Ingroup, outgroup, or ally? An inquiry on the identity content of the People’s Protection Units (YPG) supporters on social media

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Ingroup, Outgroup, or Ally? An Inquiry on the Identity Content of the People’s Protection Units (YPG) Supporters on Social Media

Abstract
Since the Syrian civil war broke out in 2011, the People’s Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel, the YPG) has been one of the most notable groups in Syria. The group has become increasingly known especially after playing a significant role in the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and, later on, declaring autonomy in northern Syria in 2014. While various political, economic, and social dimensions of the Rojava struggle and of the YPG have been examined within a wide array of fields, the group has not been adequately studied through a social-psychological lens thus far. In this study, we seek to fill this gap by examining how YPG supporters represent, understand, and express the identity and behaviour of their own group and their adversaries on social media, particularly on Twitter. In light of social identity theory, we explore YPG supporters’ (1) ingroup representations (both ingroup members and allies), (2) ingroup social norms, (3) outgroup representations, and (4) outgroup social norms. Thus, we not only present the first empirical study in this regard, but also discuss the meanings of identity content and social norms in relation to the processes of mobilisation and solidarity among YPG supporters.

Keywords: identity content; social identity; social norms; solidarity; social media; YPG; Rojava
In 2011, the popular unrest and mass protests against the Bashar al-Assad regime, which were inspired by the ‘Arab Spring’, turned into a full-scale civil war, leaving more than 387,000 people dead, 205,000 missing, 2.1 million disabled, 6.7 million internally displaced, and 5.6 million externally displaced.\(^1\) Since the civil war broke out, Syria has become ‘a multi-layered war zone, with the regime and various opposition groups fighting for state power with and among each other’\(^2\). The People’s Protection Units (\textit{Yekîneyên Parastina Gel}, the YPG), one of the most notable and effective groups of this sort, was founded in 2012 as the military wing of the Democratic Union Party (\textit{Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat}, the PYD) in Syria. Both the YPG and the Women’s Protection Units (\textit{Yekîneyên Parastina Jin}, the YPJ) have become increasingly known to larger audiences after playing significant roles in the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), particularly in the liberation of the Syrian town of Kobane and in defense of the Yazidis, an indigenous group subjected to genocide by ISIS. Especially the way the media covered the stories of female fighters in this conflict and praised them for their heroism made both organisations well-known around the world.\(^3\) Both the YPG and YPJ attracted further attention within both academic and policy circles after the PYD declared autonomy in northern Syria in 2014 and initiated the process, which was dubbed as the Rojava Revolution.


The notion of solidarity was one of the most important defining factors of the Rojava experience. A wide array of organisations across the world, especially leftist and feminist organisations, stood by the YPG in solidarity in its self-defense against ISIS over the past years. ‘Rojava solidarity networks’ were formed in different parts of the world, extending from Europe to Australia and Latin America. Thousands of people from western countries, among them were former military staff, charity members, engineers, workers, and students, joined the ranks of the YPG to take part in the struggle. In the name of solidarity, ‘anarchists and Marxists from around the world […] traveled to the region to defend the revolution, creating a historical moment resembling the Spanish Civil War’. In other words, a dual process in which the peoples of Rojava defended their homeland against ISIS and the people outside Rojava mobilised various transnational communities to show solidarity for Rojava occurred. Throughout these processes, social media was the primary platform in and through which people across the world not only expressed their support for the YPG, but also made initial contacts with representatives to join the organisation. Relatedly, the YPG members made themselves accessible to those who were looking to join the YPG – they ‘[had] an active social media presence geared toward international recruits, and they regularly [posted] updates, often in English, focusing not just on warfare but also on their vision for an autonomous Kurdish society’.

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Since 2014, the struggle of the YPG in Rojava has received ample scholarly attention in the fields of international relations, political science, security studies, sociology, and similar social science disciplines. Despite the relevance of social psychology in understanding and explaining socio-political movements, however, there has been limited interest in examining the Rojava struggle in general, and the YPG and its identity in particular, through a social-psychological lens. In fact, intergroup relations has long been a popular research area in the literature of social psychology. Drawing on social identity theory (SIT), a vast number of studies have over the past decades sought to understand and explain ingroup and outgroup categorisations as well as the outcomes of such categorisations in intergroup relations. One significant drawback of these studies is, however, that they have largely reduced the social world into binary categories such as ‘us’ vs. ‘them’. While binary categories have indeed been useful


and effective methodological frameworks, they have at the same time obscured some important features of social relations, especially in conflict contexts. In other words, by relying on a binary thinking, such studies have reflected only a limited dimension of social relations and the context within which they occur. Due to this shortcoming, it has become increasingly important to move beyond the simplified categories when studying intergroup relations. It is now more relevant and explanatory to investigate intergroup relations that involve more than two groups in order to understand not only the role of ingroups, allies who are not part of the conflict, and outgroups in conflict, but also the processes of politicisation, mobilisation, and solidarity of these groups in those contexts.

In this article, we seek to address these gaps by turning our attention to the widely overlooked social-psychological dimension of the Rojava experience and, at the same time, by employing an approach that moves beyond binaries when examining intergroup relations. In the conceptual guidance of SIT, we focus on the ways in which YPG supporters (both ingroup members and allies) represent, understand, and express the identity and behaviour of their own group and of their adversaries on social media, particularly on Twitter where the YPG has been active and effective in both disseminating its messages and recruiting more members to its ranks.

To be more specific, we explore the (1) ingroup representations, (2) ingroup social norms, (3) outgroup representations, and (4) outgroup social norms of YPG supporters. In this way, we make a two-fold contribution to the literature. On the one hand, we present an original empirical study that discusses—for the first time, to our knowledge—the meanings of identity content and social norms in relation to the processes of mobilisation and solidarity among YPG supporters. On the other hand, we enrich and deepen the recent discussions on identity content and the

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13 Ibid.
problems related to binary perspectives on intergroup processes in understanding intergroup dynamics.  

