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Declaration I, Marius Steindal, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

Acknowledgment

First of all, I have to thank Elisabeth Molteberg, who helped me a lot during the start of this project. Without your help and directions, this thesis would most likely never have happened.

I will also thank all of those I have been studied and discussed with through my studies, be it at the University in Bergen, American University in Cairo, and at NMBU. You have all contributed to my knowledge and growth.

A warm and big thank you to my parents who fed me and supported me in the final part of this project. You are mostly appreciated!

Finally I want to thank Heidi Nes, who has supported me and pushed me. Who listened and stood by my side in the darkest hours. Without you by my side, this paper would never have happened. Thank you!

Abstract

During the 20th century, Europe experienced regimes that spread their visions of a new organization of the world through the use of a new industrial violence. Millions of people lost their life under Hitler and Stalin's implementation of totalitarian ideologies.

We have told ourselves, never again can we allow such violence and brutal domination to happen.

In Syria, the conflict have now lasted over four year. It started as part of the Arab spring, but soon saw itself falling into a dark and cold winter. Where it started out as civil uprising against an authoritarian dictator, the battlefield soon became highly complex with the entering of militant groups containing religious ideologies. Most were still seeking to overthrow the dictator, but we soon witness a group with much larger ambitions.

With the rise of Islamic State in Iraq and al-Shams. (ISIS/ISIL/IS/Daesh) we saw a group that not only wanted to depose Assad, but rather establish an Islamic State and expand it throughout the world.

Not only shocked their brutal violence, but also their ability to attract supporters. With means and visions similar to those we told ourselves never to allow to rise again, ISIS have been able to recruit and declare a so-called Caliphate that stretching itself across the border between Syria and Iraq.

This thesis therefore explore the propaganda and discourse ISIS use to legitimate and narrate their visions. Their English online magazine Dabiq is in this thesis analyzed to see if it can contain totalitarian elements. By understanding ISIS as a totalitarian movement, we then might learn from the history when seeking to degrade them. This thesis is then a contribution to the research of both totalitarianism, as well as ISIS. This as it can provide and understanding of the visions and aims of today's most known and feared terror organization.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The middle of the 20th century has been called the decades of totalitarianism. The rise of Nazi Germany and Hitler's attempt to build the third Reich as well as Stalin's Soviet Union are the most common examples of the 20th century's totalitarian regimes. (Sørensen. Hagtv. Steine. 2011) Regimes that used brutal means in their quest for total domination and implementation of their worldview. During the Second World War we witnessed millions of people die in a new structural and industrial mass-murder. Genocides justified and deemed necessary by totalitarian ideologies.

With the Arab Spring, hope of a more liberal revolution struck the Middle East, only to become a cold winter. In Syria, a brutal civil war have developed into the battlefield of a more eschatological war, with both local, regional and global implications.

The rise and conquest of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (further understood as ISIS), that now stretch their rule across the border of Iraq and Syria can possible be seen as the greatest threat to security and stability in the Middle East and to the wider Muslim world. (Rashid, in Lister.2015.) During only a timeframe of about 100 days, ISIS were able to transform the politics in the Middle East into a chaotic scene. (Cockburn. 2015) With their brutal conduct in their quest of establishing an Islamic State or Caliphate, even old-time enemies like United States and Iran were able to come together as they now saw a common threat. (Ibid) The idea of an Islamic group that sought to use terror to implement an Islamic society, as well as attract fighters internationally was nothing new. However, ISIS' slick use of the modern media to spread their vision and ideology as an inspirational force to attract followers and establish a substantial militia seemed to catch many by surprise. (Berger. Stern. 2015.) This, as well as the effect their use of media helped them in their effort to scare of their opponents on the battlefield. This is then something that were seen in how ISIS, being outnumbered, caused the enemy resistance to melt away. (Cockburn.2015.) Their endurance in withstanding fierce opposition from both local groups and international coalitions, and in the

same way continued to attract recruits from both the region and abroad can be seen as both impressive and surprising. (Kurth Cronin. 2015)

Rashid (in Lister. 2015) claims that what we see in Syria and Iraq today, is something we haven't witnessed since the Arab Muslim armies spread their rule after the death of Prophet Muhammed. This concerning how ISIS have been able to expand and combine both military and political strategy with a high degree of brutal cruelty and oppression towards everyone who might disagree. (Ibid.) ISIS' apocalyptic rhetoric have in fact been a game-changer when looking at Militant Islamism and the politics in the Middle East.

(McCants.Aug.19.2015.PoliticoMagazine). The brutality seen in ISIS methods like beheadings (CNN. 20.08.14), burning people alive (CBS news. 04.02.15) and throwing people of roofs (Independent. 30.01.15), have sent shock waves through the world audience. The combined military and political elements of ISIS rise can in a political-Islamic context, perhaps as Rashid (in Lister. 2015) explain be something we have not seen since the start of the Islamic expansion.

However, looking at the 20th century, with the rise of totalitarian regimes like Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Soviet Russia, we do not need to go further back in history to find movements that hold visionary ideologies and uses brutal violence and total control in their quest to dominate the world. (Sørensen. Hagtvet. Steine. 2011)

One of the key elements to ISIS ability and success can be seen in their skillfully use of media and propaganda. As Berger and Stern (2015:101) points out: "*Jihadist have been making "slick" propaganda for decades, but for a long time, these productions catered to an exclusive audience of potential recruits, never making the evening news or creeping into the collective consciousness of the West*". The former jihadi propaganda can be seen more directed as Berger and Stern (2015) mention, toward the small pin-pointed audience of already, or nearly radicals. They focused more on branding the Muslim Ummah as victims of new imperialism, and therefore at justifying self-defense actions against those responsible—in a more retaliation manner, or to coerce forces out of Muslim land.

When talking of totalitarianism, most of us will think of the 20th century with Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet communism. Their use of terror and brutal industrialized violence in the implementation of their ideology and the very way they justified it, might therefore maybe give us a better understanding of ISIS. By looking at the ISIS propaganda in the light of totalitarian theory and rhetoric, we might therefore also better be enabled to fight the attraction ISIS seek

through their propaganda. Since the importance of ISIS propaganda is the very drive and heart of their violent campaign that seek to implement their ideology, to understand how they are able to attract their followers, and how they seek to instill fear in their enemies, will therefore be essential to form a sustainable solution to counter their recruitment and legitimacy.

Looking at the theory and definition of totalitarianism, and identify totalitarian elements in their discourse might therefore help us to understand the very functions of the ISIS propaganda and why they are able to attract followers, justify their actions and claim authority. With this knowledge, we will be better equipped to form counter arguments to persuade potential recruits to refrain joining or support their campaign.

The audience ISIS are seeking to reach with their propaganda can be seen in how they today spread it in different languages. This be German, English, Spanish, Russian as well as Arabic. (Berger&Stern.2015) As they seek to spread it in typical western languages is therefore two-fold as it can be seen as instilling fear within Western communities when it attract theirs youth and showing what they do to their enemies, but as it is also more likely to reach those who are prone to radicalize.

The ISIS' discourse aimed at the Western audience is therefore something that should worry western authorities, as ISIS are able to "brainwash" young citizens to join a brutal movement that seek to undermined the basic principle of the western civilization, multi-plurality, international and human law, and substitute it with the implementation of their harsh and brutal interpretation of Islamic law.

If ISIS are to be allowed to continue their project, there is an immediate danger that not only the present generation who are supporting and joining ISIS for different reasons are being brainwashed to substitute their human rationality with an ISIS doctrine, but the danger of those who will grow up under their reign also will affect coming generations. It is therefore important sooner than later, to counter the propaganda and limiting ISIS advances on not only the materialized battlefield, but also the battlefield located as Zarqawi himself identified as the media platform. (Berger&Stern.2015)

As 2015 is closing in on its end, different jihadist groups around the world have pledge alliance to the ISIS, further boosting ISIS' legitimacy. The international community seems no closer to a solution at present times, but there is a growing understanding that ISIS cannot only be fought with drones and missiles. (New York Times. 12.06.15) Also seen as Maj Gen Tim Cross told BCC, "*Hard military power alone would not be enough. That will only be a part of the holding,*

containing, degrading ISIS in the Middle East. It won't destroy the idea and it won't destroy ISIS in and of itself." (BBC. 22.11.15) As the world leaders still struggle to agree on a common strategy, because of different understanding of the conflict and focus on threat, ISIS are enabled to continue its brutal implementation of ideology. Where this stark contrasting stance on the current situation in Syria by the international leaders have resulted in continuation on the battlefield in Syria and Iraq, there have been some efforts on the media battlefield. This by seeking to shut down ISIS abilities to spread their message on different social media platforms like Twitter. (The Guardian.02.03.2015) However, ISIS is still able to adapt and seek other outlets to spread their message. Therefore, instead of only censor and stop them on one 'media front' by closing accounts, we should seek to counter the very message, by dismantle their message. (New York Times. 12.06.15) But first, we need to identify and analyze the ISIS propaganda and look at the power structures of it.

The propaganda that have been spread by ISIS is vast and include much of the modern type of media sources—be it social media like Facebook and Twitter, books, videos, magazines and audio releases. As mentioned, this propaganda are also delivered in different languages to reach out to more people, further helped by the modern communication technologies. To analyze all these documents will provide years of work for a whole institution. Therefore in the limited timeline of a Master thesis, analyzing all of ISIS communication would be basically impossible. As ISIS also have been directed its propaganda towards an English speaking audience, seeking recruits in their state-building project and war against their enemies, looking at the English communication would be providing a more interesting approach for this thesis. This as western powers view the western ISIS recruits as a threat to their secular societies. However, the English language propaganda is also a vast project to grasp in its whole as it includes a vast amount of tweets, videos, audio recordings etc. To limit it further down, publication directed towards an English speaking audience through their online English language magazine, Dabiq, would be more comprehensible in the time limit given a Master thesis.

Dabiq Magazine was first published as a 50 pages magazine in July 2014, with the headline "The Return of Kalifah". It provides ISIS's English audience with an insight to the new born 'State' of ISIS. Not to different from al Qaeda's Inspire Magazine, the Dabiq Magazine is quite similar on the cover, but more throughout skillfully crafted together to project a message with claim to legitimacy and justification in a quest to attract followers and justify their aim and claim for authority through their ideology. Both with guidance's, information about the current status, and propaganda about its martyrs, the Dabiq seeks to persuade through stating the

obligation to join the new born Caliphate. (Dabiq#1. P.11) Dabiq Magazine can therefore be seen as an important part of the total ISIS propaganda stream when it comes to persuade youth in the west with their ideology. It is therefore a dire need to understand this content, and look at options to counter the propaganda.

In this thesis, I'll therefore seek to analyze the ISIS' discourse in their English language Magazine Dabiq. Through the analysis I seek to identify totalitarian elements or tendencies.

Looking at the ISIS discourse in Dabiq and searching for totalitarian rhetoric, I will supplement it with the methods of *critical discourse analysis*. This because critical discourse analysis can be a useful method to understand the language as power in relation to ideology and socio-cultural change. (Bryman. 2008:508). By looking at the language and rhetoric used by ISIS and unveil the power behind it, we should be better equipped with knowledge to counter their propaganda. With the construction of organizations, the discourse plays a central role, this as a tool for legitimation and sense-making of the actions taken. (Tienari&Vaara. 2010). Tienari and Vaara (2010) also point out the importance of the narratives in storytelling, since this is the mechanism that seek to give meaning and sense to change and also managing the meaning of the discourse.

As this propaganda not only intimidating a broader western audience, but also attracts' western youth, who then support and in worst case, travel to Syria and Iraq to join their ideological mission, it is important that we understand the power and attractive message being narrated. Therefore, this thesis will seek to provide a deeper understanding of the discourse used by ISIS to attract and legitimate their claim of authority. By seeking to identify it with the theory of totalitarianism, we can draw on the theoretical thinking and understanding provided by leading theoreticians like Hannah Arendt (2004), that have focused on totalitarian regimes like Hitler's Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet. By learning from these old forms of totalitarian regimes, we might get an idea and understanding of the structures and power of the language used by ISIS.

In this thesis, I'll therefore seek as mention, to identify totalitarian elements in the ISIS discourse. The totalitarian elements will be identified out from the definition of totalitarianism given by Øystein Sørensen in the book "Ideologi og Terror; *totalitarian ideer og regimer*." (2011. P.21-22).

Øystein Sørensen (2011) points out that most classical definition on the topic of totalitarianism limit itself to the definitions of regimes and societies. As he explains, this is fruitful as there is a need to distinct between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. However, he further emphasizes the need for, not only focus on the regimes, but also the focus on totalitarian ideas. As stressed by the NEST (<http://www.hf.uio.no/iakh/forskning/nettverk/totalitarisme/>), there is an interest to go beyond the narrow traditional political and idea-historical categories of left and right. We should instead seek to understand totalitarianism as something fundamental different and seek a broader understanding of the idea or ideology. This so we are able to further develop research of modern or present totalitarianism.

This thesis is therefore an attempt to understand a modern, possible totalitarian phenomenon. It then seek to provide knowledge on a highly relevant actor in the crisis that plays out in Syria and Iraq. Where NEST seeks to drive the research on totalitarianism with a focus on the idea or on the ideological level, this thesis can therefore be a contribution to this efforts. This as it seek to identify the totalitarian elements of a contemporary movement' effort to legitimate and impose their brute ideology. Where Marita La Palm (2014), talk about the need for ex-jihadist to understand the mechanisms that were at place in their radicalization, and in this way be part of the effort of de-radicalization, this thesis therefore can be a part of this understanding.

1.2 Research Question

So, in this thesis I'll seeks to answer the question: *Can we understand ISIS's discourse in the Dabiq Magazines to be totalitarian, given the criterions in Øystein Sørensen's definition of totalitarian ideologies and movements?*

1.3 Thesis Outline

In the first part of the thesis, I will give an introduction to the theoretical framework being used for the analysis. The first part will include the theory of totalitarianism, as well as the definition that is going to be used in the coding and analysis. Since ISIS claim their legitimacy based on a traditional religion, I will also look into the concept of political religion and religious politics. This on the basis that some researchers seem to claim that totalitarianism must be understood as a secular phenomenon. As this thesis is looking aiming to analyze ISIS narrative, I will further look into the theory of Critical discourse analysis and totalitarian propaganda as theory.

After drafting up the theory that are going to be used, I will explain the method. In this chapter, I will explain CDA as a method, the collection of the chosen data, the coding, and how this coding will be used to analyze the collected corpus.

The fourth chapter consist of the main part of this thesis. In chapter four, I will be analyzing the 10 issues of Dabiq Magazine's. The chapter is then further structured and divided based on the eight criterions found in Øystein Sørenses' definition. However, some of the criterions would naturally be overlapping, and I have therefore merged some criterions into sub-chapters. The first one, is looking at the rejectionist and revolutionist discourse. In the second one, I will be looking for the discourse where ISIS claim to be the holder of the truth, and thus holds the recipe for the perfect society. In this part, I will be looking at how ISIS justify their legitimacy. It also looks at how they seek to dominate the discourse.

In the third sub-chapter, I will look at the encompassing elements in ISIS' ideology and their recipe of their perfect society. This part therefore look at how ISIS seek to control the society.

In the fourth sub-chapter, I look at who ISIS is defining as their enemies and for what reason. The final sub-chapter in the analysis is then looking at the justification of the means used to achive their perfect society.

The final chapter in this thesis is then summing up the findings and concludes, rather or not ISIS' discourse can be understood as totalitarian. I also seek to give some implications and solutions at the end.

2.0 Theory

In this chapter, I will present the theoretical foundation for my thesis. My theory is mainly based and build on the criterions Øystein Sørensen provide in his definition of totalitarian ideology. This then form the main feature of the analysis where I'll be looking for totalitarian tendencies within the ISIS discourse. Since in this thesis I'm looking on the message sent out from ISIS and looking for in which way they seek to legitimize their power, I will also look at the theoretical framework provided by critical discourse analysis. CDA is then used as supplement to the theory of totalitarianism, and thus as a methodical tool in the analysis to understand how ISIS try to shape a narrative and justify it in the Dabiq Magazine. Bryman (2008) explain the importance of research data in sociology when it is seen in relation to a theoretical concern. In this thesis, the sociology and theoretical concern can be seen in similarities of elements in ISISs and former totalitarian propaganda. With this similarities, I therefore seek to broaden the understanding of ISIS propaganda with the theory of totalitarianism.

2.1 Theory and Definition of Totalitarianism

Research on totalitarianism have as Sørensen (2011) points out, been mainly focusing on totalitarian regimes. The ones we often think of when hearing the term totalitarianism is the 20th century Hitler's Nazi Germany, Mussolini's Fascism, and Stalin's Soviet. Maybe the best know work done on the mechanisms, functioning and theory of totalitarianism can be seen in the work of Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1948, and later editions). Even though most people relate totalitarianism to evilness and horror, the functioning of the totalitarian propaganda to implement the ideology is also met by fascination and support by an amount of people. For many, the ideology and the new structures of the regimes that seek to implement them, can in the ears and eyes of those supporters give hope and a sense of answer to their grievances.

The classical definitions of totalitarianism focuses more on the structure of a regime, and in this way look for elements that can brand the movement or a regime as totalitarian. In Carl Joachim Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski's definition, a totalitarian regime must contain an ideology that seek to create a perfect society—an ideology that all elements of the society must submit to, at least passively. The ideology is implemented by a mass-party often lead by a single man, through a hierarchy-structure that are dominating the state bureaucracy. It implements' its ideology through the use of systematic terror, both physically and mentally—helped by a secret police. It holds either full or almost full control over all mass media, communication, weapons, armed forces and the means of violence. They also hold a centralized or full control over all aspects of the economy. (Sørensen. 2011).

