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The Epistemology of Violence and the Conception of Otherness: The Case of The Islamic State (Daesh).
A Mutation of Contemporary Islamism, or a Prolongation of it?

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Abstract

The Islamic State (Daesh), as an organization and an ideological trend, has become, within a few months, a major actor of the Middle-Eastern and international scene. Discussions and analyses of this movement have tended to approach it from a geostrategic point of view, and have identified the political context that allowed the movement to seize large swathes of territory, gain influence and spark terror. However, the religious underpinnings of the movement have received less attention and lesser attention to its specificities. This article aims at examining the ideological precepts elaborated by the Islamic State's key strategic theoreticians, through a content analysis of their discursive production. More specifically, the study sheds light on the doctrines promoted in the texts of these theoreticians, pertaining particularly to intra/interreligious otherness. It explores also the basic set of principles that are at the foundation of the 'new edition' of the Islamic State established in Medina. The article will try to answer these questions: what makes the Daesh theoreticians' view of the Islamic State different from that proposed by contemporary Islamic fundamentalists? Does their literature mark a turning-point? What are the critics addressed by this generation of leaders to the previous architects of contemporary Islamic fundamentalism?

Keywords: Islamic State, Islamism, Violence, Ideology, Otherness.

In 2014, President Obama told *The New Yorker* magazine that he considers Daesh – rebranded the *Islamic State* in June 2014 – to be Al-Qa'ida's weaker partner: "If a JV [Junior varsity jayvee] team puts on Lakers uniforms, that doesn't make them Kobe Bryant! [the legendary player]," Obama said.[1]

However, the Islamic State (ex-Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant [*al-Dawla al-islamiyya fil Irâq wal Shâm*]) has become, within a few months, a major actor of the Middle-Eastern and international scenes. Whoever reads the theoretical production of the key figures of the Islamic State

and their communiqués, realizes that their precepts and action plan do not rehearse blindly Al-'Qa'ida's style of terrorism. Moreover, fractures between jihadist groups arise from time to time either in an escalating-violence competition or in internal splits, in search of notoriety or allegiance or in case of diverging views or targets,[2] as has occurred in Syria during the first months of 2014 between Al-Qa'ida with its local affiliate, Jabhat Al-Nûṣra, and the virulent DAESH. Nevertheless, since the proclamation of the Islamic State's Caliphate, this competition, initially destructive against each other, has shifted to an escalating competition where each group attempts to keep the "hallmark" of jihad for Islam and "glory," not without support when necessary.[3]

In general, analyses of the Islamic State have tended to approach it from a geostrategic point of view, identifying the political circumstances that allowed the movement to seize large swathes of territory and threaten both local communities and states. This was the paradigm of scholars like, for instance, P.-J. Luizard[4] and M. Abou Zeid.[5] Furthermore, the ideological underpinnings of this "belief-system"[6] movement have received less attention, and much lesser attention to its specificities. Another dilemma is that the literature produced by the main theoreticians of the Islamic State—and pertaining to Islamist Fundamentalism in—is partially translated from Arabic language. Thus, subsequent misconceptions about Islamism may mislead researchers. As a native Arabic speaker, the author of this article attempts to help fill a gap in this domain of research. This paper is part of a broader research, which gives it its scientific relevance.

Indeed, without denying the presence of geostrategic factors, as a goal or tool, this essay aims at examining the Islamic State epistemology of violence through its key strategic "thinkers" literature. Our hypothesis is that examining the political and social conditions only, and ignoring the ideology that allow the Islamic State to emerge and survive, offers a partial explanation of its behaviour, as it does not emanate from its worldview, but considers merely Western concepts, putting all fundamentalisms in the same package.[8] We argue that the political tensions that occur can also be an expression of a deeper clash of worldviews [*taṣawûr*], in the terms of Qutb,[9] not only between civilizations, as Huntington would have said it, but within Muslim societies also; a clash between a world defined by divine sovereignty and a world shaped by human values. In fact, the dogmatic underpinnings of the action plan of the Islamic State and the conception they present regarding "otherness" illustrate what Tibi clearly posits in *The*

Challenge of Fundamentalism. Political Islam and the New World Disorder (1997). We adhere to what Tibi emphasizes that:

> In the long run the Islamic fundamentalists are far more dangerous as ideologues of power than as extremists who kill, cut throats (as they have in Algeria), and throw bombs. Fundamentalism is a […] worldview, that seeks to establish its own order, and thus to separate the peoples of Islamic civilization from the rest of humanity while claiming for their worldview a universal standing.[10]

In the present article, the analysis focuses on the perception of otherness. We try to answer the following questions: Who is designated as "other" in the literature of the Islamic State? On the basis of what criteria are the "in-groups" and "out-groups" defined?[11] What makes the Islamic State view a continuation or a turning point from that proposed by "traditional" Islamism?

In order to answer our research questions, we refer to the conceptual framework of Jodelet (2005)[12] who defines the concept of "otherness" in relation with its cultural or social belonging, as follows:

> L'autre, qu'il s'agisse d'un individu ou d'un groupe défini par l'appartenance à une catégorie socialement ou culturellement pertinente, est posé comme une entité abstraite, faisant l'objet d'un traitement sociocognitif, discursif ou comportemental sur lequel se centre l'attention.

For the frame analysis, we rely on the methodology of Yadh Ben Achour in his book *Aux fondements de l'Orthodoxie Sunnite* (2008) where he presents Sunni Islamism as a "culture of identity"[13] and proposes to "show how, based on primary references, the mechanism of guidance of the believers' […] political thought has been formed, and what would be its philosophy and principles".[14] The research is premised on the thesis formulated by Eidelson and Eidelson in *Dangerous ideas* (2003) that a group's beliefs color its perceptions of the world and, thus, have a huge influence on its behavior.[15] They posit that particular "dangerous" beliefs can trigger or constraint conflicts between groups when group members, defined by religion, or "other social identities"[16] formulate their collective worldview

based *primarily* on these beliefs and then use that worldview (rather than a complex objective reality) as a perception through which to judge the intentions and actions of other groups and to be engaged in destructive actions against them.

This framework is in line with the contributions of Tajfel and Turner to the *Intergroup Conflict Theory* (1979) and the *Social Identity Theory* (1986). By placing themselves and others into clearly defined categories, according to defined criteria, people delineate themselves as part of in-group, and others as part of an out-group. Thus, when applied to the intergroup categorization and relations, "in-groups" are groups you identify with, and "out-groups" are ones that we don't identify with, and may discriminate against or eradicate as in the case of the Islamic State. This implies that members of a cultural or religious group interact with other religious groups on the basis of their reciprocal beliefs about their respective categories. In this same vein, according to Tajfel and Turner (1979), this identification approach is to a very large extent "relational and comparative"[17]and requires a dichotomy paradigm omnipresent by virtue of the assimilation—contrast bias.[18] This "othering process" can be perceived in its radical application in the case of the Islamic State, as, according to Coupland in his *Other Representation* (1999): "Othering is the process of representing an individual or a social group to render them distant, alien or deviant".[19]

We problematize our research question through a qualitative brief content-analysis of the key-doctrines promoted in the texts of the three more influent masterminds of the Islamic State, pertaining, especially, to the view of otherness.[20] The essay succinctly crystallizes, then, the points of convergence and divergence from the action plan of the eldest generations of Islamists. The article argues that understanding the Islamic State's over-arching ideological paradigm for the relationship to maintain with the out-group provides an indispensable Islamist normative outlooks related to the concept of otherness according to its "*taṣawûr*"[21] [worldview] or, in the terms of Euben, its "own-understanding".[22] This essay contributes to knowledge not only by addressing this lacuna, but more importantly by linking the key dogmatic principles with the social and political behavior and concomitantly in relation with other jihadist movements.

