killing 23 and wounding over 250 people (Stanford University 2012).

The Islamic State's major local attacks included the takeover of Mosel; an attack on Baji oil field and the seizure of the border crossing between Iraq and Syria in June, 2014; the execution of 700 members of the Sheitaat tribe in the Deir al-Zor province and the beheading of the American captive, James Foley, in August, 2014. Internationally, major offensives have included a series of attacks in Paris, France in November, 2015 causing the death of 130 civilians and injuring 100 more; an attack on a Starbucks and a police station in Jakarta killing seven and injuring 23; and two bomb attacks within the Brussels Airport and another in the Maalbek Metro Station killing 31 and wounding 340 others (Stanford University 2012).

The financial resources of the Islamic State originate from stealing oil products to sell and from operating the oil refineries that they have seized as well as funds raised from foreign donors and money raised from kidnappings and smuggling. The Islamic State has also relied upon the money raised through taxes and extortion of the 8–10 million people who have lived in the regions under its control (Brisard and Martinez 2014).

With regard to territory, the Islamic State did succeed in capturing and maintaining control of cities in northern Syria and western Iraq. Their strongest Syrian base was in Raqqa (Brisard and Martinez 2014) and they also assumed control of the Iraq-Syria border along with the border crossing between Iraq and Jordan (Arango and Gordon 2014). Due to the American-led armed coalitions in 2015, the group lost territory in northern Syria; however, they gained control of Palmyra, a strategic and historic city in Syria, and Ramadi, which is the capital of the Anbar province, in Iraq. In 2016, however, the Islamic State lost 28% of its territories in the campaign launched by the Iraqi armed forces to retake Mosul and in the campaign launched by the Syrian Democratic Forces supported by the US to recover Raqqa (Peçanha and Watkins 2015).

Modernisation has had a significant effect upon the emergence and spread of the new movement of the Islamic State and its strategies and global communications have been identified as a crucial element in sustaining transnational radicalisation and in the adoption of extremist views (Archetti 2015). For example, one of the most important channels being effectively used by terrorist groups to promote radical ideologies and for recruitment

has been identified as YouTube which has tens of thousands of new videos being uploaded daily, and over a hundred million videos being watched per day [YouTube, Statistics 2014, as cited in Alarid (2016)]. Accordingly, the use of the Internet by extremists for the purposes of fundraising, recruitment, and spreading radical propaganda has increased (UN-CTITF 2008) to a level that is believed to currently threaten international stability, affect social cohesion and impinge upon human rights (Ferguson 2016).

3.2 The Red Brigades

The Red Brigades were Italy's largest, longest lasting, and most broadly diffused left-wing terrorist group. Formed in September, 1970 and disbanded in 1984, the Red Brigades conducted their first attack on September 17, 1970, when members of the group set fire to the car of a factory manager in Milan. Their final attack was conducted on April 16, 1988, when members of the group kidnapped a chemical engineer in Mestre, Venice. The Red Brigades were the largest terrorist group in Europe at that time, both in the number of members and in the number of revolutionary organisations involved (Khosrokhavar 2010). The establishment of the Red Brigades in September, 1970 followed earlier social collective efforts begun between 1960 and 1980, in which students and workers had vigorously opposed the failure of the reforms promised by the democratic Italian state within Italian society (Sundquist 2010). Workers' strikes began in 1968 and lasted until the 1970s, and in addition, the university systems were considered responsible for encouraging the radical acts conducted by students against the unions and government. The pursuit of class warfare by the students and the workers led to Italy's most violent period involving terrorist organisations of the left and right and to the establishment of the Red Brigades (Sundquist 2010).

The ideology of the Red Brigades reflected the spread of the 1920s Marxist-Leninist communist ideology in Europe. External influencers on the movement also included the model of urban guerrilla warfare established by Tupamaros in Uruguay and the Palestinian nationalists' prominent terrorism in the wake of the Six-Day War in 1967. Philosophically, the Red Brigades wanted to create a socialist state that adhered to the socialism practiced by Lenin's government from 1917 to 1924 and that of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution (Raufer 1993). The Red Brigades also had formal contact with European militant movements such as Germany's Red Army Faction whose kidnapping model had inspired the Aldo Moro kidnapping in 1978, and France's Actione Direct who supposedly provided training for members of the Red Brigades [Pisano 1984 as cited in Stanford University (2012)].

With regard to resources, the Red Brigades relied on ransom money from kidnappings and robberies, which was often used to acquire more weapons. The Red Brigades also relied on the material assets of the smaller groups that it incorporated, such as the Gruppi di Azione Partigiana financed by millionaire publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli until 1972. Free legal services to left-wing operatives were provided by the group Soccorso Rosso [Pisano 1984 as cited in Stanford University (2012)].