Another classical definition given by Raymond Aron focus similar with Friedrich and Brzezinski on the regime and societal factor. In his definition, totalitarianism bases itself on a monopolistic party, who uses their ideology as the official truth of the state. They control through the monopoly, all forms of coercion and persuasion, and all types of crime is politicized and met with political and ideological terror. All activities are subjected to the official ideology, and anyone deviate from it by intent or mistake, is through politicization, targeted as an enemy with the resulting terror. (Sørensen. 2011, Jean K. Chalaby in Postoutenko. 2010)

In Friedrich, Brzezinski and Aron definitions (Sørensen, Hagtvet, Steine. 2011), the criterions of an ideology is that it holds the vision and the in their eyes the truth and guide for the perfect society. However, as in the quote of Arendt (Hagtvet. 2011), ideology in itself is not harmful, unless a large amount of people start believe and follow it. In this way, the criteria of control over the means of communication becomes highly important as they seek convince or force people to support their ideology. Brzezinski and Friedrich definition sees the violence and terror as a criterion for totalitarianism whereas Aron sees it as a consequence of the politicization of “crimes”. For Sørensen (2011), the use of terror and violence is more about the appropriateness of it reaching the end-goal, rather than a criterion of totalitarianism in its own selves.

As where the classical definitions have been focusing on the regime and society element of totalitarianism, the whole idea of these regimes is to implement a certain idea or ideology. (Sørensen. 2011) It therefore make sense to instead look at the very basics of the ideas that form their tactic and attract followers.

To go beyond the thinking of totalitarianism as merely regimes structures in this thesis and seek to contribute to a more modern thinking of totalitarianism, I'll therefore understand

totalitarianism out from the definition Sørensen provide. This because, it holds strength of being inspired by earlier classical definitions, but as it look at the ideology, its criterions goes further. Since they are based on the elements of the ideology that form the regimes, rather than the regime itself, we can then use it to identify a totalitarian movement before it becomes a dangerous regime. Then there is a need to understand the functions of how the message is spread, and therefore an introduction to propaganda as an important tool for the totalitarian movement to broadcast and implement their ideology is needed. First however, I will sum up Øystein Sørensen's definition.

2.1.1 Sørensen's Definition of Totalitarian Ideology and Movements.

Sørensen's definition (2011: 21-22) of totalitarian ideologies and the movements as bearer of these ideologies, are based on eight criterions.

- Totalitarian movements believe that their ideology, is the recipe for the perfect society.
- They totally and aggressively reject the existing society. Principal all types of existing society is rejected, but of historical and other reasons, liberal democratic societies in West is especially targeted.
- They are revolutionary, and seek a revolutionary clean break with the existing.
- They are basically convinced that they hold the one-and-only truth, and therefore that they are right. By this, totalitarian movements and ideologies can be perceived as anti-pluralistic.
- They don't believe that politics and political ideas are something that regard a limited part of the human life and society. They believe that everything is connected to everything, and they have the ambitions of their ideas to be more or less encompassing. They also believe they hold the solutions for all types of problems, and by this they seek to control all aspects of human life and society.
- At least in the early stage, the insight into the ideology is reserved a limited elite. According to this elite, the rest of the world live in an imaginary conception of the world, and the population does therefore not understand how the world is actually puzzled together.
- They are convinced that they have the right to use any means necessary to reach their goals, even violence and terror if this is deemed necessary. Since the end-goal is so great and is overriding anything else, there could be no moral or ideological barriers to the legitimate means used to reach it.

- Everyone and everything that stand in the way of the implementation of the end-goal is to be perceived as enemies. This can then be supporters of existing societies that benefits from it, or it can be the supporters of competing and rival totalitarian ideas.

A focus on the ideology and message, rather than just regimes will give us a better understanding of the totalitarian movements. This as the very essence of regimes and movements are based on a totalitarian ideology. (Sørensen. 2011). When a totalitarian ideology is implemented by a totalitarian movement who have gain a structural power position, first then do we talk of a totalitarian regime. It should therefore be a great interest in how these regimes are shaping their message in such a way that enables them to establish their regime. If we seek to hinder a movement from becoming a regime, we should then seek to counter the appeal they produce through their propaganda.

Totalitarian movements in general seek the ideal society, based on their ‘true’ conception of the world and through their solutions to the problems arisen from the existing. It is as mention first when the movements have gain enough power to take control over and govern a state, ‘it’ transforms into a totalitarian regime. In this way, the movement could have been able to create the revolutionary clear break with the existing society, at least domestically to coop the power. It is in this phase it will further start their quest of not only seeking power, and implementing their idea in words, but also the quest of transforming the society into a totalitarian structural society. If the society is to be define as totalitarian, the movement or regime must have come a long way in controlling the structures of the society, and changing the opinion of its population. (Sørensen. 2011) It is first when the ideology is successfully implemented with the use of coercion, demagoguery, totalitarian pedagogy and discrimination against all outsiders it is becoming especially worrying and dangerous. This in regard to Hannah Arendt’s thinking of the when an ideology starts to become harmful and dangerous. (Hagtvet.2011)

When looking at totalitarian regimes or ideologies, they can be built on similar structures as seen in the classical definitions, however, because of the historical contexts these regimes, movements and ideologies have arisen in, they can also differ greatly. This is when we look on the how they picture their end-goal as a perfect society. This then also form the conception of who to regard as the worst enemies, what to be the values or moral in the society. It also legitimize what kind of means that should be used to achieve the perfect society. Even though different ideologies and movements can consist of differences when it come to the structure of their composition, the possible greatest similarity, is the fact that the end-goal is so overriding everything else. In this matter, killing a person or millions for that matter, is only a necessity to

eliminate obstacles for the creation of the 'perfect' society that the ideology seek to implement. (Sørensen. 2011)

The main feature where totalitarian movements seek to radically break with the existing, it is based partly on an idea that the existing society is closing-in on the end-of-time. (Sørensen. 2011) The elimination of obstacles, can therefore be seen as a life-and-death struggle, justifying all means to create the perfect society that can counter this end of existence mentality. Totalitarian ideology can in this way be viewed as an act of necessity, seeking to protect the vast majority against the doomsday. With such a narrative, it enable the totalitarian movement with legitimacy of all means, even use of violence, as it is seen to benefit the greater good. As with common revolutionaries, the totalitarian movements are convinced that they are seeking better conditions through a clean break with the existing. With this clean break from the existing, they seek to save the world, and since the existing society is the ones that created the political 'false' playing rules, and therefore created a false understanding of the world in the opinions of their people, this need to be broken down. They therefore, do not believe they have to play after the norms and rules of the international conventions, as these can be seen as part of the corrupted society. They believe everything is possible, and they toss away all previous rules and laws, this also because no norms or moral could hinder the greater good of the end-goal. Since they believe they hold the solution to all problems and found the recipe for the perfect society, they seek to control and manage all aspects of human and societal life. This because the totalitarian elite also regard themselves as the best fit for deciding what is the good-and the bad values and morals. Since the totalitarian elite believe to possess the intellect to decide what is seen as good and evil, and their ideology is grounded on the basis to achieve the good, they seek to justify and legitimate their power as saviors of the soon doomed human race. (Sørensen. Hagtvet. Steine. 2011)

2.2 Political movements as religious and religious movements as totalitarian?

Since the movement to be analyzed is branding itself as a religious movement, it would be fruitful to look at the concepts of political religion and religious politics. When it comes to religions in totalitarianism, it often is a focus on *political religion*. With *political religions*, it is meant that it is secular and modern political ideologies that have filled the gap, or taken the place of the traditional religion. (Sørensen. 2011) In this way, the political religiousness seen in totalitarianism, can be seen as pseudo- or surrogate-religions, that is focusing on the idolatry.

Political religion can be seen as a mean for integration of an individual into a community, by the use of myths, symbolism and rituals, and in this matter, political religion can be seen as a social phenomenon. (Gentile. 2005). According to Sørensen (2011), political religions share many cultural and sociological features with traditional religions. With this, it is meant that they share many similarities in their ideas of the mystical, and also how they share the features of the totality of their ideals and values. As traditional religion, political religion also seek total submission to the ideology. Through a sacralization of the ideology and politics, the totalitarian regimes or movements, give a more spiritual meaning to the goal of the implantation of the ideology. In this sense, it also enables the elite of the totalitarian movement with the power of deciding the true moral and values. (Gentile. 1990. 2005). In political religion, the politics exceeds the liberal limits, and becomes more or less total or encompassing.

Political religions in the totalitarian movements can be seen as playing on the humans feeling to seek attraction. The political religion can be seen as “*a hypnotic power of a new faith*” (Steigmann-Gall. 2004: 377). It play out its strategy through the use of rituals and mystics that awake and seduce the inner minds of people, and by this attract them to the mystical and irrational. Use of political religion can also, according to Gentile (2005) be seen in the rhetoric of George W. Bush after the 9/11 attack, where he seek to awake an American patriotism. In Bush’s speech and declaration of The War on Terror, he also mention that you are either with us or against us—setting the ultimatum of submission. Another example of Bush’s political religious rhetoric can be seen when he defines the axis of evil, and the obligation to fight it with the good. This is not to say that Bush’s America was a totalitarian state, but that political religion can be a tool for secular governments to legitimizing their actions. However, as Gentile and Mallett (2000) sees it, political religion is one defining factor in totalitarianism.

In the modern Western society, the importance of traditional religion has decline and resulted in more secular societies. With secularization, political religion can seek to fill the gap caused by the loss of spirituality. Political religion then seek to take upon itself the role of provider of hope, belief and the meaning of life. (Sørensen. 2011, Steigmann-Gall. 2004). This is not only seen in the West where politicians have sought to sacral their political rhetoric, but also in places like the Middle East. As the leaders of Middle Eastern states have been seeking to rapidly modernize their countries to keep up with the rapid technological revolution in the West, they have alienated themselves from the more traditional society in their respective countries. In the rapid re-shaping of their societies, many felt it contradicted to their cultural and traditional values and morals based partly on the Islamic tradition. For many of the leaders, they then chose

to use an Islamic rhetoric in justifying their politics. They legitimate their politics based on fitting religious terms and references to religious teachings, rather than in the political religions' creation of new sacral elements. However, some of them can be seen as trying to justify their rule through projecting themselves as the symbol of the good moral and values based on Islamic history and teaching.

Mention by Sørensen (2011), both *political religion* and *traditional religions* share many features. As totalitarian ideology can be viewed as encompassing, so are the structures and ideas of the Abrahamic monotheistic religions. In their very structure, they believe in the basic idea about the world ruled by one God. Here, God's rules could be encompassing just as in totalitarian ideologies. Only life lived by God's laws are to be viewed as perfect.

Since the end of the 19th century, we can see more *politicization of religion* as Muslim leaders tried to adapt to the Western modernization. As a response, some Islamist movements sought to Islamize politics as they saw the implications of western modernization as a threat to their cultural identity. From the second part of the 20th century and to present, these movements have manifested itself as a growing trend of opposition to western ideas, not necessarily against the modernization in itself, but the corruption and loss of values that followed. (Esposito & Burgat. 2003) By this, some of them have today formed a strong counter-ideology based on religious traditions. As these groups have been seen as a challenge to the status quo for the authoritarian leaders, they have also been suppressed causing radicalization. Some of these Islamist movements have also shown growing totalitarian features in their ideology. Just as Nazism, Fascism and Stalinism all arose in a specific historical context (Arendt. 2004), this can also be said about the growing Jihadist ideology.

In the modern discussion regarding political ideologies based on traditional religions, Islamism as a political phenomenon have gain a new focus point. Where Gentile and Mallett's (2000) understand political ideologies as secular, Sørensen (2011) believe since many political ideologies borrow ideas and features from the traditional religions, modifying the definition of *political religion* to also include religious ideology can be fruitful. However, with an inclusion of traditional religions into the term *political religion*, it threaten to dilute and complicate the understanding of the term. Sørensen (2011) therefore believe the use of the term *politicized religion* is better when it comes to the traditional religions. This is then understood as a concept when the traditional religion consist of such a degree of political elements, that it is the dominating feature. He then further highlight Islamism as a traditional religion that now consist such a high degree of politicization that it can fit the term. However, he also mention that

fundamentalist interpretations in Christianity can produce totalitarian ideologies. In regard to threat to traditional religions from secularization, Catholic counter-revolutionary cults like Sacred Heart in France, with nostalgia to the royal Kingdoms of the Middle Ages, can also be seen holding a degree of *politicization of religion* elements. (Moro. 2005)

To avoid the merger of the term *politicization of religion* and *political religion*, we can differ between them on the basis that *political religion* is to be understood as secular and therefore fits more to the Western secular society, while the term *politicization of religion* does not. They therefore differ, according to Sørensen (2011) in their different way of basic understanding of the composition of the world here and the hereafter. One is based on secular ideology, the other on traditional religion. However they both seek the encompassing and therefore meet in the totalitarian states' of their end-goal. In this way they end up with similar features in their ideologies. The interesting thing with both of them is their ability to attract or hypnotize the masses to submission, and changing their opinions to follow the ideology they seek to implement—even how screwed and irrational it may seem. Be it with secular constructed myths and symbols or religious myths, rituals and prophecies.

2.3 Totalitarian Communication and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

As the main part of this thesis is to look at the very ideology being projected through the Dabiq Magazine towards a targeted audience, we should also know some of the main features of totalitarian communication—as well as how language is used to construct opinion and worldviews. In regular communication, the sender is seeking to build a bridge to the recipient and persuade him or her of some sort of meaning. However, according to Hannah Arendt (2004:474), totalitarian propaganda is in fact not about persuasion, but rather about organization. Language is seen as a bearer of communication that through a chain of related statements build association between concepts and creates meanings. The production of texts can be seen in a discursive practice, as a system where the text are produced through a creation, and are consumed through interpretation. In this way it can be seen as an important social practice of creation of social identities and social relations. (Jorgensen & Phillips. 2002: 61) As social relations and practices are results of historical contexts, discourse can then be seen as the mechanism organizing these relations. What can be seen in the communication sent out from a totalitarian state through their mass media, is usually a controlled and carefully constructed image of the world. This message therefore seek to form the public opinion, and thus create or

organize the society through a certain discourse. In critical discourse analysis (CDA), the main focus is to look at the relations between a discourse, power, dominance and social inequality. It focusing on the role of discourse in the production or reproduction of dominance. (Van Dijk. 1993) This construction of reality is then communicated through language—be it written text, audio or other visual language. Language and communication is then, as a tool to organize society, a political tool. As a political tool, it influence and structuralize how people think about themselves, the society, and the world surrounding them—and thus give them incentive to act upon the narrative created through this structure.

CDA is seeking to understand the structures, strategies or functions of text, speech or other communicative events, and how they effects the reproduction of their narrative. According to Van Dijk's (1993: 249-250) definition of dominance, it can be understood as the: "*exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that result in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality.*"

Before gaining the power, a totalitarian movement must seek power through persuasion or organize the opinion of its potential followers. This is done through the propagation of an idea with propaganda. (Kecskemeti. 1950). The very essence of the propaganda is a mention to establish a systematic or organize opinion to legitimize the movement's idea or ideology. The further control of the flow of information is also seeking to silence the doubt about its wisdom and power by limiting access to the discourse. Even though the totalitarian movement is not able to control the whole reality per.se, they will seek to manipulate it in their propaganda. By manipulating the reality, an actor can seek to highlight the favorable events, and hide away the unfavorable ones from the public. (Kecskemti.1950: Van Dijk. 1993) As Kecskemti (1950: 226) puts it "*The totalitarian 'Big lie' consists in this manipulation of the facts rather than in outright invention.*" In Stalin's Soviet, the media served both the indoctrination purpose by providing the newest orientation of the ideology, projecting the right moral, values and behavior, and as a mass mobilization tool—seeking support for their policies. The content of the Soviet media however, bore, according to Chalaby, little relation to reality and the flaws of the system and the elite's privileges were not mentioned. (Postoutenko. 2010) Totalitarian regimes have often with its pessimistic vision on human nature, and therefore sought to annihilate all individual freedoms like freedom of expression and thought. This can be seen through the full control sought out by the regime over all means of communication. The regimes' control over the media, then as a tool, seek to stifle dissent and silence opposition, but it is also a tool for propaganda purposes, design to indoctrinate the masses with their own 'one-and-only' anti-

pluralistic truth about the society. The totalitarian regimes therefore seek to enforce a total domination of the discourse through limitation of access. In this way, as mentioned, they seek to control the representation in the discourse through access to it.

As the totalitarian movement believe to have found the recipe to the perfect society, they therefore seek to implement it through any means necessary. By limiting the access of discourse only to the elite, enables them to silence those who oppose their 'truth'. (Hanisch-Wolfram in Postoutenko.2010:202) Because of their radical and revolutionary break with the existing society where the people are living in a fantasy perception of the world, the propaganda therefore serve as education and guide for the people. An education seeking to implement a common new identity based on the values and moral given by the ideology. Values and moral often shown through the rituals where the leader (or elite) are used as a symbol of the good deeds and right moral. In this way, the totalitarian propaganda serve as Alexander Hanisch-Wolfram (inPostoutenko.2010:198) define propaganda; *“a complex and elaborated communication strategy aimed at promoting and implementing a collective identity encompassing (nearly) all aspects of life—from political opinions and attitudes to values and ways of life in the private sphere.”* According to Bryman (2008), peoples understanding of the social world are implemented through a construction of reality, and thus interpreted by the recipients of the discourse, the opinion of the masses is then only a social products.

The use of propaganda is a strategy where the totalitarian regime seeks dominance and power through a re-organization where the new social product are implemented, rather than mere persuasion. As mentioned earlier regarding when a totalitarian ideology becomes dangerous or harmful, it can be seen when the minds of the dominated is influenced in a way they accept this new re-organization and dominance. In other words, accept the totalitarian product of reality. By using some elements from reality that can be verified by the receiver of the propaganda, the totalitarian sender give them some verifiable facts within the fictional world they seek to create, so they feel it can compete with the real world. (Arendt. 2004) The propaganda then are being used in a way that shall enable the individual minds to accept the domination, and thus they are acting out of their “free will”. As according to Sørensen (2011), violence is only used if necessary, and then if they do not follow by free will. The discourse in the propaganda is therefore tailored to manufacture consensus, acceptance and legitimacy for the dominance. (Van Djik. 1993) When the message is interpreted and accepted as the facts, the problem of eliminating it arises since this may wrack the whole structure, the new society is now based on. (Arendt. 2004).