The rest of the article consists of six sections. First, we briefly outline SIT and social norms surrounding these identities. We then provide a concise background on the YPG and Rojava. Next, we explain how we collected and analysed our data. After that, we present the results of our analysis and lay out our main categories and subcategories. Following this, we present our major discussion points. Finally, we make an overall evaluation and discuss the limitations and future directions of the study.

**Ingroups, Allies and Outgroups: Social Identity, Politicisation, and Solidarity Dynamics**

SIT puts forth the concept of social identity, which can be defined as the part of the self-concept derived from membership in social groups. For example, identities related to gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and religion can be considered social identities. Rather than being a single unit, social identity is multiple and part of a complex system. It is defined in terms of ‘we’, meaning members of a social category in relation to other social categories. To feel like a member of any social group, people should have an emotional connection to said group. SIT posits that a shared/collective representation is a meaningful way for people to identify themselves and understand how they should act as members of a group.

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14 Ibid.  
According to Turner and colleagues, self-categorisation is the psychological basis for group behaviour. When it comes to group behaviour, people define themselves according to the behaviour of other group members. They evaluate themselves based on the relevant identity in a particular context and perform the behaviour that is expected of a person with that identity. Having a salient social identity tends to lead people to make comparisons with others, especially about the self, along with the basis of group membership. Based on this salient identity, group members tend to display group normative behaviour, evaluate their members compared to outgroup members more positively, and value the lives of ingroup members more than outgroup members. When self-categorisation is at the level of the group, our collective identity guides our thoughts (cognition), feelings (emotion), and actions (behaviour). The focus at this level of categorisation is on norms, values, and interests of the relevant ingroup. Thus, others are seen, evaluated, and reacted to based on whether they belong to our group (ingroup) or do not belong to our group (outgroup). When dealing with comparisons outside of the group, that is, with members of another group, comparisons are focused more on the differences between the groups, especially those that have a positive valence for the ingroup.

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23 Ibid.
Some social identities may become politicised due to the experiences of group members, such as clashing with the police\(^{25}\) and participating in social movements.\(^{26}\) For example, while woman identity can be considered social identity, feminist identity can be seen as a politicised identity due to its content and association with activism.\(^{27}\) Politicised collective identity provides a social-psychological lens to understand group members’ motivation in a political structure. A politicised collective identity is established based on shared grievances, the possession of a common enemy, and the search for third party allies. The awareness that grievances are shared among group members is a necessary first step for people to engage in a power struggle toward a politicised identity.\(^{28}\) However, having shared grievances alone is not enough for a group to become politicised. As the second step, the group needs to hold someone—an opponent, enemy, outgroup, and so forth—responsible for their problems. In this process, groups reinforce each other by identifying the other group as a target of their action. The third step is to seek a third party as an ally to take their side.\(^{29}\)

More recent studies emphasise the necessity of developing models of social change and solidarity that transcend the simple two-group perspective that dominates social psychology.\(^{30}\) According to these recent models, social change is achieved through solidarity between intermediary and lower status groups, such as between Asian Americans and Black Americans in

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\(^{29}\) Ibid.

the case of the United States (US). However, this ternary approach, *approaching the intergroup relations as 1) higher status, 2) intermediary, and 3) lower status groups*, does not fully help to explain the dynamics of groups in the context of Rojava where many parties—ingroups, allies to the ingroup who are not part of the Syrian society, and outgroups—are involved in the conflict. We aim to understand the content of a politicised identity that involves both ingroup members and allies as well as group norms and beliefs revolving around this identity, as it is those norms and beliefs that gear towards improving the status of the disadvantaged.\(^{31}\) It is our expectation that this exploration, conducted in light of SIT, sheds light on the (1) intragroup dynamics of the YPG, (2) intergroup dynamics between the YPG and its allies, and (3) intergroup dynamics between the YPG and its adversaries. At this point, a concise background on the YPG and Rojava will be provided to facilitate the contextualisation of conceptual points discussed so far.

**The YPG and Rojava**

Under both Hafez al-Assad and Bashar al-Assad, the Kurds in Syria were subjected to oppressive state policies including, but not limited to, the suppression of language and denial of citizenship. Around the time the protests culminated in an uprising and, later on, a civil war, Syrian Kurds also began protesting the regime. As noted earlier, the YPG was established as the military wing of the PYD in 2012. After the regime forces largely withdrew from northern and eastern Syria to mobilise its forces to deal with conflicts that were taking place in other parts of the country, Kurdish-led forces took control of these large territories quickly. In 2013, the YPJ was established towards achieving the dual goals of the national liberation of the Kurds and emancipation and self-determination of women.\(^{32}\) In the same year, the PYD formed a coalition under the name of the Movement for a Democratic Society (*Tevgera Civaka Demokratîk*) and

\(^{31}\) Radke et al., ‘Beyond Allyship’.

\(^{32}\) Toivanen and Baser, ‘Gender in the Representations of an Armed Conflict’, 297.
declared autonomy for the region following the collapse of the regime’s authority in northern Syria. Around the same period, ISIS was simultaneously expanding in the territories of Iraq and Syria and carrying out violent activities in different parts of the world, especially in Europe and the Middle East.

In 2014, the Kurds called their autonomous region Rojava, yet also referred to these lands as the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria and the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria in the ensuing years. For the PYD, the primary goal was not to topple the Assad regime, but rather to radically change ‘the very political system through which dictatorships and dynasties emerge’ in Syria as well as the Middle East overall. The YPG and YPJ joined with various Arab groups and formed the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in 2015, an umbrella organisation that was provided with weapons by the US and supported by some other countries including the United Kingdom (UK), France, and Italy. Together, they led the struggle to push ISIS from the region in general, and from Rojava in particular.