The major attacks carried out by the Red Brigades included the kidnapping of the Genoa Assistant State Attorney, Mario Sossi, in 1974, who was the first state employee and the sixth person kidnapped by the Red Brigades. This was followed by the killing of two members of the right-wing Italian Social Movement party in 1974. In 1977, Carlo Casalegno, the deputy editor of La Stampa newspaper, was shot in a Turin street. In March, 1978, the kidnapping of Aldo Moro, president of the Christian Democratic Party and a former

prime minister, took place during which five of Moro's bodyguards were killed. A communiqué by the Red Brigades announced that Moro was condemned to death for his role in the counter-revolutionary function of the Christian Democrats. However, terrorism during the time of the Red Brigades was not limited to the acts conducted by the Red Brigades only; the organisations of the right in cooperation with the state intelligence also used violence to provoke and promote the strategy of tension at the time. An example of this was what came to be known as the 'Piazza Fontana Massacre' in which a bomb exploded at the headquarters of Banca Nazionale dell'agricoltura killing 16 and wounding 87. Initially this was blamed upon the far left but the Red Brigades insisted that right-wing groups had conducted the attack [Tarro 1991 as cited in Stanford University (2012)].

The Red Brigades were organised into at least different six columns located in Milan, Genoa, Turin, Rome, Naples, and the Veneto region, and dependent upon their geographic locations, some of the columns had explicit tasks or roles [Smith 1984 as cited in Norwitz (2008)]. In the northern part of the country, for example, the columns were active within areas in which large factories and their workers were based. The goal of the Roman column, however, was to attack the political leaders of Italy, and particularly those associated with the Christian Democratic Party. Areas that were not covered by columns were administered by the regional revolutionary committees, which were the cells of future columns [Smith 1984 as cited in Norwitz (2008)].

The Red Brigades were finally disbanded as a unified organisation in 1984; however, further attacks were carried out in Italy under the name "Red Brigades" throughout the ensuing decade. The main successor of the movement was the Red Brigades Fighting Communist Party.

The Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse) relied on the concept of operating clandestinely, whereby the telephone was one of the main communication tools of the time and was assumed to be monitored. For this reason, it was advised that, as a tactical strategy, communication be limited and brief (Red Brigades Handbook 1974). Rather, printed copies of public documents and announcements of terrorist attacks were found at different times and locations. For example, Brigate Rosse's Communiqué No. 1 on the capture of Aldo Moro, president of the Christian Democrats, was found around noon on Saturday, 18th March, 1978, on the roof of a street photo booth in an underpass in Largo Argentina, by a journalist from *Il Messaggero* who had been notified of the location by phone. Five copies of the communiqué were found in a commercial-sized orange envelope along with a Polaroid photograph of Moro wearing a shirt and sitting under a flag on which was depicted the organisation's five-pointed star and the words 'Brigate Rosse' (Archivio '900 2003).

4 Methods

4.1 The thematic and content analysis approach

The content in this study was to be approached with the object to explore. Consequently, the qualitative approach served the study intent as a first step because it offers an open-ended starting point (Khosrokhavar 2008). Meanwhile, the quantitative approach was used as a second stage in the study in order to triangulate the highly subjective qualitative analysis with the objective mathematical analysis of the texts in a way that complements and offsets the biases inherent in each method (Denzin 2012).

The study began by utilising the thematic analysis approach as a tool to provide a purely qualitative, detailed, and nuanced account of the data selected for the study (Braun and Clarke 2006). This was followed by the content analysis approach, which allowed the data to be analysed qualitatively and quantitatively (Grbich 2012). The applications of both of these methods are generally associated with two tactics: deductive and inductive. The deductive approach is useful in cases in which the general purpose of the approach is to test a former theory in a new situation, or to compare categories at different time periods (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). However, considering that this study approached the analysis of the texts with no pre-determined theory or hypothesis, and because of the lack of previous studies examining the phenomenon in a comparative approach, an inductive content analysis and thematic analysis were preferred for this study, in which the coded categories were derived directly from the raw textual data (Hsieh and Shannon 2005).

4.2 Selection of texts

Both research methods—the thematic and content analysis approaches—offer a factual perspective assuming that the data that is being studied is an accurate and truthful source of the reality under investigation (Sandelowski 2010). For this reason, the text selection and handling was conducted as follows.

In cases where no official translation was provided in English by the original source, all the documents selected for the study were translated from Italian to English and from Arabic to English by native Italian and Arabic translators to ensure accuracy and to preserve the high level of cultural density within the translations. Following the initial translation, the documents were also reviewed by two additional translators to check for accuracy and to confirm that the meaning portrayed in the texts reflected the original sources.