When it comes to looking at propaganda, the totalitarian propaganda is different from other type of propaganda, as in the propaganda of regular regimes, the people might still have an opinion but is not allow to speak it. In the totalitarian one, this is no longer an option, since the totalitarian propaganda and ideology is all encompassing and as function control the mind of the masses. (Arendt. 2004) In this way, it no longer is about interpretation of the meaning. When indoctrinated into a totalitarian ideology, any counter-propaganda is null and void as it are viewed as defending a reality the followers cannot accept as no-longer true. In this way, the masses' opinion would only believe in the truth that is commonly interpreted as reality, a reality based on the ideology and constructed through the totalitarian propaganda.

3.0 Methods

When looking at ISIS discourse and seek to identify totalitarian elements in it, seeking to understand if ISIS can be understood as totalitarian or not, I've chosen to analyze their propaganda English language magazine Dabiq.

By doing this, I seek to provide a deeper understanding of their discourse and ideology, and to see if the discourse can give an answer rather or not ISIS can be defined as totalitarian. Discourse in this sense is to be view as in Phillips and Hardy's (2002. quoted in Bryman.2008: 508) definition: *"as an interrelated set of text, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being"*. In this way, discourse is understood as organizational structure that produce social reality. This thesis is an effort to explore how ISIS seek to create the social reality with use of language that correlate to the definition of totalitarianism. This as seen in the introduction to the theory chapter where research data gain significance when being viewed in relation to a theoretical concern. (Bryman. 2008) The research data collected shall then through the understanding of the theory of totalitarianism seek to provide an understanding of the phenomenon of ISIS propaganda. In this way, it shall explore if there is a correlation between the definition of totalitarian ideology and the structures of ISIS propaganda.

The analysis is then based mainly Øystein Sørensen's definition of totalitarianism (2011) and the analytical framework is based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is however not only a method of analysis, but as seen in the final part of the theory chapter, it shall also be seen as a theory of understanding the connection between a discourse and power. I have chosen to use CDA as a method since its role is to explore the function of language as a power resource that are related to ideology. (Bryman. 2008) Through the use of CDA I seek to uncover and explore the structures that seek to organize and dominate opinions and discourse. When seeking a revolutionary break, the discourse being communicated by a totalitarian movement will naturally seek to become a dominant. Therefore, I seek through the use of the methodical tools provided by CDA to uncover totalitarian elements in the ISIS discourse.

3.1 Method and Data

Both the theory of totalitarianism and the theory provided by the understanding of CDA, does thus give us a better entry-point when it comes to identify the corpus of analysis. CDA seek to broaden the understanding of phenomenon regarding power structures through looking at the discursive dimension of change in social and cultural phenomena. (Jorgensen & Phillips. 2002: 61). According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002: 63) CDA focus on a critical analysis of the discursive constructive practices of representation of the world, its social subjects, social relations and power structures, as well on the how these structures are affecting and help the interest of those particular groups. These discursive practices can then include all types' of projected messages that are to be interpreted— be it text, speech, videos, songs, pictures etc.

When it comes to ISIS, they also uses a broad specter of visual, audio and written text in their propaganda apparatus. They have been particular active on social media outlets like Twitter and Facebook where videos and pictures of their brutality have widely been spread all over the world. With the graphic violence they have been able to gain access to a broader audience and stirred deep-rooted feelings within the audience. Seeking to analyze all tweets posted on Twitter or communication on these other social media platforms would create a workload for a whole research establishment with a large staff for years to come. Since ISIS's supporters and audience can be seen globally, their communication have also been communicated in different languages. One especially interesting communiqué can be seen in their English language magazine the Dabiq. This because it can be understood as the official communication sent and sanctioned by the ISIS leadership. Therefore, the interrelated text in the discourse shall be understood as the various issues of Dabiq and their written articles inside them.

With the time-limit given a master thesis, narrowing the vast amount of ISIS propaganda down to one magazine, would make the task of finding totalitarian elements more comprehensible. Choosing to analyze Dabiq Magazine, and chose it as a sampling units, thus is interesting for the western governments since they are worried by ISISs' ability to recruit western citizens. With a “*slick*” and tailored English language, the Dabiq Magazine can therefore be seen as aimed at an English and Western language audience.

Within the definition of discourse regarding the “*practices of their production, dissemination, and reception*” (Phillips and Hardy. 2002. quoted in Bryman.2008: 508), the main actors at focus in this thesis is to be understood as ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) and it's aimed *receptors* of their message. The sender of the message (al Hayat Media) is therefore to be

understood as ISIS and the practice of their production must be seen in their aims and goals. The audience/receptors ISIS are seeking to reach with their propaganda can be seen in how they today spread it in different languages, this be German, English, Spanish, Russian as well as Arabic. The way they in this way seek to spread their message in typical western languages is therefore two-fold. The way they seek to attract Western youth by “convincing” and luring those who are prone to radicalize to follow their path, as well as instilling fear amongst the west by projecting themselves as strong and scary. In this way, they are able to persuade western youth with skillful propaganda that undermines the legitimacy of the rule in their countries. This by playing on their feelings that may lead them to travel to ISIS’s “clean” and “truthful” society in their Caliphate or to oppose their country of residence with violent means. The ISIS propaganda aimed at the Western audience in Dabiq is therefore something that should worry western authorities, as they are able to “brainwash” or reorganize the opinion of young citizens to join a brutal movement that seek to undermined the basic principle of the western civilization, multi-plurality, international and human law, and substitute it with the implementation of their interpretation of Islamic law.

As mention, because of the limited time and content of a master thesis as well as the vast amount of ISIS propaganda out there, I have narrowed it down and collected data from 10 English issues of the Dabiq Magazine. These magazines have been distributed on various jihadist forums, social media and analyst blogs. Instead of searching all of these, I chosen to collect my data from Jihadology.net. Jihadology is run as a personal webpage by Aaron Y. Zelin, a known terrorism researcher associated with The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. On this page, Aaron Y. Zelin provide up-to-date reports on the Jihadist community, as well as translation of jihadi discourse. (<http://jihadology.net/>).

By only focusing and analyzing one sets of magazines, I can then focus my time on the coding and analyzing part rather than spending time on different search engines, searching multiple forums, twitter accounts and so on for the broader spectrum of ISIS discourse. By collecting data through jihadology.net, I receive secure official pdf files of the latest al-Hayaat Media center’s Dabiq magazine issues, and thus can see these as the official communique of ISIS. It would be easier to access these publication than searching the whole World-Wide-Web for tweets and other published statements on social media. Therefore, narrow the ISIS discourse to Dabiq, would prove more easily comprehensible than searching for gatekeepers to closed forums online. These closed forums, would maybe have provided a different style of discourse

than the one we are interested to find. This in regard to understand the broad official discourse that seek to organize the product of a ‘reality’ the ideology ISIS seek to implement.

In this way, as mention, my reason to collect the written text in ISIS’s Dabiq English language magazine as data can be understood by the way al-Hayat media center and Dabiq can be seen as an official communique of ISIS. As ISIS’s official discourse, I can therefore approach it in a more comprehensible way. Another reason is also based on my limited knowledge in the translation of Arabic, therefore seeking to look at the Dabiq would be easier as it is written in English. So far, Dabiq Magazine is published in 12 issues (pr. November 2015). The final issue was published after the coding processes, and therefore left out. Issue six is also not included as I believe coding the remaining 10 issues would be sufficient.

Seeking to understand rather or not ISIS can be understood as totalitarian, I will through a deductive way be searching for totalitarian elements in the communication provided by written texts in the Dabiq Magazine.

As mention, 11 issues of Dabiq have been published online between June 2014 and September 2015. The first issue called the “*The return of the Khilafah*” was published online June 5th 2014 and is focusing on the declaration of their new Caliphate. This issue have then been followed by eleven more, where the last one included in the corpus, published in the end of August (or September), named “*From the Battle of Al-Ahzab to the War of Coalitions*” focusing on the historical battles between the first Muslims and the Mecca. The other issues embraces topics from Islamic law, legitimacy, glorification for the cause and the obligation of pledge allegiance, declaration and branding of enemies through eschatology, aims for the future, world conquest, talking down enemies, obligation of *hijra* (migration to the Caliphate.) and the doomsday vision a totalitarian movement need to justify their actions. The different issues contain different feature articles, but also a set of articles that follows through the whole corpus. Articles like “In the word of the enemy” function as giving the impression of the enemies acknowledge failures and the strength of ISIS. These can also be seen as a way for ISIS to answer and give their “side of the story” by answering claims by the enemy. However, it can mainly be understood as seeking to highlight the struggle the enemy have in fighting ISIS, to show the ISIS as strong and the enemy as weak

The pdf of Dabiq issue number 3, named “A call to Hijrah” is accessed and downloaded from The Clarion Project^{1 2}, an independent founded non-profit organization who seek to expose the danger of Islamist extremists. This because the other issues of number 3, called “Un appel a la Hijrah” I found were written in French.

An analysis of these issues will be providing an insight and better understanding of why and in what way the ISIS seek to shape a new social reality for their audience. By identifying totalitarian elements within the structures of the ISIS discourse, this can also help the research on totalitarianism further as political religion has been disregarded as totalitarian.

3.2 Coding

Coding in the thesis is to identify the totalitarian criterions given in Sørensen’s (2011) definition of totalitarianism within the written text given in the Dabiq Magazine. By coding after these criterions, the further work will be to identify through interpretation and a critical discourse analysis, to look for the totalitarian dominance factors. In this way, the coding is based on the theoretical concept of totalitarianism, and I’ll therefore be looking for- and identifying themes and patterns in the written text, that can be identified accordingly. I will be searching for themes that can be showing the narrative ISIS is seeking to implement through their discourse in Dabiq. This both in what is explicit written and in the more latent and underlying deeper meaning of the discourse.

Statements I will be looking for, includes those that seem to imply that ISIS believe to have found and are the holder of the recipe for the perfect society. Statements that seem to be revolutionary and seeking to create a distance or break from the present society. Statements that can be understood as anti-pluralistic. Statements that seek to be encompassing, and thus seek to implement rules and regulations on all aspect of human life, as well as being expansive. That give the impression that those who live in and share the benefits of the societies outside their own vision is living in a world of denial or in a fake or non-rightful way. Statements that legitimizing the use of all means necessary to achieve their goal. Statements that can tell us about who they regard as enemies. Statements that is condescending towards their opponents and statements that seek to dominate the discourse as seen in the CDA theory.

¹ <http://www.clarionproject.org/news/islamic-state-isis-isil-propaganda-magazine-dabiq>

² <http://www.clarionproject.org/about>

The coding is therefore based on identifying Sørensen's definition in the different issues of Dabiq as well as looking for statements and arguments that can be seen functioning as domination of discourse.

3.3 Findings and Analysis

As a deductive research, after the data collection, I will go through the data to identify the more latent meanings, I will be looking for interesting patterns that can provide understanding of how the author (ISIS) seek to organize a new structure and organize the opinions of the masses. This will then be done through looking for consisting patterns of descriptions; regularities and variation in the text: reverse effects where the author projecting themselves as the good, and in this way the other as bad: and the omissions in the text. (Bryman. 2008)

Looking for consisting patterns of descriptions will be done to see how their words and phrases are linked together in patterns. By searching for regularities and variation, I'm interested in looking at how ISIS uses descriptions of actors in their text and for what reasons. I will however, set a deeper focus on the two last ones, namely reverse effect and omission. It is especially interesting to look at how ISIS is projecting themselves as the legitimate good force, and in this way all opposition as the wrong and bad. How they describe their intentions and creation or rebirth of their new society. This then could be seen through the omission, as where ISIS propaganda might be seen as highlighting favorable facts.

Through an analysis of the collected corpus, the findings will seek to explain what reality or narrative ISIS seek to project through Dabiq and see if this can be understood as totalitarian.

4.0 Analysis

Totalitarian discourse in the Dabiq Magazine

With the theory provided through Øystein Sørensen's definition of totalitarian ideology, supplemented by the theory and methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, I will in this chapter seek to broaden the understanding of ISIS discourse in the Dabiq Magazine, by identifying elements that can be seen as fitting into Sørensen's definition of totalitarianism.

4.1 The Rejection of the Existing and the Revolutionary Break

A totalitarian ideology and movement are according to Sørensen's definition (2011) something that seek a constant and clean revolutionary break. This through a total and aggressive rejection of all existing societies. According to Sørensen (2011), for both historical and other reasons, the western liberal democratic societies are the societies' most mentioned societies. In the case of ISIS, they also tend to seek a revolutionary break with especially the western liberal and secular democratic societies. As totalitarian regimes and movements tend narrate an existential threat, for ISIS this threat are as seen caused by the western *kufir*³ ideologies that harm the Muslim unity and faith as they through their "false" ideology misguide the Muslims away from

³ Kufir: to show ungratefulness to Allah and not to believe in Him and His religion. In Arabic - ungratefulness and disbelief in Allah and denial of the truth. Kafir: a person who refuses to submit himself to Allah (God), a disbeliever in Allah-- from the word kafara - "to hide." Those who deliberately hide the truth; unbelievers, truth-concealers; one who is ungrateful. (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

the true faith. ISIS therefore seek a revolutionary break with what they believe is a *kufir* world [world of unbelievers] filled with sins.

In the modern context, secularization cause people to distance themselves and reject their submission to the religion of Allah something ISIS then narrates as an existential threat towards Islam. (Dabiq#1.p24) It can according to ISIS be seen in connection to how the Prophet and his companions were looked upon as strangers in their establishment of the Islamic religion. (Dabiq#3.p.8) By replacing the religion of Islam with secular politics, people start to look at the Quran as merely a book of chanting and recitation, instead of a book of governance and legislation. (Dabiq#1.p24) This is then causing a decline in the personal faith and obedience to Allah. By not accepting Allah as the highest authority and the only One to worship (*taweed*), humans are falling into sinful acts and risking the hellfire at the Day of Judgement.

An example used by ISIS to highlight the need for a new society, as well as their success in doing so, is their focus on demolishing the western construct of the Sykes-Picot agreement. They see the Sykes-Picot agreement as a western tactic of divide and conquer with an ultimate goal of divide the Muslim Ummah⁴ in a way that make it easier to dominate Muslims. (Dabiq#4.p.18) Western concept of nationalism is perceived as a threat to the proper way of organizing the society in lines with what was commanded by Allah. In this way, ISIS communicate the need for breaking down or demolish the western construct that is harming the Muslim and aim to replace it with their own solution. By doing so, they believe that they will restore the pride, dignity, might and rights for the Muslims. (Dabiq#1.p.7)

ISIS then divide the world into two camps, the camp of the kufir and hypocrisy and the camp of the Muslim and mujahedeen. The camp of kufir and hypocrisy consist of falsehood, sins and evil, while the camp of the Muslims is a camp of truth and good. (Dabiq#3.p.12) However as many Muslims still reside in the camp of the Kufir, they urge that the Muslims reject those societies and move to the camp of Muslims and Mujahedeen. Only by a complete separation and break with the existing false world, can they establish their new perfect society in line with the guidance from Allah. This as they regard all the current international- and other human made laws and norms as illegitimate.

With the removal of the contemporary false society, they seek to build a new world order with the legitimate laws of Allah. Being revolutionary can be seen as they claim that the world have

⁴ Muslim Population: It is used in reference to the community of Believers or Muslims. The global community of all Muslim believers. The body of the Muslims as one distinct and integrated community. (Ibid)

never seen any statehood like the Islamic State. «Where the muwahhid to search every book authored by the historians, he would not find mention of any state similar to the Islamic State, particularly as it exists following its revival under the wing of Amirul-Mu'miniin Abu Bakr.» (Dabiq#3.p5) «This phenomenon is something that has never occurred in human history, except in the case of the Islamic State! And nothing like it will ever occur thereafter except in relation to it; and Allah knows best» (Dabiq#3.p.5)

By these quotes, ISIS can be believed to narrate themselves as revolutionaries.

Whereas the former totalitarian regimes often seek to fill a vacuum of lost faith with an invented secular political religion (Sørensen. 2011), ISIS seek to fill this vacuum of lost faith with their interpretation of religious politics based on the traditional religion. To fill the vacuum, the first thing that a man should do, is to distance himself from the existing society through a total rejection. Especially the 'filthy' western world since they can be seen to have lost their moral. This as they "*experiment with a myriad of Shaytani methods*" only to fulfil their own desires. (Dabiq#7. P.42) If the Muslims are continuing to live amongst the unbelievers, ISIS claim that Satan and his soldiers will fill the vacuum with a false and kuffar understanding of the world. (Dabiq#3. P.16) Living in this society would cause the Muslim to risk the submission of the '*pillar of kufr*', risking a life of arrogance, envy, anger and desire of worldly idols, as well as falling into the same "sexual revolution" the west started five decades ago. (Dabiq#2. P.29) (Dabiq#7. P.42-43)

According to ISIS, the world are living under banners of nationalism, patriotism, and revolutionism—banners that will cause the decline of faith. This is then projected as an existential threat towards the survival of the Muslim Ummah. This as they oppose the tawheed⁵ and the sharia, meaning violation of the belief in Allah as the one-and-only authority and His commands. (Dabiq#8. P.4) Rejecting the system of nationalism is further explain as "*Amongst the greatest deeds the muwahhid⁶ performs is his rejection of nationalism. Rather, his Islam is not correct until he disbelieves in nationalism, as nationalism declare people equal regardless of their religion, it does not discriminate between them accordingly, it limits the religion to a*

⁵ The Muslim profession of faith. The defining doctrine of Islam. **Tawhīd (Al-Tawheed)** monotheism; affirmation of the Oneness of Allah. Muslims regard this as the first part of the Pillar of Islam, the second part is accepting Muhammad as rasoul (messenger). The opposite of Tawheed is shirk. The Divine Unity, Unity in its most profound sense. Allah is One in His Essence and His Attributes and His Acts. The whole universe and what it contains is One unified event which in itself has no lasting reality. Allah is the Real, Al-Haqq. (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

⁶ Unifiers. Sometimes referred to as those who believe in One God. (Monotheist) A Muslim who places emphasis on the concept of Tawheed.

nationalistic border, and it prohibits its expansion beyond” (Dabiq#8. P.4) Because of this, ISIS claim that the pure *tawheed* can never coexist with nationalism, it is therefore a need to reject and erase it.