Three masterminds … not like the predecessors?
In the following, we are tackling, succinctly, the main conceptual

underpinnings of the Islamic State's prevailing literature, through the doctrinal production of three of its most influential "theoreticians".

THE THEORETICIAN OF THE GLOBALIZATION OF JIHAD

Brynjar Lia, the biographer of Abu Musab Al-Suri (1958-...), considers him as the "true architect of global jihad."[23] So, does Kepel,[24] as well as Samuels, who presents him as "the new mastermind of jihad".[25] Lacey classifies him as "the most important theorist of the global Islamic jihad".[26] Indeed, he is considered by many as the most articulate exponent of the contemporary jihad's sophisticated strategies, being a "real intellectual" as described by Bergen[27] who met him in person.[28]

His real name is Mustafa Setmariam Nassar.[29] He followed the curriculum of a mechanical engineering student before joining a Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated group which was at the forefront in the Islamist uprising in Syria against Hafez Al-Assad's government. He finally, rejected the Muslim Brotherhood, because of their alliance with secular groups in their political resistance.[30] He emigrated to Spain in the mid-1980s. In 1987, Nasar and a small group of Syrian friends left Spain for Peshawar where Al-Suri met Abdalla Azzam, the key figure of the Arab-Afghan movement. In the early 1990s, he was a member of the inner circle of Ben Laden till 1992 when he returned to Spain. He also fought against Soviet Union in Afghanistan and the Communist government in Kabul after the Soviet withdrawal in 1988. Upon the request of some of his colleague,[31] he published a 900-pages' treatise in 1991, entitled *The Syrian Experience* [*Al-Tadjrûba al-Sûriyyah*] where he compiles 17 "bitter lessons" and critiques of the Muslim Brotherhood that will constitute an important part of the intellectual foundation for Al-Qa'ida current during the 1990s. In his opinion, the most salient mistakes of the Muslim Brotherhood were, among others: not to develop their strategy before launching their uprising; to share too little information about their real goals; to have launched a war of attrition against the regime in Damascus rather than a combination of terrorism and guerrilla operations, provides Al-Suri.[32]

Another turning point occurred in 2000. That time, when he launched a vehement criticism of Ben Laden for the disdain Al-Qa'ida has shown towards the Taliban leadership of Afghanistan, including Mullah Omar, while Al-Suri was part of the Taliban's Ministry of Defense. In his article written in Afghanistan, entitled: *Intellectual gap methodology in the current jihadist movement* [Al-Fadjwa al-fikriyya al-Manhadjiyya fil tayâr al-

djihâdi al- ḥâli] (2000), he inaugurates the jihadist revival that he calls: "the globalization jihad".[33] This third phase follows that of the "secret, and armed organizations" started with Sayyid Qutb—the mastermind of Muslim Brotherhood and all jihadis;[34] then the "beginning of the international confrontation" (Bosnia, Afghanistan, mid-Asia, etc.). On the intellectual level, he considers his generation as the second after the pioneers: Mawdudi, Qutb, Auda, Marawan Hadid and Said Hawi.[35]

The Islamic State has followed many of Al-Suri's methodological precepts regarding the attitude and behavior with the enemy. In fact, Al-Suri elaborated a "handbook" of the *jurisprudence of jihad* [*fiqh of jihâd*] against the out-group. This action plan is as follows: "the jihad of sword" [*al-senân*] by inciting more violence against non-Muslims, apostate rulers and their supporters, using arms; "the jihad by argumentation" [*al-bayân*], by promoting hatred against hypocrite Muslims supporting secular regimes; then, the popularization of jihad takes place with the reformation of education in order to incorporate Islamic sciences along with history, political science and *jurisprudence of actual issues* [*Fiqh al-Waqi'*].[36] These basic sciences are endorsed by some essential military principles for individual confrontation and urban warfare. Al-Suri also sheded the light on the main gaps in research to be filled by boosting studies in the reformulation of *Al-Ḥakimiyya* Fiqh (Only the Islamic Shari'a of Allah rules)[37] as well as the "rules" of murder, spoils of war, slavery and rape.[38]

Nevertheless, Al-Suri exposes at length his doctrine in his best-known masterwork: *The Call for Global Islamic Resistance*, published on the Internet in 2004. These 1,600 pages of jihadism constitute a kind of indoctrination manual. Following the onslaught that radical jihadists have experienced after 9/11, Al-Suri wrote this book with the aim of transforming Al-Qa'ida from a "vulnerable hierarchical organization into a resilient decentralized movement."[39] Al-Suri considers his own text as a "comprehensive doctrinal, political, behavioral, and educational method".[40] It establishes the real foundations of the Islamic State and inspired jihadists, from the Jordanian leader al-Zarqawi to the Americans of Chechen origin suspected of the attack in Boston in April 2013. Al-Suri opposed the strategy of Al-Qa'ida based on spectacular violence, advocating instead, for "decentralized terrorism".[41] He coined the term: "leaderless resistance" to describe the "techniques that have proven their worth […] in planting the idea of *globalizing Jihad*. For instance: "solo jihadi terror work" created by individuals, the covert work of small autonomous groups able to fund and arm themselves.[42]

In fact, through an evident illustration of what Tajfel and Turner hold in their *Social identity* (1997) about the conceptual categorical dichotomy: "in-group vs out-group," Abu Musab Al-Suri categorizes people according to their religious beliefs as follows:

> The *In-Group* includes jihadists and Muslim Umma (applying Shari`a law). This category has the spiritual, doctrinal and moral superiority towards others;[43] The *Out-group* defines all the other categories of human beings: Jews, oriental Christians, Crusaders (The Occidental Christians and allies), and atheists. This categorization comprises also those Muslims who "go astray" the right Sunna [*al Dâlin*] such as the Shi`ites, Nûṣayriyya, Druzes, Bahais, Ismailis,[44] and soufis. It applies also to the adepts of democracy and the infidel Muslim governments, for they have substituted the Shari`a of Allah and ruled according to man-made laws.[45]

From Savagery to Khilâfa

For the Egyptian Abu Bakr Naji (1961-2008),[46] the *jamâ῾a* of Muslim Brotherhood is the "mother of the islamist's movements".[47] Naji is the author of the *Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through which the Ummah will Pass* [*Idârat al-Tawaḥûsh*]. This 112-pages' book was posted online in 2004. Some observers prefer to put this book as an alternative to the "decentralized leaderless approach" popularized by Abu Musab Al-Suri, because it offers a plan for how a group of jihadists could establish their own self-governing Islamic state. However, we see this manual as a complementary phase of Al-Suri's manifesto[48] and in the same line of anti-Al-Qa'ida strategy of massive attacks on super powers.