Rojava was a unique Kurdish political experience for various reasons. Unlike the majority of the past national liberation movements that aimed at establishing an independent state, the PYD followed a decentralised or even a ‘non-statist’ administrative system in Rojava.

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34 Turkey perceived the autonomy of Rojava and the possibility of an independent Kurdish state on its borders as an existential national security threat. To prevent this from happening and to stop a potential ‘domino effect’ within its borders and in the region, it took various actions that ranged from turning a blind eye to the logistical activities of foreign jihadists seeking to enter Syria to organising cross-border operations to northern Syria such as the Operations Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, and Peace Spring in 2016, 2018, and 2019, respectively. See Seçkin Köstem, ‘Russian-Turkish Cooperation in Syria: Geopolitical Alignment with Limits’, Cambridge Review of International Affairs (2020). Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2020.1719040.
36 The US administration decided to withdraw its military presence from Syria in 2019.
37 After 2015, Russia also provided support for the YPG, allowed the PYD to open its first office abroad in Moscow, and tried to include the Kurds in the Geneva talks to conclude a sustainable solution on the ground. See Köstem, ‘Russian-Turkish Cooperation in Syria’, 13.
Instead of putting efforts into establishing a new nation-state, the party challenged the idea of the nation-state itself. Accordingly, Rojava was designed not as an independent country, but as a semi-autonomous region with connections to Syria as well as other Kurdish areas in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. Given the shared ideological goals between the YPG and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan, the PKK), it was hardly surprising that the political and administrative structure of Rojava was based on the idea of ‘democratic confederalism’ which Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the PKK, formulated after being influenced by the American anarchist and political philosopher Murray Bookchin. In this model, local units or autonomous regions would consist of ‘Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Arameans, Turkmen, Armenians, Chechens, Circassians, [...] Muslims, Christians, Yazidis, and various other creeds and sects’ who would come together in a federation while keeping their autonomy to a great extent. Emphasis was placed on direct, bottom-up democracy and active citizenship participation, which allowed local communities to make most of the decisions and engage in self-government. In order to ensure gender equality, new rights related to abortion and equal pay were enforced, women’s quotas were allocated, and the policy of co-governance was pursued. Overall, Rojava has enjoyed de facto independence from 2014 onwards and, despite not being internationally recognised, received ample solidarity from various groups and organisations across borders.

40 Gunter, Out of Nowhere, 122–123.
43 Malik, ‘Syria’s Kurds’.
44 Ibid.
Methodology

We collected our data on Twitter between January–July 2018. This six-month interval was highly relevant for data collection because Operation Olive Branch, Turkey’s cross-border operation into Afrin, began in January 2018 and lasted until SDF withdrew from Afrin in March 2018. This period, as well as the following few months afterwards, was a period in which a number of human rights violations were reported in the region.\textsuperscript{45} In terms of covering the escalation phase of a conflict, which may differ from the de-escalation phase,\textsuperscript{46} this interval gave us the opportunity to examine ingroup vs. outgroup dynamics at a critical and unique time.

There are four major reasons as to why we chose Twitter as our primary data source. First, in the conflicts of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, conflicting parties have increasingly relied on Twitter for propaganda, public relations/diplomacy, and recruitment purposes\textsuperscript{47} because digital technologies in general, and Twitter in particular, have become a crucial means for weaker players to overcome the power asymmetry between majority and oppressed groups.\textsuperscript{48} Second, Twitter is considered the fastest, most convenient, and most influential medium to establish links between the war zone and the ‘real world’ and, therefore, preferred to other social media platforms in conflict geographies. Third, online ethnography through Twitter allows researchers ‘to observe interactions without changing the dynamics during the process of participant

\textsuperscript{45} ‘Rojava: A Timeline’, Rojava Information Center, 2021. \url{https://rojavainformationcenter.com/background/rojava-timeline/}.
observation’,49 especially if researchers are already familiar with the online community under observation. Fourth, today an increasing number of political activists around the world, including the members and supporters of the Kurdish political movement, more actively participate in online communities in order to express their ideas and discuss common interests about nation-building projects,50 which is highly relevant in the context of Rojava.51

To include as many relevant tweets as possible in our analysis, we conducted the search in Turkish, Kurdish, and English through the ‘Advanced Search’ feature of Twitter. As a first step, the authors chose the initial keywords of ‘the PKK, the PYD, the YPG, Öcalan, Afrin, Rojava, and Kobane’ by checking the tweets of some major Kurdish news agencies, such as Fırat News Agency and Mesopotamia Agency, that have often reported news about Rojava. After deciding which words were more commonly used in the news reports, we selected a few influential, high follower accounts who supported the YPG. These accounts and their tweets enabled us to include four more commonly used keywords, which were ‘Jin, YPG azadi [freedom], Efrin, and şehid namirin [martyrs never die]’. By searching for these keywords, we collected 550 tweets from 23 accounts that actively supported the YPG. The majority of the tweets were in English (90%). The rest were in Turkish (9%) and Kurdish (1%). However, some tweets also included mixed words in both languages (e.g., a tweet in English that includes the Kurdish word ‘heval’ [friend/comrade]). We defined YPG supporters as people who belonged to this ingroup (e.g., people from Rojava and who shared this identity) or were allies (e.g., people outside Rojava and who did not share this identity, yet supported the YPG). We chose these