“Once again, the heretical call to the gates of Hellfire – the religions of the tawāghīt⁷ – was answered by many of the ignorant. Then came the announcement of the Islamic State’s expansion to Shām followed by the subsequent announcement of the Khilāfah... ringing the grayzone to the brink of permanent extinction...” “...by reviving the great body of Islam and so no Muslim had any excuse to be independent of this entity embodying them and waging war on their behalf in the face of kufr.” (Dabiq#7. P.55)

Here referring to the ‘grayzone’, to successfully extinct the grayzone is goal that can be seen successful through the rejection of the contemporary society. There should be no-one left in the grayzone, as ISIS refer to Bush statement: *“either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists”*. ISIS then use this quote, and say *“either you are with the crusaders or you are with Islam.”* (Dabiq#7. P.54) This can then be understood as either you are not a proper Muslim as you support the crusaders war on Islam, or you reject the contemporary society and join the ranks of ISIS.

To be a Muslim, you need to reject the societies based on non-Islamic manmade law and perform hijrah (migration). A Muslim who continue to live in a non-Islamic society only will cause him to live in sins, *“which would cause him to commit greater sins until he could commit kufr for the sake of his sinful interests.”* (Dabiq#7. p.55) In this state, the Muslim will according to ISIS risk ending up an apostate. The migration to the “Islamic” State is therefore an obligation there should not be any excuse to violate.

The need to reject and move from the contemporary ‘*kufr*’ societies can also be read-out from the headline *“Bad Company destroys the heart.* (Dabiq#3. P.32) Here, ISIS claims to refer to the Prophet Muhammed who according to ISIS said. *“I disassociate myself from every Muslim who live amongst the mushrikeen⁸. They should not see each other’s tent fires.”* (Dabiq#3. P.32)

⁷ Referred to as disbeliever, idolatry. “The ones who does not rule by that which Allah has revealed is taghut.” (<http://www.abukhadeejah.com/the-meaning-of-taghut-according-to-the-early-scholars/>) Impurity; anything worshipped other than God, i.e. all the false deities. Literally denotes the one who exceeds his legitimate limits. In Qur'anic terminology it refers to the creature who exceeds the limits of his creatureliness and abrogates to himself godhead and lordship. (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

⁸ Idol-worshippers. People who associate partners with Allah Ta'ala, such as the Christians, who have raised the Prophet Isa (Jesus) to the level of Allah. (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>) For ISIS, this can then be other idol-worship as well. It can be all from the worship of money, personal power, etc. Living and striving for something else than fighting for the cause of Allah.

According to ISIS, Muslims who continue to live in the un-Islamic societies, their religion would be destroyed until the person ends up in hellfire (Dabiq#3. P.32)

As ISIS has declared a Caliphate (Dabiq #1. P.6-7), this Caliphate are to be ruled in a way no contemporary state are rule by. In this way, ISIS seek to create their state without the existing norms of statehood and state structure. Structures' they believe are made by the disbelievers to only increase their own personal wealth and political power—causing arrogance, envy, anger, desire and loss of moral. (Dabiq#2. P.29)

As they see it, the basis in the contemporary world, is the desire for wealth and power. This then leads the man to forget or to neglect what his real desire should be, namely the desire to worship Allah. According to ISIS, the desire for wealth and power should therefore be seen as the most dangerous desire. (Dabiq#7. P.55)

ISIS claim that through the establishment of the Caliphate the true Mujahedeen have abandoned their former leaderships, “*who were too busy burying themselves alive in the garbage dump of history.*” (Dabiq#7. P.57) The last part of the sentence indicate that they believe a new revolutionary era is coming, as the kufr leaderships are soon to become not more than history. Comparing the world leadership with something that belongs on the garbage dump, can also be seen as to project them as unworthy, and thus as a tactic in their discourse to claim they are not worthy to be listen to.

The reason for the need of rejection can further be seen in the headline “*A new era has arrived of Might and Dignity for the Muslims*”. (Dabiq#1. P.8) Here ISIS show that they seek a break with the contemporary organization of the world of which they believe Muslims have been dominated and suppressed. “*The modern day slavery of employment, work hours, wages, etc., is one that leaves the Muslim in a constant feeling of subjugation to a kafir master. He does not live the might and honor that every Muslim should live and experience.*” (Dabiq#3. P.29) To restore the might and dignity of the Muslims, they must reject the society they currently are “living as slaves” in, and move to the revolutionary new Caliphate. “*Living amongst the sinful kills the heart, never mind living amongst the kuffar!*”, “*They can destroy the person’s fithra⁹ to a point of no return, so that his heart’s doubts and desires entrap him fully.*” (Dabiq#3. P.32) ISIS narrates the contemporary western civilization as a civilization of *shirk*¹⁰ and *kufr*, a

⁹ It is believed to be by ISIS understood as the born personal instinct to believe in the Oneness of the Allah. Innate disposition towards virtue, knowledge, and beauty. Muslims believe every child is born with fitrah. (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

¹⁰ Associating partners with Allah. Shirk can also encompass any object that a person may hold in regard higher than Allah. It is the most severe of sins and will not be forgiven. Opposite of Tawheed. To associate anyone or

civilization of usury and prostitution, and the civilization of humiliation and subjugation. (Dabiq#4. P.4) According to Dabiq issue four, page four; al-Baghdadi narrated that they are now *“on the doorstep of a new era, a turning point for the map of the region, rather the world.”* This then indicate that ISIS see themselves as a revolutionary movement that have a vision to erase the contemporary organization of the world and implement a new type of statehood in accordance with the ideology.

It is not only the liberal and secular democracies in the West, ISIS claim the need to reject and eradicate. All types of societies that does not implement the Sharia to the fullest are being projected as bad, ignorant, evil or hypocrites—and thus need to be replaced. Looking at how some groups sought to fill the power vacuum left after the Arab spring, as well as the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, ISIS sees these group as illegitimate as they bases themselves on either the support from the filthy democracies in the west, or their type of organization. One example of this is seen in their article about *“The Libyan Arena”*. (Dabiq#8. P.25-26). Here *“a number of deviant individuals gathered together in the city of Benghazi to form and subsequently gain Western support for a political entity that would carry the kufri banner of democracy”*. *“Following the extermination of the Libyan clown Gaddafi, the NTC continued its efforts to further corrupt the affairs of the people. It introduced a new kufri constitution.”* (Dabiq#8. p.25). The NTC¹¹ and the so-called (as ISIS believe) Islamists from the Muslims Brotherhood violates Allah’s commands as they agree on elections that *“put the rule of Allah’s to a vote”*. (Dabiq#8. P.25) They are in this way, only seeking to quell opposition through implementing parts of the Sharia into the manmade law. ISIS also disregarded Mullah Omar’s Taliban leadership and rule as they perceived his leadership to not having the right intention. According to ISIS, Mullah Omar did not intent to fulfill his duty as he only wanted to build a nationalistic *“Islamic”* emirate within the border of Afghanistan. (Dabiq#10. P.20) They further downplay Mullah Omar’s legitimacy by claiming that he, by reaching out his hand to the neighbors, was a violating the principles of *Imamah*¹². (Dabiq#10. P.20) For ISIS, this is then seen as a betrayal as he claim they seek cooperation with the neighbors, Iran, Pakistan, China, etc., that thus should be seen as accepting and cooperating with the Kufr.

anything with Allah. Shirk is idol-worship. Idol-worship means attributing form to Allah, encasing Him in an object, a concept, a ritual or a myth. (Ibid)

¹¹ National Transition Council

¹²Understood by ISIS as religious as well as political leadership (Dabiq#1. P. 23) Office and function of an Imam (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

Through a revolutionary new state, ISIS claim that the Muslims can live in accordance to the right pillars of Islam, and therefore be saved on the Day of Judgement.

“And O you who continues to residing in the lands of kufr under the authority of the crusaders and the tawaghit, in the shade of their manmade laws, hearing them revile Allah’s Shari’ah day and night in their media and describe it as backwards, oppressive, and barbaric, do not allow another Ramadan after this one to pass you by except that you have made hijrah from the lands of kufr to the lands of the Islamic State.” (Dabiq#10. P.29)

In this way we can see ISIS as a movement that seek to reject the current organization based on their impression of it is based on the denial of Allah’s laws. This through claiming it is an obligation commanded by Allah. By urging the rejecting of the current style of organizing the society and implement their own solution in a way never before been seen, ISIS can be understood as revolutionaries.

4.2 The holder of truth and the recipe for a perfect society

According to Sørensen’s (2011) sixth criterion, the insight into the totalitarian ideology is at least in the first phase something that is reserved a selected elite. According to this elite, the rest of the world are living in a fantasy conception of the world. He also explain that totalitarian regimes tend to base their legitimacy on a ‘doomsday’ vision with an immediate existential threat; this is especially evident in ISIS’s rhetoric as they base themselves on the traditional religion of Islam and the belief in the Day of Judgement. Here, the truthful and good Muslim will enter Jannah (Paradise) and all the others will end up burning in the eternal hellfire. (Dabiq#11.p.38) Only through the establishment of the Caliphate and submission to ISIS’s ideology and rule, you will have a chance of entering paradise. ISIS therefore see themselves as those who are obliged to change the world through the implementation of the ‘only way’ to organize the society in accordance with Allah’s commands.

Through references to religious texts, they seek to justify their claim of being the rightful ones, as guardians of the Muslims. Because they base their legitimacy on the religious texts, they also use this literature as the guide and recipe for the perfect society. This recipe is viewed as the only recipe that can save the Muslims from wrongdoing and ending up in hell. For ISIS, the cure against the evils caused by western modernization is to be implemented through the rejection and the establishment of the Caliphate. Being totalitarian, the movement is projecting

an ultimate requirement of submission to their ideology. (Sørensen. 2011). In ISIS's vision, the whole world should submit to the rules set by Allah, through the guidance given in the Quran and the examples given by the Prophet Muhammed and his trusted followers. *"The best of my Ummah¹³ are those of my generation, and those who follow after them, and then those who follow after them."*(Dabiq#2. p.11) From this quote, ISIS seek to project themselves as the best of the Ummah. This is because they claim solely build their society based on the texts and guidance revealed to the Prophet. As Prophet Muhammed believed that he was guided by Allah and by following his example, ISIS believed to have found the only truth and therefore seek to fight what they believed to be falsehood. *"Indeed Allah has sent me with guidance and the religion of truth."* (Dabiq#4. P.11).

Today, ISIS claim that they are the only ones who follow the example of Muhammed fully and truly. In this way they therefore claim to understand the meaning and how to best organize the world. Anyone claiming otherwise are narrated as hypocrites, deviators, agents of falsehood, etc. By being the only ones' who have found the true meaning of life, they can be understood as being anti-plural, which means that they do not accept any other interpretation and understanding of the world.

The way ISIS believe to be the holder of the truth, all attempts to argue against them will be seen as false—and thus defined as bad and by evil intent. An example of this is when Jayshul-Mujahidin, a group that allies with an opposing jihadi fraction named the Jawlani Front, where arguing that wearing the hijab is a personal freedom. (Dabiq#2. P.24) By claiming that wearing a hijab are a personal freedom, they accept the concept of personal freedom or free-will. According to ISIS, this is a false claim that belong to the *kufir*, and thus is a sin. This because the freedom-of-choice is a concept that violate Allah's commands as it give the humans the ability to decide for themselves what is good and what is bad. *"Therefore, giving the people choice was no longer a possibility in this new state of affairs. Rather, the guiding principle became that every time choice is allowed it result in misguidance, either in present or in the future."* (Dabiq#2 p.5) ISIS therefore claim that the hypocrites only use freedom of choice as an excuse to violate Allah's obligations. (Dabiq#2. p.24) *"So until we return to the correct state of Islamic affairs, it's upon us all to work together to eradicate the principle of "free-choice" (Dabiq#2.p. 11) They want to eradicate the free-choice and replace it with Allah's choice, implemented with ISIS's understanding of this choice.*

¹³ It is used in reference to the community of Believers or Muslims, the global community of all Muslim believers. The body of the Muslims as one distinct and integrated community.
(<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

ISIS justify themselves as proper Mujahedeen¹⁴ through claiming that *“Because their creed is that of Ahlus-Sunnah¹⁵, they believe that Allah’s actions are truly characterized by justice, wisdom, mercy, and grace”* (Dabiq#2. P.23). Claiming to follow the right methodology of the Prophet Muhammed, ISIS claim that with this methodology, they hold the right and true recipe to organize a perfect society. They believe that by not following this methodology and thus not support ISIS, people risk violating what Allah have commanded and thus become the sinful ones—earning hell. (Dabiq#7. p.60) Only those who follow and fight for the implementation of Ahlus-Sunnah in all matters, and since ISIS claim that their ideology is doing this, following ISIS’s ideology and fight for it, would be the only way to be acquire acceptance into Jannah¹⁶. All those who reject the Ahlus-Sunnah should be directed to hellfire—either at the Day of Judgement or if ISIS are able to carry out their “duty” to either direct them onto the right path, or kill them. (Dabiq#7.p.7) *“Whoever wishes to enter paradise should die believing in Allah and The Last Day...” “If another man comes forward disputing his legitimacy, then strike his neck”* (Dabiq#1. P.28) According to this, ISIS refer to Taymiyyah that claim, *“Every party that resist the manifest and definite laws of Islam from these people or others, then it is obligatory to fight them until they comply with its laws”*. (Dabiq#8. P.45) Through the quote above, it is then understood that disputing the legitimacy of ISIS and al-Baghdadi, their necks should be struck. This is then further justified through a quote from Tārīkh at-Tabarī; AlBidāyah wan-Nihāya: *“Whoever answers him, accepts the truth, halts his evil, and does good, my envoy will accept this from him and will aid him in it. If he refuses, I’ve ordered him to wage war against them over such, to not spare anyone he is able to kill, to burn them alive with fire, to kill them in a severe manner using all means, to enslave their women and children, and to not accept from any one of them anything but Islam”*(Dabiq#7.p.7)

¹⁴ Someone who is active and fights for Islam

(<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

¹⁵ Those who rightfully followed the methodology of Prophet Muhammad (According to ISIS). (Dabiq#2) Refers to the vast majority of Muslims who follow the Sunnah of the Prophet and the precedents of his rightly-guided successors. Used in contradistinction to the Shee`ah who believed that `Alee, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, should have been his immediate successor.

(bid)

¹⁶ Paradise- the reward for those who are judged to be good. A created abode in the Hereafter for those who believe in the Unity of Allah and in all His Prophets and Messengers, and who follow their way of life (Ibid)

When ISIS declared the establishment of the Caliphate and that it is seen as the recipe, how do they understand this concept? ISIS explains the concept of Caliphate (*Kalimat*¹⁷) with two meanings: one is the “*term can refer to statements concerning the qadar*¹⁸ of Allah” and the other “*can be used in a sharia context, as in the statement of Allah.*” (Dabiq#1. P.26) ISIS understand the term *Kalimat* in a more comprehensible way as laws, commands and prohibitions. They base this understanding of the term as the implementation of Allah’s statements with both guidance and commands—mandatory to obey. The concept of the Caliphate is thus to be the materialization of their recipe for the perfect society through the establishment of an Islamic State. This is because this methodology of organizing the society is the only truthful way to ensure the obedience of Allah’s qadar.

*“There is no Islam except with jama’ah*¹⁹, and no jama’ah except with imarah (leadership), and no imrah except ta’ah (obedience).” (Dabiq#4. P.3)

By referring to this, ISIS seek to unite the Muslims under one leadership. This leadership is based on obedience towards a rightful leader who follow the Ahlus-Sunnah. In this way, as Hannah Arendt explained, a totalitarian ideology is not dangerous unless people start to believe in it. (Hagtvet.2011). Through ISIS’s strategy to unite all Muslims and indoctrinate them with their ideology, it would become dangerous if enough start to believe in it. Looking at how they are able to recruit and control territory as well as threatening the wider world, there is supportive evidence that ISIS have in fact followers who believe in the ISIS ideology. This are further manifested in how they are able to attract youth from many parts of the world to either travel to Syria and Iraq to fight, or to carry out terror plots in their respective homelands. Through a propaganda strategy, ISIS seek to project a narrative and rhetoric that support their claim of being the only holder of the truth and authority, and thus the only Muslim body to be trusted and justified as leaders of the Muslim Ummah.

Through the analysis of the written text in the Dabiq Magazine, ISIS mention different concepts that must be understood by the Muslims and be implemented to achieve a perfect society. Part of the duty ISIS claim to fulfill, is to use their “knowledge” to guide and teach the masses.

¹⁷ **Kalimatul tayibah** The Pure Word, i.e. the assertion that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah. (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

¹⁸ The divine decree of Allah- predestination. Allah's complete and final control over the fulfillment of events or destiny (Ibid)

¹⁹ A united Muslim population in worshipping (Ummah) (Dabiq#4)

These concepts are thus organized and narrated in a way that benefit and support ISIS's claim for authority and obedience.

The first concept that ISIS mention in their first issue, "The Return of Khilafah", is the concept of 'Imamah'²⁰. By mentioning this concept, ISIS seek to legitimize their leadership of the Muslim Ummah. By claiming themselves as the ones that do not follow falsehood and hypocrisy, but followers of the 'truth' given by Allah, they claim to help restore the young man's confidence in his religion. They encourage him to disassociating himself from the kuffar²¹ and mushrikin²² and instead follow true path with ISIS. (Dabiq#1. P. 21) "*Stick to the jama'ah (congregation) of the Muslims and their imam. I said; if they have neither a jama'ah nor an imam?*" He said; "*Then avoid every group, even if you have to bite onto the root of a tree until death reaches you while you're in that condition.*" (Dabiq#1. P. 22) With the declaration of their Caliphate, they have restored a territory where Muslims can move and where they can live in accordance to the Ahlus-Sunnah without risking their dignity, might and rights as Muslims being violated. (Dabiq#1. P. 7) This Caliphate is established and guided by a trustworthy leadership based around ISIS and with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the Caliph and imam. With the establishment of the Caliphate, no one is in need to "*bite onto the root of the tree*" as the Caliphate is a clean territory based on the 'truth', and therefore the ones' inside shall be true and pious.