The research sample consisted of 30 documents: 15 belonged to the Red Brigades and 15 to the Islamic State. All the documents were directly produced by both movements during their tenure.

Among the challenges faced in the selection of the texts for this study was the fact that the format of the documents varied widely between both organisations. This was due to the different means of communication available to both organisations in the different periods of their existence, for example, some of the Islamic State documents were originally produced in audio-visual format; a tool that was not then available to the Red Brigades in its current format. In this case, all the electronic documents (audio and subtitles) were transcribed with the aim of normalising the content and focusing the study on the analysis of the texts.

Another challenge in the selection of the texts was related to finding a complete list of publications for both movements. This was due to either censorship or a request for membership access to view some content produced by the Islamic State. Such challenges did not permit the study to conduct the random probability sampling method in order to select the sample. Rather the documents were selected using the purposive sampling method with the aim of selecting original publications regarding the establishment of the movements, their organisation and recruitment, accusations and attacks by the groups as well as some selected general messages (Table 1).

Documents	# Red Brigades documents	# Islamic State documents
Establishment	1	1
Organisation and recruitment	2	2
Accusations and attacks	8	8
Other	4	4

Table 1 Number and type of documents used in the study

*The complete description of the documents used in the study is available in (Supplementary file1)

4.3 The analyses process

A qualitative analysis using the thematic analysis approach was conducted as the first step with the aim of going through all the documents selected for the study in order to construct the themes. The themes were not imposed but rather extracted from the original texts. The process consisted of two stages: firstly, the documents were carefully read, and the first list of 37 codes was identified from the raw data. Secondly, the emerging codes were grouped and organised by category reflecting four main general themes; the justification behind its establishment, ideology, violence, and organisation. The analysis was conducted using the computer-assisted programme ATLAS.ti 8; a qualitative analysis software that also allowed the extraction of the quantitative word counts that were used in the second stage of analysis in this study.

The second stage of the study included a quantitative word count by means of an analysis of lexical specificities (Lancia 2007), which allows the creation of a series of occurrence tables in which each row represents a word and each column a subset of qualitative data. In this case, the subset was categorised under the four main general themes, identified in the qualitative study listed above, in an effort to triangulate the results of the quantitative word count with the subjective qualitative thematic analysis.

In order to pre-process and prepare the text for the analysis of its lexical specificities, the total words list for each of the movements was extracted separately from the raw documents using the ATLAS.it 8 'word list' function and then the lists were exported to Microsoft Excel. The textual data was normalised, in that all articles, prepositions, conjunctions, and general function words were omitted from the lists, then all the words were reduced to a single root verb or noun. A process of cautious synonymisation was conducted to combine words of similar meanings (for example, 'weapon', 'gun', and 'sword' were combined into one cell) and a threshold of at least four occurrences in both movements was established in order to focus on the most frequent words.

One last step of optimisation was conducted for both of the lists in order to exclude words that were not significant to the analysis of the four themes. For example, words such as 'Syria', and 'Iraq' that simply determined the location of the Islamic State but were not relevant to the analysis were removed. The percentages of the words used in the study are listed in (Table 2).

Both of the aforementioned lists were utilised in the comparative analysis of this study. The percentages of the total word count under each of the themes was calculated in relation to the 'total word count' list before optimisation in order to measure the significance granted to each theme by both movements. Following this, the percentage of similar words present within both of the movements was calculated in relation to the 'optimised word

Table 2 The percentages of the words used in the study

	Islamic State	Red Brigades
Total list - word count	3230	3005
Optimised list - word count	2816	2798
Percentage of words used in the optimised list	87.2%	93.1%

[*]The total list and optimised list are available in (Supplementary file2)

count' list in order to measure the weight accorded to the 'similar words' under each theme by both movements.

5 Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis identified the four main themes structuring the documents produced by the two movements. This section presents a discussion about each of the themes and compares both movements from a qualitative perspective.

5.1 The justification behind its establishment

The first identified theme in the qualitative analysis of the documents was the justification behind each movement's establishment. The theme included several elements that expressed the failure of and betrayal by their co-ideologists, along with political and social struggles as the reasons behind the need for the existence of the movements.

5.1.1 The failure of and betrayal of co-ideologists

The Red Brigades highlighted that the crisis they faced was mainly attributable to 'the dominance of the multinational capital and the imperialist bourgeoisie', that is, the subordination of Italy 'to the imperialist power' that flows beneath the 'mask of formal democracy'. They described their co-ideologist leaders' acts of 'betrayal' and openly blamed the Communist Party. Following the 1948 attack on Togliatti, instead of investing in the partisans who 'took up arms and waited for instructions, for revolutionary indications', rather the Communist Party had recommended 'tranquillity, invited them to return to their homes, to return to the masters' factories'.