49 Ibid., 38.
50 Ibid., 37.
accounts as well as conducted our analysis based on the content of their tweets (e.g., YPG is fighting against tyranny) and hashtags used in those tweets (e.g., #YPGfighters). We did not take into consideration their retweets, for they did not necessarily mean endorsements. The accounts were based in locations as diverse as the US, UK, Italy, Rojava, and Manbij. Arguably, for this reason, the majority of tweets were in English. Because some accounts were anonymous, we could not determine where they were based and whether they were administered by individuals or groups. Indeed, Twitter is a dynamic platform where tweets can be deleted, and user accounts can be suspended due to various reasons. As of 2021, 11 of these accounts are active, six of them are suspended, and six no longer exist. Due to the public status of Twitter and these user accounts, we did not seek to obtain informed consent from these users.52

We used Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to analyse our data. QCA is not limited to counting words. On the contrary, this method is widely known for allowing researchers to reduce data, focus on selected content aspects of the data, and describe it systematically along with these aspects.53 It involves the subjective interpretation of the meaning of qualitative material and examination of language to classify large amounts of text into an efficient and manageable number of categories that represent similar meanings.54 The selection of content aspects is typically driven by the research question or aim of the study. Once the research question is specified, QCA involves selecting the material, building a coding frame, dividing the material

53 Margrit Schreier, Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice (London: Sage, 2012).
into units of coding, trying out the coding frame with a second coder, evaluating and modifying
the coding frame, carrying out main analysis, and interpreting and presenting the findings.\textsuperscript{55}

As we aimed to explore the identity dynamics manifested in tweets, our research question
was specified at the beginning of the research process. After selecting the content, we
systematically described the selected data.\textsuperscript{56} We deductively developed the main categories of
(1) representations of the ingroup (i.e., who are we?), (2) social norms associated with the
ingroup (i.e., what do we do?), (3) representations of the enemy (i.e., who are they?), and (4)
social norms associated with the enemy (i.e., what do they do?). After a careful examination of
the main categories, we developed the subcategories under each main category inductively.
Finally, we labeled each subcategory, defined them in detail, and added examples from the raw
data. In this process, we made sure that each category captured only one aspect of the text
material, each unit of coding was assigned to only one subcategory, and each subcategory was
used at least twice. In other words, our coding framework fulfilled the requirements of
unidimensionality, mutually exclusiveness, exhaustiveness, and saturation.\textsuperscript{57}

We present these main categories and subcategories below. To note an important caveat,
we placed particular emphasis on two dimensions in the data, which were (1) descriptive
frequency counts in each subcategory of the coding scheme and (2) the most prominent themes
mentioned. In other words, instead of discussing each and every subcategory in our coding
frame, we discussed only the most prominent themes mentioned by the participants, such as
subcategories with a higher frequency, together with relevant examples.

\textsuperscript{55} Schreier, Qualitative Content Analysis, 6.
\textsuperscript{56} See Özden Melis Uluğ and Yasemin Gülsüm Acar, ‘What Happens After the Protests? Understanding Protest
44–55; Özden Melis Uluğ and Yasemin Gülsüm Acar ‘“Names Will Never Hurt Us”: A Qualitative Exploration of
729 for similar applications in qualitative research.
\textsuperscript{57} Schreier, Qualitative Content Analysis, 71–77.
Results

**Main Category 1: Ingroup Representations (Who Are We?)**

The first main category included the statements YPG supporters made about the characteristics of the members of the YPG, the people who the supporters considered as ‘their own’ people. The analysis shows that YPG supporters had a dominant tendency to define the members of the YPG as *fighters*. The supporters usually paired the word ‘fighter’ with some other words that signified freedom such as ‘free’, ‘freedom’, and ‘liberation’. Therefore, it is as well possible to claim that the supporters saw the members of the YPG not just any fighters, but *freedom fighters*. It is worth noting that YPG supporters clearly highlighted the gendered dimension of conflict. Through statements like ‘Syrian female warriors dealt a major blow to ISIS’, they frequently expressed how proud they were of female fighters who were engaged in the battle against ISIS.

The analysis indicates that YPG supporters saw the members of the organisation as *heroes*. Especially the reports from the battlefield attributed a heroic role to the efforts of the YPG against its adversaries. This attribution was visible in tweets such as ‘#YPG heroes killed 7 invaders in Efrin in again a great operation against the occupiers’. Heroism was not confined to the wartime efforts of the YPG, though. In the eyes of YPG supporters, those who lost their lives in the battle were also heroes for, among many others, ‘[helping] fight the evil Islamic State’ or ‘[dying] for internationalism, for equality and the safety of Syria[n] children’.

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58 Subcategory 1, frequency 23; see Table 1.
59 Twitter account #21.
60 Subcategory 2, frequency 18.
61 Twitter account #9.
62 Twitter account #21.
The analysis also indicates that YPG supporters defined the members of the YPG as martyrs in addition to representing them as fighters and heroes. ‘Şehid namirin’, which translates as ‘martyrs never die’ from Kurdish to English, was one of the most common expressions that YPG supporters tweeted, especially when a member was killed. As explained before, the YPG and its supporters saw Twitter as an important medium to inform the public and disseminate their messages. For this reason, it was important and practical for the supporters to provide a detailed explanation as to why those fighters were martyred. Tweets such as ‘The YPG media center revealed the record of the fighter “Koşer Koban” who was martyred in the countryside of Deir Al Zour while he was performing his duty’ served this purpose well.

The analysis further indicates that YPG supporters characterised the members of the YPG also as comrades, immortal, and volunteers to supplement their representation as fighters, heroes, and martyrs. As explained in larger detail in Main Category 3 below, in related tweets, YPG supporters made a clear distinction between the members of YPG and ISIS in terms of their motivations to engage in warfare. To be more specific, YPG supporters viewed the members of YPG as volunteers and praised them for their self-sacrifice, yet they viewed the members of ISIS as mercenaries and looked down on them for their self-seeking behaviours.

Main Category 2: Social Norms of the Ingroup (What Do We Do?)