When appointing a Caliph there is some specific criterions that is needed to be fulfilled.

"My covenant does not include wrongdoers"..."A number of scholars used this verse as evidence that the imam must be a man of justice, good conduct, and virtue, and have the strength to fulfill his role. [They say that] such an imam is the one whom the Prophet commanded the Muslims not to rebel against..." (Dabiq#1. P.23) By appointing Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the Caliph, ISIS claim he is a just imam, with virtue, good conduct and strength, and thus should be the honored one to lead the Muslim Ummah, just as Ibrahim (Abraham) was honored by Allah with imamah. (Dabiq#1.p.25)

To boost al-Baghdadi's legitimacy and leadership, the Dabiq Magazine refer to him as Amirul-Mu'min Abu Bakr al-Husayni al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi. As Caliph, he further took the name of

²⁰ Leadership- Office and function of an Imam (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

²¹ The ones who denies and conceal the truth.

([Ibid](#))

²² Polytheists (may believe in Allah, but worship other things as well) (Dabiq) ([Ibid](#))

Caliph Ibrahim. Both of these names are aliases. However, it is believed that his real name is Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai (Ali Hashem. 23.3.2015). By choosing the name Caliph Ibrahim, he is likely to link his authority to the concept of the *millah*²³ of Ibrahim (Abraham) and thus the concept of leadership. (Imamah) (Dabiq#1. P.20-30) With the name al-Qurashi and al-Husayni, ISIS can shape the impression that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is a right descendant from the line of the Prophet. The function of choosing these names can be to create greater legitimacy and trustworthiness in the appointment of him as the Caliph. On page 27-30 in *The Return of Khilafah*, they explain that their leader is a true imam since they are the ones who have “*carried out the command of Allah- as much as it can- in the best possible manner. It established the religion in the areas where it exists and continues to pursue this effort vigorously.*” “*All this, after Allah had granted the imam of The Islamic State the blessing of performing hijrah*²⁴ *and fighting jihad in His cause, on top of already having been characterized by his noble lineage, sound intellect, and a prestigious level of knowledge and religious practice.*” (Dabiq#1.p.27). Here they are arguing that ISIS in fact are the one-and-only to be trusted. By stating, “*It is not fitting for anyone, whomever he may be, to seek to demolish the building that the sincere men of the Ummah made so much effort to construct over the course of many years...*” (Ibid) they further urge that no one should seek to challenge their hard-worked establishment and implementation of their recipe, as this will be to challenge the commands given to Ibrahim by Allah. “*Anyone who rebel against its [ISIS] authority inside its territory is considered a renegade, and it is permissible to fight him after establishing hujjah*²⁵ *against him*”. ISIS argue this on the basis that ISIS, led by al-Baghdadi are to be acknowledge as the holder of the imamah (leadership) and since al-Baghdadi is the one who follow the millah of Ibrahim. Questioning ISIS’s interpretation of the Sharia and the implementation of it, like al-Qaeda leader Zawahiri supposedly did, their statements against ISIS is then explain as being “*fabrications and distortions of reality*”. (Dabiq#2. P.24)

To be able to reach the end-goal of the implementation of their perfect society, they stress the need for one of the most important concept—the *Jihad*. A controversial concept that in a political context being understood by Jihadists and a large part of the world as Holy War. For ISIS, this is also the case as they see it as a way of expanding and defending the rule of Allah

²³ Path (Dabiq#1 p.20-30)

²⁴ Departure, exit, emigration. Migration in the path of Allah. The Hijrah refers to the Prophet's migration from Mecca to Madinah. (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

²⁵ Clarifying his error to him with proof (Dabiq) - **Itmām al-hujjah** clarification of truth in its ultimate form. (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

throughout the world, with all means necessary. This meaning of Jihad should then be understood as Jihad al-Akbar²⁶. The concept of Jihad is seen as benefitting the cause in reaching the end-goal [the perfect society] as they believe they should fight *fitnah*²⁷. According to ISIS, to fight *fitnah* is one of the most important missions in the establishment of their perfect society. “*And fight them until there is no more fitnah and (until) the religion, all of it, is for Allah.*” (Dabiq#1.p.35). The jihad should be further organized through the concept of *hijrah* (Migration), *bay’ah* (to pledge allegiance), *sam’* (listening), *ta’ah* (Obedience) and *i’dad* (training). Based on these concepts, ISIS believe that through fighting, they will be able to establish their mighty Caliphate and implement Allah’s rule throughout the earth. (Dabiq#1. p.35) (Dabiq#5. p.3)

The concept of *Hijrah* is an obligation that ISIS use when seeking to unite all Muslims and works for ISIS as recruitment of fighters and staff for their new “State”. In this way, to establish their state, they acknowledge the need of administrative as well as other type of critical positions. Their acknowledgment of the need for admin and staff personnel to critical state-functions can be seen in how ISIS highlight the obligation of *hijrah* in their first issue, as they seek to recruit especially doctors, engineers, scholars and judges (Islamic), as well as other specialists. (Dabiq#1.p.11). To recruit these personnel, they play on the religious obligation of *hijrah* to Darul-Islam [The Islamic State].

Those who cannot perform their obligation for “*whatever extraordinary reason*” must publicly pledge *bay’ah*²⁸ to the Islamic State. (Dabiq#2.p.3) When stressing the importance of publicly pledging *bay’ah*, ISIS stress the need to spread the act of *bay’ah* as much as possible through a recorded broadcast of the pledge. This is a strategy that ISIS believe will cause the majority of Muslims to view a pledge of allegiance as the common norm. All those who do not pledge *bay’ah* would according to ISIS be consider abnormal by the majority. (Dabiq#2.p.3) In this way, they use propaganda to dominate the discourse when it is projected as abnormal for people not to pledge *bay’ah*.

²⁶ Jihad al Akbar - physically fighting against the enemies of Allah.

(<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

²⁷ A situation where the believer are harassed and intimidated because of religious conviction. Alternatively, a state of affairs wherein obedience are given to another object than the one true God. Fitnah is understood as the spread of falsehood that causes rift between Muslims. (Ibid)

²⁸ Pledging allegiance and obedience. - An oath of allegiance. To make a pledge to a leader, traditionally the Caliph or Imam. (Ibid)

The bay'ah and hijrah is then some of the most important tools to boost ISIS legitimacy, and something that would by Hannah Arendt, be seen as a dangerous sign. This is because the bay'ah prove their support and their acknowledgment of the ISISs ideology as the right one. Through the concept of bay'ah, ISIS seek to show their strength and their abilities of uniting the vast and divided Ummah and lead them back to a truthful and rightly guided way of life.

“This month, the ranks of the Muslims were further strengthened and unified with the bay’āt of the mujāhidīn in Sinai, Libya, Yemen, Algeria, and the Arabian Peninsula, in addition to the bay’ah of more than 30 Kurdish villages in Wilāyat Halab.” (Dabiq#5.p.12) By highlighting that people and groups are pledging allegiance to their movement, they use this to boost their legitimacy, as the masses of Muslims now have acknowledged ISIS as the holder of the ‘one-and-only’ truth.

By acceptance of bay'ah and the establishment of new Wilayats²⁹, ISIS regard the former groups as nullified as they now are unified under ISIS leadership. (Dabiq#5. P.24) They also explain that when new groups and people around the world pledge bay'ah, this should be seen as a proof that the Muslim Ummah is further consolidated and that the enemy camp is weakened. (Dabiq#7. P.36) The bay'ah should be seen as a sign of ta'ah (obedience). It is in this way, swearing bay'ah and obedience to ISIS, is like swearing obedience to Allah, as ISIS project themselves as those who implement His rule.

ISIS's effort to indoctrinate their followers can be seen in their concept of i'dad³⁰ (training). The training would be to inform and guide the Muslims masses; train them to understand what is good (halal³¹) and what is bad (haram³²). The corner stone of the perfect society and the ideology is the use of and implementation of the Sharia³³—and it is then understood as the recipe.

²⁹ Here understood as a state/province/area under ISIS control

³⁰ Understood by ISIS as training. (Dabiq) --Preparation. I'dad Al-'oda: "preparation for battle" according to Qur'an (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

³¹ Something that is lawful and permitted, good, beneficial, praiseworthy, honourable in Islam. (<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

³² Something which is unlawful or prohibited in Islam. (Ibid)

³³ The Shari'ah is the revealed and the canonical laws of the religion of Islam. The legislative power in the government lies in the hands of legislative assembly. The legislators are to make rules and regulations within the scope and dimensions of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (s.a.w.). These rules constitute the Shari'ah. "the path to a watering hole"; the eternal ethical code and moral code based on the Qur'an and Sunnah; basis of fiqh (Ibid)

ISIS claims that *“People are ignorant of their religion and they thirst for those who can teach them and help them understand it.”* (Dabiq#1.p.11) The answer for this thirst can then be met by ISIS who can help the people to understand the true meaning and the right way of life.

“The Islamic State has taken it upon itself to fulfill the Ummah’s duty towards this generation in preparing it to face the crusaders and their allies in defense of Islam and to raise high the word of Allah in every land” (Dabiq#8 .p.20)

Through the establishment of the Khilafah and the implementation of their recipe, the people will be able to step out of their miserable life of ignorance, dishonor, and instead step into a society of truth and dignity. (Dabiq#1.p.7)

As ISIS rejects the manmade laws, the Sharia is claim to be true and give guidance in all matters be it personal or political. It should then to be used as the recipe to establish the Law of Allah and His religion in all corners of the world. (Dabiq#5.p.22) ISIS communicate that if secular separation of religion and politics are not fought and replaced with the implementation of Sharia, the intellect in “our” era is going to fade away. (Dabiq#1.p.24) Their recipe is therefore all about to hinder the Muslims so they do not fall into a ‘fantasy perception’ of the world where they live in Jahiliyyah³⁴. Those who do not actively acknowledge and submit to ISIS rule are those who ignorantly reject or forsaking the truth. They are the same as those who lived in the pre-Islamic jāhiliyyah periode. (Dabiq#10.p.23) In this way, as ISIS narrates that ISIS should be seen as those who found the truth, the others can be seen to be *“from a deaf, dumb, and blind people who do not understand.”* (Dabiq#4.p.32)

Just as they mention the concept of *i’dad* (training), they therefore as elite seek to “help” the Muslims out of their state of jāhiliyyah by train and guide them onto the “right” path of Ahlus-Sunnah. ISIS are in this way communicating a narrative that they are the guardians of Allah’ commands and the Ahlus-Sunnah. *“The religion of Allah will only be supported by someone who protects all of its sides”* (Dabiq#3.p.16) As explained above, through their legitimization of their rule explained through the concept of *imamah*, and the way ISIS believe to be those who understand Allah best, they can be understood to look at themselves as a Muslim elite. According to Taylor (1997), as a group or regime are seeing themselves as guardians of the ideology, their power is absolute and the only control over the guardians are the ideology itself. This claim of being the guardians can then be seen in connection to when Taylor (1997) explain

³⁴ Living in ignorance. **Jahiliyyah** means ignorant. Jahiliyyah refers to the pre-Islamic era that existed in Arabia. (Ibid)

that “*the knowledge of the Good which is the most precious possession of that intellect determines the content of the ideology, which in turn provide the justification for the power which that intellect exercises via its knowledge of how the God is to be realized.*” (Taylor. 1997. P. 281-282) When ISIS claim to have the knowledge to organize the society based on the Ahlus-Sunnah as it is the core of their ideology, this is then based on the assumption that ISIS believe that the Ahlus-Sunnah is the ‘Good’. This is seen in how they believe they are in the possession of the knowledge of the Good. Therefore, the appointment of al-Baghdadi as Caliph is then understood as appointing the Caliph on the basis of the best of the Ummah, since the decision is made on the assumption of holding the knowledge of the truth.

So far, ISIS claim that their own state, established in Iraq and Syria, is the only place on earth ruled with the full implementation and true meaning of Sharia. (Dabiq#10.p.50) This as they claims that after fighting to acquire territory, they have spread the authority of the Sharia over all their gained territory. This includes the enforcement of the obligatory prayers, collection of the religious taxes (Zakah), and the founding of a Hisbah (religious sanctioned authority) that can “*command good and forbid evil*”. With the founding of a Hisbah, ISIS are implementing the recipe through forcing the people to submit to Allah and ISIS authority. This is done by the establishment and execution of hudūd³⁵. With the implementation of Sharia and hudūd, they claim to be judging in accordance to the laws given by Allah. In this way, they claim they can return the rights of the oppressed, fight the non-believers (*kufir*) and enforce the claimed ‘protection fee’ (*Jizayh*) from the Ahlul-Kitāb³⁶ (The people of the Book). (Dabiq#10.p.51)

The reason for why ISIS are claiming to be in possession of the recipe for a perfect society is communicated by claiming to be the holder of the one-and-only truth. The words truth, truthful or truthfulness are identified almost 200 times throughout the various Dabiq publications. In Dabiq, one can find phrases like “*the religion of truth.*” (Dabiq#5.p.3) “*Defend the truth.*” (Dabiq#5.p.5). “*He spoke the truth.*” (Dabiq#7.p.12) “*The Quran, the divider between truth and falsehood.*” (Dabiq#7.p.55) “*The truth revealed by Allah*” (Dabiq#2.p.5). “*Their appearance*

³⁵ Literally, limits; the specific punishments assigned by the Qur'an and the Sunnah for particular crimes - intoxication, theft, rebellion, adultery and fornication, false accusation of adultery, and apostasy. These crimes involve transgressing the limits of acceptable behavior.

(<https://islam.worldofislam.info/index.php/glossary/836-glossary-of-islamic-terms>)

³⁶ The People of the Book: The followers of the Abrahamic religions. - **Ahl al-Kitab** literally 'People of the Book,' refers to the followers of Divine Revelation before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Jews and Christians. (Ibid)

was from the clearest of proofs for the truthfulness of the messengers” (Dabiq#2.p.27). ISIS are flooding the reader with sentences that claim ISIS to be truthful so the reader would accept their ideology and leadership to be justified and true.

Claiming they are holders of the truth does also indicate that anyone who disagree or object their rule are projected as liars. Anyone who do not accept ISIS’s claim of truthfulness are referred to as deviators from the truth who should not be trusted. By claiming this, they use phrases like *“Their creed is so deviant from the truth”* (Dabiq#4.p.14). *“Their hatred towards the religion of truth.”* (Dabiq#9.p.3), *“Authenticity is something impossible for a lying Rāfidī to ever achieve, as they are infamous for being the greatest liars of the creation”*. (Dabiq#11.p.16), and *“How far is their claim from the truth, for Allah has revealed Islam to be the religion of the sword, and the evidence for this is so profuse that only a zindiq (heretic) would argue otherwise”*. (Dabiq#7. P. 20) Projecting themselves as the holder of the truth, they use this as a tactic in Dabiq to downplaying all critics as lies. Where the Nazi’s saw themselves as immune against every critics (Hagtvet.2011), so does ISIS by projecting themselves as the only trustworthy part in the discourse.

They however seek to claim that their solutions should be made by good consultation. In their *“Advice for the Leaders of The Islamic State”* (Dabiq#7. P. 9-16) they advises the leaders to seek consultation and to hold discussion. Through discussion, they claim the correct options will become clear. (Dabiq#7. P.10) However, they should only consult intelligent men, and this should then be done one-to-one so the ‘intelligent’ man do not disclose the issue discussed. This then implicit indicate, that if the ‘intelligent’ man disagree with the core assumption of the cause, or the strategy, he will not misguide the rest of the group. Highlighting that the leader should only discuss with intelligent men, most likely means the ones who are seeking the same as the leadership. It then also indicate they seek to control the access to the discourse. This can then be seen in regard to totalitarian propaganda, as Kecskemeti (1950) explain that it include communication between the citizens and the leadership, only that this communication is not to be in public. In this way, the leadership make sure that if there is any deviating or critical opinion against the leaderships, this will not go public. Only the leadership shall be expressing the public opinion. They however claim that you should in fact consider consulting a person with a different view than yourself, but since ISIS can be seen as anti-plural, this as long as the man follow the same ideology and do not deviate from the principles of it. The purpose of consulting those with different opinion can then also be to discover any potential challenging opinions within its body, that need to be handled. The ISIS leaders are further told to be aware

of bad company. (Dabiq#7. P.11) *“Beware of letting your brothers be accompanied by one who will cause them to abandon the fight or will say things that will harm their moral.”* (Dabiq#7. P.12) Instead, *“the leader must let his subject and soldiers hear things that will strengthen them and cause them to feel that they will triumph over their enemy.”* (Dabiq#7. P.13) By referring to only favorable discourse and withhold those who can harm their cause, they can be seen to manipulating their followers, by controlling what is to be perceived as truth, and what is not.

Another way they only use favorable texts and discourse can be seen in how they only quote verses in the Quran and the Hadiths that is in favor of their ideology and vision. They exclude verses that teach moderation, tolerance and pluralism, while the texts and discourses that are beneficial for the cause are perceived and projected as the truth. All negative discourse that can hurt their project are projected as false and lies. They propagate their recipe as the right one, while all the others are wrong. By flooding the reader with impression of ISIS as the trustworthy part, they seek to limit and control the access of discourse. They seek to erase all scientific knowledge regarding culture, projecting it as pseudo-science and therefore not trustworthy. (Dabiq#9.p.26) A pseudo-science that only seek to divide and misguide the Muslims into sins that can cause the Muslim to apostate from the religion. The only knowledge the Muslim masses can trust to be true, is the conception of the world ISIS is telling them through their understanding of the science of the Sharia. (Dabiq#11.p.44) Therefore, when ISIS is stressing their ideology as the truthful guide, and therefore claim that all Muslims have an obligation to endorse and follow it, it can be seen in comparison to how Hagtvet (2011) explain how the Nazi's saw their implementation of their ideology as a consciousness revolution.