The Red Brigades acknowledged the 'state of unpreparedness of revolutionary forces'. They quoted their Brazilian comrades who had stated that the 'involution' of the communist parties is to be found in the 'inability of their organisation to cope with the levels of confrontation that the bourgeoisie progressively imposes on the class movement'. They confirmed that their 'political experience (as a new movement) stems from this need (to organise)'.

Meanwhile, the Islamic State clarified that the struggle that society faces today is attributable to 'democracy, secularism, nationalism', 'Christians and Jews' and the 'crusaders' claim to bear the standard of liberty and justice'. They blamed their co-ideologists; the rulers in the region for having 'practiced the lowest and most despicable form of treachery' for causing 'divisions in the region', and for 'selling your issue and surrendering your

affairs and your land to your enemy'. They expressed that no other provision remains: 'Whom would we consult? Should we consult those who have abandoned us? Those who have betrayed us? Those who have disowned us and incited against us? Those who have become hostile towards us? Those who wage war against us? Whom would we consult, and whom do we step over?' They state that 'the Islamic State will bring together those who want unity'.

5.1.2 Political struggle

Eliminating political oppression was one of the most significant elements highlighted in the justification behind the establishment of both movements. The Red Brigades explained that total disarmament; 'political disarmament' and 'military disarmament' were what the bourgeoisie governing the state were seeking. Post-fascism and reconstruction had included the firing of hundreds of workers who were placed in the 'confined departments' while the police were beating and murdering peasants in the squares of the South. They also supported their positions by stating that Neo-fascists 'kill by taking their time', by keeping people such as locked up in jail, despite their obvious innocence, or who play with political trials for the comrades of the revolutionary groups and the avant-gardes of the movement. They explained that in recent years the counter-revolutionary plans had unfolded in Italy and now evident, 'without the mystifying veil of a formal democracy', by which it had been covered were the 'raids and mass arrests, the state of siege, special laws, special courts, and concentration camps' as well as 'still exploitation, still unemployment, still marginalisation, and [the] political genocide of the communist vanguards'.

The Islamic State expressed similar political struggles: 'We were patient for years in the face of being killed, imprisoned, having our bones broken and our limbs severed. We drank all sorts of bitterness, dreaming of this day'. They warned their communities stating that 'the Jews, the Christians, and the rest of the disbelievers will not approve of you nor abandon waging war against you until you follow their religion and apostatise from yours'. That their armies 'are only to crush you, weaken you, enslave you', describing this as the reality to 'turn you away from your religion and the path of Allah [God], plunder the goods of your lands, and rob you of your wealth'. They accused Muslim leaders of not caring about the tragedies of the Muslims all over the world, citing examples of the suffering of the Palestinians in particular, along with the barrel bombs of death and destruction in Syria for years: 'the scenes of Muslims being killed, imprisoned, slaughtered, and burned, and their honour raped, their wealth plundered, and their homes destroyed'.

5.1.3 Social struggle

Class struggle was at the core of the Red Brigades movement. They clearly stated that 'the experience of the class struggle in the age of imperialism teaches us that the working class and the working masses cannot defeat the armed bourgeoisie without the power of guns'. Increasingly, the police were being called to intervene in workers' disputes in large factories where the refusal to work had become a rejection of power, hence, 'the struggles are repressed by any means'. They explained that 'receiving starvation wages…Italian proletarians swallowed the gall of Italy's "reconstruction"'.

The Red Brigades highlighted that it was precisely the situation of 'unequal economic development, the worsening of imbalances between North and South, the collapse of small and medium industry, growing unemployment, the livid and violent opposition

of agrarians, industrialists, speculators in the spectrum structural reforms, uncontrolled growth in prices, tax increases, the rebellion of proletarian sectors that are ever more widespread through the criminal policy of the bosses, that nourished the neo-fascist recovery in our country'.

In the Islamic State documents, the social struggle was expressed through examples of 'the killing of more than 20,000 Muslims whose homes have been brutally taken away and they were displaced from the land of Isra to secret prisons that stink'. The documents called upon all Muslims to leave the life of 'humiliation, disgrace, degradation, subordination, loss, emptiness, and poverty, for a life of honour, respect, leadership, richness, and another matter that you love—victory from Allah and an imminent conquest' and in the afterlife to have a place in heaven—'know that Jannah (heaven) is beneath shadows of swords'.