The second main category comprised the statements YPG supporters made about the behaviours and motives of the members of the YPG. According to the analysis, YPG supporters

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63 Subcategory 3, frequency 12.
64 Twitter accounts #7 and #19.
65 Twitter account #7.
66 Subcategory 4, frequency 7.
67 Subcategory 5, frequency 5.
68 Subcategory 6, frequency 4.
believed that the YPG was a unique organisation in the sense that its members were behaving in a different and particular way when compared to other groups and organisations. First and foremost, the supporters expressed that the members of the YPG were working towards, and succeeded in, making a revolution.\(^{69}\) From the perspective of YPG supporters, the revolution was three-fold: ecological revolution, women’s (feminist) revolution, and revolution in general. They underlined the ecological dimension of the revolution in various tweets such as ‘One of the most robust projects in Rojava is the Internationalist Commune, where a collective ecological & revolutionary life has been established... By understanding the philosophy, learning languages and conducting social activities, they become pioneers of the revolution...’ \(^{70}\) Similarly, they emphasised the feminist nature of the revolution through statements like the one below:

The women revolution in N[orthern] Syria is unique in the Middle East and the world. Women manage themselves in political, military, social, cultural and economic fields and have achieved great deeds by obtaining their rights and freedom and getting them out of control of male domination.\(^{71}\)

The analysis demonstrates that, according to YPG supporters, the members of the YPG were liberating regions\(^{72}\) and people,\(^{73}\) especially women.\(^{74}\) The liberator role that the supporters attached to the YPG and its members was conveyed in different terms. For example, one supporter claimed that it was actually ‘The Kurds [who] liberated Raqqa’ and said, ‘They then handed the city over to a civilian council. Democracy has brought new life back to N[orthern] Syria’.\(^{75}\) From a broader perspective, another supporter highlighted the YPG’s role in ‘liberating

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\(^{69}\) Twitter accounts #1 and #8; subcategory 1, frequency 38; see Table 2.
\(^{70}\) Twitter account #2.
\(^{71}\) Twitter account #7.
\(^{72}\) Twitter accounts #14 and #15.
\(^{73}\) Twitter account #17.
\(^{74}\) Twitter account #9; subcategory 2, frequency 37.
\(^{75}\) Twitter account #22.
people from IS’ and underlined that ‘the most joyous is when we see the smile of a child who has gone out of oppression. It has come to my attention that the women here lived a difficult life [before YPG] as if in hell’.\textsuperscript{76}

The analysis also shows that YPG supporters saw the members of the YPG as people who \textit{resisted} and \textit{struggled} against barbarism,\textsuperscript{77} occupation,\textsuperscript{78} and dictatorship\textsuperscript{79} in addition to their \textit{revolutionary} and \textit{liberating} deeds. We see this view being manifested through statements like ‘[r]esistance against occupation & colonisation army continues’\textsuperscript{80} or ‘[a]s YPJ fighters, we are resisting against barbarism for all humanity’.\textsuperscript{81} It is noteworthy that YPG supporters often emphasised that the YPG’s resistance would continue in the long term. Some members stated that the struggle would go on until the full liberation of Afrin, expressing their determination through tweets such as: ‘Our forces will turn every area into a nightmare for them [our enemies]. The resistance in Afrin will continue until every inch of Afrin is liberated, and until the people of Afrin return to their homes’.\textsuperscript{82}

[Insert Table 2]

\textit{Main Category 3: Enemy Representations (Who Are They?)}

The third category contained the statements YPG supporters made on the characteristics of those they considered the enemy of the YPG and its members. The analysis indicates that there was more than one way through which YPG supporters labeled the enemies of the YPG. In narratives surrounding the region, the supporters usually thought of enemies as \textit{invaders}.\textsuperscript{83} They

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{76} Twitter account \#7.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Twitter account \#1.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Twitter account \#9.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Twitter account \#19; subcategory 3, frequency 16.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Twitter account \#9.
\item \textsuperscript{81} Twitter account \#1.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Twitter account \#14.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Subcategory 1, frequency 43; see Table 3.
\end{itemize}
exclusively defined ISIS and the Turkish Armed Forces/Turkish state as the invaders of their lands.\textsuperscript{84} In their related statements, YPG supporters provided detailed descriptions as to what the entities they saw as invaders did in particular cities,\textsuperscript{85} arguably to use the opportunity to convey their messages to larger audiences. The following tweet illustrates this point better: ‘[o]ccupiers & their mercenaries are only busy looting, infighting, kidnapping & extorting. Efrin was a pearl, and they turned it into a pigpen’.\textsuperscript{86}

The analysis also indicates that YPG supporters saw the enemies of the YPG as \textit{gangs} or \textit{gang members}\textsuperscript{87} in addition to seeing them as \textit{invaders}. We observed instances where the supporters used the labels \textit{invaders} and \textit{gangs} complementarily. For instance, one YPG supporter had the following to say to emphasise the gang-like character of the enemy: ‘YPG and YPJ fighters have carried out an operation against the invaders and its gangs, killing 2 elements and 5 of its gangs, and 6 others were wounded on Thursday morning, in the Old neighborhood of Afrin’.\textsuperscript{88} We also observed instances where the supporters used the same two labels interchangeably in tweets such as ‘31 Turkish soldiers and allied gang members were killed in today’s actions against invaders in #Afrin by #YPG-led #SDF fighters, two military vehicles were destroyed’.\textsuperscript{89}

\textit{Jihadist} was another label that YPG supporters commonly used to define their enemies.\textsuperscript{90} The supporters used this label, especially in regard to issues such as ISIS militants forcing women to wear hijab. The title of a news story shared by a YPG supporter, ‘#Kurdish women

\textsuperscript{84} Twitter accounts #1, #6, and #9.
\textsuperscript{85} See Main Category 4 for enemy norms.
\textsuperscript{86} Twitter account #9.
\textsuperscript{87} Subcategory 2, frequency 41.
\textsuperscript{88} Twitter account #7.
\textsuperscript{89} Twitter account #14.
\textsuperscript{90} Subcategory 3, frequency 37.
protest after being told by #Turkish-backed jihadists to wear the hijab’, was telling in this context. Apparently, it was also common for the supporters to use the labels *jihadists* and *terrorists* interchangeably. They hardly saw a difference between a jihadist and a terrorist, as seen in this tweet that reads as: ‘#Turkish occupation turns #Afrin into another conflict zone. Besides infighting between terrorist/jihadi groups in the city, now #HTS thugs try to sneak into to assassinate #FSA thugs’.