4.3 ISIS as Encompassing

According to Sørensen's definition (2011), totalitarian movements doesn't see politics and political ideas as something that is limited to only parts of the human life and society. Everything is connected. ISIS see Allah as all-encompassing and since they bases their ideology on the religious texts, ISIS's vision of the perfect society can also be understood to be encompassing. As for ISIS, the when looking at the problems and the threat towards the religion of Islam, this is mainly caused by worldly and human constructed reality that misguide the Muslims to decline in their religious conciseness. All questions and problems that might arise, is to be answered by the Sharia. In this way, Islam is the all-compassing solution to all problems. This because Islam should be seen as a throughout guide for

organizing the society, with its constitution and legislations. (Dabiq#1. p.24) With a recipe that is based on their perception of what is commanded by the all-encompassing Allah, their organization of their society's main goal is to guide or force the humans into obedience of the commands of Allah. As they believe the revelation given to Muhammed contained guidance in all aspect of organizing the society, and since they claim to be following this revelation, their recipe can then be understood to include answers for all problems that might arise as they seek to build a society comparable to the society of the Prophet.

“Absolute power, knowledge, and ownership are attributes unique to Allah (ta’aalaa)
(Dabiq#9. P.15)

“And Allah is all Encompassing in favor and Knowing” (Dabiq#10.p.24)

“And ever is Allah, of what they do, encompassing” (Dabiq#7.p.65)

“And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing” (Dabiq#7.p75), (Dabiq#9.p.44)

“Indeed, Allah is encompassing of what they do” (Dabiq#9.p.52),

As ISIS believe that Allah is all encompassing, His guidance through the Quran must then also be understood as all-encompassing. Through building a society that are organized based on the Sharia, ISIS seek to control all aspect of both the personal as well as the public sphere. This as their mission is to fight fitnah. As ISIS see themselves as those who understand how the world should be organized, and thus those who are the right leadership with the right recipe for the perfect society, according to ISIS, those who do not agree with them is the ignorant, just as those who didn't believe Muhammed in his time. The ignorant are not grasping the reality of how the world function and thus ends up violating Allah's commands. Islam as it was revealed through Muhammed, should according to ISIS not to be understood as only limited to a small part of the personal sphere. It should rather be perceived as an encompassing religion, concerning all aspects of societal organization, be it personal conduct of the religion or political organization. This as ISIS claim the Quran not to be a book of chanting and recitation, but rather a book of governance, legislation and enforcement.
(Dabiq#1.p24)

With the implementation of the hisbah and the hudud, ISIS can be understood to seek to control all aspect of the peoples' lives. If someone deviates from the right path, he or she should be “guided” back through the execution of hudud and judged by the sharia. The encompassing element in the ISIS's rhetoric can also be seen in how they claim that by defending Islam, this must be done in a holistic way. *“Rather, Islam is a holistic religion that is to be approached*

from all sides, and defended from all sides. If any aspect of it is abandoned or ignored, the Shaytān and his soldiers will quickly fill the vacuum.” (Dabiq#3.p.16) Here, ISIS then seek to fill the vacuum with their religious politics before the crusaders or the other apostates fill it with their kufr ideology of liberal democracy.

ISIS then further explain that their Darul-Islam is to be implemented and supplemented with both a violent jihad as well as a da’wah³⁷ campaign that “*actively tends to the needs of its people.*” (Dabiq#3.p.16) They claim that they fight to defend the Muslims and liberate their lands by fighting the wrongdoers, as well as seek to “*guide and nurture those under its authority and ensure that both their religious and social needs are met.*” (Dabiq#3.p.16-17) They legitimize and project themselves as the savior and therefore have the right to control the lives of the masses. When indicating “*its authority*”, they claim their right to rule over the population they so kindly “liberated”— in all matters.

“For what good is there in liberating a city only to leave its inhabitants steeped in misguidance and misery, suffering from ignorance and disunity, and disconnected from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger...” (Dabiq#3.p.17)

“As such, the Islamic State actively works to educate its citizens, preach to and admonish them, enforce their strict adherence to Islamic obligations, judge their disputes, implement the shar’i hudūd, eradicate all traces of shirk and heresy, incite the people to jihād and call them to unite behind the Khalīfah, Ibrāhīm Ibn ‘Awwād Al-Husaynī Al-Qurashī.” (Dabiq#3.p.16-17)

As they claim to be liberating the population, they are doing this by indicating that the population needed liberation from the wrongdoings they so miserably were misguided into. However as dutiful ISIS are, they will through the Sharia, hudud, and the use of hisbah, kindly and justly guide them back on the right path. For the people who are “liberated”, ISIS narrates that their encompassing recipe is to be perceived as the best solution for the people under its authority. As they implement punishment, they also project themselves as the kind soldiers of Allah that can bring joy and answer the more common needs of the people. This as they claim, “*The soldiers of Allah does not liberate a village, town or city, only to abandon its residents and ignore their needs.*” (Dabiq#4. P.27) Claiming to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammed, they also claim to appoint a deputy that shall remain in their newly acquired territory to look after the families’ needs. They further state that, “*that the practice of the*

³⁷ To inform the masses about Islam and invite them to submission for Allah.

Khilafah to ensure that the needs of the Muslims are being met as much as possible...”
(Dabiq#4. P.27)

ISIS’s focus on the holistic solution is therefore based on the encompassing guidance Muhammed received from Allah. This based on ISISs’ understanding of the revelation as a revelation of Allah’s Trinity. The Trinity of religion (dīn), way-of-life (dunya) and government (dawla). (Mozaffari. In Sørensen. 2011) Since Allah’s Trinity is encompassing, ISIS uses it to guide and control aspects of the human and society in an encompassing way.

“The soldiers of the Islamic State came to the lands of jihad to fulfill their oath to Allah, sacrificing their lives and spilling their blood for His sake. And while they’re eager to take part in the battle against Kufr and its many faces in search for shahadah, they’ve come to understand that a state cannot be established and maintained without ensuring that a portion of the sincere soldiers of Allah look after both the religious and worldly affairs of the Muslims. So they’ve manned their administrative posts, and have set out to establish, support and maintain numerous institutions that the Muslims have come to rely on in their daily lives.” (Dabiq#4. p.28) In this way, we can see that ISIS seek to implement their way of life in both the personal religious sphere, as well as projecting themselves as the ‘good big brother’ who will look after their smaller siblings, and if they don’t behave, they will “slap them over the head”. Only that, by “slapping over the head, can include the flogging, beheading, burning, stoning, etc.

Through the propaganda found in the Dabiq, we can see that ISIS seek to urge the Muslim masses to distance themselves from their contemporary non-Islamic societies. This even though it mean distancing yourself from your own family. (Dabiq#3.p.6) The only true loved-one should be Allah. Though separating them from their former organization they can be looked-upon as being “individualized” so it would be easier to unite them under the new society. When not being attached to their families and friends, and instead being individualized, they can more easily be seduced into a total and selfless submission. (Uwe Backes in Sørensen. Hagtvet. Steine. 2011. p.36) Uwe Backes (ibid) further explain how the totalitarian movements change the strategy when being in power. In ISIS’s case with their propaganda, they paint a glorious picture of their plan and society. However when hearing the accounts of those who escape ISIS, it seems like the life within the Islamic State are not so glamorous. (The Guardian. 14 Oct. 2015)The implementation of the Hisbah patrols can then be seen in comparison with the secret police that worked under the traditional totalitarian regimes. This as when moving to the Caliphate, through ISIS “training”, they are being indoctrinated into their ideology. Here the Hisbah function as the religious police who through their ideological doctrines of justice, force

the people into submission. If you do not submit, the Hisbah can find you, causing a feeling of never being safe. In this way, both physical and mental terror works as a deterrence strategy of indoctrination, implemented by an extensive repression and persecution apparatus. On page 33 in the second issue of Dabiq, ISIS show some of the hisbah assignments that has been conducted. Here, three blindfolded men are being shown in one picture and are according to ISIS been apprehended with five others as they are claimed to be supporting the enemy regime. In another picture, a stockpile of weapons, books and a bag are seen as proof of an allegedly anti-drug operation carried out by ISIS.

As claiming the failure of other so-called “Islamist” groups in their effort to enforce the right penalties for sins: *“It has so far made no effort to ban smoking or regulate how women dress.”*(Dabiq#10. P.67-68), ISIS can be seen as seeking to control the proper moral codes propagated through their Islamic doctrine. They ban smoking, alcohol (Dabiq#7. P.16) as well as regulate how women dress is then a part of their ideology. In another report, ISIS explain how they throw a man they claim was guilty of sodomy of a roof. (Dabiq#7. P.42) This was then justified by referring to an example from the “noble” tradition of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq. Another man was flogged after he allegedly were found with pornographic material. Yet another example is the stoning of a woman who by ISIS was found guilty of zinā (unlawful sexual relationship). (Dabiq#7. P.43) By compel the inhabitants to follow the rules, the use of hadd is seen as *“an expiation for the sin”* (Dabiq#7.43)

Through use of terror and violence, performed against all those who oppose or might oppose their claim of rule, or not following all their directions, they seek to control all aspect of the society to downplay or erase all potential opposition—be it in the personal- as well as in the public sphere.

According to Backes (in Sørensen. Hagtvet. Steine. 2011. p.38), where the western secular society bases itself on the positive law, a totalitarian regime uses terror as a mean to facilitate the “historical laws”, “the natural laws” or what can be seen in ISIS case, “Allah’s laws”. To ensure that Allah’s laws are followed, they use terror and violence if deemed necessary. This then to coerce and control their inhabitants.

Through Dabiq Magazine, ISIS can be viewed as seeking to spread their ideology and to seek to organize the social consciousness of the Muslims around the world. Ideologies can be seen as principles that should organize the social consciousness, (Van Djik. *Discourse Analysis as*

Ideology analysis.), since ISIS ideology is built on the Quran and the hadiths, the principles found in these texts therefore lay the foundation of how to organize the societal consciousness. ISIS do not only seek to control the assumption of the reality, but can be seen as seeking to totally control and reproduce the identity of its members through “training”, better understood as indoctrination.

With the ideology, ISIS are mentally seeking to shape not only the basic social characteristics of the Muslims, but rather with their encompassing understanding, the whole world. Usually, membership of a group would acquire an ideology through a long-term processes. (Van Djik. *Discourse Analysis as Ideology analysis.*) For ISIS, as seen with other totalitarian regimes, their belief in the ‘near end’ and the fight for the survival, is then an excuse to speed up this processes of acquiring the ideology. They therefore communicate the urgent need to reproduce the social fabric so their identity, with its norms, morals and values are reproduced in the line with the guidance from Allah. This so they can be saved and enter paradise on the Day of Judgement.

As ISIS base themselves on the religious texts of the Quran, Hadith’s and other religious historical texts, they do not have to create symbols or rituals like the 20th century secular totalitarian regimes. The texts and histories ISIS use to build their narrative can however be seen in the same way as the former regimes’ use myths and rituals. As Alexander Hanisch-Wolfram (in Postoutenko. 2010) explain, “*myths play a central role in (totalitarian) propaganda as they provide the basis of belonging together which is noting*”. The basis for what ISIS is using to communicating their legality and justification of both their authority and ideology as a whole, can be seen as in the same way of myths as it is not verifiable other than that the Quran is claimed to be true. Just as constructed myths can provide a common understanding and answers for roots, goals and defining of enemies, ISIS narrates a war between the Muslims and the ‘other’ with links to the historical key events of the first Muslims. This is then understood as where Hanisch-Wolfram (in Postoutenko. 2010) explain where totalitarian ideology uses myths and rituals to give meaning and importance of today’s events, ISIS use religious prophecies and religious events. In this way, ISIS build a conception of the world based on the teaching from the Quran and the Hadiths.

4.4 Defining the enemies

Anyone or anything who seek to muddle and hinder their implementation must either be eliminated or directed to the right path. As seen with the ignorant, some might be guided onto the right path, but those who continue to deny, must have their neck struck. (Dabiq#7. p.22)

“Allah (ta’ālā) also described what should be struck with the sword, {Remember when your Lord revealed to the angels, “I am with you, so strengthen those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieved, so strike [them] upon the necks and strike from them every fingertip”} [Al-Anfāl: 12]. He (ta’ālā) also said, {So when you meet those who disbelieve, strike their necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens} [Muhammad: 4].” (Dabiq#7. P.22)

Sørensen’s (2011) eight criterion explain if being a totalitarian movement, anything or anyone who stand in the way of the implementation of the perfect society would be defined as enemies or object that need to be eliminated. Be it supporters or those who continues to live their lives in the contemporary society, rivaling totalitarian regimes, objects or symbols that can be defined as unfavorable for the movement. According to Sørensen (2011), a common feature of the totalitarian movements, are that they justify their rights to brand or define anyone as enemies.

“We will strike the neck of anyone- whoever he may be – that attempts to usurp his leadership...” (Dabiq#1. P.29)

Here, ISIS is communicating quite clear that anyone who stands in their way would be define as an enemy. Be it the superpowers who bomb and trying to kill the leadership through military means, other Islamic groups that seek to remove the ISIS legitimacy, or internal members who seek overthrow the leadership for personal power. Anyone who seek to dismantle what ISIS claim to have built are defined as enemies.

“...the Islamic State will do everything within its means to continue to strike down every apostate who stands as an obstacle on its path...” (Dabiq#2. P.4)

As a totalitarian movement claim to have the authority to define anyone and anything as their enemies, ISIS brand all other Islamist groups or individuals as hypocrites who apostate if they do not acknowledge ISIS authority. At page 25 in the second issue, ISIS denounce the Islamic

Front based on what ISIS claim to be cooperation with the tawaghet³⁸. As ISIS claim the Islamic Front have called the Arab nations who fight ISIS, “friends of Syria”, they can therefore be seen as allies to these tawaghet. (Dabiq#2. P.25) As the Islamic Front, according to ISIS congratulated the “*Erdogan secularists upon their renewed apostasy*”, this can be seen as a proof of their hypocrisy. (Dabiq#2. P.25) Any group, who ally with or seek to fight ISIS will be defined as enemies.

“...anyone who attempt to divert us from our commitment to make the religion of Allah triumphant over all other religions, and that we will continue to fight the people of deviation and misguidance until we die trying to make the religion triumphant.” (Dabiq#2. P.11)

Anyone who either physically or through communication seek to hurt ISISs’ effort to implement their perfect society will be understood as enemies. (Dabiq#2. P. 26)

As an example, ISIS claim that the Jawlani Front is seeking to spread lies and slandering to drive people away from ISIS. (Dabiq#2. P.25)

“So beware, for by fighting the Islamic State you fall into kufr whether you realize it or not.” (Dabiq#10. P.50) Therefore, those who fight ISIS and at the same time call themselves Muslims or Islamists, ISIS regard them as apostates. Being an apostate will also qualify as enemy.

“Therefore it becomes clear that the one who denies him to be the messenger and prophet has indeed cursed Allah, slandered Him, and attributed ignorance, weakness, and foolishness to Him!” (Dabiq#2. P.27) Therefore, all Muslims who fight ISIS will not be seen as Muslims according to ISIS as long as they do not repent, acknowledge and join ISIS rule.

Anyone who do not follow their interpretation of the religion, as they base their ideology upon, and thus is seen slandering ‘Him’, they can therefore be seen as seeking to oppose the basis of their “perfect society”. As enemies, they will therefore get their neck chopped off.

Just as the traditional totalitarian regimes defined their enemies through a politicization of crimes, those who might seek to hinder ISIS’s implementation is through a religious definition defined as non-Muslims. As we have seen, ISIS regard themselves as the right authority and through the Hisbah’s they decide who is a true Muslims, and who is not. ISIS can therefore declare anyone their enemy, just as the former totalitarian regimes defined their enemies based on political necessity. This since they believe they have the knowledge and power to understand who the true Muslims are and who is not. Those who did not choose the “true” side through the

³⁸ The ones who do not rule in what was revealed by Allah. (Dabiq)

rejection of their contemporary society are seen as those who choose the wrong side—the side of the enemy.

“This Khilafah is more in need than ever before for experts, professionals, and specialists, who can help contribute in strengthening its structure and tending to the needs of their Muslim brothers Otherwise, his claims will become a greater proof against him on Judgment Day.”

(Dabiq#3. P.26) Out from this, it is not an explicit threat against those who do not perform hijrah or jihad, but as staying would cause destruction to the religion and any future jihad, the person who do not reject his “false” society would be a hinder and therefore an enemy as he is a hypocrite. *“”whoever dies without intending to take part in a battle, has died with a trait of hypocrisy. Therefore, abandoning jihad is a trait of hypocrisy.”* (Dabiq#3. P.26)

“So abandoning hijrah—the path to jihad—is a dangerous matter. In effect, one is thereby deserting jihad and willingly accepting his tragic condition of being a hypocritical spectator.”(Dabiq#3. P.27)

This then indicate that those who do not fulfill their obligation to perform hijrah and jihad would be defined as enemies of the cause since hijrah and jihad is narrated as obligations. As hijrah and jihad is narrated as obligations, by not performing it would be a great sin that can result in kufr and seen by ISIS as disobedience of Allah’s commands. By not complying with Allah’s commands, the person is seen as mushrik and therefore an enemy.

“Similarly, one who abandons jihad—the deed without which he can achieve no maslahah—should be punished by hajar³⁹, since he did not assist the Muslims in righteousness and piety.” (Dabiq#3. P.32)

All groups, states or individuals who seek to hinder ISIS authority and the establishment of the Caliphate is in ISIS view a hinder of the implementation of Allah’s reign on the earth. *“Therefore, the groups of apostates, hypocrites, innovators, corruption spreaders, rebels, and partisans – having diverse hearts but allied to one another—thought, evaluated, plotted, participated amongst each other, and all of them participated in the concocted treachery...”* (Dabiq#10. P.51)

In this way, all who do not acknowledge ISIS’s authority and thus fight them, are by ISIS striped their legitimacy as Muslims, as they are only viewed as people of treachery. Since they do not fight for and defend Islam, they are apostates and it should therefore be morally easier to kill them. This is further justified by claiming that anyone who fight or resist the implementation

³⁹ Stoning

of the “obvious and definite” laws of Islam, there is an obligation to fight them until they comply. (Dabiq#10. P. 56) As ISIS see themselves as the only rightful authority to enforce the laws of Allah, this must then be understood as Muslims are obligated to fight whoever fights ISIS.