Indeed, Abu Bakr Naji shared the same concept of otherness as the Islamic State's theoreticians. Among those out-categorized Muslims Naji includes also "deceptive media halos in various directions and the spreading of predestinationist, Sufi, and Murji.'ite."[49] Naji elaborated an integral power management strategy against the out-groups in three stages. The first stage is a war of attrition. A "vexation" of the enemy aimed at creating chaos in which the forces are exhausted by attacks of vital economic centers, especially energy sources. The second stage is "the spread of savagery." He posits: "the goal is to dislodge these regions [the regions selected for attack] from the control of the regimes of apostasy."[50] In fact, violence

reaches such a level that people will turn away from the government and are ready to join any force capable of restoring peace. This explains in part the broadcasting videos of severe atrocities. The policy of "paying the price" is also applied in this framework in order to make the enemy think *one thousand times* before attacking. This was the case of the murder of Copts in Libya, Ethiopians and some Western hostages, as interpreted in the Islamic State's online magazine *Dabiq*, Volume 7, released on February 12th.

The third stage, finally, is the empowerment by the establishment of a caliphate under Shari 'a governance. It is the central base for the spread of international jihad. In this perspective, the proclaimed Caliph Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi (June 2014), put in place many services: Justice, Police, trade, coins, food, health and education.[51]

CURRENT IDEOLOGUE IN THE JIHADI INTELLECTUAL UNIVERSE[52]

Born in Palestine, Abu Mohammad Al-Maqdisi's [Issam Al-Barqaqi] (1959–...) writings constitute a core element of jihadist theory. Al-Maqdisi is also the mentor of Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi the famous slaughter and the Emir of Al- Qa'ida's Iraq Branch.[53] His most influential books are: *The Religion of Abraham* (1988) [*Millat Ibrahîm*][54]and his tract: *This is our Creed* (1997) [*Hadhihi 'Aḳidatûna*].[55] According to the *Militant Ideology Atlas*, this little book was the most read text on his website as of November, 2006.[56] He is also the author of a collection of *fatâwas*. Like all jihadists, he was influenced by the doctrinal precepts of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Al-Qayyim. While in Medina he read the writings of Mohammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab and was strongly impressed by them.[57] Brachman rightly names Al-Maqdisi a "global Jihadist scholar."[58]

Through the doctrine of Al-Maqdisi, we can identify two major vectors: 1) The demarcation limits between the inter-religious and intra-religious otherness—*dâr al-kûfr* [disbelief] as the world of unbelievers and *dâr al-islâm* as the world of Islam. He calls to exercise caution and "not issue sweeping proclamations of *takfir against Muslims.*"[59] He thus argue:

> There is a danger of making the blood of Muslims [or: those who pray] and affirm Allah's unity lawful. The error which leaves a thousand unbelievers untouched is lighter than the error of shedding the blood of a single Muslim in the amount of a cupping glass (taking the life of a single Muslim).[60]

Subsequently, this division constitutes a methodical split between Maqdisi and Zarqawi's *takfir* proclamations towards the Shi'a populations in Iraq. At the same time, he regards every non-Muslim as *Kâfir* (disbeliever of apostate), belonging to the out-group:

> And we believe that every child is born upon the *fitrah* yet it was the parents that make him into a Jew, a Christian, a Magian or a *mushrok*. For that reason, we believe that everyone who adheres to a *dîn* other than the *dîn* of Islam is a *kâfir*.[61]

He declares the illegitimacy of having a legislator beside Allah alone and urges that whoever follows what he calls "the religion of democracy" seeks a religion different from Islam.[62]

> So, the democracy is on one side a polytheism and on the other side a disbelief in Allah. […] Allah said: […] 'And whosoever seeks a way other than submission to Allah, it will not be accepted of him, and he will be a loser in the hereafter.' Surat Âl'-Imran, ayah 83-85.[63]

This rule echoes the precepts of Qutb, al-Banna (the founder of the *Muslim Brotherhood*) and Mawdudi, who associate democracy to the idols of the *djahiliyya* that Islam must destroy.[64] Al-Maqdisi declares as a *Kâfir* the one who legislate in accordance with the "religion of Democracy," this is according to many verses, as, for instance: "The religion before Allah is Islam" (Al-Imrân III, 19); "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (Al-Imrân III, 85).[65]

2) Education is the other tangent of his doctrine. Maqdissi, similarly to Al-Suri, attaches much importance to the new generations' education in accordance with Islamic precepts. He elaborated an educational system through: *Preparing Leaders by Abandoning the Corruption of schools* [*I'dâd al-ḳada al-Fawâres behadjr fasâd al-madâres*].[66]

Concerning jihad, Al-Maqdisi develops a vision aligned with the first generations of theoreticians. He considers jihad as a common past of every Muslim community; the "sacred war" is an irrevocable prescribed obligation that can be carried out, until the entire religion is for Allah.[67] Nevertheless,

the Islamic State established its strategic fighting priorities which are different from the priorities of Al- Qa'ida. While Al- Qa'ida focuses on the "far enemy" (the West), the Islamic State has to start fighting near enemies around it in order to apply the Shari `a in the caliphate[68] and for the expansion to contiguous lands in the aftermath of this stage, states Al-Maqdisi.

THE ISLAMIC STATE: A MUTATION OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMISM, OR A PROLONGATION OF IT?

POINTS OF CONVERGENCE

Described as a salafi-jihadi group with carefully considered beliefs, the Islamic State is identified with the Salafism, after the Arabic *al-salaf al ṣâlih* [the pious predecessors]. These forefathers are the Prophet himself and his earliest adherents, whom Salafi honor and emulate as the models for all behavior, including warfare, couture, family life, even dentistry. The Islamic State's adepts refer to the same doctrinal texts and sources as all salafi wings. The leaders' discourses are deeply infused with Qur'anic quotations and directly echoed orders from early Islam. Also, extensive quotations from the Sunna (prophetic Hadiths, or the actions and statements attributed to Prophet Muhammad) are invoked, often with detailed analysis justifying the practices implemented. For instance, a huge part of Al-Suri's colossal *Call to Global Islamic Resistance* is dedicated to listing Islamic legal proofs as a justification for the writer's claims. The Islamic State relies heavily also on events from Islamic history because they can be more powerful, especially if the stories and events support Qur'anic verses or *hadiths*. The clips diffused by the Islamic State are constantly inaugurated with the verses they refer to as legal punishments [*ḥûdûd*].