As mentioned in Main Category 1, the analysis further shows that YPG supporters used the label *mercenaries* to define the enemies of the YPG in addition to labels such as *invaders, gangs, jihadists, and terrorists*. It is worth mentioning that the supporters placed a special emphasis on the notion that these mercenaries were supported by the Turkish state. They established this link through tweets such as ‘15 #Turkish-backed mercenaries killed in #Afrin’ and pointed at the role of Turkey in the exacerbation of the conflict in the region. The way YPG supporters described these mercenaries in words like ‘Turkish mercenaries are so insanely greedy they even looted the generators that supply power to the Syriatel Communication towers in Efrin. This is what sums up Turk Occupation in Efrin: If they can’t loot it, they destroy it’ was also illustrative of how they viewed the enemy.

[Insert Table 3]

**Main Category 4: Social Norms of the Enemy (What Do They Do?)**

The fourth and final category included the statements YPG supporters made about the behaviours and motives of those they considered the enemy of the YPG and its members. The
analysis shows that YPG supporters described more than one enemy behaviour and highlighted a few specific ones. One specific behaviour that the supporters associated with the enemy the most was occupation.\textsuperscript{98} They underlined this behaviour through statements such as ‘[e]very place occupied by Erdoğan & his jihadist[s] becomes a hell for the civilians they terrorise’\textsuperscript{99} or ‘Turkish occupation kills two children in Kobani’.\textsuperscript{100} 

The analysis also shows that YPG supporters highlighted how the enemy was torturing, raping and kidnapping civilians\textsuperscript{101} in addition to highlighting that the enemy was occupying lands. The supporters emphasised this particular behaviour specifically to inform its audience and draw international attention to atrocities in the field. Tweets such as ‘Turkish-backed jihadists have kidnapped a Kurdish woman and her father. Her name is Langin Mohammed Jamil’\textsuperscript{102} were effective in terms of transmitting what the enemies of the YPG were doing in the region. Tweets like ‘If [civilians] stay they are kidnapped, raped and tortured. If [civilians] leave they face hunger, disease’\textsuperscript{103} were also useful to highlight and disseminate the dilemma and desperation the civilians faced.

In addition to these, the analysis points out that YPG supporters widely associated the behaviour of killing civilians with the enemy.\textsuperscript{104} The supporters reported the events on the ground via tweets such as ‘Security and weapons chaos, killing civilians, robbery, kidnapping and absence of justice and law […] All this is taking place in areas occupied by Turkey in #Ezaz’\textsuperscript{105} to draw attention to killings and other hostile acts in the region. The supporters

\textsuperscript{98} Subcategory 1, frequency 39; see Table 4.
\textsuperscript{99} Twitter account #9.
\textsuperscript{100} Twitter account #14.
\textsuperscript{101} Subcategory 2, frequency 32.
\textsuperscript{102} Twitter account #15.
\textsuperscript{103} Twitter account #23.
\textsuperscript{104} Subcategory 3, frequency 31.
\textsuperscript{105} Twitter account #19.
particularly emphasised the innocence of those killed in the region. They tried to make their case heard and influence larger audiences through tweets like ‘Turkish troops kill another innocent civilian at Susik village between #Kobane and #GirSp (Tel Abyad) today. 65 years old man died immediately after being shot’.

Finally, the analysis shows that YPG supporters accused the enemy of committing genocide or ethnic cleansing in the region. Even though the supporters did not bring this issue forward as much and frequently as they brought up other issues above, they nevertheless interpreted the killing of civilians as massacres in some instances. The following tweet that reads as ‘The little child Husni Kenno survived from a massacre committed by the Turkish terroristic bombardment, but he did not survive of the shock when he saw his father’s corpse’ was illustrative in this regard. When all of these above-mentioned behaviours and motives attributed to the enemy combined, apparently, YPG supporters believed and implied that the enemies of the YPG were, in fact, destroying almost everything they touched.

Discussion

Our results reveal some significant defining characteristics of the YPG identity. We see that, in the eyes of YPG supporters, the YPG identity differs from other identities with its quest for a utopian model of a free, democratic, egalitarian, and ecofeminist society and a non-state-centric model of governance, two models that have never been experimented in the region. Also, the YPG identity is frequently associated with being a fighter and being a hero. It is important to note that this link between the YPG with heroism is established not only by YPG supporters, but

\[\text{Insert Table 4}\]

\[\text{106 Twitter account #1.}\]
\[\text{107 Subcategory 5, frequency 12.}\]
\[\text{108 Twitter account #4.}\]
\[\text{109 Subcategory 4, frequency 13.}\]
also by the Western media and coalition forces who have widely glorified the members of the YPG (and the YPJ) like heroes.\textsuperscript{110} We also see that the notion of martyrdom is another important part of the YPG identity. Previous research has indicated that the YPJ portrays its fighters as fearless heroines and martyrs who are determined to die for the Kurdish cause.\textsuperscript{111} Our results complement these findings in the sense that they demonstrate the parallels between the two organisations in terms of the portrayal of their fighters as courageous fighters who are ready to give up their lives for freedom if necessary. In other words, the results show that YPG supporters sought to build a positive identity that would arouse the devotion of its own members and the respect of others. Still, the YPG identity (and the relations among the YPG and other organisations) has been a fluid one, which is never fixed and is always in the making given how the context changes continuously.\textsuperscript{112}