The Islamic State expounded that the claims of the West 'to aid the weak and oppressed, help the poor, relieve the afflicted, liberate the enslaved, defend the innocent and peaceful, and prevent the shedding of their blood' were a lie. The Islamic State aimed to portray that they existed for the 'oppressed of them, the orphans, the widows, and the impoverished', adding that 'If you support it, then you do so for your own good' and 'if you forsake the State or wage war against it, you will not harm it. You will only harm yourselves'.

5.2 Ideologies

Ideologies were at the core of the proposed solutions to the struggles of the people; to establish a socialist state in the case of the Red Brigades, and an Islamic State in the case of the Islamic State movement. The Red Brigades referred to Marxism-Leninism, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and the ongoing experiences of metropolitan guerrilla movements as their point of reference, while the Islamic State based their establishment and strategies on their interpretation of Islam and its teachings.

References to their ideology were repeated in many documents published by the Red Brigades, however, they mostly focused on also detaching themselves from the other Leninist-Marxist practices that were already present in the political and extra-parliamentary arena at the time. For example, the Red Brigades expressed that they were not 'in favour of blank voting papers' and that is 'a Marxist law, not an opinion'. They believed that voting unnecessarily divides the revolutionary left and does not satisfy nor accomplish their 'request for power'. They also explained that they 'do not accept all the patterns that have guided the European communist parties in the revolutionary phase of their history' especially in regards to 'the issue of the relationship between political organisation and military organisation'. Furthermore, the Red Brigades used examples from history of 'inter-imperialist wars that ended as soon as the simple danger of communist revolution was perceived'. The communiqués published in one of their most significant attacks, the kidnapping of Aldo Mora, all ended with the same slogan 'For Communism, Red Brigades'.

The ideology of the Islamic State was repeatedly intensified in all the documents: 'Whomsoever Allah (God) guides, none can misguide, and whomsoever He misguides, none can guide'. In this way, the condition of believing in and worshipping Allah is presented as a strict request. In the first document announcing the launch of the Islamic State it was stated that 'He [Allah] promised to grant the Ummah succession to authority'. He also made leadership of the world and master ship of the earth for the Ummah, as long as it fulfilled the condition: "They worship me and do not associate anything with me" [annur: 55].

The Islamic State confirmed that this fulfilment of Allah's promises includes 'the ability to build, reform, remove oppression, spread justice, and bring about safety and tranquillity' and that without this condition being met 'authority becomes nothing more than kingship, dominance and rule, accompanied with destruction, corruption, oppression, subjugation, fear, and the decadence of the human being and his descent to the level of animals'. The Islamic State used several success stories from the history of Islam, explaining that Allah's promises will be fulfilled for the believers 'just as He granted it to those before them'.

5.3 Violence

The use of violence and the establishment of armed militants were perceived as inevitable necessities by both movements in order to achieve their ideological solutions and attain power.

The Red Brigades explained that 'it is a problem of attack, of armed struggle for communism' adding that 'Opposing this project is not enough. What we argue is that this opposition must be strategic, that is, it must be an armed opposition'. With this perspective, they aimed to pursue war as a means of achieving their goal by essentially building the Combatant Communist Party. They stated that 'this is the only way it is possible to move towards the strategic victory of the proletariat' and added that 'the revolution is not just a technical-military fact, and the armed vanguard is not the armed weapon of a disarmed mass movement, but its highest point of unification, its demand for power'. In their position towards extra-parliamentary groups, they were clear they did not care to participate in 'a sterile ideological argument'. Their attitude towards extra-parliamentary groups was 'primarily determined by the armed struggle position'.

They used a language of inspiration with their followers by explaining that 'the communist revolution is a result of a long armed fight against the armed power of masters!' adding that this is the fundamental lesson that they learnt from 'the Paris Commune, from the Bolshevik revolution, from the Cuban and Chinese revolution, from Che Guevara and Vietnam, from the forces that today fight in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and from the revolutionary groups fighting in the great imperialist metropolises'. It is 'the fundamental content of liberation'.

The Islamic State built on the issue of faith stating that 'Speech will not benefit you without action, for there is no faith without action'. Once the condition of belief is fulfilled, the followers are requested to obey the leader for 'it is incumbent upon all Muslims to pledge allegiance to the Khalifah Ibrahim and support him' and to fight for 'your Lord has made jihad for the cause of Allah obligatory upon you and has commanded you to fight His enemies so that He may forgive your sins, raise you in rank, take from among you martyrs, purify the believers, and destroy the disbelievers'. These publications included several verses from Al-Quran that call for battle: 'Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you' [Al-Baqarah: 216].