In exegesis, the key figures of the Islamic State content themselves with listing facts through a literal reading of Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions through a basic principle they formulate as follows: *Where there is a text there is no room for interpretation* [*lâ idjtihâd ma' wûdjûd naṣ*].[69] This rule is based on the verse of Surat (*Al-Nisâ'* IV, 59): "O ye who believe! obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, […]."[70] What is more, their guiding principles' archeology conforms itself to thought of the ideologues of all purist Salafi. They belong all to Ibn Hanbal most conservative jurisprudence, and refer to Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Abu Hamed al-Ghazali, Mawdudi, Qutb and to the exegesis of Qurtubi, al-Tabari and Ibn

Kathîr. Not surprisingly, the name of the jihadi hymn, known as *Anasheed*, produced by the Islamic State in mid-2014 is: *The Unsheathed Swords* – also known as The *Clanging Swords* [ṣalil al-ṣawârim];[71] the name is inspired from the *unsheathed Sword* that constitutes a part of Ibn Taymiyya's major work book: *The Unsheathed Sword against whoever insults the Messenger* [*Al-ṣârim al-maslûl ʿala shâtim al-Rasûl*] (1294).[72]

In the realm of politics, the ultimate goal of the fundamentalists is to establish the Shariʿa Law in the Caliphate. Ben Achour explains that the caliph is defined as a "succession to the Prophet for world affairs and religion. The head of state is the Commander of the Faithful".[73] In June 2014, DAESH declares the New Islamist Caliphate and took the name of: "The Islamic State" [*al-Dawla al-Islamiyya*]. The Islamic State's spokesman, Abu Muhammad Al-Adnani, invoked this slogan of the "Prophetic methodology" [*khilâfa ʿala minhâj al-nûbûwa*] in one of his speeches, saying:

> O Allah, and if it is a state of Islam that rules by Your book and the tradition of Your prophet, and performs jihad against your enemies, then keep it firm, strengthen it, support it, grant it authority in the land, and make it a khilâfah upon the prophetic methodology.[74]

In essence, the caliphate is not only a claim for political governance that all Muslims must submit to but that it is a confirmation of an "ontological"[75] system of rule, predicted by the Prophet, that will be upon the Prophetic methodology toward the end of times.[76] In this regard, the Islamic State shares many common principles with all Salafi groups,[77] by rejecting all political precepts not compatible with Islamic *worldview*: democracy, nationalism, the nation-state, etc. It should also be mentioned that, similarly, the State of Shariʿa has always been a priority in the program of the Brotherhood as a divine path that guarantees the ḥakimiyya of Allah [governance] and as a reincarnation of the model of the State of Medina. The master thinker of Contemporary Islamism, Qutb, formulated the same precept about the rule of Shariʿa. In his *Signposts on the Road* [*Maʿålem fil Ṭârik* (1964)], he wrote: "The homeland is a home [*Dâr*] governed by a creed, a methodology of life and the Shariʿa of Allah."[78] Like all the ideologues of Islamism, Qutb refers also to the Surat (*Al-Mâʿida* V, 49-50): "And this (He commands): judge thou between them by what Allah hath revealed."[79]

Because its values and principles are not rooted in Islam, but rather in the "infidel West," the Jihadi-Salafists condemn in categorical terms the modern world order and the rulers of the Muslim-majority countries who cooperate with Western regimes as they have been co-opted into this system and "serve the interests of the dominant West, and thus have become "apostates" who must be toppled."[80] The dichotomy of the early Islam: *Islamic* vs. *jahili* is henceforth a constant of the Islamist ideology.[81] Outside the Umma lies adversity that threatens its religious unity. Adversity includes, then: "Crusaders, Jews and their allies from the apostates and hypocrites [Muslim supporting the Western forces]."[82] The consequence is a process of expulsion to the social and political margins of out-group members, along with Muslim schismatic groups who are viewed as opponents. Qutb went to sum up the relationship into a key word: "the struggle."[83] The spokesman of the Islamic State emphasizes this demarcation, and pleads: "O Allah, deal with everyone who has split the rank of the *mujâhidîn*, divided their word, delighted the *kuffar*, angered the believers, and set the jihad back many years!"[84]

Therefore, in the realm of this Khilafa, religious identity becomes prevalent at the expense of civil identity entailing a "sharp distinctiveness from nonmembers,"[85] transcending to the maximum the ontological division among their respective values; the in-group being "*al-ṭâ'ifa al-Mansûra* [the victorious category]" as Al-Maqdisi posits.[86] This understanding of collective identity under the "prophetic methodology" through the implementation of a set of Islamic attributes in the private as well as the public spheres[87] is also reproduced in the manifesto of the *Da`wa Salafiyya* (*The Salafi Call*), published on June 2006.[88]

Applied to the belief model of Eidelson and Eidelson (2003), the major lines exposed in the Islamic State's theoretical production—namely the three master minds succinctly presented in this article—are common to all the Islamists and could be directly correlated with conflict between groups. The texts are laden with what Eidelson and Eidelson call the "triggering beliefs": superiority, injustice, vulnerability, distrust, whose presence signals the potential of inter-group conflict.[89] Al-Suri, like his predecessors, is obsessed by the conviction that the Muslim Umma is superior to all other nations, according to the verse 110 of the Surat of *Al- 'Âl 'Imrân* (Quran III):

> Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining
> what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in

> Allah. If only the People of the Book had Faith, it were best
> for them: among them are some who have Faith, but most
> of them are perverted transgressors.[90]

The master thinkers of Islamism invoke the superiority of Muslims in relation to their duty of being the "guardians by force" of the *Shari`a* of Allah[91] to save humanity from moral deterioration. In *This is the Promise of Allah*, Al-Maqdisi states that Allah "made leadership of the world and mastership of the earth for the umma, as long as it fulfilled the condition: 'They worship me [Allah] and do not associate anything with me'" [*An-Nûr* XXIV: 55].[92] The out-group is seen as an inferior one on many grounds, which include moral, spiritual and intellectual values. This moral discrimination echoes the conviction of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as all the Salafists.[93] Moreover, Islamists are convinced that the group of believers is being threatened on religious and cultural grounds[94] and has been the victim of Crusaders and none-believers that prevent their ascension to the position they deserve as masters of the world[95]. This same dream had been anticipated by the Brotherhood's founder who coined the slogan of "*ûstadhiyyat al-ʿâlam*."[96] In fact, the term "*ûstadhiyyat al-ʿâlam*" implies three dimensions: prestige, knowledge and superiority pertaining to the "collapse of the Other."[97] Thus, this is not a marginal slogan; it is an active principle of domination. Also, in the *manifesto* of the Da`wa Salafiyya, we find the same logic:

> Our mission is summed up in the return to the Qur'ran
> and the Sunna of the Salaf [...] Allah says: Ye are the best
> of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right,
> forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah (*Âl
> `Imrân* III, 110).[98]

Injustice is relatedly linked with the aborted dream of superiority; the propaganda of the Islamic State emphasizes the "oppression" against Muslims and the global conspiracy against Islam from the "Zionists allied to the Crusaders led by the United States of America," according to Al-Suri who believes that the West is plotting to weaken the religion of Allah.[99] Furthermore, he dedicates The *Call for Global Islamic Resistance* to the believers determined to react against the Crusaders-Zionist force of *Kûfr* portrayed as seeking to eradicate "the religious, intellectual and moral foundations of the region […and re-shape] them on the basis of Western thought."[100] Al-Suri repetitively refers to genocide, loss of life, imprisonment, and martyrdom, and also to economic-related gaps, so does Naji who

describes this attrition and injustice through the same *cause to effect* binary:

> These regimes opposed the belief of the societies which
> they ruled and, with the passage of time and gradual
> decay, they squandered and plundered the resources of
> those states and spread iniquity among the people.[101]

This account of injustices fuels hatred towards the out-group and invokes revenge, no doubt. Referring to the Qura'nic verse. Al-Suri urges: "Then fight in Allah's cause – thou art held responsible only for thyself - and rouse the Believers. It may be that Allah will restrain the fury of the Unbelievers; for Allah is the strongest in might and in punishment" (*Surat Al-Nisâ'* IV: 84).[102] The same logic is detailed in the *Management of Savagery* of Naji.[103] In fact, every action by the out-group is automatically interpreted as hostile; this "perception of threat […] focus group behavior in specific directions that include hostility to the source of threat", explain Eidelson and Eidelson.[104]

The turning points

Compared to its predecessors, the Islamic State does mark a turning point vis-à-vis the *modus operandi* of the epistemology of violence. With this generation of ideologues, we cross the phase of theorization into a grounded leadership of "a living, moving project"[105] as formulated by Al-Suri. Even though the Islamic State follows a battle plan developed over years by "experienced theoreticians,"[106] it *has learned* from the past failures of other jihadist movements to refine its strategy. The target of the Islamic State is to restore the Islamic Caliphate. Al-Baghdadi, proclaimed first contemporary caliph is a descendent of Quraysh, the tribe of the prophet of Islam; he holds a PhD in Islamic studies from Baghdad. Al-Khilâfa was one of Al-Qa'ida's stated goals, and a strategic goal of the Muslim Brotherhood, but it was never realized.

The Islamic State's slogan is "*Remaining and Expanding*" [*bâḳiyah wa tatamadad*]. By contrast to Al-Qa'ida, the Islamic State requires the effective control of Sunni territory to remain legitimate. Then, it can hold power and administer services such as education. Whereas other Islamist groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood, in phases of weakness, agree to work in a democracy framework even though the sovereignty of people is against their beliefs, this is not an option for the Islamic State, but an act of apostasy. In the second chapter of his book: *Democracy: A religion* (1997), Al-Maqdisi states:

> Ibn Al-Qayyim said: 'Everyone who exceeded his limits either worshipped, followed or obeyed - so, the deity of any people is the one who they make a judge besides Allah and His prophet, or worship other than Allah, or follow him without taking any consideration of Allah, or obey him in a matter that is a disobedience to Allah.' Democracy […] is a religion that is a contradictory to Allah's religion.[107]

The Islamic State developed its own pattern of violence. It is predictable, by contrast to traditional terrorist groups (like Al- Qa'ida) that do not signal their future targets. It communicates widely on its doctrine and its objectives, so that by listening carefully, we can deduce how it intends to govern and expand. Also, the Islamic State changes the conventional means to suicide attacks, hit-and-run warfare, targeting civilians arbitrarily, destabilizing a country's security, and recently targeting airplanes.

Through the Islamic State's own epistemology of violence, every act has a message and is based on rules related to its context. This *penal code* includes several practices that they acknowledge as integral to the sacred texts, and a throwback to Islamic earliest conquests, such as: slavery, crucifixion, and rationalizing the act of beheading prisoners-of-war and the taking of the religious *jizya* tax from Christians,[108] as it was the case in eastern Syria. This explains why the Jordanian pilot Mo'adh al-Kasasba[109] is burnt alive, Christians are slaughtered, Yazidi women and children are enslaved to be divided amongst the fighters as spoils of war.[110]

To mention but a few examples: by slaughtering the 21 Egyptian Christians in front of the Mediterranean Sea (15 February 2015), the Islamic State wanted to mix the beach waves with blood, thus reproducing the battle of Ullayis (called "the river of blood") which happened in mid-633 H, where the famous commander in chief, Khalid Ibn al-Walid, and his troops, during the reign of Abu Bakr al-saddik, the first caliph, slaughtered 70,000 from the army of enemies, transforming Ullayis into a river of blood.[111] In the communiqué diffused through *Dabiq* (16 February 2015), explaining the motives of slaughtering the Egyptian Christians in Libya, the Islamic State argued that this act has been perpetrated as a revenge for all the atrocities the *Christian* West is practicing against Muslims. They believe that all Christians are *Kûffâr* and deserve to be slaughtered: "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost" (*Surat Al-*

Imrân, II, 85)[112] and referring to *Surat Muhammad*: "Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers, smite at their necks" (XLVII, 4). They justified the capture of the Royal Jordanian Air Force pilot, al-Kasasba and the reason why he has been burnt alive (4 February 2015) according to examples from the *Ṣâḥâba*, i.e. Abu Bakr al-Saddiq who burnt alive those who were unjust or allied with unjust forces against Muslims. Thus, Al-Kasasba deserves this revenge, having worked with the Jordanian regime hostile to the Islamic State.[113] More interestingly, the Islamic State "deliberately employs unusual punishments to shock observers and to highlight similar incidents in Islamic history;"[114] for instance, gay people are thrown from high buildings. The phenomenon lies in how it has added "a focus on sectarianism to a history of radical views [and how the theoretical underpinnings linked with jihadi-takfiri thought helped …] the group to authenticate itself, and renders it less subject to ridicule or accusations of deviance."[115]

Another technical point makes the distinction between the Islamic State and other Salafi jihadists groups, especially Al- Qa'ida. Unlike Al-Qa'ida's members, the Islamic State's supporters are masterful at producing technically sophisticated videos that are then widely distributed through social-media applications. "And these are not just gory beheading clips"[116] – they skillfully include sound and visual effects. In general, the harshest punishments diffused help as a deterrent force to terrorize the enemy. As McCants observed, whereas Al-Qa'ida cares about "building a popular front in the Muslim world […], the Islamic State cares more about 'doctrinal righteousness.'"[117]

The Islamic State is also distinctive by its financial and military independence; in mid-2015, its overall monthly revenue was around $80 million.[118] Its manpower is also distinctive, as it succeeded in attracting several thousands of Western *mûjahidins*.