Our results also discover crucial points related to the construction of acceptable and plausible social norms that are associated with the YPG identity. Social norms can be defined as principles or rules which are understood and shared by the members of a group. Thus, norms that guide and constrain behaviour play a crucial role in regulating group processes.\textsuperscript{113} We observe that positive or even noble acts such as initiating a revolution, liberating oppressed groups, and resisting jihadism are considered the norms of the YPG identity. Furthermore, these norms bring


\textsuperscript{111} Amelie Malmgren and Michelle Fabiana Palharini, “‘Martyrs and Heroines’ vs. ‘Victims and Suicide Attackers’: A Critical Discourse Analysis of YPJ’s and the UK Media Representations of the YPJ’s Ideological Agency” (Master’s thesis, Malmö University, 2018).


both ingroup members and allies who identify themselves with the YPG on online platforms to stand in solidarity with people in Rojava as well as to advocate mobilisation for freedom and resistance. While people tend to help their ingroup members more than outgroup members, this does not necessarily mean that people (in this case, allies) will not help outgroup members.\textsuperscript{114} Our findings demonstrate the content of a politicised identity that involves both ingroup members and allies as well as group norms and beliefs revolving around this politicised identity. As those norms and beliefs gear toward improving the status of the disadvantaged,\textsuperscript{115} our results show that the YPG identity may bring allies and ingroups together based on shared norms. People who identify with the YPG identity may help others and show solidarity with them even if they are not ingroup members. Depending on the context, YPG supporters often use the words ‘revolution’, ‘liberation’, ‘resistance’, and ‘solidarity’ to make these norms part of their struggle in Rojava. These norms can be accepted as universal for people who are outside Rojava to take part in the struggle of the YPG. In other words, people who tend to have a ‘universalist’ worldview may see any victim as a fellow human being that may create a long socialisation.\textsuperscript{116} These universalist terms may be an important factor in mobilising people and creating unity among different groups.

Related to the point above, our results highlight critical insights concerning the construction of an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ binary between the YPG and other actors involved in the conflict. While an identity creates connections with others, it also has a mechanism to distinguish between one’s group and others.\textsuperscript{117} We see that YPG supporters also base their arguments on

\textsuperscript{115} Radke et al., ‘Beyond Allyship’.
\textsuperscript{116} Reicher et al., ‘Saving Bulgaria’s Jews’.
identity politics, making a distinction between the friend and enemy or ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Therefore, the YPG identity is constructed through the exclusion of a number of identity characteristics associated with adversary groups. For instance, YPG supporters use the label ‘invaders’ to highlight their acts of self-defense; ‘gangs’ to emphasize their own orderliness and legitimacy; and ‘mercenary’ to reinforce their own commitment and dedication. They associate destruction, death, and misery with the outgroup (ISIS, the Turkish state, jihadists, etc.) while associating restoration, life, and contentment with their ideology and way of life. In other words, the existence of an outgroup becomes a necessity for the YPG to construct and protect its identity. Indeed, it is not uncommon to see that different groups make clear distinctions among each other in violent contexts such as conflict zones (e.g., Palestine), war (e.g., Yugoslavia), and genocide (e.g., Rwanda). These extremely violent environments also lead people to decide who belongs to ‘us’ and who belongs to ‘them’. Several factors may play a role in the creation of the ‘them’ end of the duality. For instance, groups may feel moral obligations to each other or to their collective identity, and, as a result, the groups may portray ‘them’ as a threat because they do not share the same interests and values as ‘us’. This may lead to groups joining together to act against ‘them’. While it is widely thought that the ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ distinction in conflict zones brings more violence, it is also possible that this distinction creates coalitions among similar groups, and this, in turn, creates solidarity towards acting together with shared values.

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findings indicate that the conflict in Rojava may also have a similar impact. The very same
distinction may lead YPG supporters both inside and outside Rojava to establish solidarity with
the YPG (‘us’) against its various enemies (‘them’), playing a crucial role in keeping solidarity,
mobilisation, and resistance alive.

Our findings illustrate the relevance of the politicised collective identity approach\textsuperscript{122} when examining cases like Rojava. As explained before, a politicised collective identity is
established based on shared grievances, the possession of a common enemy, and the search for
third party allies. The theory is relevant because, as discussed, Rojava was under ISIS attack in
the past few years. In addition to killing many people, ISIS used systematic rape as a tool of
warfare, particularly against Yazidi Kurdish women due to their religious beliefs. YPG
supporters organise and unite around the shared grievances of people in Rojava as ingroup (e.g.,
the Kurds in different countries) and allies (e.g., international communities). The supporters have
a common enemy (or enemies) and, while people in Rojava wage an armed struggle against ISIS
and other enemy groups, people outside Rojava also take action, mostly on and through social
media, to support the resistance and mobilise people in multiple places. As a result, these
cumulative actions bring more people together to share their anger and hopes for social
change.\textsuperscript{123} As the last step of this triad, the YPG (and YPJ) supporters seek third party support
and call people to show solidarity with the oppressed people in Rojava. However, as mentioned
above, this call extends beyond ingroup members and targets rather allies to include them in the
struggle. Overall, with its three conceptual triads, the politicised collective identity approach

\textsuperscript{122} Simon and Klandermans, ‘Politicized Collective Identity’.
provides a useful framework to understand the dynamics of mobilisation in different periods and contexts in the Rojava experience. Because some elements of shared grievances are limited to ingroup members in this approach, our findings extend it further by taking into consideration many other groups that demand better conditions for others, especially in conflict contexts.