The Islamic State declares the 'sword as a mercy to all creation', and call upon their followers to accept this responsibility for 'You are now the defenders of the land of Islam and its guards. You will not be able to preserve this trust and defend this land, except by fearing Allah secretly and publically, then by sacrificing, being patient, and offering blood'. They add, 'Islam was never for a day the religion of peace. Islam is the religion of war' and urge their followers, not only within the region but also abroad, to both attack and fight in the name of their religion.

5.4 Organisation

The examination of the Red Brigades documents and the Islamic State documents demonstrated the diverse organisational approaches between the two movements.

The Red Brigades relied on clandestineness and considered it 'an indispensable condition for the survival of a politico-military organisation that operates within imperialist metropolises'. In addition to the condition of absolute clandestinity, there was also a second condition: 'the militant has to operate within the movement, and is therefore forced to appear and operate through the political forms that the movement assumes legally'. Clandestinity was not intended in 'a purely defensive sense' but rather to allow for 'a decisive tactical advantage over the class enemy, who, instead, lives through its men and installations'.

The Red Brigades also wanted to exercise full control over the work of their comrades and militants. 'The political work of each comrade takes place within a column. All political relations must therefore be monitored and evaluated'. They gave the clear instruction that one 'should never go to an appointment or do a particular job without someone else from the organisation being aware of it'.

Recruitment for the Red Brigades aimed to 'generate an alternative power in factories and in the popular neighbourhoods' where 'revolt and exploitation are mainly concentrated'. Their point of view is that the armed struggle in Italy should be conducted by an organisation that is 'a direct expression of the working-class movement vanguard'. They added, 'We must develop a military action that is linked to the political needs of this vanguard. In order to root the armed struggle in the movement, the vanguard must be forced to directly engage in the armed struggle. Our military action will have to be carried out together with the people more and more'.

Conversely, the Islamic State relied on copious and direct publicity with regard to its establishment. Their dependence on the use of quotes from the Quran and success stories from the history of Islam suggest that affirming a strong ideology does not require a great deal of organisation.

The documents of the Islamic State did not reveal any aim to exercise complete control over the work of its followers: 'To our brothers in Aqidah (religion) and Iman (belief) in Europe, America, Russia, Australia, and elsewhere. Your brothers in your lands have absolved themselves of blame. So, leap onto their tracks and take an example from their actions. And know that Jannah (heaven) is beneath shadows of swords'. Furthermore, the documents publicly provided instructions on how to commit random attacks without the need for any sort of consultation with the movement, hence, 'hostage taking, armed with a firearm, the acquisition of a firearm, ideal target locations, execution, without firearms, war is deception, luring targets'.

Recruitment by the Islamic State was more inclusive than the Red Brigades, inviting 'Oh Muslims everywhere' or 'we call upon every Muslim in every place to perform hijrah (emigration) to the Islamic State or fight in his land wherever that may be'. The only condition is to believe and have faith that 'Allah the Mighty and Majestic will support His soldiers, grant His slaves authority, and preserve His religion'. They stated that they did not call upon Muslims 'out of weakness or inability' but rather to provide 'advice for you, love for you, and compassion for you'. They also warned Muslims 'do not attain Allah's anger, torment, and punishment, so that you do not lose this good that the mujahidin (fighters) for Allah's cause obtain'.

Table 3 The percentage of the words identified under each theme for each of the movements

	Islamic State		Red Brigades	
Theme	Word count	% theme to total word count list	Word count	% theme to total word count list
1- Justification behind its establishment a. Enemy identification	374	11.58 %	552	18.37%
1- The justification behind establishment b. Struggle	387	11.98 %	554	18.44 %
2- Ideology	1438	44.52 %	551	18.34 %
3- Violence	568	17.59 %	552	18.37 %
4- Organisation	29	0.90 %	554	18.44 %

6 Content analysis: word count

The quantitative content analysis was designed to capture the word count under the four main themes that were previously identified in the qualitative analysis of the documents for the purpose of triangulation.

The first step aimed to measure the percentage of the words identified under each theme for each of the movements in relation to the 'total word count list' as depicted in (Table 3).

In the publications prepared by the Red Brigades, the analysis demonstrated an almost equal word distribution amounting to an average of 18% under each of the categories (considering the separation between the two sub categories 'enemies' and 'struggle' under the first theme 'the justification behind its establishment'). In the Islamic State documents the distribution varied widely revealing a higher percentage of 44.5% under the 'ideology' theme.

A similarity of word counts between both movements was revealed under the 'violence' theme. In the Red Brigades documents 18.37% of the words were dedicated to terms reflecting 'violence', and an adjacent percentage of 17.59% in the Islamic State documents reflected the same theme.