Finally, the battle of The End of Days is a *leitmotif* in Islamic State's literature. To this end, the Islamic State has attached great importance to the city of Dabiq located in northern Syria, and captured in 2014. Abu Musab al-Suri posits that the inherited animosity with the West and his allies is a re-incarnation of the struggle that occurred between the Muslims and the *Romans (In Surat Ar-Rûm*, 30). Thus, the Islamic State named its magazine after this town where, according to some interpretation of the Qur'an, a major battle will take place between jihadists and the "infidel horde," signaling the end of time. In July 2016, production halted. A new

multilingual magazine of similar production quality began to be published rebranded *Rumiyah*. It carries the same general theme of a religious prediction of victory nevertheless, Rumiyah's title is based on a different interpretation of Quranic prophecies predicting the fall of Rome.[119]

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to probe into the beliefs and persuasiveness of the radical religious discourse that promotes violence, through the literature of three of the "theoreticians" of the Islamic State (ex- DAESH), with the aim of inferring the worldview that promotes ideologically-based violence. Regarding a creed-based group like the Islamic State, it is indispensable to be aware of the ways this entity is tied to the history of Islamic theology and law, how it refers to its sacred Texts, and to link this ideological underpinning with the political, economic, and social context in which this jihadist group emerged. According to Haykel:

> To ignore the Islamic background and content of the Islamic State's ideology or the material factors that led to its rise is to fail in the scholarly enterprise and to fall short at providing the policymaker, the student, and the public with an adequate understanding of the global phenomenon of jihadism.[120]

To this purpose, we succinctly highlighted the common grounds that make the Islamic State a constitutive continuation of "traditional" Islamism and we identified the turning points from the ideological underpinnings of the epistemology of violence proposed by the contemporary Islamic fundamentalism. The article emphasized how the Islamic State links the context it rises from, and the challenges it faces, with the difficulties encountered in the early Islamic state by the Prophet Muhammad and his rightly guided Caliphs in spreading of Islam, and the rewards that came from Allah.[121]

The article argued that the different factions of contemporary Islamism are "similarly minded;"[122] they are connected by a common religious creed [*aḳîda*], which provides principles and a worldview for applying religious beliefs to contemporary issues. They differ over their assessment of contemporary problems and thus over the methodology and action plan to be applied. This creed is also valid when applied on the definition of the out-group, the enemy, the adversary. From this perspective, "there is only one legitimate religious interpretation; Islamic pluralism does not

exist," as stated by Wiktorowicz, or rather: "pluralism does not exist!" In this regard, the doctrinal texts of the main Islamic States's theoretician, and more generally the literature of contemporary Islamism, are laden with four "conflict-triggering" belief domains, namely, superiority, injustice, distrust, and binary categorizations of in-groups and out-groups (Eidelson and Eidelson, 2003).

The Islamic State's perception of otherness constitutes, *grosso modo*, a continuation of the Sunni contemporary Islamism; however, its action plan is boldly distinctive on many levels, as we have shown. We saw how the Islamic State's literature divides the world into in-groups and out-groups in accordance with their commitment—or not—to the fundamentalist interpretation to the Islamic creed. Muslims are disassociated from others, and failure to disassociate oneself from non-Muslims or from apostates is itself a sign of disbelief and apostasy, which deserves death. They strongly reject nationalism and the idea of territorial boundaries. Failure to rule in accordance with God's law (however narrowly defined) constitutes disbelief (*kûfr*).

The findings also revealed that the practices of the Islamic State may be considered as an empirical field that emphasizes the a priori distinction between the two extremes of social behavior according to Tajfel and Turner (1998). They represent

> [the] other extreme [that] consists of interactions between […] groups which are fully determined by their respective memberships in various social groups or categories, and not at all affected by the interindividual personal relationships between the people involved [… it is] a cast system […] perceived as immutable.[123]

Furthermore, in several respects, the construction of otherness becomes an example of what Willem Doise defines as follows:

> L'altérité, dans un sens radical, revient à considérer l'autre comme ne partageant pas de caractéristiques communes, parfois même pas celle d'être humain, avec soi. Par définition, cet autre résisterait à toute forme de familiarisation.[124]

Finally, by focusing only on strategic factors to explain the Islamic State's behavior, we are missing the essential point. In fact, examining the worldviews that guide the actions of Islamist political forces—acknowledging their diversity—allows us to understand the global mechanisms at work. In the terms of Graeme Wood: "We'll need to get acquainted with the Islamic State's intellectual genealogy if we are to react in a way that will not strengthen it."[125] Bernard Haykel makes the same point.[126] We believe we should take their advice seriously.

Notes

1. He explained: "I think there is a distinction between the capacity and reach of a Bin Laden and a network that is actively planning major terrorist plots against the homeland versus jihadists who are engaged in various local power struggles and disputes, often sectarian." Amy Davidson, "Obama to Iraq: Your Problem Now" in *The New Yorker* (June 13, 2014). http://www.newyorker.com/news/amy-davidson/obama-to-iraq-your-problem-now (accessed February 1, 2015).

2. See: Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2004), 364-366.

3. Fady Walid Akoum, *Da'esh. The black Book* [DAESH. Al-Kitâb al-Aswad] (Cairo: Dar Amli for publications and Distribution, 2014), 47-54.

4. Pierre-Jean Luizard, *Le piège DAECH* (Paris : ed. La Découverte, 2015).

5. Mario Abou Zeid, "ISIS : Terrorism upgraded" (2014). http://carnegie-mec.org/2014/07/08/isis-terrorism-upgraded-pub-56098 (accessed March 14, 2015).

6. Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants" (2015) http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2015/02/what-isis-really-wants/384980/, (accessed January 7, 2016).

7. Roxanne Euben, "When Worldviews Collide: Conflicting Assumptions About Human Behavior Held by Rational Actor Theory and Islamic Fundamentalism" in *Political Psychology* 16, No. 1, Special Issue: Political Economy and Political Psychology (Mar., 1995).

8. See Euben,1995;7 Monroe and Kreidie, 1997. Kristen Renwick Monroe and Lina Haddad Kreidie, "The Perspective of Islamic Fundamentalists and the Limits of Rational Choice Theory" *in Political Psychology*, 18, No. 1 (Mar., 1997).

9. Sayyid Qutb, *Towards an Islamic society* [Naḥwa Mujtamaʿ Islami], (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruk, 2004 [1952]), *The Islamic conception and its characteristics* [Khasa'is al-Tasawûr al-Islâmi wa mûḳawimatihi], (Cairo: Dar Ihyaa al-kutub al'arabiyya, 2002 [1953]). *Signposts on the Road* [Maʿâlim fil-Tarîq], (Cairo : Dar al-Shuruk. 1979 [1964]).

10. Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder*. (Berkeley, Calif London: University of California Press, 1998).

11. See Tajfel & Turner 1979 and 1986. Henri Tajfel and Jonathan Turner, "An integrative theory of intergroup conflict" in *The social psychology of intergroup relations*, ed. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel (Monterey, Ca: Brooks/Cole, 1979), "The

social identity theory of intergroup behavior" in *Psychology of intergroup relations*, ed. Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin, (Chicago: Nelson-Hall,1986).

12. Denise Jodelet, "Formes et figures de l'altérité" in *L'Autre: Regards psychosociaux*, ed. Margarita Sanchez-Mazas and Laurent Licata (Grenoble: Les Presses de l'Université de Grenoble, Col: Vies sociales, 2005) : 25.

13. Yadh Ben Achour, *Aux fondements de l'orthodoxie Sunnite*, (Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 2008), 161.

14. Ibid., 4.

15. Roy J. Eidelson and Judy I. Eidelson, "Dangerous Ideas: Five Beliefs That Propel Groups Toward Conflict" in *American Psychologist*, 58. No. 3, (2003): 182–192. http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic920395.files/Dangerous%20Ideas.pdf, (accessed June 10, 2016).