“So any resistance party that resists some of the obligatory prayers, fasting hajj, or resist abiding by the prohibition of spilling blood, looting wealth, alcohol, gambling, incest, or resists adherence to jihad against the kuffar or the enforcement of jizyah upon Ahlul-Kitaab, or resists abiding by anything else of the obligations and prohibition of the religion, those rulings which no one has an excuse for being ignorant of or abandoning and which the individual commits kufr by denying, then the resistance party is fought over this rulings even if it acknowledge them.”

“So if a person who adheres to all the laws of the religion but forcefully resists the prohibition of gambling, usury, or fornication is a kafir whom it is obligatory to fight...” (Dabiq#10. P. 56)

Here, ISIS lay the basis for who is to be defined as enemies. As they also include “*or resist abiding by anything else of the obligation and prohibition of the religion*”, they also open up for further inclusion of other elements that can brand an enemy, as they can further interpret the religious texts for their own advantage. In the most basic sense, all who do not follow ISIS understanding of the religion and the laws, they are enemies of the Islamic State as they are enemies of Allah.

This are then understood as all those who oppose the rule of Allah, enforced by ISIS—be it Muslims, or non-Muslims.

When looking at the main enemy, it can be understood as those mentioned in the end-day vision of ISIS. This as they believe in and The Grand Battle—al-Malhama al-Kubra in the city of Dabiq. In the prophesy ISIS believe in, the Muslims [understood as ISIS], will fight the non-believers and win the battle between ‘good and evil’.

“The hour will not be established until the Romans land at A’maq or Dabiq. Then an army from Madinah of the best of the people on the earth at that time will leave for them. When they line up in ranks the Romans will say, ‘Leave us and those who were taken as prisoners from amongst us so we can fight them.’ The Muslims will say, ‘Nay, by Allah, we will not abandon our brothers to you.’ So they will fight them. Then one third of them will flee; Allah will never forgive them. One third of them will be killed; they will be the best martyrs with Allah. And one third will conquer them; they will never be afflicted with fitnah. Then they will

conquer Constantinople.” (Dabiq#3. P.15) In this prophesy, ISIS therefore see themselves as the best of the people on earth and therefore those who are meeting the “Romans” in Dabiq. The Romans are then believed to be understood as the Europeans or the Western forces who ISIS claim are in a constant war against Islam. As ISIS narrates it, the first step of expanding the rule of Allah is therefore to defeat the ‘Crusaders’ in the Grand Battle in Dabiq, then conquer Istanbul (Constantinople), further expand into Europe as they conquer Rome. (Dabiq#1. P.5) Rome is then understood as Europe and the western civilization, based on the reference to the Romans and their Roman Empire. Using words like the Crusaders and the Romans in their discourse, ISIS seek to legitimize their cause by referring to the contemporary Western presence and interventions as a treat against Islam. Linking the contemporary western society to the historical crusades, ISIS seek to convince their followers that west in fact wish to replace the truth with a kufir ideology just as they believed the crusaders did before. As crusaders, ISIS project the west as the aggressors who seek to damage the Muslim population, and misguide them into evil sins. Using a historical context, branding the westerns as crusaders, they link them to the fight between the Catholic Church and the Muslim Ottoman Empire between 1000 and 1500. They further mention the western efforts to divide the Muslim population with their national borders made by Sykes (Dabiq#9. P.21) and their domination of the Muslims through the Balfour Declaration. (Dabiq#9. P.20)

What is evident when looking for ISIS’s defined enemies, it is their use of derogatory terms. As mentioned, the actors from mainly the western society are referred to as Crusaders or Kuffars. As a rhetorical tactic, using the term kuffar on their enemies, they brand them as not trustworthy since they are the agents of misguidance and are therefore seen as a threat against Islam. This as they claim that the kuffar are denying the truth or seeking to conceal it. The Muslims who oppose the ISIS legitimacy are also branded as not trustworthy and thus enemies. However, they are branded as mushrikeen (polytheists). They believe in Allah, but according to ISIS, they are still worshipping other idols or created beings, and do not fully submit to Allah. *“Indeed, the one who abstains due to arrogance from worshipping Allah does not worship Him, so he is not mustaslim (submitting) to Him, and he who worships Him and worships others with Him is a mushrik towards Him, so he is not sālim for Him, rather he has shirk towards Him.”* (Dabiq#7. P.22) Mention above, as they are violating the commands of Allah, they should therefore be fought as long as they do not repent and acknowledge ISIS as the true leaders.

Explained before, those who do not follow the laws of Allah, which ISIS believe they have the right to enforce, ISIS, brand these as apostates. Sunni Muslims who oppose ISIS authority, is therefore claimed to have left their religion. Since renunciation of his or her religion is seen as one of the most serious crimes, ISIS then through defining opposing Muslims as apostates, they justify killing them. Any Muslim who do not support ISIS, might by ISIS be defined as an apostate and therefore also an enemy.

When ISIS write about groups who fight ISIS or work for those government that ISIS reject through their revolutionary stance, they often also call them murtaddīn. This can however also be other Islamic factions, as seen with regard to what they call the Sahwah Coalition. (Iraqi Sunni Awakening Movement). With their cooperation with the Americans in Iraq against the Jihadists, as well as their meetings with the anti-ISIS coalition in Syria, they are seen as hypocrites and backstabbers. Since they work with the enemies, they are defined as enemies as they no longer can be understood to be Muslims.

“Whoever aligns with the kuffār has disbelieved.’ The biggest form of alliance is support whether by statements, spears, or speech. So those who tread behind Bush in his crusade against the Muslims have disbelieved in Allah subhānahū wa ta’ālā and His Messenger...” ...”Even if he supported them just by a single word. He who aligns with them by a single word falls into apostasy – extreme apostasy” (Dabiq#4. P.44)

An explicit statement that brand the Shawah coalition as a clear enemy that need to be fought can be seen in ISISs’ quest for purifying their territory into a “clean” Darul-Islam. *“Thus, it would only be natural to assume that as the Islamic State continued to expand, it would place a strong focus on cleansing its bastion of Safawī forces and Sahwāh militias...” (Dabiq#5. P.10)* Further ISIS seek to delegitimize them by claiming that they have not ruled any village they controlled by Shari. *“Thus, it becomes clear to you that the mere adherence to Islam coupled with the resistance to some of its laws does not save them from war and that they are to be fought because of their kufr and apostasy from Islam...” (Dabiq# 10. P.57)* Instead, ISIS claim that there were a great deal of fitnah in their territory. They therefore claim that they have an obligation to fight them. This by claiming that Allah have said *“Fight them until there is no fitnah and until worship is for Allah.” (Dabiq#10. P.56)*

ISIS being a Sunni movement grown out from Zarqawi’s legacy of Sunni-Shia sectarianism, there is a great hatred towards the Shia’s in Dabiq. This is seen through multiple different

derogatory terms. When talking of the Syrian regime, ISIS call them the Nusayri regime. This linked to the Alawite sect and the Nusayri doctrine. As ISIS see it, with reference to Ibn Taymiyya, *“The Druze and the Nusayriyyah are kuffār according to the agreement of the Muslims. It is not permissible to eat what they slaughter nor marry their women. Rather, they cannot be acknowledged with jizyah, for they are apostates from the religion of Islam, not Muslims, nor Jews, nor Christians.”* (Dabiq#10. P.8) According to Fabrice Balanche (2015), because of their belief in reincarnation, their non-use of mosques, tolerance of alcohol and their acceptance that the woman do not need to use the veil, they have been condemned by many Sunni clerics. According to ISIS, as seen above, the Syrian Alawite regime is an apostate regime and must therefore be removed.

Overall, with the explicit sectarian element in the ISIS ideology, ISIS used different names to disregard the Shi’ites. One of the names ISIS can be seen using is Safawi. This used as a derogatory term to describe the Shia Muslims who ISIS claim to have been misguided from the propaganda of the 16th century Safawi dynasty. (Dabiq#11. P.52) According to ISIS, the Sawafi dynasty with their Sufi elements forcefully converted the majority of the “Iranians” to Shi’a Islam, causing a greater split between the Sunni’s and the Shia’s. By this division, they damaged the true Islam and misguided parts of the Muslim Ummah into apostasy. Just as seen with regard to the Sunni Sahwah militias, there is a need to cleanse out the Safawi to eradicate all fitnah. Another name they use to talk about the Shi’as is Rāfidah. Used to brand someone as rejecters with the meaning of those who reject. ISIS use Rāfidah to refer to those who at the succession of Muhammed rejected the Caliphate of the Prophet’s two first successors. Rāfidah can perhaps be seen as the group ISIS hate the most and thus a priority target.

“Deal with the Rāfidah first, wherever you find them, then Āl Salūl and their soldiers before the crusaders and their bases. Deal with the Rāfidah, Āl Salūl, and their soldiers. Dismember their limbs. Snatch them as groups and individuals.” (Dabiq#5. P.27)

“O people of wisdom and faith... be harsh against the Houthi Rāfidah, for they are kuffār murtaddīn.” “the Rāfidah were enemies of Islam” (Dabiq#5. P.28)

When talking about the other Arab regimes, which allies with the West, ISIS refer to them as the Arab tawaghit. In this manner, ISIS are referring to them as disbelievers who are committing idolatry—as regimes that does not rule in accordance to Allah. Instead, they are seen as misguiding their Muslim population and by ruling by manmade law. Their cooperation with the West as puppets of the crusaders, and the way they rule the ‘Muslim’ lands in a western constructed organization and not Islamic, are therefore the reason Muslims would risk falling

into sinful acts. (Dabiq#9. P.22) Arab regimes are therefore seen as a treat against Islam and therefore enemy. As contemporary regimes seek to preserve their status-quo as nationalistic states, ISIS narrate this as a direct treat against their current state structure. ISIS narrate that the lust of the political leaders therefore are driven by the lust for political power and other worldly gains, something as mention earlier leads to the neglecting the desire to worship Allah. This as ISIS see the desire for wealth and power as the most dangerous desire that would ultimately lead to kufr. (Dabiq#2. P.29) (Dabiq#7. P.55) Since the Arab regimes are organizing their society based on structures that follow the manmade law, is seen as proof that the leaders are not to be viewed as Muslims, They are therefore defined as apostates and enemies.

The overall assumption regarding ISIS's enemies is that everyone who oppose their implementation and their authority should be defined as non-Muslims. In this way, all who do not agree with the narrative the ISIS leadership decide to be the truth are a potential targets as they can be seen as obstacles in regard of the cause, narrated as those who violate Allah's commands.

Anyone who fight ISIS or talk about them in a non-favorable way is defined as enemies of Islam.

“So beware, for by fighting the Islamic State you fall into kufr whether you realize it or not.” (Dabiq#10. P.50)

“...fighting with them [Sahwah Coalition] against the Islamic State they are actually waging war against the established Shari'ah replacing it with something else and this is kufr and apostasy. (Dabiq#10. P. 54)

“Every party that resist the obvious and define law of Islam from these people or others, then it is obligatory to fight them until they comply with its laws even if they pronounce the shahadatayn.” (Dabiq#10. P.56)

“Thus, any of those who forcefully resist obeying Allah and His Messenger have wage war against Allah and His Messenger. And whoever implements upon this Earth something other than the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger has thus strived to spread corruption on the Earth. (Dabiq#10. P. 57)

“Everyone who oppose this goal or stand in the path of this goal is an enemy to us and a target for our swords, whatever his name may be and whatever his lineage may be.” (Dabiq#11. P.20)

It becomes clear that whoever stands in the way of the materialization of ISIS's ideology throughout the world, they will be branded as obstacles and therefore defined as enemies who must be eliminated.

In Sørensen's definition (2011), not only those who stand in the totalitarian movements' way are defined as enemies, but also things that can hinder the implementation of the perfect society. In Dabiq, this can be seen through their destruction of buildings, artifacts and symbols they believe is causing worship not in line with their ideology. As they narrates that the only worship is to be the worship of Allah, any human made things that can be used as a symbol of faith or to be worshiped would be seen as damaging for the cause. This seen in their photo reports where they show their "success" of destroying "Shirk". In these reports, ISIS show pictures of their demolition of the Husayniyyatul-Qubba Mosque, as they call it a temple (Dabiq#2. P.14), their demolition of the "Grave of the Girl" in Mosul. (Dabiq#2. P.15), their demolishing the Shrine and tomb of Ahmad Ar-Rifai in the district of al-Mahlambiyyah #Dabiq#2. P.16), as well as the demolition of the "Husayniyyat Jawwad" 'temple' in Tal'Afar. (Dabiq#2. P.17) By justifying the demolition as the removing of shirk, ISIS project it as a necessity as they claim these building are causing harm to the faith. In another ISIS report, they show their success of "*erasing the legacy of a ruined nation*". In this report ISIS with "*sledgehammers in hand, revived the Sunnah of their father Ibrahim.*" (Dabiq#8. P.22) By destroying old heritage of the Assyrian town, they claim they removed the statues and ruins, portrayed by the kuffar as part of a cultural heritage that the Muslims should embrace and base their identity on. (Dabiq#8. P.22)

"It was not the people of the kafir nations that the Prophet was instructed to revere and identify himself with. Rather, he was instructed to identify with and emulate the example of his father Ibrahim..." (Dabiq#8. P.23)

Here we can see that historical heritage posing a threat against ISIS as it can form the basis for another identity than the strict one ISIS seek to produce with their ideology. Demolishing symbols that can be seen as harmful for the implementation of ISIS ideology are explained to be examples of hisbah. Commanding the good and forbidding the evil. In this way, the demolishing of historical and other symbols are according to ISIS, therefore religiously sanctioned by Allah. (Dabiq#3. P.17) Through the destruction of any symbols that can challenge the one-and-only way and identity, ISIS believe they can direct the Muslims back to only worship the One worth worshipping—Allah.

By first defining themselves as the proper and truthful Muslims, they define their enemies as the evil and bad. As their enemies are seen as spreading falsehood and seeking to hinder the implementation of the truthful Sharia, there is a need to identify and fight them. By identifying their enemy as the ‘other’, they then can fight him as this is needed to stabilize the group, or in ISIS discourse stabilize the faith and Allah’s supreme rule. (Hanisch-Wolfram in Postoutenko. 2010)

4.5 The means

When it comes to the means a totalitarian movement can use to reach their perfect society, Sørensen (2011) explain that for a totalitarian movement, any means necessary to reach their end-goal should be uses— even violence and terror if its deemed necessary. The end-goal is so great that reaching it should overriding everything else. Therefore, there can be no moral or ideological barriers to the means. If a totalitarian movement were convinced that the establishment is so overriding everything else, they would seek to justify their use of any means necessary. Justifying the killing of anyone who do not follow the ISIS ideology, based on that they are not Muslims, indicate that they can brand whoever they want as non-Muslims and kill them as long as this benefit the cause. ISIS would then use extreme violence and terror to force people to submit to their rule.

One tactic that can be seen endorsed by ISIS, is Abu Mus’ab’s modus operandi of seeking to create as much chaos as possible. This so the government authority would not be able to uphold their power. This can be done with vehicle bombs, IEDs and suicide missions. (Dabiq#1. P.36-37.) Another tactic is to attack any group who cooperated with the “*crusaders*”, be it the Iraqi government forces, other Sunni- and Shi’a groups. By doing this, Abu Mus’ab sought to create a conflicting environment, and threatened anyone with war if they did not comply with the Ahlus-Sunnah. This done to ensure a constant environment of insecurity in Iraq so that no ‘apostate’ group were able to gain power. (Dabiq#1. P.37) We can therefore understand ISIS to first seek to create much insecurity in an area, for so go in and “*liberate*” it as they call it. When *liberating* a territory, they then seek to inflict fear within the hearts of their enemies just as they seek to inflict it in the hearths of the western civilians. “*Through operations like this, terror enters the hearts of Allah’s enemies.*” (Dabiq#8. P.62)

Using terrorist attacks, they wish to destabilize the area they seek to control. When the area is destabilized they seek to fill the vacuum by implementing their Shari’a laws. Through brutal

hudud punishments, they further seek to rule the territory through terrorizing the population into submission. According to ISIS, they are only educating the population into the correct path with the right moral. If anyone deviate from what ISIS define as criteria for their perfect society, they can use brutal punishment against this person to set an example. ISIS' use of power can then be seen as Clausewitz's claim "*an act of violence to compel the opponent to do as we wish.*" (in Arendt.1970. p.36) Just like Sørensen (2011. p.23) explained, if someone is defined as an enemy, as the person is seen as an obstacle of the implementation of the overriding perfect society, it would be beneficial to eliminate him/her. In the case of ISIS, both Clausewitz' and Sørensens' explanations can fit, as either you compel, or you're an obstacle that must be eliminated.

ISIS also project a narrative through their believe of the Day of Judgment and the Great battle in Dabiq that gives the impression that reaching the end-goal is a question of life and death—or paradise and hellfire. As explained according to the rejection of the contemporary society, if people do not reject and join the Caliphate, they risk being dragged down to hell with the other sinful kaffirs. Also with their claimed mission of erasing all fitnah, this erasing of fitnah, can therefore justify the use of all means necessary. (Dabiq#10. P.56) Where Sørensen (2011. P.23) explain when there is a question of survival; the preservation would override all and every moral considerations. This seen in how ISIS claim they justly could burn the Jordanian pilot (Dabiq#7. P.5), or throwing homosexuals of tall buildings. (Dabiq#7. P.42) In these brutal executions, ISIS claim they are sanctioned to do so on the basis of their understanding of the histories of the first Caliphs and what was revealed by Allah. Doing this, they seek to convince their followers that their actions are moral based. Those ISIS kills, are the ones' who have deviated from the acceptable moral path and if not killed, they might infect the rest of the society with sins and evil. Killing anyone who do not follow ISIS ideology is therefore seen as a necessity and a part of the obligation to erase the fitnah.