The largest gap between the themes in the documents of both movements was evident under the 'organisation' category. In the Red Brigades documents, 18.44% of the words were dedicated to 'organisation' while only 0.90% of the words in the Islamic State documents were attributed to this theme.

The second step of the study aimed to identify a list of similar words used by both movements, and their percentage in the optimised word lists (Table 4) for both movements.

The numbers demonstrate an almost equally high percentage of similar words present under the 'violence' theme in both the Islamic State, amounting to 16.76%, and the Red Brigades documents, amounting to 16.80% of the optimised lists. There was a higher concentration of terms related to 'ideology' in the Islamic State documents amounting to 4.23%, with only 0.64% in the Red Brigades documents. The 'organisation' aspect, specifically in the use of the word 'strategy', was revealed to be higher in the Red Brigades documents at 1.57% as opposed to only 0.18% in the Islamic State documents.

7 Further analysis

The two movements under examination represent two distinct ideologies. While this study aimed to set aside the ideologies and to explore other possible similarities and differences in the structures of both movements, the important variations in the reference to 'ideology' by both movements and especially in the Islamic State documents was also considered within the analysis. The findings of the qualitative study highlighted the repetition and development of the 'ideology' in all the Islamic State documents, reiterating that with the conditions of belief and faith, Allah's promise of victory, a good life on earth, and heaven after death will be fulfilled. The quantitative word count confirmed these qualitative results as 44.5% of the 'total word count' list was dedicated to terms reflecting the Islamic 'ideology'. In the qualitative analysis of the Red Brigades, the documents revealed an average dedication to the publicising of the movement's 'ideology' amounting to 18.34% of the 'total word count' list. More focus was dedicated to highlighting the failure and unpreparedness of the previous communist movements in achieving their ideological objectives. Democratic practices such as the voting system proposed by the new capitalist-imperialist system were perceived as counter-revolutionary efforts that could only weaken the ideology of the 'Marxist law'. Another relevant observation was in the word count of the word 'Allah' which had the highest word count in all of the documents by being mentioned 447 times. Another finding was revealed in the use of the words 'belief/faith and victory' which were mentioned 4.23% in the 'optimised list' of the Islamic State as opposed to 0.64% for the Red Brigades.

Political and social struggles were among the main elements in the 'justification behind its establishment' theme revealed in the qualitative analysis of the documents. Terms including oppression, disarmament, firing workers, locking up the innocent, killing and enslaving the public by those of opponent ideologies were expressed widely in both of the

Table 4 The list of similar words used by both movements, and their percentage in the optimised word lists

Theme	Similar words	Islamic State % Similar words to optimised list	Red Brigades % Similar words to optimised list
1- Justification behind its establishment a. Enemy identification	Enemy, parliament (extra-parliament), democracy, America, government (regime), Europe, authorities	3.48 %	5.47 %
1- Justification behind its establishment b. Struggle	Struggle (class/social)/suffer/poor/starve/displace /disgrace/humiliation, oppress, war/crimes/invasion, politic, betray/infidelity (genocide/disarm/torture/imprison/exploit), liberty/freedom/dignity/honour/glory/security/grace, family/children, justice	13.14 %	11.33 %
2- Ideology	Belief/faith, victory	4.23 %	0.64 %
3- Violence	Attack, fight, war, dead, bomb, hostage, soldier (militant), power, execute, blood, assassination, defence, kill (murder), defeat, battle (combat)	16.76 %	16.80 %
4- Organisation	Strategy	0.18 %	1.57 %

movements' publications. Furthermore, stories of class struggles, workers receiving starvation wages in favour of the bourgeoisie, poverty, robbing and displacement from lands were also widely mentioned under the 'justification behind its establishment' theme. The quantitative analysis demonstrated that 18.44% of the words in the Red Brigades documents expressed political and social struggles while 11.98% of the words in the Islamic State documents expressed political and social struggles. This theme also demonstrated a higher number of similar words used by both movements. For example, words like 'oppress', 'struggle' and 'freedom' amounted to 13.14% of the 'optimised list' in the Islamic State documents and 11.33% in the Red Brigades documents.

'Violence' was one of the themes revealed in the qualitative analysis of the documents, and was perceived as an inevitable necessity by both movements in order to achieve their goals. The Red Brigades declared it as a problem of attack and an armed struggle for communism, while the Islamic State stated that the sword is the way to mercy for all creations, thereby, requesting sacrifice, patience, and the offering of blood. This was confirmed by the quantitative analysis of the word count, as 17.59% of the words in the 'total word count' list reflected violence in the Islamic State documents and 18.37% of the words in the 'total word count' list in the Red Brigades documents also reflected violence. The similarity in the use of words in the 'optimised list' was also high with an almost equal average in both movements' documents: 16.76% for the Islamic State and 16.80% for the Red Brigades documents.