16. Ibid., 182.

17. Tajfel and Turner, "An integrative theory of intergroup conflict", 40.

18. Ibid., 39-40.

19. Nikolas Coupland, "Other Representation" in *Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. J. Verschueren, J.-O. Ostman, J. Blommaert & C. Bulcaen (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1999): 5.

20. Jodelet pinpoints the difference between "other" and "otherness". In fact, the term "otherness" includes the mechanism of construction and interaction that the word "other" does not bring. Ibid., 25.

21. Qutb, *Signposts on the Road*, 123; Hassan Al-Banna, *Epistles of imâm shahîd Hassan al-Banna* [Rasâ'il al- Imam al-shahîd Hassan al-banna], (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruk, 2002), 170-171.

22. Euben, "When Worldviews Collide," 159.

23. Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab Al-Suri*, (London & New York: Hurst &Columbia University Press, 2007).

24. Henri Tincq, "Depuis 2005, la fulgurante percée du « jihadisme de proximité" in *Slate Magazine* (15 January 2016), http://www.slate.fr/story/112465/jihad-francais2016 (accessed March 30, 2016).

25. David Samuels. "The New Mastermind of Jihad" (2012), http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303299604577323750859163544 (accessed, June 10, 2015).

26. Jim Lacey, *A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto*, (USA: Naval Institute Press, 2008), 205.

27. Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc. Inside the Secret War of Osama Bin Laden,* (New York & Londres, Touchstone, 2001), 59.

28. The proclaimed Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was directly inspired by him. Ibid.

29. In Peshawar, he became well-known under his pen name Umar Abd al-Hakim after he published '*The Islamic jihadi revolution in Syria*, also known as the *Syrian Experience* in May 1991.

30. Abu Musab Al-Suri, *The Islamic jihadist revolution in Syria*. 2 parts: I. The experience and lesson. II. The thought and the methodology [Al-Thawra al-islamiyya al jihâdiyya fi Syria. I. Al-Tadjrûba wal Ibrâ. II. Al Fikr wal Minhâdj] (1991). https://ia902700.us.archive.org/17/items/Syrian_Tajruba/Scanned_Syrian_Tajruba.pdf, Part II.: 284-289, (accessed April 15, 2014).

31. Ibid., Part I, 17.

32. Ibid., Part I., 351-360.

33. Abu Musab Al-Suri, *Intellectual gap methodology in the current jihadist movement* [Al-Fadjwa al-Fikriyya al-Manhadjiyya fîl tayär al-jihadi al-Ḥâli] (2000) http://

www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_25656.html (accessed April 15, 2014).

34. See: Abu Musab Al-Suri. *The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance* [Daʿwat al-mûḳawama al-Islamiyya al-Âlamiyya]. Part I. The roots, History and Experiences. Part II. The Call, Program and Method. (2004). https://ia800409.us.archive.org/24/items/TheCallForAGlobalIslamicResistance-EnglishTranslationOfSomeKeyParts AbuMusabAsSuri/TheCallForAGlobalIslamicResistanceSomeKeyParts.pdf, Part I, Chapter 1, (accessed April 17, 2014), Part I, Chapter 1.

35. See: Al-Suri, *Intellectual gap methodology in the current jihadist movement.*

36. See: Ibid.

37. See: Al-Suri, *The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance.* Part I., 92.

38. See: Ibid., Part II, Chapter 4.

39. Paul Cruickshank and Mohannad Hage Ali, "Abu Musab Al Suri: Architect of the New Al Qaeda" in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30 (2007): 1–14. http://www.lawandsecurity.org/documents/AbuMusabalSuriArchitectoftheNewAlQaeda.pdf (accessed May 14, 2016).

40. Abu Musab Al-Suri. *The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance*, Part I, Chapter 1.

41. Ibid.

42. See: Ibid., Part II, Chapters 4 and 5 and 8.

43. Abu Musab Al-Suri. *Ahl as-Sunna in the Levant in confrontation with al-Nûsayriyy, the Crusaders and Jews* [Ahl-as-Sunna fil Shâm fi mûdjahat al-Nûsayriyya wal şalibiyya wal yahûd]. http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_25667.html (2000). Chapters 5 and 7.

44. See: *Dabiq*, issue Nᵒ 6: 19-20.

45. See: Al-Suri, *The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance*, 71.

46. Pseudonym of Abu Jihad al-Masri. Other name: Mohammad Hasan Khalil al-Hakim.

47. Abu Bakr Naji, *Traitors; the most despicable deal in the history of contemporary Islamic movement* [al-Khawana; Akhas şafḳa fi Târikh al-ḥaraka al-islamiyya], https://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=e8in7fim (accessed June 12, 2014).

48. Abdel Samad al-Suaylam. "Daech Manifesto. The management of Savagery and the anti-Strategy of defragmentation" [Manifesto Daech. Idarât al-Tawaḥûsh wa Istratidjiyyâyat al-tashadhi walinshitâr al-Moḍâda] in *Al-Hewâr al-Motamadden*, 4753, (19/3/2015). http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=460031 (accessed December 3, 2016), and Lacey, *A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto*, 205.

49. Abu Bakr Naji, The *Management of Savagery: The most Critical Stage through which the Umma will Pass* [Idârat al-Tawaḥûsh. Akhṭar Maraḥala satamuru biha al-Ummah]. Translated to English by William McCants. (The John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, 2004), https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/abu-bakr-naji-the-management-of-savagery-the-most-critical-stage-through-which-the-umma-will-pass.pdf, 6, (accessed June 12, 2014).

50. Ibid., 23-61.

51. Ibid., 54-61.

52. This is the conclusion of a study carried out by the Combating Terrorism Center of the United States Military Academy (USMA). Maqdisi is also deemed as "the most influential living Jihadi Theorist," https://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Atlas-ExecutiveReport.pdf: 8 (accessed August 22, 2016).

53. Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al Qaeda Strategist Abu Musʾab Al-Suri*, 328.

54. Abu Muhammad 'Asim Al-Maqdisi, *The Religion of Ibrahim and the Calling of the Prophets and Messengers and the Methods of the Transgression Rulers in Dissolving it and Turning the Callers Away from it* [Millât Ibrahim] (Dar Al-Tibyan. (W.D.) https://ia600309.us.archive.org/17/items/MillatIbraheem.pdf/MillatIbraheem.pdf, (accessed June 10, 2014).

55. Abu Muhammad 'Asim Al-Maqdisi. *This is our 'Aqîdah* [Hâdhihi Âḳîdatûna]. (W.D.) https://ia802605.us.archive.org/26/items/ThisIsOuraqidah-AbiMuhammadAl-maqdisi/our_aqeedah.pdf, (accessed June 10, 2014).

56. See: Orhan Elmaz, "Abu Muhammad al-Maqdi's Imperatives of Faith" in *New Approaches to the Analysis of Jihadism. Online and Offline*, ed. Rüdiger Lohlker (Vienna University Press, 2006): 15-36.