What the majority of the world would understand as totally unmoral and disgusting acts of violence, ISIS sees as just and morally acceptable in comparison to the unmoral opponents that claim ISIS to be unjust. This as ISIS claim their brutality commanded by Allah. "*I am with you, so strengthen those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieved, so strike [them] upon the necks and strike from them every fingertip*" (Dabiq#7. P.21)

They seek to terrorize the humans in such a way they would not dare to ask questions and instead subjugate under ISIS authority. Those who don't, should live in fear. Being examples, this brutal means are therefore to show the populations of the Earth what happens to the enemies of Allah and ISIS. By carrying out terror attacks, ISIS seek to project themselves as strong so they can recruit as well as to scare of any potential opposition. In this way, the use of violence and terror is then more seen as a tactic. By showing their brut violence, like beheadings or throwing people of the roof, ISIS can be seen as following the words of Hobbes: "*Covenants, without the sword, are but words?*" (Arendt1970:5). Using brutal violence can then be seen as a necessity to achieve publicity and awaked different feelings within the audience. Be it a feeling of justice or the fear of becoming an enemy. In this way the use of violence is seen as tactic that legitimate ISIS as the "true" soldiers of Allah, not merely the hypocrites who use the Quran as a book of chanting and recitation. Just as Arendt quote Hobbes, (Ibid) ISIS claim that the "*Islam is the religion of the sword, not pacifism.*" (Dabiq#7. P.20) This is further explain as: "*There is a slogan repeated continuously by apologetic "du'āt" when flirting with the West and that is their statement: "Islam is the religion of peace," and they mean pacifism by the word peace. They have repeated this slogan so much to the extent that some of them alleged that Islam calls to permanent peace with kufr and the kāfirīn. How far is their claim from the truth, for Allah has revealed Islam to be the religion of the sword, and the evidence for this is so profuse that only a zindīq (heretic) would argue otherwise.*" (Dabiq#7. P.20) In this way ISIS legitimize their use of violence and brutality based on the conception of Islam as a religion of the sword.

"I was sent with the sword before the Hour so that Allah would be worshipped alone without a partner" (Dabiq#3. P.29)

"...for Allah has revealed Islam to be the religion of the sword..." (Dabiq#7. P.20)

As ISIS sees those who continue to live amongst the apostates and the non-believers as someone who live in denial of Islam, they can be seen as subjugating to Shaytan (the devil). "*So fight against the allies of Shaytan.* (Dabiq#9. P.51) "*but they who plot evil deeds will have a severe punishment, and plotting of those –it will perish.*"(Dabiq#9. P.51) Here, these quotes are aimed at those who fight ISIS. However, with the western society's liberal democracies, ISIS claim that there is no innocent and all can be targeted as they are seen as supporters of the crusader government. In this way, all who continue to live and acknowledge the liberal democracy will be defined kuffars and crusaders—and thus enemies. "*Do not look for specific targets. Kill anybody. All the kuffar over there are target.* (Dabiq#8.p.62). With the

second line, “*plotting of those—it will perish*” can then be read as they justify the elimination of them.

As ISIS seek to establish a pure Islamic Earth, where there is no fitnah, this therefore also indicates that they wish to eliminate anyone who are not deemed “pure” or “clean”. Just as with other forms of totalitarian regimes (Sørensen.2011), if they deemed it necessary to eliminate one, hundreds or even millions of people, it is the right thing to do since the goal is so overriding everything else. Therefore, as ISIS claim to establish Allah’s rule all over the world through a worldwide pure Islamic Caliphate. To establish the worldwide Caliphate they then have to eliminate all fitnah, indicating the need to kill or eliminate the majority of the worlds’ population. However if this is what it takes, then it shall be done with the help and grace of Allah.

“*Either ones performs hijrah to the wilayat of the Khilafah or, if he is unable to do so, he must attack the crusaders, their allies, the Rafidah, the tawaghith, and their apostate forces, wherever he might be **with any means available to him**, and he should not hesitate in doing so, nor consult any supposed “scholar” on this obligation.*” (Dabiq#9. P.54) First, with the phrase *if he is unable to do so*, ISIS in this way accept, at least implicit, that some might violate the obligation of hijra. Those who do not travel might be beneficial for the cause if they can terrorize the public where they are. This can also be read out from “*any attack against the supporters of the Sahwah—the crusaders and Al Salul –strengthens the mujahidin in Dimashq [Damascus]*” (Dabiq#9. P.73) However, by claiming that the ones’ who do not perform their obligation of hijrah should attack with any means available thus underscore that no means are of the table. With the attacks in Lyon and at the hotel beach resort in Tunisia, these attacks were justified as they were targeting citizens of the *crusader states* who are waging war against ISIS. (Dabiq#10. P.3) As these states are seen as seeking to remove ISIS and its new Caliphate, ISIS then project it as they wage war on Islam.

“*So rise O muwahhid. Rise and defend your state from wherever you may be.*” “*The call to defend the Islamic State—the only state ruling by Allah’s Shari’ah today...*” (Dabiq#10. P.4) “*...should they [the Jihadi “claimants”- opposing jihadist groups and the coalition] succeed in taking any territory from the Khilafah, that territory would no longer be ruled by Allah’s pure Shari’ah.*” (Dabiq#10. P.4)

“*Thus we renew our all to the sincere Muslims around the world to march forth and wage war against the crusaders and apostates who seek to wipe out the Shari’ah. March forth,*

neither fearing the blame of the critics, nor seeking the pleasure of the people, for the hukm belongs to Allah, not the people.” (Dabiq#10. P.4)

In this way, ISIS narrates waging war against ISIS is waging war against Allah and the true Islam. By attacking the crusaders, it should therefore be seen as a defensive war of survival. A war of survival therefore justify all means. By spreading fear, they seek to destabilize the liberal democracies. This would then cause anxiety and xenophobia towards Muslims, something ISIS uses to prove the need of a safe-heaven for the Muslims. By creating xenophobia and anxiety towards Muslims in the west, ISIS can further claim the need to reject the present and embrace the new Caliphate. Western discourse regarding the war on ISIS then serve as proof that the West are in war with Islam. With the controversial anti-Muslim statements of the American presidential candidate Donald Trump (CNN. Dec. 8. 2015) , this can then be used to underscore that the Western society is hating and seek to control and subjugate Muslims away from their true religion. In this way, spreading violence and fear within Western societies is then a tactic to create an anti-Muslim environment where the Muslims should see the evil of the West, and therefore reject it.

Regarding the legitimate violence against those sects ISIS regards as seeking to spread falsehood upon the Earth, like the Druze, they claim them to be *“from the most deviant kuffar.”* (Dabiq#10. P.9) Since ISIS believe the Druze to be apostates that spread lies and misguide the Muslims, ISIS therefore justify the killing of their scholars and their religious figures. This so they can protect the Muslims and the true Islam from the harmful misguidance. (Dabiq#10 p.9) By killing scholars and religious figures from the opposition, this can be seen as an attempt to limit and control an Islamic discourse, as they silence potential opposing narratives.

However, there are some contradictions in the issues. Where ISIS urge supporters who doesn't perform their hijrah to use any means available, in the first issue, 'The return of the Khilafah' it is told that Abu Mus'ab strived to create as much chaos as possible with *“the means permitted by the Shari'ah.”* (Dabiq#1. P. 36) Therefore in this article, ISIS acknowledge that there should be limitations to the means, however, as they define their enemies as non-Muslims or apostates, they seek to paint a picture that show themselves as morally just and that they only acting to forbid evil and commanding the good. In regards to the defining of enemies, when branding all opponents as kuffar or apostate, they find ways with their understanding of the Shari'ah to justify almost all violence.

Where the secular totalitarian movements relied on political religion to enable them with the power to deciding true moral and values that lay the basis for the legality of the means. (Gentile. 1990. 2005). ISIS by relying on the traditional religion of Islam, they construct morals and values out from their interpretation of the religious texts. All use of violence and force in their quest to materialize a worldwide Shari'ah-ruled empire, are then sanctioned by Allah and therefore divine. By rejecting contemporary society based on the false international system, this also include the laws and norms regarding 'just war'. With Allah's guidance, they therefore believe they are fighting a just and sanctioned war. According to ISIS, the use of brutal violence and terror is not merely narrated to be used out of necessity as in Sørensen's definition (2011), but rather used as it is commanded by Allah. However, as seen as in the example with Abu Mus'ab, use of violence and terror can be understood used as strategy to achieve a certain goal, and therefore still be seen as a necessity. This especially in regard to the execution of hudud punishment and the execution of their enemies, as the publications of these harsh punishments can work as deterrence.

5.0 Summing up and Conclusion

In this thesis, I have sought to give an insight into the propaganda and ideology ISIS communicate through the Dabiq Magazine. This to see if the justification and narrative ISIS communicated through their propaganda can be understood as totalitarian. The research question in this thesis have been: *Can we understand ISIS's discourse in the Dabiq Magazines to be totalitarian, given the criterions in Øystein Sørensen's definition of totalitarian ideologies and movements?* By coding and analyzing the corpus out from the criterion found in Øystein Sørensen's definition (2011. P.21-22), I've have tried to find elements within ISIS's discourse that can be understood as totalitarian. Through this thesis, I've then sought to broaden the understanding of ISIS ideology as well as sought to give a contribution to the field of totalitarian research. With focus on a militant Islamic movement like ISIS, I hope this thesis can be a contribution to the totalitarian research as ISIS, as a religious movement also can fit into the definition of totalitarian ideology and movements.

5.1 ISIS's totalitarian elements.

Through the analysis, ISIS can be seen as a movement that claim to have found the recipe for the perfect society. A recipe that is just on the basis that it follow the true example of the Prophet Muhammed and the revelation revealed to him from Allah. As seen, ISIS as a guardians of the Muslims shall therefore implement their recipe to save the Muslim Ummah from the fitnah that exist in the world.

In the analysis, we can see how ISIS use their discourse in Dabiq to communicating a narrative were the Muslims have been misguided and risking to apostate from their religion. With western constructed concepts of nationalism, free will, secularism, and manmade law, ISIS narrate a clear and present danger to the survival of the Islamic faith. A danger that only can be handled by rejecting the present and direct onto a new course. (Sørensen. 2011) By claiming there is an obligation to perform hijrah from the land of shirk, and move to the newly revolutionary established Caliphate, ISIS is narrating the need to reject the present. To save the Muslim from domination and prepare them for the Day of Judgement, ISIS urge the Muslims to reject the false society they are living in and move the revolutionary new society establish by ISIS through the materialization of the Caliphate. As with the traditional totalitarian regimes, the western liberal democracy is especially mentioned as the evil and a reason for the loss of faith. By living in this western constructed society, the Muslims would risk losing their faith, piece-by-piece, ultimately risking apostasy and the hellfire.

As ISIS have established a new, truthful and pure society that never before have been seen, the Muslims now have a state where they can live in a prosperous life without living as slaves under a kafir-master. Therefore to avoid becoming apostates, they must through a revolutionary breach and rejection of their contemporary societies perform migration to the new state.

As seen, most of the Earth's population is according to ISIS living in a false conception of the world. They live as the people before the revelation of Allah, and now since ISIS is lecturing them, they will have no excuse to not rejecting it. ISIS is in this way narrating themselves as the Muslim elite that can guide and save them.

Through their discourse, ISIS can be seen to believe they found the only truth about how the world function and therefore also how to best organize the society. This is then through their discourse highlighted many times and this can be seen as ISIS seek to convince their readers that they are the only legitimate actor to be trusted. Anyone who argue otherwise is seen as

liars and agents of misguidance—or agents of Shaytan. Through highlighting favorable texts and events and not incorporate unfavorable ones, ISIS is seen to build a narrative where only their ideology is based on the truth. By not including the unfavorable texts and events, the reader are only told what ISIS wants them to know, and if anyone else seek to challenge this narrative, they are merely seen as deviators and liars.

As ISIS claim Allah to be all encompassing, and therefore also the revelation they are following to be so, they believe they have solutions for all the problems in the world. This can then be seen in correlation to their claim of holding the truth, as well as they believe the Quran provides guidance both in the personal religious sphere, as well as political organization of the society. As seen, through the implementation of Allah's laws and commands, ISIS seek to coerce the world into submission to their ideology—or as they see it, submission to Allah. As they believe they are the best and most fit to guide the Muslims back on the right path, they justify to rule and intervene in all aspects of the personal, societal and political sphere. This as they believe only through a holistic approach, will they be able to implement Allah's reign throughout the world.

Since the establishment of the Caliphate and their cause is sanctioned and commanded by Allah, not carrying out these commands will risk the destruction of Islam, and violation of His commands. Seen in the analysis, use of terror and violence is not in their view only understood as a tactical necessity, but rather commanded by Allah. As Allah have commanded them to fight for the cause, their means are by ISIS seen as the moral justified means. They are therefore seen in their discourse to seek to convince their readers that they as the 'good guys' are the morally right, and the 'other' are morally bad. This can then also be seen as claim their opponents actions to be guided by Shaytan. ISIS can therefore in their discourse be seen to not only justify their use and violence, but actually highlight it as something good and divinely sanctioned.

Through defining their enemies by derogatory terms, ISIS can be seen to dominate the discourse as they seek to remove their enemies' credibility, in this way the reader would see them as untrustworthy. However, by using such names on their enemies, they also seek to remove their right to live as they are branded as those who seek to destroy the Muslim faith and therefore enemies of Allah. By defining other opposing Muslim groups as apostates, they justify the killing of them as they defying Allah. By narrate that their enemies are in league

with the devil, this can then be seen as an attempt to make it more morally justified to kill them. As seen in their discourse, ISIS project anyone or anything that can be a hinder of their implementation of their ideology as obstacles, and therefore define them as enemies. It does not matter who you are, Muslim or not, if you do not acknowledge ISIS as the rightful holder of the truth, you will be defined an enemy. As ISIS seek to construct or as they call it, redirect the Muslims back to their true identity, by defining their enemy, they also seek to define and narrate what is to be their own identity. In this way the defining of enemies also work to construct a “true” Muslim identity based on the principles found in their ideology. In this way, also symbols or other worldly constructions that can be used to create another identity than the one ISIS seek to create must be destroyed.

5.2 Conclusion

So can we then understand ISIS’s discourse in the Dabiq Magazines to be totalitarian, given the criterions in Øystein Sørensen’s definition of totalitarian ideologies and movements? Based on the findings in this thesis, I will argue that ISIS’ ideology and as a movement can be understood as totalitarian. This because their narrative include all of Sørensens criterions.

6.0 Implications and Solutions

Being a totalitarian ideology that seek to dominate the world, it will not be sufficient to fight ISIS with only military means. Even though ISIS is defeated militarily in Syria and Iraq, their ideology will not necessarily be defeated. By sending troops to fight ISIS, it can produce some success, if the aim of doing so and the battlefield successes is narrated in a good way. However, if this is not narrated in the best way, ISIS can further seek to use the intervention to radicalize more people and justify further that the non-Muslim world are at war with Islam. Therefore, in the fight against ISIS, we must have a strong focus on combating the ideology, rather than only fighting their soldiers. Winning on the battlefield can remove some of the claimed strength of ISIS, as they highlight their victories as Allah’s grace. In this way, directing the fight to ISIS’ prophetic battlefield and beat them there might reduce the moral and trustworthiness of ISIS.

However, by engaging against ISIS in Syria and Iraq, this would most likely also cause ISIS to urge frustrated Muslims in the west to carry out their “duty” to wage war with terror attacks in the west. With more xenophobia and an un-inclusive discourse in the western societies regarding Muslims, this can then cause more frustration amongst the Muslims to such a point

that some of them might fall for ISIS's narrative. It is therefore highly important to understand the ideology ISIS use in their propaganda and seek to discuss it and find the error and flaws with it. As ISIS highlight the favorable elements and do not include the unfavorable ones, we should seek to highlight ISIS's unfavorable elements. Telling the stories of those who have lived under the ISIS rules would also help to downplay the propaganda ISIS seek to communicate. This is then especially from those who performed their hijrah to ISIS, but returned as they saw the reality on the ground. By highlighting the reality in the Caliphate, instead of the constructed reality in ISIS narrative, we hopefully might hinder further radicalization. In this way, the most important war on ISIS should not be with the *sword* as ISIS hope, but rather with the word. We as a world community, and especially those who have knowledge about Islam and its' teachings must therefore together prove that ISIS does not hold the one-and-only truth. They must not be allowed to claim they are the best of the Muslims. It is therefore also highly important that the Sunni and the Shia leaders seek to compromise and work together to challenge and disprove ISISs' claim of being the leaders of the Muslim Ummah, as this also will be in their own interest. At the same time, the western world must start to be more inclusive and stop identifying Muslims as only Muslims, but rather as regular citizens. Only by including the citizens with their Muslim faith, can we defeat ISIS together. In this way, the analysis in this thesis, as it highlight and identify how ISIS tries to create a narrative based on their ideology, we can use this knowledge to fight these elements with arguments against their legitimacy. Through information and a nuanced discourse we must highlight that ISIS is also violating Islamic principles and therefore, as they call other hypocrites, they are the ones' who should be seen as hypocrites. Where ISIS claim they have found the only truth and as parts of al-Baghdadis authority is that he holds a high degree in Islamic studies, the leading Muslims scholars should be included in teaching the Muslims and the generations to come a more nuanced picture where there is a focus on the word and not the sword. To hinder the xenophobia and the fear that cause non-Muslims to distance themselves from Muslims, education and more information about the history and religion of Islam, can help the non-Muslims to understand Muslims in a more inclusive and respectful way.

Therefore, the fight against ISIS, should not only be seen as a military campaign against a brutal organization, but rather a fight against a totalitarian ideology that can only be limited or defeated through a counter-narrative based on reality and knowledge.

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