A gap was revealed, however, in the thematic and content analyses between the Islamic State and the Red Brigades documents under the theme of 'organisation'. Clandestinity and secrecy were the main concepts under which the Red Brigades managed and ran their operations. They explained that this was not only a matter of defence but also for tactical advantage. They relied on the exploited workers to form their forces and requested full secrecy and obedience in running their operations. The Islamic State, on the other hand, requested 'fearing God secretly and publicly'. Consequently, they targeted Muslims everywhere and requested that they attack their 'enemies' wherever they are in the world. 'Ideology' was their reference and they used it to attract and mobilise followers to undertake individual attacks without the need to seek permission. The quantitative analysis revealed similar findings as only 0.90% of the words in the Islamic State documents reflected 'organisation', while 18.44% of the words in the Red Brigades documents reflected 'organisation'. The word similarity analysis between both movements included only the word 'strategy'. Its occurrence in the 'optimised lists' of the Islamic State documents amounted to only 0.18% and 1.57% in the Red Brigades documents. The Red Brigades documents included words such as 'clandestine', 'organise', 'secrecy' and 'autonomy' at a relatively widespread rate forming a total of 18.44% of the 'total word count' list.

8 Implications

The principal finding of this study implies that the constructions of the documents produced by both organizations aiming at establishing their legitimacy and building social capital are rather similar. Despite the different ideologies, the gap between the time of existence, and the different geographic location of the organizations, the research revealed that the documents are constructed under four themes, the justification behind the establishment within which both movements identified their enemies, along with social and political struggles; ideology; violence; and organisation. With both organizations gaining a

reputation for the frequency and effectiveness of their violent acts, both organizations have indeed dedicated an equivalent portion of the 'violence' theme in their documents. Violence was perceived as an inevitable necessity by both movements to achieve their goals.

The principal difference derived from this study is related to the extensive concentration of the ideological terms in the Islamic State documents, mostly at the cost of the organizational aspect. Conversely, in the Red Brigades' documents, there is an evident homogeneous distribution of the four identified themes. The Red Brigades 'clandestinity' tactical concept was adopted by their organisation and operation as a defensive and tactical advantage. Whereas, the findings of this research speculate that the concentration of the ideological terms at the cost of the organizational terms in the Islamic State documents is likely to be contributed by modernisation in the world today, which has provided the Islamic State with an opportunity to build legitimacy and target Muslims everywhere with less organizational demands. Confirming such speculations call for additional comparative investigations and additional scrutiny in analysing the fluctuation of the identified themes at the different stages of development of the movements to draw more insights.

9 Conclusion

The study aimed to broaden and refine our knowledge on radicalisation by applying a different lens derived from communication sciences. It also aims to minimise the limitation and bias resulting from the several studies focusing on one movement—the Islamic State. The study adopted a comparative approach between two strong cases of radical movements in order to refine our ability to describe such movements and to minimise the bias resulting from the several recent studies focusing on only one movement—the Islamic State. The qualitative and quantitative comparison conducted in this study between the Red Brigades and the Islamic State documents was based on the content analysis of 15 original documents published by the Red Brigades and 15 documents produced by the Islamic State.

The principal finding which suggests that the strategies adopted by both organizations are rather similar, is represented in the qualitative analysis which revealed a division in the construction of the documents of both movements under four main themes: the justification behind its establishment within which both movements identified their enemies, along with social and political struggles; ideology; violence; and organisation. The divisions were confirmed through conducting a quantitative analysis as a second step based on the word count under each theme.

The study revealed that words representing social and political struggles were used by both movements to justify their establishment, and in so doing presenting their ideologies as a solution to achieve power that would provide justice, freedom, better living conditions and, in the case of the Islamic State, heaven in the afterlife.

The study also revealed that the Islamic State documents appeared to be highly representative of their ideology. The documents repeatedly developed their ideology as a strategy on which to build and attract a wide network of followers, while the publications of the Red Brigades included information about their ideology at a lower frequency.

The findings of the thematic and content analyses demonstrated high and equivalent percentages in the representations of 'violence' in their documents. Both movements stated that violence was the only method for achieving the movements' ideological goals that would ultimately provide solutions to the struggles of the people.

The principal difference derived from this study is related to the extensive concentration of the ideological terms in the Islamic State documents, mostly at the cost of the organizational aspect. Speculated to be contributed by modernisation in the world today, which has provided the Islamic State with an opportunity to build legitimacy and target Muslims everywhere with less organizational demands.

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