57. Abu Muhammad 'Asim Al-Maqdisi. *Democracy: A Religion!* [Al-Dimûḳratiyya Dîn !], (Australia: Al Furqan Islamic Information Centre, 2012), 8-12.

58. Jarret Brachman, *Global jihadism: Theory and Practice*, (London: Routledge 2009), 22.

59. In *This is our creed,* Al-Maqdisi proclaims: "There is a danger of making the blood of Muslims […who] affirm Allah's unity lawful". Ibid., 62.

60. He indicates that this quote is taken for Qadi 'Iyadh in *Ishifa*. See: Ibid., 59.

61. Ibid., 54 and 57.

62. See: Al-Maqdisi, *The Religion of Ibrahim*, 17-20 and 71 and *This is our Creed*, 62.

63. Ibid., *The Religion of Ibrahim*, 36.

64. Qutb, *Signposts*, 90.

65. Ibid., 55.

66. Abu Muhammad 'Asim Al-Maqdisi. *The preparation of the great leaders by escaping the corruption at schools* [I'dâd al-ḳâda al-Fawâres behadjr faṣâd al-madâres] (2001). https://ia802600.us.archive.org/0/items/eadad/eadad.pdf.

67. See: i.e.: The Statement about the Blessed Paris Invasion on the French Crusaders, https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Statements/is-claims-paris-attacks-warns-operation-is-first-of-the-storm.html and the one issued in the aftermath of the attack by bombing inside Cairo's Coptic chapel, December 2016, killing 25 Copts, http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-39024278.

68. See: Al-Maqdissi, *The Religion of Ibrahim*, 33-34 and *This is our Creed*, 65.

69. See: Qutb, Signposts, 57.

70. *The Qur'an*, Site *Al-Islâm*, Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Waqfs, Proselytism and Orientation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, http://quran.al-islam.com/Page.aspx?pageid=221&BookID=16&Page=1http://quran.al-islam.com/Page.aspx?pageid=221&BookID=15&Page=1.

71. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiGuyCtoISI.

72. Al-ṣârim al-maslûl is a lengthy legal treatise arguing that anyone – Muslim or non-Muslim – who insults the Prophet Muḥammad must be killed without further recourse (around 1,100 pages).

73. Ben Achour, *Aux Fondements de l'Orthodoxie Sunnite*, 45.

74. "The Flood of Mubâhallah" in *Dabiq*, Issue N º 2, Ramadan 1435: *The Flood: Its either the Islamic State or the Flood*, 20-22, 20.

75. Ben Achour, *Aux fondements de l'orthodoxie sunnite*, 37.

76. *Dabiq*, issue N º 5, p. 24.

77. Bernard Haykel, "Analysis: Defeating ISIS Requires Understanding Their Interpretation of Islam". (2015), http://www.thetower.org/1662-analysis-defeating-isis-requires-understanding-their-interpretation-of-islam (accessed June 10, 2015).

And see: Joas Wagemakers. "A Purist Jihadi-Salafi: The Ideology of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi" in The British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies. 36: 2, (2009): 281-297. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/135301909030073277, (accessed July 27, 2016).

78. Qutb, *Signposts*, 145; see 17 and 143.
79. *The Qur'an*, Site *Al-Islâm*, Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Waqfs, Proselytism and Orientation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, http://quran.al-islam.com/Page.aspx?pageid=221&BookID=15&Page=1.
80. Bernard Haykel, "A leading scholar explains the beliefs and goals of the Islamic State", (3 June 2015) https://paw.princeton.edu/article/isis-primer, (accessed December 21 2016).
81. Qutb, *Signposts*, 137. See: Roxanne Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 57.
82. Bernard Haykel, "A leading scholar explains the beliefs and goals of the Islamic State".
83. Qutb, *Towards an Islamic society*, 51
84.   *Dabiq*, issue N º 2, 20.
85. Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity" in *Theory and Society,* 29 (2000): 7 and see p. 10.
86. Al-Maqdisi, *This is our Creed*, 66 and see Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Savagery*, 6.
87. See: http://alsalafway.com/cms/aboutus.php.
88. *Who Are We? What Do We Want*, (2006). 9/6/2006. http://alsalafway.com/cms/aboutus.php, (accessed May 7, 2014).
89. Eidelson and Eidelson, "Dangerous Ideas", 183-187.
90.   *The Qur'an*, Site *Al-Islâm*, Ministry of Islamix Affairs, Waqfs, Proselytism and Orientation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On line: <http://quran.al-islam.com/Page.aspx?pageid=221&BookID=16&Page=1.
91. Al-Banna, *Epistles*, 24.
92. Abu Muhammad 'Asim Al-Maqdisi, *This is the Promise of Allah* [Hadha Wa'dullah] English translation (Al-Furquan W.D), 2.
93. See: al-Banna, *Epistles … ,* 24; Qutb, *Signposts*, 5 and http://alsalafway.com/cms/aboutus.php, June 9, 2006 (accessed November, 2012).
94. See: *The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance*, chapter 4.
95. See: al-Suri. *Intellectual gap methodology in the current jihadist movement.*
96. Al-Banna, *Epistles*, 25
97. Salwa Ismail, "Confronting the Other: Identity, Culture, Politics, and Conservative Islamism in Egypt" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Cambridge University Press, (1998), 30. 2: 207.
98. See: www.Salafvoice.com, June 9, 2006.
99. See: al-Suri. *Intellectual gap methodology in the current jihadist movement.*
100. Ibid.
101. Abu Bakr Naji, *The management of Savagery*, 6.
102. Al-Suri, *The call* …, 5.
103. See: 5-6.
104. Eidelson & Eidelson, *Dangerous Ideas*, 7.
105. See: Al-Suri, *The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance,* 77.
106. Bergen, *Holy War*, 58.
107. Al-Maqdisi, *The Religion of Ibrahim*, 9-11.
108. *Dabiq*, issue nº 7, 21-23.

109. Al-Maqdisi, *The Religion of Ibrahim*, 5-8.
110. *Dabiq*, issue nº 4, p. 14.
111. See: Al-Tabari. *The History of Nations and kings* [Tarîkh al-ûmmam wal Molûk), Vol. 2, (1985), http://al-hakawati.net/arabic/civilizations/77a2.pdf   and Ahmed Hussein Heikal, *Al-Seddik Abû Bakr*, (Cairo: organism of Universities and schools' books, 1982).
112. See: http://www.islamist-movements.com/26090.
113. See: the Communiqué : http://www.islamist-movements.com/25948.
114. Hassan Hassan, *The Sectarianism of the Islamic State: Ideological Roots and Political Context* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Publications Department, 2016), 22.
115. Ibid.
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119. Unlike Dabiq, it does not risk being destabilized by events. The reason for this rebranding is that the Islamic State realized that the battle in Dabiq could not happen until several other prophecies were fulfilled, especially that forces from Turkey and Iraq recaptured swaths Islamic State-controlled territory.
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121. On January 20, 2017, the media office of the Islamic State (ISIS) Aleppo province released a 28-minute video titled "Between Two States – Challenges and Rewards" and diffused by Shamukh.net/vb, January 20, 2017. See https://dawaalhaq.com/post/62253.
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