Finally, our findings contribute to the literature by shedding light on (1) intragroup dynamics, (2) intergroup dynamics between ingroup and allies, and (3) intergroup dynamics between ingroup and outgroup(s). The findings also highlight the problems of reducing the social world to binary categories such as ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ in social psychology approaches.\textsuperscript{124} Since approaching groups in conflicts as dichotomous categories may oversimplify social realities\textsuperscript{125} and these groups may entail more complex patterns of intergroup dynamics and more variegated forms of intergroup behaviour,\textsuperscript{126} we need a more differentiated approach to intergroup relations. According to recent models of social change and solidarity, social change is achieved through solidarity between intermediary and lower status groups.\textsuperscript{127} Our findings show that this ternary approach (i.e., higher status, intermediary, and lower status groups) does not adequately help us unpack the intergroup dynamics in the case of Rojava, as the allies of the YPG do not necessarily reside in Syria. Even though allies who see their group members and disadvantaged group members as part of a larger common ingroup are more likely to participate in actions that benefit the outgroup,\textsuperscript{128} in this case, the allies come from different physical spaces and hardly share the

\textsuperscript{124} Dixon et al., ‘It’s not Just “Us” Versus “Them”.
\textsuperscript{126} Dixon et al., ‘It’s not Just “Us” Versus “Them”.
\textsuperscript{127} Klavina and van Zomeren, ‘Protesting to Protect “Us” and/or “Them”?'; Subašić, Reynolds, and Turner, ‘The Political Solidarity Model of Social Change’.
\textsuperscript{128} Radke et al., ‘Beyond Allyship’.
same identity, language, or culture. However, they nevertheless take some sort of action, albeit online. Both the politicisation and mobilisation of ingroup members and allies as well as solidarity among them highlight the importance of going beyond the binary approach of social psychological studies as the unit of analysis. Given that topics such as solidarity and resistance have been generally neglected in the field, we need to focus more on these topics in order to tackle intergroup relations where there are more than two groups.

Conclusion

In this study, we examined the identity content of YPG supporters through a social-psychological lens. More specifically, we examined YPG supporters’ (1) ingroup representations, (2) ingroup social norms, (3) outgroup representations, and (4) outgroup social norms on social media. The study builds on the social identity literature and extends it by showing how we should take into account the intragroup dynamics of an ingroup, intergroup dynamics between an ingroup and its allies, and intergroup dynamics between an ingroup and outgroup in a conflict context. Our results speak to the recent discussions on identity content and social norms surrounding identity dynamics that help us understand intergroup relations such as politicisation, mobilisation, and solidarity.

The study is not without its limitation, though. The first limitation is related to the highly dynamic character of politics in the Middle East region in general, and in Rojava in particular. The alliances, priorities, and tactics of both state and non-state actors involved in the conflict have been in constant change since we collected our data in 2018, influencing the identity and

131 Dixon et al., ‘It’s not Just “Us” Versus “Them”’. 
solidarity dynamics within and between different groups. In that sense, our study provides only a (static) snapshot of a certain time period and context rather than presenting a (dynamic) wholesome analysis of political developments in Rojava. Future studies may focus on the current dynamics in the region and investigate how the present developments may have shaped the identity content of the YPG as well as its solidarity dynamics.

The second limitation concerns the challenge of collecting data online, especially on Twitter. Due to time and resource constraints, we reached out to only 23 Twitter accounts and collected the tweets from these accounts in a six-month window in 2018. Without a doubt, this limited the generalisability of our findings to a certain extent. Also, as mentioned earlier, thousands of Twitter accounts, including the ones that were linked to the YPG/YPJ, were suspended at the time of our data collection. Even though we are confident that our results adequately reflect the representations of the YPG identity and its outgroups, we still question whether we would generate the same subcategories or to what extent our coding frame would look the same if we had the opportunity to include the tweets from those suspended accounts. We also ask whether we would reach different conclusions about intergroup dynamics if we also included tweets in Arabic in our analysis. Therefore, future studies may obtain a larger sample and use more representative data that will be collected not just from Twitter, but from a wide array of social media platforms.

The final limitation is related to the qualitative/quantitative divide in research methods. The content of the YPG identity shows why different actors across the world may support the YPG. Our study provides an exclusively qualitative account of this identity on social media. We believe a further quantitative study may complement the efforts to explain the support behind the

YPG as well as social-psychological predictors of endorsing the ideologies revolving around the YPG identity. For example, we have limited knowledge of the demographic characteristics of those supporters as well as the doctrines they support. Future studies may investigate how demographic characteristics and different ideologies play an essential role in shaping people’s support for the YPG.
Table 1

_Frequencies for the first main category’s subcategories._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fighter (freedom)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hero</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Martyrs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comrades</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Immortal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>We are the oppressed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Symbol of freedom</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 2

*Frequencies for the second main category’s subcategories.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Revolution</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Liberating</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Resist-struggle</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Killing and destroying</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Solidarity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fighting for democracy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Women-led society</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fighting and sacrificed for freedom</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Avenge</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Defeating terrorism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Socialism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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Table 3

*Frequencies for the third main category’s subcategories.*

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<th>Subcategories</th>
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<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Invader</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gang</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jihadist</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mercenary (not volunteer)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Terrorist</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Animal metaphor</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Barbaric</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Criminal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Thief</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Monster</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Evil</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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Table 4

*Frequencies for the fourth main category’s subcategories.*

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<th>#</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Occupying</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Torturing, raping, kidnapping</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Killing civilians</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ethnic cleansing and genocide</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Destroying</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Violating international law</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fascism</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tyranny and aggression</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Suffering</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>171</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
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